Conference: Youth violence prevention, rehabilitation and public policy Fight for Peace & Rio de Janeiro Secretary of Public Security Biblioteca Parque do Estado, Rio de Janeiro: 4th May 2016

According to the Global Burden of Armed Violence Report 2015: Everybody Counts (Cambridge University Press 2015) in 2007-2012 there were 86,000 violent deaths annually in Brazil and India alone, exceeding the global number for deaths as a result of direct conflict each year. The report estimates the global financial loss from homicide at \$171 Billion for 2010. In Brazil the annual rate of homicide increased from 14,000 in 1980 to 50,000 in 2002. According to the Brazilian Forum for Public Security there were 58.559 violent killings in Brazil during 2014, a figure that includes 2.368 killings by police. This is higher than 58,220, the official number of US military fatalities for the Vietnam War (US Government National Archive). In 2013, in Brazil, almost half of deaths of 16 and 17 year olds were homicide victims and figures suggest that these numbers will grow (Mapa da Violencia 2015). In Brazil's urban areas, many of these deaths result from armed violence involving criminal gangs.

In 2013, with support from the IKEA Foundation, Fight for Peace (FFP) initiated a three year pilot project, the *Special Scholarship Programme* (SSP), aiming to provide tailored support to help and encourage young people wishing to disengage from organised criminal activity and the drug trade, to leave faction structures and return to education and legal employment.

The SSP offered intensive individual mentoring, scholarships, fast track education and access to employment to provide young people who wish to leave a life of crime with a structured, serious opportunity to change the direction of their life. It focused on 'entrenched' gang members who have been involved in criminal activity for considerable time. 'Entrenched' identified gang members with some or all of the following characteristics: directly involved in organized criminal activity/drug trafficking since childhood; illiterate; rarely (in some cases never) visit parts of the city outside the favela; no educational and/or employment history; suffer from trauma/psychological problems as a result of exposure to and involvement in acts of violence. Preparatory work helped to identify these characteristics and the need for a comprehensive, detailed set of activities that could successfully support young people wishing to leave criminal structures.

The conference was a unique opportunity to share lessons learnt in an open, transparent manner in accordance with the goals of the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Brazil is member of a core group of signatory states of the initiative. The declaration recognizes that armed violence constitutes a major obstacle to achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and accountable institutions. The Geneva Declaration aimed to achieve measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence and improvements in human security by 2015. Signatories commit to support initiatives to measure the human, social and economic costs of armed violence; undertake assessments to understand/respond to risks and vulnerabilities; evaluate the effectiveness of armed violence reduction programmes; disseminate lessons and best practices.

Opening remarks:

Pedro Strozenberg, Rio de Janeiro Public Defense Office

Solving the question of violence is the responsibility of all sectors of society. This can be a space in which these different sectors come together to join forces.

Round Table Objectives: Bearing in mind the upcoming Olympic Games and in the context of Fight for Peace's pioneering work with sport as a tool for social development and violence prevention, the objective of the discussions were to present *Special Scholarship Programme* findings to policy makers, legal practitioners and local/international partners. By promoting secondary prevention to fight recidivism, and exploring alternative possibilities to incarceration, the SSP seeks to open new pathways towards reducing armed violence and establishing sustainable peace in Rio de Janeiro.

Round tables: Youth violence prevention, rehabilitation, and public policy

Round Table 1

Panellists: Luke Dowdney, Founder and Director Fight for Peace; Fábio Eon (UNESCO); José Mariano Beltrame (Rio de Janeiro Secretary of Public Security)

Recommendations:

For future programmes of this type to be collaborative, engaging multi-sector actors.

For society to take action to address the high levels of deaths amongst poor, young, black males.

For the state to improve the monitoring of what happens with funds going to programmes which benefit society.

For NGOs to persevere with these "silent programmes", as public policy is unlikely to support them.

Luke: Commented that throughout Fight for Peace's history, the focus has been on prevention, but when UPP units were promised in Maré, there was a growing demand for intervention from young people, and help in leaving criminal activities. The aim of the SSP was to build resilience in participants, bringing about sustainable change; many of the participants had left drug factions before but fallen back in.

Fábio: The SSP appealed as it linked three important UNESCO themes: a culture of peace – which isn't achieved through laws; youth; and international cooperation. He highlighted the particular relevance of this in Brazil, where young, black males are disproportionate victims of lethal violence.

Beltrame: Reinforced that it is always difficult to predict the outcome of a pilot study, but that the important thing is to do something. FFP did it, and is doing it, and the Secretary of Public Security sees it as absolutely necessary, and supports it. Whether the numbers prove it or not, he is confident that it was a success. He stressed that more citizenship leads to less policing, but that programmes like this are very unlikely to come from the state. The state does not have the conditions/resources to create and maintain such projects, therefore the responsibility lies with the third sector. He bemoaned the fact that there is so little structure in place to help vulnerable young people, and stressed the lack of monitoring and evaluation of social programmes: "the police is parameterised, social assistance is not. We have controls to measure everything else (everybody knows about police statistics), but who measures what happens with social assistance? How much is spent? Who controls it? How many young people are benefited? What are the cost-benefits?" 10,000 young people were taken to police stations in Rio last year, and nobody knows what happened to them after. He concluded that these types of programmes do not happen because they do not win political votes, so the solution must come from "silent programmes" which do the dirty work.

Round Table 2

Panellists: Juliana Tibau, Project Manager, Fight for Peace; Lourenço Cesar, Fight for Peace; Eduardo Soares, Co-founder, Instituto Reação; Carlos Alexandre Santos Lapa, Instituto Reação

Recommendations:

For a project like SSP to work it needs to include a team that embraces and believes in the project, and the young people involved.

Key to positive results is to help young people build "musculature" to prevent re-entry into crime and violence.

Juliana: Described how Fight for Peace's history and previous projects (New Pathways) helped to shape the SSP. She stressed the importance of the staff: it was critical that they formed a multi-disciplinary team who worked well together and embraced the project and the young people participating. It was also fundamental that they thought about and helped plan the project together.

Lourenço: It has always caused anguish to see people from Maré with so much potential not having the opportunity to fulfil it. Time and space in the favela is reduced, with limited and mostly negative references. The SSP aimed to provide the "musculature" for young people to progress, but it was a challenge for people who often didn't have a family/identity/had drug addictions. The biggest obstacle was stopping participants going back into crime. This was especially difficult when: participant couldn't get documentation until after elections; participant was sacked after criminal record discovered; participant was killed. Another difficulty was trying to show that participants didn't need FFP and they could rely on the state, when the state often does not work. A further challenge was to help

participants from a life when they might earn 6000 a month to one where they were earning minimum wage. It was emotional work, especially in the case of a participant who was murdered during the project; he had worked hard, wanted to get out, but then everything was destroyed in an instant.

Eduardo: At Instituto Reação the focus has always been on prevention and they have lost few young people, but nearly gave up after going to funeral of a participant. IR entered Degase this year, yet when they started the class in gym, only 3 young people left stands to participate, because there were faction rivalries. They have learnt a lot, and can see small improvements in young people's behaviour/attitudes. They also realised that as well as learning dynamics inside and modifying classes, they also had to offer classes to prison officers. They are now hoping to offer a mixed class of officers and young people: this collaboration is important to break down preconceptions.

Carlos: (Referring to Beltrame) Everybody thinks of giving up at some point, but you have to rely on your colleagues to help you through tough times.

Presentation: presenting the results of the Special Scholarship Project

Recommendations:

For this model to be replicated in other areas and scenarios

For state and society to confront the logic of the "War on Drugs"

Presenter: Silvia Ramos, CeSec

It was important to be able to bring together the "hardcore" of drug factions – bosses/managers. Whereas criminal careers around the world are characterized by residential instability, in Rio it is the opposite; and usually a way of helping exits from crime is to "de-territorialise" young people, but the SSP attempted to do it in the same space. Profiles of participants confirmed that not all criminals come from destroyed families, and that it wasn't a new thing for young people to have a formal job – the issue was retention. If somebody leaves school and doesn't get picked up by a social project, they are "at the mercy of the streets". Programmes like the SSP will always be seen as a "bolsa bandido" and that idea has to be confronted, but for the first structured programme of its kind, results were exceptional and surprising: 66 people died in Maré in this period, and only 2 from the project did. In another project of its kind 10 of 50 died. The SSP can and should be replicated; however, nothing will change until the "War on Drugs" logic changes. One of the most positive things was how open and transparent FFP was, allowing evaluators to come to meetings, to accompany young people in their activities.

Debate

Recommendations:

For there to be a collective effort towards violence prevention, without preconceptions: neither young people in crime nor police should be vilified.

For there to be greater dialogue between civil society, public security and the criminal justice system and more structured actions to deal with issues such as drugs and guns.

For state and society to rethink the way education is offered – some young people will never be engaged by classic education

To continue to work with the hardest-to-reach young people, because the social value is greatest, and demonstrates what is possible.

Questions from audience

Fabrizio (UPP captain): Part of Pamesp Escolar, a programme designed to demystify role of police in favelas and show that it is not only repression. They are called "uncle/dad" and are seen as heros. We have to create an "atmosphere of peace". Lots of people go in to favelas, speak, and then leave, changing nothing. It has to come from people who know the community. We have to understand in this debate that there are no "sides" – it has to be collective effort. We also have to think about the drug issue: 70% of crimes are related to drug use.

Ignacio Cano (State University of Rio de Janeiro): What was the cost per beneficiary?

Paula (Fica Vivo): Did it involve the police? Because police involvement has complicated projects in Minas.

Beto Chaves (Rio de Janeiro Civil Police): There is an analogy to be made between YP and police characterized by: scarcity of resources; lack of hope and belief; undignified situations; being considered scum of society. Neither side sees the human in the other – don't know each other's dreams. How do we motivate people? That is the challenge of public security.

Responses

Luke: State prison costs R\$1700 per person per month, Federal prison R\$3300. The SSP cost R\$2250. Recidivism rates are somewhere around 75% in Rio, in the SSP they were 40%. FFP has Embracing as one of its core values, and it is therefore fundamental to work with the police. The old police tactics of invasion make prevention work very difficult. Things have improved recently, though there looks to be a return to old ways. We need to believe in the human being. There was a moment recently where police chief and criminal were sat discussing, weeks after conflict. This needs to be part of the solution.

Lourenço: Drug logic is complicated: in the SSP they found that entering drug gangs coincided with first use – was it to guarantee use? Society's big challenge is to reinvent ways to motivate, and to show alternative ways are possible,

challenging preconceived notions. Creating the idea of family was fundamental to the SSP.

Eduardo: IR has never worked with police, and had a difficult situation when police asked if they could use IR facilities. Ideally he would like to start integrated classes in Degase with detainees and officers to improve "truculent" relationship.

Bianca (UPP captain): Lost her husband (UPP commander Nova Brasilia) 18 months ago, but has not given up, because it is imperative to think about the future. "It is magic to be part of 38 projects, benefiting 6,000 young people"

Eliana Souza Silva (Redes da Maré): The SSP is pertinent because it "takes focus from violence and brings another dimension". There needs to be a dialogue between NGOs - public security – criminal justice system, and more structured actions to deal with issues such as guns and drugs.

Robson Rodrigues (ex-UPP commander): Despite the good will, there is an undoubted fragility of the state/public security/education. There are lots of police who have worked anonymously in support of social projects. Young people are often in limbo: there were many who didn't want to be in trafficking any more who sought police in UPP areas, asking for jobs, and they didn't know what to do with these young people. Lots of people question why programmes benefit some young people, when they might be seen badly by the community for what they have been involved in already, but he says this is key because they become the examples of what is possible. He wanted to give police officers who had been kicked out of force a 2nd chance, but couldn't because the rules are so rigid.

Nason Buchanon (LA Mayor's Office): There are many similar problems in LA, but the US makes a lot of use of data. LA combines mayor, LAPD and ex-gang members to work together towards violence prevention.

Marielle Franco (Human Rights Defence Commission): We need to strengthen state institutions. Everybody is a victim when there are violent confrontations. Organisations in Maré need to find ways to influence public policy.

Thomas Abt (Harvard University): Congratulated FFP for "doing the hard thing": there is tremendous value in turning round a person who is "high risk". It is very difficult, but the social value is enormous. FFP showed a courage to be so open and transparent about the work, and this is positive because we have to be honest about both successes and failures. He was impressed by the comments – in USA forces for prevention and enforcement clash much more.

Pehkx Jones: The mission now is to influence public policy. Discontinuity is big flaw in Brazilian public policy. It is a responsibility to join together prevention/enforcement.

Leriana: Emphasised the necessity of spaces for this kind of dialogue, the importance of leaving preconceptions to one side (from all sides), and of bigger investment/compromise from the state.

Silvia: There was a consensus among participants in the SSP that they didn't like school. This may force us to reflect on the way we think about education (offering alternatives to classic). The mindset of the mentors was the difference in the SSP. One of the great things about the SSP is that it has touched on a taboo subject in Rio. It is the first time this has been talked about so openly with so many people.

Lourenço: Why did young people leave the project? 9 left when the army came in and ADA (drug faction) lost territorial control – many were threatened and had to leave community.

Pedro: Surprised at the lack of involvement of church – in a replication church should be part of solution. The SSP is a question of rights, not of favouritism. Brazil needs to become a country in which citizens are responsible for their choices, but also a society which doesn't exclude. The criminal justice system needs to be part of that.

Luke: The figure of the mentor was fundamental, as was the contract signed at the start. It made YP realize that they would receive something, but that they also owed something. There is a critical need for NGOs and state to work together.