PROJECT IMPACT STUDY OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION, PHASE II
Summary Report

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Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section

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1. BACKGROUND

The first phase of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention (NSCSCP), implemented in 1994, provided a framework to coordinate federal/provincial/territorial cooperation and crime prevention activities within the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of the Solicitor General (RCMP). Phase II of the National Strategy was launched on June 2, 1998 to renew and strengthen the federal government's commitment to crime prevention through community-focused partnerships, capacity building, engagement and awareness raising. As part of the government's *Safe Communities* plan, the overall objective of the second phase was to create safer communities by equipping Canadians with the knowledge, skills and resources to introduce crime prevention initiatives in their communities. Towards this end, the Strategy focused on partnerships among community partners.

In May 2001, the federal government announced the expansion of Phase II of the National Strategy. The DOJ components of the National Strategy, Phase II expansion include: the *National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC)*, which is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the National Strategy; the *Safer Communities Initiative*, which consists of five grant and contribution funding programs – the Community Mobilization Program (CMP), Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF), Crime Prevention Partnership Program (CPPP), Business Action Program (BAP) on Crime Prevention and Business Network on Crime Prevention, and Crime Prevention Strategic Fund (CPSF); and the *Communications, Promotion and Public Education Program*, which aims to improve Canadians' awareness and knowledge of crime and victimization, effective crime prevention through social development (CPSD), and NCPC programs.

The objectives of the National Strategy are as follows:

- to promote integrated action of key governmental and non-governmental partners to reduce crime and victimization;
- to assist communities in developing and implementing community-based solutions to crime and victimization, particularly as they affect children, youth, women and Aboriginal persons; and
- to increase public awareness of and support for effective approaches to crime prevention.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The 1999 Evaluation Framework for the National Strategy, Phase II specified that a summative evaluation be conducted in 2002/03, with a focus on assessing the results of National Strategy funding that can be attributed to the work of the NCPC. In preparation

for the summative evaluation, the quality of available CMP project outcome data was assessed in a 2001 study commissioned by the DOJ Evaluation Division and the NCPC Research and Evaluation Division. This assessment of the CMP project evaluation report template revealed a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed in order to meet the information requirements for the summative evaluation. In particular, there is inadequate and inconsistent reporting of CMP project outcomes and performance. There is also a need to develop project evaluation reporting templates and address information gaps pertaining to project results in the CPPP and BAP such that comparable and comprehensive project outcome data are available for all three programs.

The present study focused on addressing the concerns noted above as well as providing information on project impacts under the CMP and CPPP to support the requirements of the summative evaluation.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study included the following components:

- ***Review of literature and CPSD approaches:*** Literature on crime prevention and crime prevention through social development (CPSD) approaches as well as documentation on the National Strategy and the three programs under study (i.e., the CMP, CPPP and BAP) was reviewed. This review provided context for the research and assisted in the development and refinement of logic models, study instruments and project evaluation reporting templates;
- ***Key informant interviews (n = 10):*** Approximately 10 key informants were consulted in meetings/teleconferences to assist in the development of program logic models and project evaluation report templates. Interview respondents included NCPC management and staff; senior CMP, CPPP and BAP program staff including regional coordinators; and NCPC informatics staff;
- ***Review of project files and evaluation reports (n = 250):*** A total of 250 CMP and CPPP project files/reports were reviewed on-site at the NCPC facility to search for evidence on project delivery and impacts. This included virtually all (40 of 45) completed CPPP projects as well a random sample of 210 CMP projects with final reports;
- ***Survey of project sponsors (n = 305):*** A telephone survey of 305 CMP and CPPP project sponsors was conducted in order to collect a standard set of outcome measures for completed projects. The sample included 40 CPPP project sponsors and 265 randomly selected CMP project sponsors; and
- ***Development of logic models, reporting templates and evaluation guidelines:*** Program logic models and standardized project evaluation reporting templates were developed for each of the CMP, CPPP and BAP. These should be useful for guiding future performance monitoring and evaluation of these three programs. In addition, a typology and logic models of approaches to crime prevention that have been funded by the CMP and CPPP, along with guidelines for evaluating future projects, were developed.

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the survey and file review findings, it can be concluded that projects funded under the CMP and CPPP have been successfully implemented and have had some positive impacts that contribute to the formal goals and objectives of these two National Strategy programs. The findings from the review of project files/reports generally support the perceptions and opinions expressed by project sponsors in the telephone survey, lending credibility to the latter findings. In drawing conclusions, more weight is given to the survey findings because the sample size of CMP projects was larger in the survey and many of the project files/reports that were reviewed had limited information and documentation, in particular, pertaining to project impacts.

4.1 Satisfaction with Application and Funding Process

CMP project sponsors typically first heard about the program by word of mouth and CPPP sponsors typically learned of the program by word of mouth, through their crime prevention network and from NCPC publications. It is surprising that only five per cent of CMP project sponsors indicated that they learned about the program from NCPC publications. This finding suggests that there may be a need to improve this method of program communications. CMP and CPPP project sponsors were very satisfied with most aspects of the application and funding process, though there is a trend for project sponsors to be somewhat more satisfied with the CMP than the CPPP, in particular, with respect to the fairness of the application review process. This issue may warrant further attention by CPPP officials.

4.2 Project Design and Delivery

Funded projects were involved in a range of suitable activities, with public awareness and education being most common for CMP projects and the development of resource materials most common for CPPP projects. In addition, projects were focused on a range of target groups, with youth being prominent, and a range of risk factors, in particular, personality/behavioural factors, peer association, family factors and school-related factors. Virtually all CMP and CPPP project sponsors reported that their projects were implemented exactly or somewhat as planned, though implementation according to plans was apparently easier in urban than rural communities. Lack of funds, insufficient time, and less involvement from target groups and partners than anticipated were key reasons given for why project implementation deviated from original plans.

4.3 Partnerships

CMP and CPPP projects benefited from successful partnerships with which project sponsors were very satisfied. In fact, most of these partnerships were still ongoing at the time of the survey. Most partners offered in-kind contributions and participated in networking/mobilization, and approximately half also provided financial contributions. Project partners typically delivered as much or even more than they originally promised, and only a minority provided less than originally committed. The most common types of

project partners (aside from the federal government) were non-governmental/non-profit organizations, police and criminal justice agencies, educational organizations, social service agencies and municipal/regional government. In addition, for a minority of projects, there is evidence of some non-traditional partners, in particular, business organizations, which were involved in one-third of CMP projects and 10 per cent of CPPP projects in the survey. There may be a minor problem with partnerships with urban planning organizations, given that some project sponsors were less satisfied with them and perceived a lack of follow-through with their commitments.

4.4 Project Impacts

Project sponsors perceived that their projects have had beneficial impacts in line with their specific objectives and have also contributed to the broader CMP and CPPP goals and objectives. Although no "hard" evidence of project impacts was obtained in this study, most project sponsors based their observations on the positive feedback they have received from project participants, partners and other stakeholders. Not surprisingly, perceived impacts were somewhat lower for the more ambitious program objectives – the CMP objective of increasing public support for crime prevention and the CPPP objective of addressing the root causes and risk factors associated with crime and victimization. It is also worth noting that CPPP project sponsors were somewhat less satisfied with their project results than CMP sponsors. As discussed above, it may be worthwhile for CPPP officials to further examine the satisfaction of their project sponsors with aspects of this program and to take corrective measures if necessary.

4.5 Dissemination of Project Results

Most project sponsors have disseminated the results, tools and resources produced by their projects by presenting these at conferences, meetings or workshops, by circulating brochures, publications, newsletters, etc., through the media, and (particularly for the CPPP) by posting material on a website. The major target audiences of these communications included the project partners, crime prevention practitioners, the general public in sponsors' own communities as well as other communities, the target/priority group (mainly for CMP projects) and educators.

4.6 Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned by project sponsors focused on the importance of involvement, support and commitment by project participants, partners and the broader community – when these factors were present they were seen as strengths, whereas when they were absent they were identified as weaknesses. Some sponsors also noted that more project funding and a longer timeframe for the project funding would facilitate project success.

4.7 Project Sustainability

The survey results suggest that at least half of the CMP and CPPP projects were sustainable beyond the period of federal funding, particularly projects serving youth, and

that most of these projects lasted for two years or less after the termination of the program funding. Moreover, three-quarters of these projects secured financial and/or in-kind contributions from alternative sources, typically some of the same and some new partners, to enable them to continue their work. All sponsoring organizations in the survey have continued to be involved in community safety and crime prevention.

5. TYPOLOGY OF CRIME PREVENTION APPROACHES

A typology and logic models of crime prevention approaches funded by the CMP and CPPP were developed, based primarily on the findings of the survey of project sponsors and review of project files/reports conducted as part of the present study. The five major types of approaches are as follows:

- public awareness and education;
- networks and coalition building;
- assessment of community needs, assets and capacities;
- development of resource materials; and
- recreational and cultural activities.

6. GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

In general, it is suggested that a methodology for evaluating these programs and project-level impacts should include the following components:

- ongoing performance measurement of the three programs and the funded projects, guided by the outputs and outcomes in the program logic models and utilizing the data from project evaluation reports, with annual performance reporting;
- periodic surveys and possibly focus groups with project funding recipients/sponsors;
- case studies of a sample of funded projects, including some employing each major type of CPSD approach, which would involve a review of the project file/report and other pertinent documentation, interviews and/or focus groups with the project sponsor and staff, partners and participants, and an interview with the responsible NCPC officer;
- a review and analysis of available longitudinal crime statistics for participating communities; and
- to the extent feasible, the incorporation of both pre- and post-intervention measures, a comparison group of non-participants and the assessment of long-term outcomes in the evaluation design.

For project-level evaluation, it is suggested that the NCPC give consideration to the following guidelines to ensure that useful project evaluations are conducted:

- provide basic training in evaluation for project sponsors;
- encourage project sponsors to develop a logic model for their project, using the program logic models and models of crime prevention approaches as a guide;

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- require project sponsors to prepare and implement a basic project evaluation plan;
- provide project sponsors with the project evaluation report template (after it is pilot tested and refined) so that their reports follow a common format and provide quantifiable data on project outcomes that can be used for performance monitoring; and
- encourage networking and information sharing among project sponsors (e.g., sharing of useful evaluation instruments).