

Community Policing Shows a Better Way Forward



The Community Police Project was awarded the Order of Merit "Silver Medal" for its achievements.



The Community Police Project results can be attributed to an entire team effort.

Marta Ventura Sagastume is an officer in charge of Community Policing, Public Relations and Public-Private alliances at JICA Guatemala Office. Even before she joined JICA, she had been working closely with the Guatemala National Civil Police (PNC) since 2011. That experience, personal network and trust help her in promoting Japanese-style Community Policing in her country. She had an opportunity to participate in a JICA Training Course on Community Policing with her PNC counterpart. Visiting Japan, they were deeply impressed with the level of trust that existed between people and the police. Marta points out that many of the community outreach activities found in Japan, such as home and shop visits and classes for children on road safety and violence prevention, are already being implemented in Guatemala with the help of the project. However, what she thinks could be most beneficial is to regain trust between Guatemalan citizens and the police officers, and increase the nation's self-confidence, which was lost during the harsh three-decade long civil war last century. The Community Policing project can help the PNC do a better job through effective communication. She says that "to construct the trust is a critical step to progress, because the police also belongs to the community."

For Marta, it is more than just a job—it is a part of her life as her work supports the development of Guatemala. "I am proud of the results with the Community Police Project. I feel that the community and the police trust me, so I can be a bond of trust between them. I am happy to give my little piece of support to the

world." The safety of the community is also linked to the advancement of women's status. Guatemalan women tend to be shy and sometimes hesitate to communicate with the police due to "machismo", a Spanish expression of paternalism. She believes that men and women can work as a team without difference to improve their community. JICA's role in the development of Guatemala is not only to promote local police but to empower women in community. The JICA project team has always been comprised of female officers including Marta. "It enabled us to get trust from women in community and coordinate with police officers." A gender-balanced community empowerment may help improving their own lives as well as community safety. "People are now aware that they can take advantage of working hard as a team to get out of poverty." She wishes that communities and the police respect each other and live in peace and harmony, regardless of age or gender. Such a society may be achieved by improving Guatemala through the support of JICA, especially in the area of Community Policing.



Marta Ventura Sagastume
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