

IMPLEMENTING PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING IN MEXICO MORELIA, MICHOACÁN

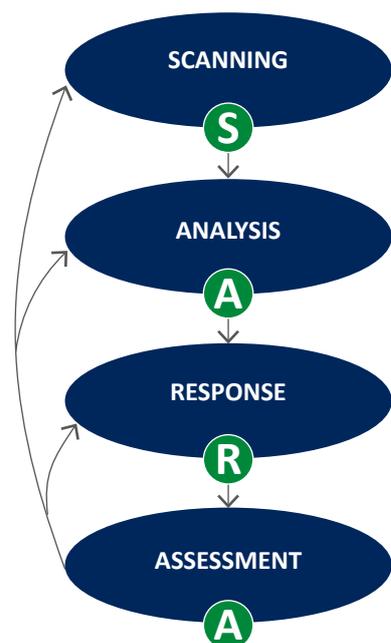


From October 2020 to February 2021, LAB-CO partnered with Morelia's Municipal Citizen Security Commission (CMSC) to implement a Problem-Oriented Policing pilot. The project aimed to improve Morelia Police's capacity to design, implement, evaluate, and adapt effective, evidence-informed strategies that fit the local context.

I. METHODOLOGY

We drew from **Problem-Oriented Policing** methodologies, particularly the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment), as well as guides from the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (POP Center) at Arizona State University. Likewise, we adopted the **Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation** (PDIA) approach created by the Center for International Development at Harvard University, a dynamic process with tight feedback loops aimed at building problem-solving capabilities among local actors.

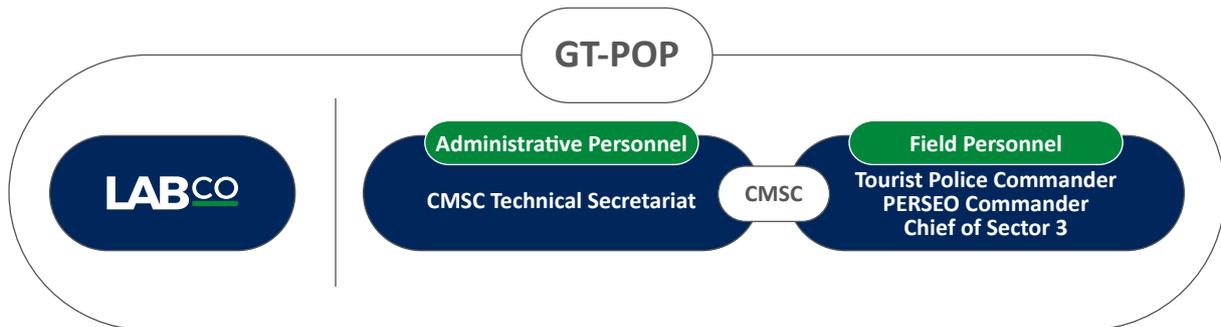
SARA CYCLE



Source: Created by author based on Eck and Spelman (1987)

Implementation was structured in the following phases:

- 1 We set up a specific **Working Group (GT-POP)**, which included both LAB-CO members as well as field and administrative personnel from the CMSC. GT-POP provided support and specific follow-up throughout each phase of institutional transformation.



- 2 We launched the pilot's implementation in **three** (of fourteen) **sectors** of varying socioeconomic and territorial characteristics, with the goal of testing POP in diverse municipal conditions.

- 3 We established **POP Task Forces** in each sector. These included the Sector Chief, a Criminal Analyst and a Criminal Investigator.

POP TASK FORCE



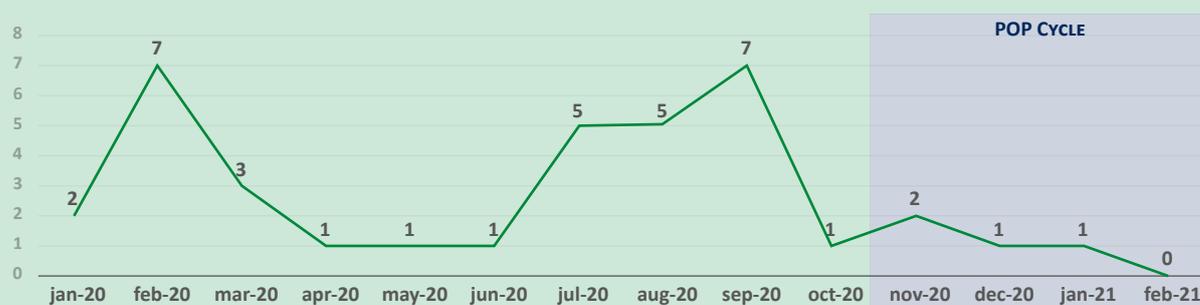
- 4 We structured activities in **short cycles** of no more than two weeks, applying the **SARA model** and implementing feedback loops in a learning-by-doing approach.

- 5 We selected **those crimes** with the highest incidence in each sector: house burglary, robbery of commercial stores and robbery of OXXO convenience stores.

II. RESULTS

- 1 We observed a **decrease in the incidence** of selected crimes, as shown in the graph on the crime-rate evolution of house burglary in Sector 14:

SECTOR 14 (VILLAS DEL PEDREGAL)- HOUSE BURGLARY



- 2 POP Task Force participants developed **new capabilities**, especially regarding the data and evidence-informed design of policing strategies, coordination between field officers and criminal analysts, and the effective mobilization of actors beyond the police.
- 3 POP Task Force participants strengthened their **individual abilities**, for instance, showing initiative in proposing and implementing solutions within their sector and adopting a more critical and analytical perspective regarding everyday operations.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 **The LAB-CO team verified the existence of preliminary conditions enabling effective POP implementation within the Morelia Police, including:**
 - The belief that crime should be attended both through **prevention** and **reaction** in a comprehensive and articulated way.
 - **Openness** among **police leadership** and relative **autonomy** for decision-making for **middle management**.
 - Basic skills for data **analysis**.
 - Good fundamentals of **community policing**.
- 2 **We identified the following key success factors for implementation:**
 - The active involvement of **mid-level police commanders**, as frontline operators of organizational change.
 - Working iteratively with feasible tasks in the **short term**, regular feedback loops, and adaptation. This methodology creates a sense of steady and continual progress among participants.
 - Incorporating the scientific method in all POP phases—that is, continually **generating hypotheses** and then confronting them with **data and facts**, allowing implementation participants to develop the critical and analytical perspective needed to effectively address public safety issues.

3 Implementing POP within the Morelia Police allowed the entire corporation to adopt new ways of working, including:

- Collaborating between **field personnel and criminal analysts** for the development of data-driven policing strategies.
- Strengthening the police's criminal **investigation capabilities**.
- Consolidating the police's capacity to **collaborate with the community**.
- Developing **evidence-informed** crime prevention strategies.

IV. EXPANSION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Based on the pilot project's results, the CMSC's Leadership decided to expand the POP approach throughout the entire municipality. They designed and adopted an **Expansion Plan** that seeks to gradually incorporate all remaining sectors by **August of 2021**. Likewise, the CMSC has committed to **systematizing** and **institutionalizing** all POP processes, in order to secure new practices' continuity and **sustainability** throughout the following administration.



LAB-CO is a nonprofit laboratory for policy innovation in crime prevention, citizen security, justice and human rights in Latin America.

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