

Experiences of the Member States performing evaluations in projects and activities aimed at crime prevention

Research report

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Content disclaimer

The content of this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of any EU Member State or any agency or institution of the European Union or European Communities

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The evaluation of crime prevention interventions involves the systematic collection and analysis of information about the changes that occur in the different components of a criminal problem produced by the activities of the intervention. The principal objective of analyzing such information is to determine at what level the goals were achieved, and at what cost. Different groups benefit from the results of the evaluations, including those who design and implement the intervention, managers, stakeholders, sponsors, policy advisors, target groups, etc. The information produced by the evaluation is useful for guiding decisions about how to redesign the intervention, how to orient the future allocation of resources, and how to advise on policy directions. Whether or not to use the results of the evaluation is ultimately a management decision, but professionals and evaluators are reinforced when they see that the effort they put in to evaluating the interventions is useful to introducing improvements.

Evaluation entails important methodological aspects, and evaluation must be planned at the same time that the intervention is planned in order to ensure the intervention's evaluability (i.e., the capacity to be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner). Misalignments between the crime problem, the objectives, and the activities that the intervention comprises result in low evaluability and might seriously compromise the quality of the evaluation. In this sense, evaluation is a tool that contributes to the design of the intervention.

Research questions

Previous research about the assessment of the effectiveness of crime preventive interventions done or commissioned by the EUCPN has traditionally followed a top-down approach. The present study intended to shift to a bottom-up approach in order to obtain an overview of the real evaluation practices that EU Member States undertake. The ultimate goal was to identify possible shortcomings and gaps and to make recommendations accordingly. The objectives of the study, as determined by the EUCPN, were to gain insight into existing practices when it comes to the evaluation of interventions aimed at crime prevention and to make recommendations on the evaluation of interventions based on the experiences in the Member States.

Methodology

The study had a one-year timeframe and was performed between March 2019 and February 2020. A mixed quantitative and qualitative methodology was employed. In addition, a scoping review of the literature on best practices in evaluation supported the final recommendations. According to the objectives, the study focused on the EU 27 Member States and had the participation of almost all countries.

The quantitative study aimed to accomplish the first objective. A web-based questionnaire, including both closed- and open-ended questions, was developed for data collection. The content of the questionnaire was based on the principles and guidelines for the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives that the EUCPN has disseminated through thematic paper No. 5 and the toolbox No. 3. More specifically, the questionnaire inquired about process evaluation and outcome evaluation procedures.

It included questions about the planning of the evaluation, data collection, data analysis, and communication of the results. Topics such as needs assessment, definition of the evaluation objectives, involvement of stakeholders, budget, and advisory teams, among others, were also explored. Furthermore, Items asking the opinion of participants regarding evaluation were introduced in order to study their motivation for performing evaluations. A total of 182 respondents replied to the questionnaire. The majority of the interventions were implemented at the local level, and the police were most commonly reported as being responsible for the implementation. A large number of interventions had a period of implementation longer than 12 months, and most of them had received a budget allocation or had been funded.

The qualitative study focused on both the first and second objectives. An interview guide was developed for data collection. The goal was to know in more detail the evaluation procedures, the opinion of the participants about shortcomings, how these shortcomings could be remedied, and the state of the evaluation culture. The interview focused on three topics – (1) process evaluation, (2) outcome evaluation, and (3) support that is needed in order to be able to improve the evaluation of interventions in the future. Nineteen participants, including practitioners and crime prevention managers, were interviewed.

Key findings

The results showed that there is still a considerable amount of work to do in order to achieve full crime prevention practice based on evidence. In many cases the evaluability might have been compromised because the *Needs Assessment* was in general unstructured and was done by professionals working in the area, but lacking the methodological support of experts in crime prevention. More concerning was that a portion of the participants reported that *Needs Assessment* did not occur at all, and the decision to implement the intervention followed managerial and political pressures. On the basis of these findings, we asked the questions: *To what extent are the crime problems that the interventions are supposed to prevent known by those responsible for designing and implementing the intervention? What objectives are proposed to prevent a crime problem that has not been properly studied?*

A second finding of this study indicates that the great majority of interventions were tailored to the specific crime problem and circumstances or that they used available interventions but proceeded with major adaptations. This indicates that crime prevention practice in the EU might not be taking advantage of validated and scientifically demonstrated work. Furthermore, more than 50% of the participants reported that the interventions they implemented were not grounded on theoretical or empirical knowledge, and more than 40% reported that the crime prevention mechanisms underlying the intervention had not been identified *a priori*. Under these circumstances, the *Logic Models* might run the risk of not being logical at all, and once again the evaluability might have been compromised.

The intervention outcomes were formally evaluated in only 44% of the cases, while 36% had been informally evaluated (i.e. by staff members or other persons, but not systematically measured or registered in an official report) and 10% had not been evaluated at all. This is bad news for crime prevention managers. *Why would managers and policy makers want to employ resources in applying an intervention for which there is no evidence for its efficacy? Are the crime rates in the EU countries the results of our inefficient interventions and strategies?*

The good news is that in general the experience of doing evaluation was seen as positive and necessary by both those participants whose interventions had been evaluated and by those whose interventions had not. They pointed out three reasons why evaluation should be done – (1) it provides feedback that

can be used to improve the interventions and avoid pitfalls, (2) it is a driving force to further develop the interventions, and (3) it motivates the persons who implement them. However, it was also suggested that evaluations might be considered a bureaucratic burden, and when resources are scarce they are not seen as a priority. In those cases in which the results of the evaluations are not used to improve the interventions, persons on the teams will likely develop negative attitudes for doing evaluations.

In those interventions that had been formally evaluated, almost 30% of the cases indicated that the outcome evaluation involved external evaluators, but they were enrolled in late stages of the implementation period. This raises the concern that those who had not been involved from the beginning might have found shortcomings in the planning of the intervention that might have hindered a proper evaluation.

The participants indicated advantages of doing evaluations internally. In their opinion, the persons in charge of the evaluation know the intervention better, and improvements can take place faster because the results are known faster than if the evaluation is done externally. The lack of expertise within the organizations was the strongest motive for commissioning the evaluation to external experts.

Regarding the scientific design employed in the evaluations of those projects that had been formally evaluated, less than 20% used experimental or quasi-experimental designs. The greatest percentage used pre-post designs without a control group. Taking into account that the majority of the interventions had been tailored to address the assessed needs or had introduced major changes in previously developed interventions, we would expect extensive work of testing and validation involving experimental designs before applying them to a target population. This does not seem to be the case. Furthermore, only 50% of the participants indicated that the formal evaluations included the measurement of possible unintentional effects. In sum, in many cases we do not know if the interventions are useful, if they are harmless or if they have unintentional effects that can produce more problems than the ones they try to solve.

Several factors were highlighted as having a negative impact on the outcome evaluation. Among others were the lack of involvement of all the parties (e.g., stakeholders, persons in the target group, etc.), the large amount of time required to plan and carry out the evaluation, difficulties in getting access to necessary data, problems related with data protection, and the lack of expertise of the people responsible for the evaluation. In addition, the participants pointed out the difficulty in identifying which data are necessary for doing the evaluation properly and how the different indicators should be measured, which reflects a basic lack of knowledge in methodology.

Informal evaluations were carried out by persons involved in the design and implementation of the interventions. However, the competence of these professionals to properly plan the evaluation is not beyond question. If we insist on not using expert evaluators, it is necessary to make an effort to educate these professionals in the methodology of evaluation and to create a culture inside the organizations so that we can increase the amount of interventions being formally evaluated.

The only indicator that showed an increased likelihood for the evaluation to occur was if the intervention had a budget or allocated funds, which is most likely if the evaluation is a requirement for receiving funding for the intervention. Factors such as the type of institution responsible for implement the intervention or the type of intervention in itself did not have an impact on the practice of evaluation. This suggests that any potential solution for encouraging the evaluation of interventions must be applied across all the institutions and organizations responsible for crime prevention practice in the EU without exception.

Recommendations

A small percentage of our respondents reported to following good practices when doing evaluations. In addition, the majority showed a positive attitude for doing evaluations. However, we identified many shortcomings that need to be addressed in order to drive crime prevention in the way of best practices. These shortcomings are directly related with gaps in four major areas.

First, there is a lack of knowledge on the methodology of evaluation among those responsible for doing it, mainly when evaluations are internally produced. Managers should decide between appointing external experts who can produce evaluations of high quality each time they need to evaluate an intervention or to educate their own professionals. In one way or another, it is necessary to guarantee the competence of those involved in the process of evaluating crime prevention interventions. The education should imply academic literacy along with practice in crime prevention and in evaluation. It is also necessary that managers, stakeholders, and policy-makers have sufficient knowledge to understand what evaluators do in order to be able to communicate with them and to interpret the evaluation results. Encouraging a culture of evaluation among institutions and organizations would help to increase evidence-based crime prevention practice, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our work, and make our service more valuable for individuals, communities, and governments.

Second, evaluation requires the employment of human resources that in general are scarce. Although planning for the evaluation can be done by one person or a small group of experts, the implementation of the evaluation procedures, especially the data collection, requires manpower. The time for doing the evaluation tasks should be calculated separately from the time employed for implementing the intervention. The evaluation plan should justify the personnel required to execute each one of the evaluation tasks in each one of the follow-ups or evaluation periods, and the managers should ensure the availability of sufficient resources to accomplish the plan. The quality of the evaluation depends on it.

Third, the participants pointed out the general lack of financial resources to perform evaluations. The budget of the evaluation should be calculated apart from the budget for the intervention. Managers should ensure that the evaluation can be financed before they decide to go ahead with the implementation of the intervention. When interventions and evaluations receive financial support from different funding budgets, it is important to secure the evaluation funding as soon as possible, preferably before the intervention starts. Funds from the evaluation should not be diverted to the intervention.

Fourth, the difficulties in gaining access to necessary data was an obstacle highlighted by many of the participants. The evaluation plan should provide logical arguments regarding the data required to perform the evaluation properly. Unnecessary data should not be requested or collected. However, it might be necessary, for example, to have access to detailed crime statistics, the social profiles of young offenders, financial information about groups of people, etc. Whenever it is justified, evaluators should have guaranteed access to such information. Moreover, the evaluation plan should include an ethic strategy for enrolling and keeping track of persons in the target group if it is necessary and for as long as it is necessary.

Best practices in evaluation

A review of the scientific literature supports our recommendations for best evaluation practices. First of all, the evaluation must rely on the objectives, the *Program Theory*, and the *Logic Model* of the

intervention. Before starting to plan for the evaluation, the intervention's evaluability must be determined. The evaluator needs to know the crime problem and the results of the needs assessment in order to make a first judgment about the suitability of the objectives. Furthermore, the evaluator should review the *Program Theory* to make sure that the preventive mechanisms underlying the intervention can in fact be useful for preventing the crime problem. The appropriateness of the *Logic Model* should also be reviewed considering the alignment between needs, objectives, resources, activities, and expected outcomes. Only after that can the evaluator define the evaluation questions.

Second, the evaluation should be planned at the same time that the intervention is designed. The work of the evaluator is in parallel to the work of the intervention designers. Even if the evaluators are external to the intervention, they should be enrolled at very early stages. Working as a consultant, the evaluator can be a precious asset for developing a well-designed and evidence-based intervention. Stakeholders must also engage early in the process and play an active role in the design of the intervention and the planning of the evaluation.

Third, the objectives and the expected outcomes create the evaluation questions and define how the indicators are measured. The evaluation questions must be concise and must address each of the objectives individually. The indicators should be carefully chosen because the final judgment about the achievement of the objectives relies on them. In the case of strategies, or multi-level interventions, the evaluation plan should reflect their complexity, evaluate each of the levels separately, and use common indicators to determine the impact of the whole strategy. The evaluator should provide a report in which the rationality for choosing the questions and the indicators is explained.

Fourth, the methodology of the research design and analysis employed in the evaluation must be aligned to its objectives. Instruments and tools used for measurement need to be validated before applying them. Here again, the evaluator must provide rational explanations for the motives for choosing the selected methodology and its advantages and disadvantages. Eventually, the evaluator might provide alternative plans of evaluation indicating the level of evidence for each of them.

Fifth, the intervention must be tested before extended implementation. Testing means judging the capacity of the intervention in order to address the crime problem and the cost that it implies, as well as to identify any side effects that it might have.

Sixth, evaluations must be ethical and legal. There are constraints to the design of research and data collection. For example, it is not ethical to expose people to situations that might entail hazards, and it is not ethical to subject individuals to unnecessary measurements or observations. The use of personal and sensitive data needs to be justified. Evaluations need to be transparent in their methods in order to ensure replicability. The results of the evaluation must be communicated to those directly interested in its results but also to the community. Conflicts of interest need to be dealt with beforehand.

The role of the EUCPN in further support of the Member States

The EUCPN is a referent within the EU for practitioners and managers working in crime prevention. The network has already developed several projects to encourage and support the practice of evaluation and has for a long time promote a culture of evaluation. From our perspective, it is essential to strengthen the network and to increase its competences in education, research, and different services so that it can close gaps between the EU Member States in their evaluation practices.

The EUCPN can further support the Member States by increasing its offering of educational resources. For example, the network might organize workshops and seminars where professionals can learn and practice the principles and methods of evaluation. Arranging meetings where the professionals in different organizations and different countries can exchange experiences is another way. Writing documentation and manuals and making them available in the local languages was suggested by the participants in our study. Creating a best practices manual and operationalizing the manual in a tool, digitally if possible, would reinforce the message and promote a culture of evidence-based practice.

Best practices of high-standard and evidence-based interventions developed or implemented within the EU should be compiled and such a database should be made available to managers and practitioners in order to promote a culture of evaluation, which is still lacking in Europe.

The network could have a consultant role in planning evaluations of interventions. Such consultancy might not involve the planning of individual interventions, but rather entail acting as an advisor for managers and eventually for evaluators. Because language might be a barrier, by working hierarchically the network could promote the education of those persons responsible for educating others within their own countries.

In its role as a model for the organizations working in crime prevention, the EUCPN has a responsibility to continue promoting research similar to that undertaken in this study. Identifying the necessities, the gaps, and the strengths in the evaluation of intervention is the way to find solutions. Supporting the Member States in undertaking more detailed evaluations within their borders can further help to find individualized solutions.

Finally, channeling funds specifically for use in evaluation was indicated by some participants of our study.

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LIST OF CONCEPTS USED IN THE REPORT

Intervention: To facilitate the reading of this report, we used the term *intervention* to make reference to any type of crime prevention initiative, including programs, projects, operations, strategies, plans, policies, etc.

Crime Prevention Intervention: We borrow the definition of crime prevention intervention from the Council of the European Union “*All measures that are intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens’ feeling of insecurity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, either through directly deterring criminal activities or through policies and actions designed to reduce the potential for crime and the causes of crime.*” (Council Decision 2009/902/JHA (30 November of 2009)).

Crime Prevention Program: A highly structured crime prevention intervention focused on one specific problem. The crime problem is at the core of the objectives and the activities deployed to achieve the objectives. The development of a program implies two stages. During the first stage (design), evaluation aims at defining the internal validity, identifying a credible cause-effect relationship between the program and the expected outcomes while at the same time eliminating alternative explanations for the outcome. In the second stage (implementation) evaluation seeks to define the effectiveness of the program, the extent of the outcomes, for example, how many crimes were prevented by the program. An example of a crime prevention program is *BENGALO* (an optimized educational and treatment intervention for offenders with aggression and addiction problems that is given in a sociotherapeutic ward within a secure youth custody center), which was presented by Germany at the ECPA in 2019.

Crime Prevention Strategy: A multi-level intervention or plan of action with broad objectives designed to achieve long-term goals. In general, such strategies target a wide group of people or the entire population of one community, area, or country. The needs of the target group are at the core of a strategy and therefore have to be assessed, and operationalized, in order to properly define the objectives. Normally, a strategy integrates multiple activities, and eventually programs as well. Each one of the activities and programs must be individually tested and scientifically validated before implementing the strategy. The evaluation of a strategy concerns the impact of the totality of the activities and programs on the target group, and broadly on the social environment of the community. An example of a strategy is the *Sofielund Approach*, which was presented by Sweden at the ECPA in 2019.

Theory of Change (ToC): The conceptual explanation of the mechanism used by an intervention to prevent crime. The ToC formulates the changes of the criminogenic factors (e.g. attitudes of offenders, behavior of victims, characteristics of the environment, etc.) that the intervention produces. It relies on the analysis of causal and correlational factors, mediators and moderators, and their relationships. The ToC generates a logical chain that aligns problem, objectives, activities, and expected outcomes.

Theory of Action (ToA): This is a structured model of the ToC that also takes into account external factors that might affect the outcomes of an intervention. In the ToA, the links between problems/needs, objectives, activities, and expected outcomes are explained in detail. It sets priorities in achieving the outcomes considering the characteristics of the activities.

Program Theory: The ToC and ToA together constitute the program theory, which is a logical explanation for how and why the intervention works to achieve the intended outcomes. Proper outcome evaluation relies on the Program Theory to determine what types of information and

characteristics of measurements are necessary in order to make judgements about the efficacy and effectiveness of the intervention.

Logic Model: A diagram that plots the resources that the intervention employs (i.e. inputs), the action designed to achieve the outcomes (i.e., activities), the expected and unexpected changes produced by each one of the activities (i.e., outcomes), and the units of service or products (e.g., the number of workshops with young people to prevent juvenile delinquency, the number of talks with elderly people to prevent victimization through fraud and theft, etc.) that the activities generate (i.e., outputs).

Process evaluation: Also called *implementation evaluation*, or *monitoring*, this process documents how the activities were implemented in order to determine any deviations from the original planning. It facilitates finding explanations for when the results of the intervention are not as expected.

Outcome evaluation: Measures the direct effect (i.e., extent of the changes) of the intervention on the target group, population, or geographic area. The information produced by the outcome evaluation determines at what level the objectives were achieved.

Impact evaluation: Measures long-term effects of the intervention on the target group, as well as indirect effects on the broader community. The information produced by the impact evaluation determines at what level the ultimate goals of the intervention were achieved.

Cost-benefit analysis: A type of economic evaluation that compares the direct and indirect cost of the resources employed in the intervention, with the equivalent economic value of the benefits.

Needs assessment: Systematic collection and analysis of information to determine any discrepancies between the current condition produced by a crime problem and the desired condition.

Efficacy: Determines whether the objectives were achieved or not with the intervention (dichotomous, yes-no, judgment about the effect).

Effectiveness: Determines at what level the objectives were achieved (quantitative judgment about the effect).

Efficiency: Determines the cost of achieving the objectives at a certain level (economic judgment).

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of crime prevention interventions entails the systematic collection and analysis of information about the changes that occur in the different components of a crime problem that results from the activities of the intervention. The principal objective of analyzing such information is to make judgements about the efficacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of the intervention. Through evaluation we are able to identify what parts of the intervention worked and what parts did not work and to explain why this is the case. Therefore, evaluation is useful for defining what needs to be improved and for guiding decisions about further solutions to prevent the crime problem.

The results of an evaluation provide important feedback to different groups of people, including those who designed the intervention, managers, staff, stakeholders, sponsors, policy advisors, target groups, and the general population. This feedback is useful for guiding decisions on how to redesign the intervention, for orienting the future allocation of resources, and for advising on policy directions. In general, those responsible for the evaluation encourage the persons responsible for managing the intervention to take into account the information produced by the evaluation, but ultimately it is the managers who are the ones who decide what to do with it.

The importance of evaluating interventions is well established in many disciplines. For example, medications and vaccines cannot be legally distributed and administered to the population without being properly tested (i.e., knowing their efficiency, side effects, cost-benefit ratio, etc.). The introduction of a new safety mechanism in cars or a new method to purify water supplies requires previous demonstration of its efficacy and harmlessness. Determining that the product is safe is as important as confirming that the product is useful.

In the same manner, crime prevention interventions must be seen as “products” that need proper testing in order to ascertain that the outcomes are beneficial and to ensure that any possible side effects are not harmful at levels that might undermine the community’s social environment, disrupt the normal functioning of persons in the target group, or result in even bigger crime problems. This is a matter of ethical practice. A crime prevention intervention might have a counterproductive and harmful effect by, for example, increasing the amount of crime it is intended to prevent, promoting the emergence of other types of crime, displacing crime to more difficult to control areas, increasing fear of crime among the population, etc.

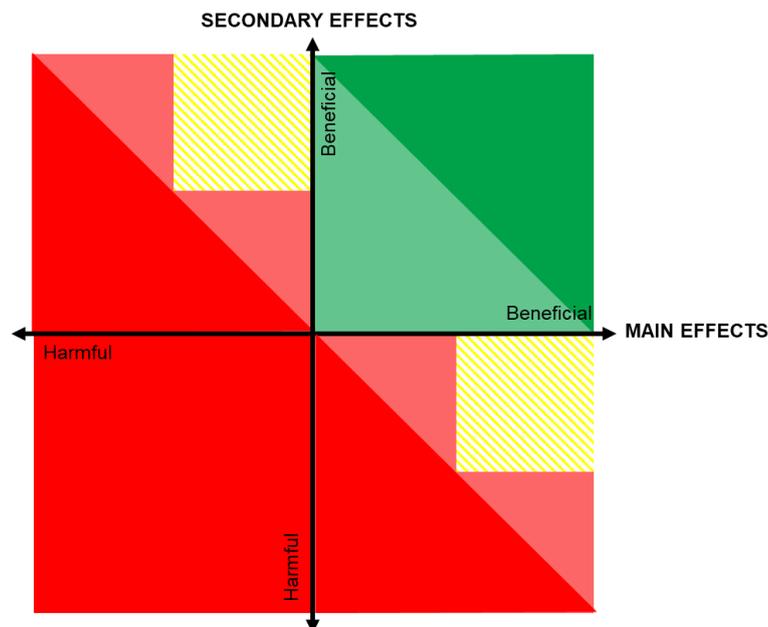
Figure 1 plots the possible main effects and side effects of an intervention. There are five possibilities that crime prevention managers must pay attention to:

- (1) The evaluation places an intervention within the dark green area. In this case, the intervention is effective in preventing the crime problem that it is supposed to prevent. The intervention should be taken into account when choosing among all the possible interventions available.
- (2) The evaluation places an intervention within the light green area. The intervention is not completely effective for preventing the crime problem and should be chosen only if there are no others available that have been shown to have greater effectiveness. Likewise, crime prevention managers might eventually decide to implement the intervention if it shows a better cost-benefit ratio when compared with others.
- (3) The evaluation places the intervention in the yellow square under the horizontal axis. Such an intervention should be implemented only after developing a plan to deal with the side effects. The designers of the intervention should consider introducing changes to decrease the side effects.
- (4) The evaluation places the intervention in the yellow square on the left side of the vertical axis. In this case, the intervention is effective in preventing other crime problems than the main problem

for which it was designed. Crime prevention managers need to search for an alternative intervention. The designers of the intervention should reconsider the objectives and further develop and test the potential of the intervention to solve other crime problems.

- (5) The evaluation places the intervention in the red areas, light or dark. It is necessary, by all means, to avoid its implementation. Any manager who decides to implement an intervention with such poor outcomes might eventually be held accountable for malpractice and irresponsible use of taxpayers' money.

Figure 1. Benefits and harmfulness of interventions



Evaluation is also useful to determine the economic benefit of preventing crime and the subsequent chain of results achieved by the intervention. Although costs may be more or less easy to calculate, the benefits, mainly those that are not immediately visible might be hard to define. Cost-benefit analyses are complex to perform and should be carried out by a team of experts including criminologists and economists. For example, the economic benefits attained by a program directed at preventing reoffending in juvenile delinquents, might include a) the capital that is not spent because they are not incarcerated, b) the capital that is saved due to the prevention of crimes that they might otherwise have committed, c) the capital that is saved because are not dependent on social welfare, and d) the capital gain because of their production in useful jobs.

Different interventions aimed at preventing the same type of crime most likely have different cost-benefit ratios. This information is useful for managers who need to choose carefully between a more effective intervention at a higher cost and a less effective one that costs less. Crime prevention managers might also have to decide whether they are willing to accept the harmful side effects of a less costly intervention or, conversely, if they are willing invest in a more expensive intervention with no side effects.

Evaluation, therefore, is a matter of good and ethical practice and should not be seen as a luxury that can only be afforded by well-funded, large-scale interventions. Evaluation is an essential component of any intervention and should be carefully planned before the intervention is implemented.

Research about the quality of evaluation procedures has identified different methodological problems that occur with certain frequency. Neuhanser and Kreps (2014) pointed out – (1) a lack of evidence for

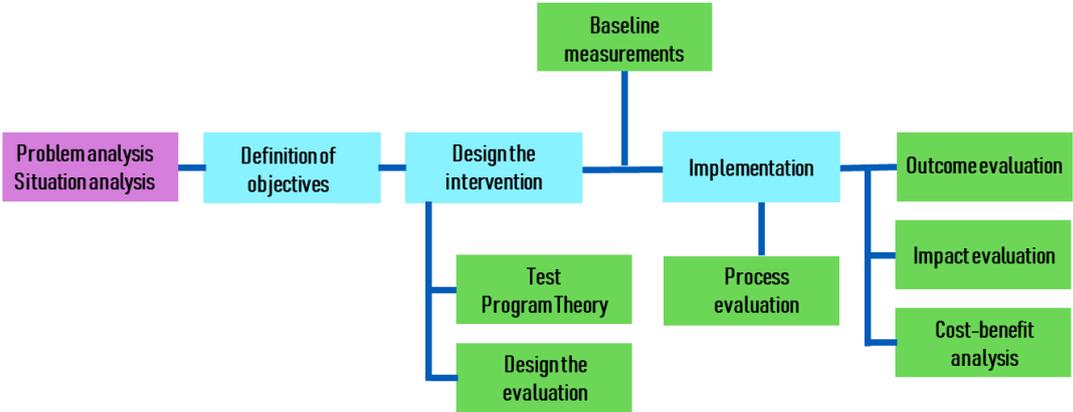
internal validity required to determine the efficacy of an intervention, (2) insufficient information about the characteristics of the problem that the intervention is designed to solve (i.e., deficient situation analysis), and (3) a lack of external validity or the possibility to generalize the results to other groups, populations, or geographic areas. Gorman (2018) highlighted the misuse of methods of data analysis in the pursuit of those results that support the efficacy of the intervention and the selective reporting of the beneficial outcomes while omitting or not measuring the side effects. Ekblom and Pease (1995) identified as a problem the lack of adequacy of the study designs, while Morgan (2014) advocates for the need to include stakeholders in the evaluation process. We exhort managers, designers, and evaluators of crime prevention interventions to work to circumvent such methodological problems.

In the context of the above, we consider that evaluation of crime prevention interventions is not an easy task. Persons responsible for planning such evaluations should at least have some level of expertise in criminology and methodology. When this is not the case, experts should be consulted. If the evaluators are external personnel, they should be enrolled early in the planning stage of the intervention.

Intervention design, implementation, and evaluation

Evaluation is intertwined with the design and implementation of the intervention, and it relies on rigorous scientific methods of study design, measurement, and data analysis that require meticulous planning. Several evaluation procedures take place at different stages of the design and implementation of the intervention (see Figure 2, with evaluation tasks identified in green).

Figure 2. Types and stages of evaluation



Before starting the planning of the intervention – Problem and Situation Analyses

To increase the probability of success of an intervention to prevent a crime problem, it is necessary to perform a detailed analysis of the problem. This analysis is grounded on criminological theory and empirical knowledge, and analytic methods from social and behavioral sciences are applied to collect and analyze this information. For example, a city is dealing with a certain proportion of crime committed by young people. The analysis of the problem requires studying those factors that are known to be contributors to the problem. Among others, the analysts might consider studying the socio-economic status of families, the social environment in the neighborhoods where the suspected offenders live, school attendance and achievement, delinquent peers, use of alcohol and drugs, and

antisocial attitudes. Consulting with social work practitioners and other key professionals working in the field can reveal other important areas to take into account when collecting information. For example, the commission of crime might be more common among youths with certain characteristics, crime victims or target spaces might not be random, and certain events might be triggering the commission of crime. The results of the problem analysis determine WHAT must be done (i.e., the components of the intervention).

At the same time, it is necessary to study the extent of the problem through a situation analysis. In this case, the analyst should make an estimation of the number of youths involved in the crime commission, the areas of the city that are more affected, the portions of the population that are being victimized, and at what time of the day and what days of the week the crimes are more likely to occur. The results of this analysis determine HOW, WHERE, and WHEN the intervention should be applied.

While the intervention is being planned – ensuring evaluability

Evaluability, or the capacity of an intervention to be evaluated, requires the correct alignment between the crime problem, the objectives of the intervention, and the activities that compose the intervention. The persons involved in the design of the intervention must be able to provide a rational explanation for each of the objectives (i.e., why it is important to achieve such objectives) and for each of the activities (i.e., why, how and at what level the activity is useful for achieving the objectives). The correct alignment produces a strong *Program Theory*. At this stage, it is advisable to test the *Program Theory* through an experiment in a small and controlled sample of individuals or area of the city. The aim of the experiment is to ensure that the activities work as planned (i.e., to provide internal validity for the intervention).

Concurrently, it is necessary to plan the evaluation. The objectives and the activities will determine which indicators are mandatory to measure so that a judgment about the intervention's success or failure can be made. Indicators of the benefits obtained with the intervention are as important as any side effects produced when implementing it. Crime displacement is just one of the side effects described occasionally in the scientific literature when applying situational prevention. Other possible effects are an escalation of violence even if the total amount of crime decreases, or a change in the perception of safety among the public.

The design of the intervention involves determining all the resources necessary to implement the activities, and this might include materials, well-trained personnel, amenities and facilities, specific services, etc. A close collaboration among all the involved partners along with stakeholders' engagement is essential for an intervention's success. Resources are in general limited, and once again the designers and managers should provide rational explanations for the necessity of employing such resources. This is achieved by the *Logic Model*.

Before starting to implement the intervention, it is crucial to take baseline measurements of all the indicators that will be used to demonstrate the changes produced by the intervention. For example, if the intervention implies the use of debates and workshops for young people to modify their antisocial attitudes, it is necessary to assess the antisocial attitudes before and after the intervention in a way that allows comparisons to be made.

At this stage, the designers, planners, and managers might have the feeling that everything is in place to guarantee the success of the intervention. However, a well-planned and *Program Theory*-tested

intervention still might fail if the activities are not implemented as planned or if the resources are not adjusted to the objectives.

While the intervention is being implemented – evaluation of the process of implementation

The evaluation of the process of implementation (i.e., *Process Evaluation*) produces qualitative and quantitative information that allows one to judge the level of fidelity in fulfilling the planning, whether the target group is being reached, whether the intervention is producing the outcomes expected, and whether unexpected beneficial or harmful outcomes are occurring as a consequence of the intervention. In order to properly collect this information, it is necessary to establish a plan in the previous stage concurrent with the planning of the outcome evaluation.

Process evaluation should be carried out periodically during the time the intervention is being implemented. The results of monitoring are necessary to allow the program to continue, to make necessary adjustments or even to stop the implementation if serious harmful consequences make it necessary to do so. The evaluation is also helpful for identifying unexpected obstacles or barriers that might emerge during the implementation period.

Evaluators and intervention managers must critically analyze the behavior of the indicators. For example, an intervention to prevent youth delinquency in a certain area of the city that involves increasing the number of patrolling officers (i.e., a deterrence measure) might initially lead to an increase in the crime rates, which should not be seen as a harmful effect and therefore should not stop the continued implementation on the intervention. In subsequent measurements, the crime rates are expected to decline if the intervention is successful. If the crime rates continue to escalate or if they remain stable at a higher level than before the intervention started, that is when managers need to consider introducing modifications or even completely stopping the implementation.

A process evaluation that confirms that the intervention was implemented as planned does not guarantee its success. Mistakes in any of the previous stages can cause the intervention to fail.

At the end of the implementation period – outcome evaluation, impact evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis

Outcome evaluation refers to the evaluation of the change produced in the target group or target area due to the intervention. It measures how well and at what level the goals of the intervention were met. Evaluators should be able to demonstrate that the changes are due to the intervention and not to other external factors, and likewise the evaluation must demonstrate that the outcomes are not the result of natural and expected changes over time (i.e., the changes would have occurred even if the intervention had not been implemented) or to any other random or non-random effect. The evaluation achieves this through the research design (e.g. the use of a control group) or through statistical analysis (e.g. controlling for confounding variables).

Impact evaluation refers to the long-term effect of an outcome and measures the effectiveness of the intervention in achieving its ultimate goals. It refers to the changes that affect not only the target group or area, but rather more broadly the entire population of a region or a country. Impact evaluation also measures whether the effect is sustained over time.

Cost-benefit analysis is a valuable tool for managers and policy-makers who usually deal with limited resources. The simple idea underlying this type of analysis is that all costs and all benefits associated

with the intervention are calculated and then the costs are subtracted from the benefits. The number obtained (positive or negative) indicates the profitability of the intervention. The difficulty of performing this type of analysis is related to the difficulty in determining the costs and the benefits when dealing with crime prevention. Jacobsen (2013) identifies as obstacles, the difficulty in determining at what level the resulting outcome is fully attributed to the intervention, whether other variables might have contributed to the results, or if part of the outcomes might have occurred independent of the intervention. Furthermore, certain costs are very difficult to determine, for example, psychological injury (McCollister, French, & Fang, 2010).

Some interventions have clear starting and ending points for the implementation period. For example, the *Functional Family Therapy* program (Alexander, 2007) is a short-term family therapy intervention and juvenile diversion program design with the purpose of helping at-risk children and delinquent youth to overcome adolescent behavior problems, substance abuse, and delinquency. The implementation period is about 30 hours. At the end of this period, outcome measures of life domain functioning, child internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and child risk behaviors indicate the level of success of the program. Furthermore, measures such as the number of delinquency adjudications, recidivism, and new drug charges at different points in time during the follow-up periods document the effectiveness of the program in preventing crime among the target groups (i.e., younger and older adolescents) and its impact on society.

However, it is not unusual that many crime prevention interventions are applied continuously without an ending point. For example, *Neighborhood Watch* is a type of intervention that can be applied indefinitely either alone or in combination with other elements such as property marking and security surveys. It has been demonstrated that *Neighborhood Watch* has an impact on the reduction of crime of between 16% and 26% (Bennett, Holloway, & Farrington, 2008). With such interventions, evaluators need to establish a cutoff point in time (e.g., 6 months after the start of the implementation) or periods of evaluation (e.g., between the 1st of January and the 31st of December of one specific year).

Evaluators must be aware that it is possible that the changes produced by a specific intervention might occur at different times. While some of the results might be immediately noticeable when the intervention period ends (i.e., immediate outcome), other results might take a while to be visible and therefore are considered intermediate outcomes. Long-term outcomes refers to those beneficial effects that endure over time.

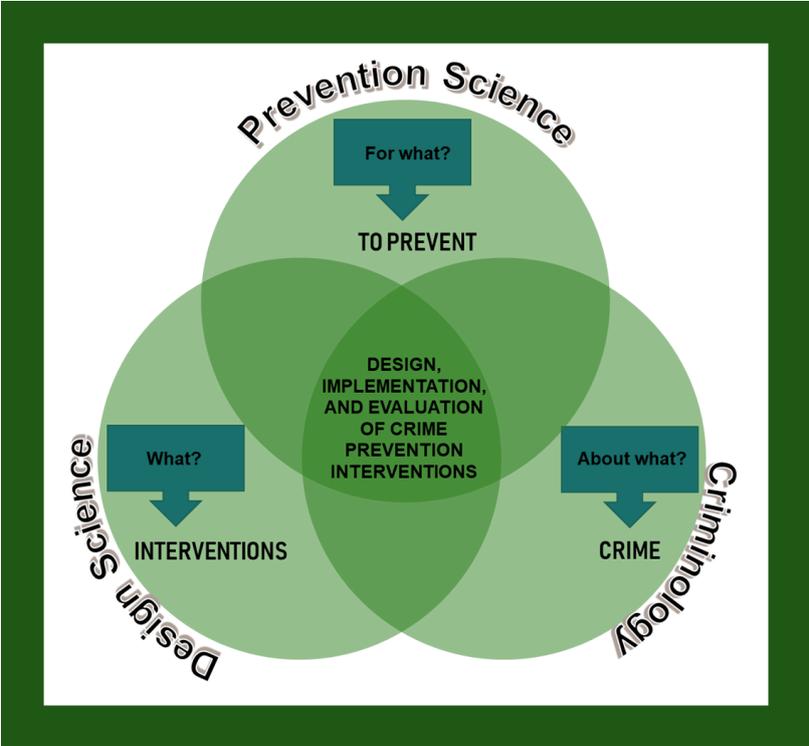
Ideally, the evaluator is part of the team responsible for the design and implementation of the intervention and has planned for the evaluation from the beginning. However, many times the evaluator only comes onto the scene when the period of implementation ends. In such cases, it is often not possible to perform a proper evaluation because baseline measurements were not taken and there is nothing to compare the outcomes to. *Program Theory*-driven evaluations are more difficult if the intervention is a black box that nobody really understands the workings of. If the monitoring of the implementation process is not registered anywhere, mistakes made during the implementation would be almost impossible to identify.

Evaluation in context

Crime prevention interventions are problem-solving creations with the goal of preventing criminal phenomena. Epistemologically, these creations are developed at the intersection of three areas of knowledge design science, preventive science, and criminology (see Figure 3).

Design science is about the creation of solutions and the evaluation of their utility. At its core, design science is a problem-solving paradigm (Hevner, March, & Park, 2004) that relies on the “build and evaluate loop” (Markus, Marjchrzak, & Gasser, 2002). The process of designing a solution (e.g., a crime prevention intervention) includes a cycle with two stages. During the first stage, data are gathered and analyzed to properly define the problem and the needs that the problem generates. In the second stage, designers propose ideas to model and test a solution. Problem definition is an analytic sequence in which the designer determines all the components of the problem (e.g., causes, contributing factors, environmental elements, etc.) and specifies the necessary requirements that a successful design solution must have. Problem solution is a synthetic sequence in which the various requirements are combined and balanced against each other, yielding a final plan to be carried out into execution. A feedback loop at the end of the second stage is necessary to help to redefine the problem and the needs associated with the problem. Ideally, the evaluation and revision of the solution should continue over time in a continuous formal process so that the intervention can be improved and can be adapted to any changes that might occur regarding the problem and associated needs.

Figure 3. Epistemological framework of crime prevention interventions



Prevention science covers the systematic study of interventions designed to produce a change in the occurrence of certain disruptive phenomena in the population (e.g., crime, disease, traffic accidents, political radicalization, etc.). Prevention science uses social and behavioral methodological approaches to design, implement, and evaluate the interventions. Prevention relies on the knowledge of factors that are direct causes and factors that, when present, increase the likelihood that the phenomenon will occur (i.e., risk factors). For example, maltreatment during childhood is a well-known risk factor for violent offending during adolescence (Currier & Tekin, 2012; Mersky, Topitzes, & Reynolds, 2012). Furthermore, prevention science identifies those factors that, when present, prevent the occurrence of the phenomenon or curb its probability (i.e., protective factors). For example, school connectedness has a protective effect on offending behavior during adolescence and young adulthood even among those individuals who were maltreated during childhood (Wilkinson, Lantos, McDabiel, & Winslow, 2019).

Fishbein, Ridenour, Stahl M, and Sussman (2016) propose a translation approach to framing prevention work. This translation framework is based on transdisciplinary collaborations within and across six stages of knowledge transference. Stage 1 represents the basic process of scientific discovery, and basic research from many areas is translated in order to inform the next stage of applied research. In stage 2, knowledge from stage 1 is transferred to applied methods and theory-based intervention development. Stage 3 collects the applied strategies developed in the previous stage and through testing, creates evidence-based (i.e., scientifically validated) interventions. In prevention science, the testing focuses on determining the efficacy, effectiveness, and efficiency of the interventions. This stage takes place mainly within the academic research context. Stage 4 transfers the research developed in earlier stages from the academic environment into applied settings. The adoption and adaptation of evidence-based practices intends to overcome the problem in society. In stage 5, the interventions are scaled up to achieve widespread implementation, maintenance, and documented success. To make this possible, there is a need for growing professional capacity within the service systems and agencies that effectively supports the wider implementation. Stage 6 involves the translation of the results achieved during previous stages to global communities at the local and national levels. This last translation stage deals with the way in which global policies can effectively target the problem across different cultures and societies.

While design science and prevention science provide the structural foundation and methodology for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of preventive interventions, criminology endows them with content. Criminology borrows scientific research methods from social and behavioral sciences to determine the nature, extent, causes, consequences, management, and control of criminal phenomena, and ways to prevent them. On the basis of this knowledge, criminology builds theoretical models that explains how criminal phenomena are generated and the effects that these have on individuals and on society. Likewise, criminology explains individuals' antisocial and criminal behavior on the basis of their personal characteristics and the complex interrelationships between different risk and protective factors present on their lives. This knowledge is essential to understanding what the crime problem is and what should be done to prevent it (i.e., to develop *Program Theory*). In the construction of *Program Theory*, it is also imperative to take into account the evidence provided from reliable scientific studies about what works, and what does not work in preventing the crime problem. Only by doing so will it be possible to establish a rational plan (i.e., a *Logic Model*) to achieve purposeful objectives. The objectives should be SMART(ly) defined, meaning that they should be – (1) Specific (i.e., concrete and well defined), (2) Measurable (i.e., allow a quantitative comparison of the state of the crime problem before and after the intervention takes place), (3) Achievable (i.e., feasible and easy to put into action), (4) Realistic (i.e., resources, time-frame, and cost constraints are considered), and (5) Time-limited.

Any crime prevention intervention that (1) is designed following the principle of *Program Theory*, (2) is developed on theoretical and evidence-based grounds, (3) proposes SMART objectives, (4) defines a rational *Logic Model*, and (5) is deemed effective when properly tested using rigorous scientific methodology can be considered a successful evidence-based intervention. Only interventions with these characteristics should be allowed to continue to stage 4 of the translational approach (Fishbein, et al., 2016).

Evaluation alone does not grant the status of “evidence-based” to an intervention because an evaluation that is not grounded on *Program Theory* might mistakenly provide evidence for the success of the intervention. *Program Theory* defines the information that must be collected during the evaluation, including indicators of efficacy and effectiveness, variables that might confound the effect, and eventual beneficial and harmful side effects. Besides the judgment about efficacy and

effectiveness, the results of the evaluation should identify those components of the intervention that worked, those that did not work, and why they did or did not work. For example, it is not enough to know that the crime rates have decreased after the intervention. Evaluators should ask questions such as: *Is the effect entirely due to the intervention? What are the other factors that might explain the result? Were there any factors counteracting the effect of the intervention? What is the level of success of each of the components of the intervention?* In the case the program failed to achieve the objectives, evaluators should be able to explain why this happened or to present plausible hypotheses. This provides important feedback for introducing changes that might improve the intervention in a rational manner.

Creating vaccines against crime

To design and implement a crime prevention intervention is an exercise similar to the creation of a vaccine against a dangerous virus. In the same way that viruses are a threat to the health of a population, crime is a threat to the wellbeing of a community.

But even when viruses represents a global hazard and thousands of people die, as is the case of the coronavirus in 2020, no laboratory or pharmaceutical company would dare to start to inoculate a population without properly testing a new vaccine. Even when the scientific knowledge produced by the design of another similar vaccine is applied to developing a new one, and therefore there might be a good chance that the new vaccine is, at the very least, non-harmful, millions of people at high risk of infection and death were told that they must wait at least 12 to 18 months to have a new vaccine.

This happens because the medical community is determined to avoid any harm that a medical procedure might cause in people. For the medical community, it is not acceptable to take the approach that it is “better to do something even if it is bad than do nothing” because if the “something” is not an evidence-based scientifically tested solution, then it is not a solution at all. Society and politicians seems to accept that.

Crime prevention interventions should have the same approach to a crime problem that the medical community has to vaccines. Crime prevention interventions, like vaccines, are preventive products and are solutions to problems that should only be applied after their capacity to solve the problem and their harmlessness are demonstrated. This is done through evaluation, and, like vaccines, crime prevention interventions follow a process of development that works in loops of design–evaluation–implementation–evaluation at several stages, which we indicated when making reference to the translational framework of prevention sciences.

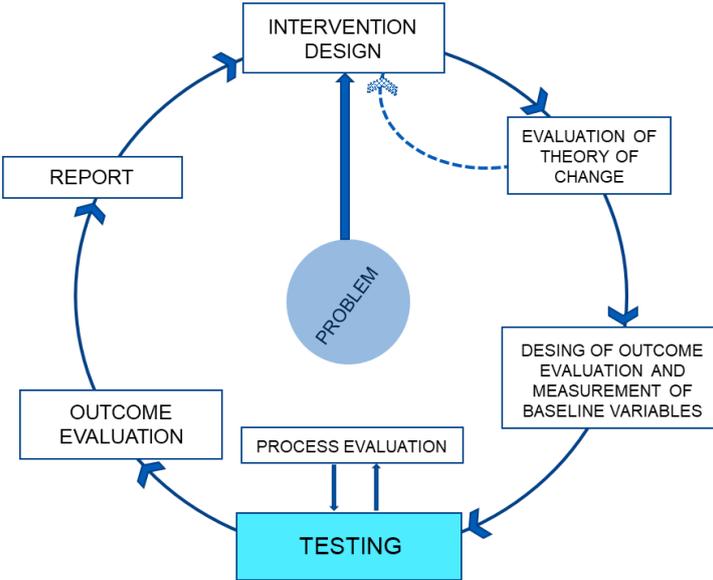
Developing and testing interventions

The development stage encompasses the three first stages of the translation approach defined by Fishbein et al. (2016). The evaluation of interventions at the development stage is sketched in figure 4.

At this stage the *Program Theory*, which some call the “black box”, is tested. At the core of all the work performed at this level is the problem itself. The first step is to analyze all the causes and contributing factors and the relations among them, and this analysis is nurtured by the criminological theory and the empirical evidence. The identification of the elements that compose the problem is followed by the definition of goals and the activities to attain such goals. Problems, objectives, and activities must

be aligned with a logic rationality in what is called *Theory of Change*. In addition, the *Theory of Change* also informs about the positive and negative expected outcomes and the expected impact (i.e., long-term outcomes and societal changes). The designers of the intervention decide what are the objectives and scientifically explain how and why each one of the activities is useful to reach them. Ideally, an evaluation of the *Theory of Change* by expert peer reviewers should take place before advancing to the development of an intervention. Afterwards, baseline measurements of variables are taken. In the next step the intervention is tested and the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs is highly recommended.

Figure 4. Developing and testing interventions



At this stage, the intervention should be tested under “aseptic conditions” in which inclusion and exclusion criteria are used such that it is ensured that any external factors that might eventually affect the results are not operating. The outcome evaluation that follows will primarily be a comparative analysis with the measures taken previously. The designers must be able to demonstrate the internal validity of the intervention by answering questions such as: *Was the intervention useful to achieving the objectives that were initially proposed? At what level? What were the side effects? How long did it take until the objectives were achieved?*

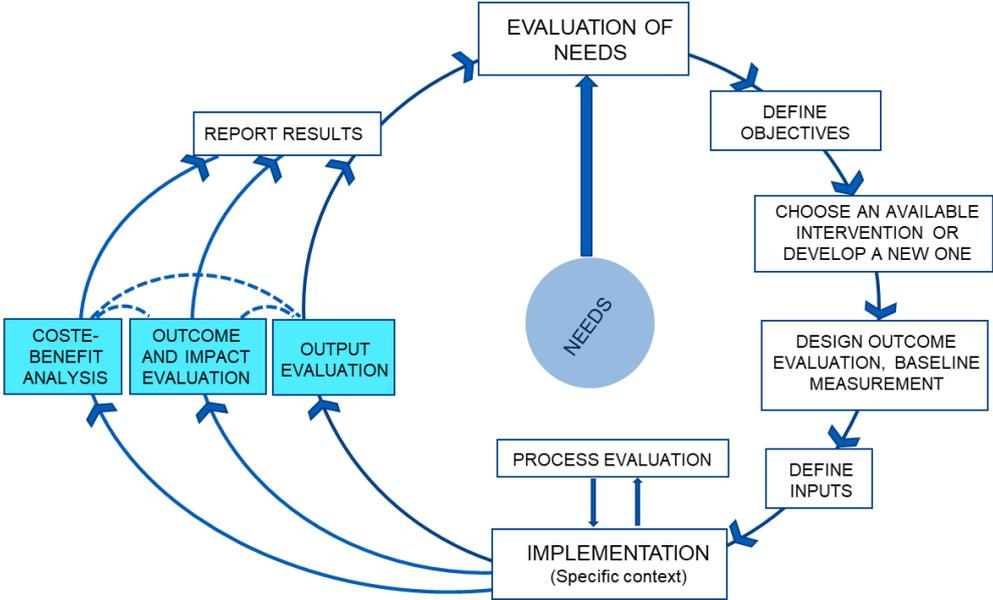
If the intervention is successful, the final report has the purpose of disseminating the results, but most importantly providing a detailed manual with clear instructions for how to implement the intervention. This allows others in different communities to use the intervention properly. If the intervention does not achieve the expected outcomes, the designers must be prepared to explain why the intervention failed. *Should the Program Theory be revised? Did anything fail while testing the intervention?* Regardless of whether the results suggest that the *Program Theory* is strong, it is crucial to check the quality of the implementation (Patton, M. 2008). If the implementation can be improved, then the designers should not discard the intervention and should give it a second try with a proper monitoring of the implementation process in order to avoid implementation failure.

Implementing and evaluating interventions in applied settings

The implementation stage encompasses stages 4, 5, and 6 of the translation approach defined by Fishbein et al. (2016). The evaluation of interventions at this stage is shown in Figure 5.

At the implementation stage, the needs of the target group or population are at the core and a situation analysis or needs assessment is the starting point. In this case, the *Logic Model* is what is tested. The *Logic Model* implies the alignment of needs, objectives (that should match the objectives of the intervention or the purposes that the intervention was designed for), inputs, activities (that are dictated by the intervention itself), outputs, expected positive and negative outcomes, and expected impacts.

Figure 5. Evaluation of interventions in applied settings



When the needs are defined, all the stakeholders meaning those who eventually will have a role in meeting these needs must decide together what objectives they have. Afterwards, an intervention must be chosen among several available that have already shown their internal validity and their ability to prevent the crime problem. The choice must be made on the basis of *Program Theory* and the cost-benefit analysis. If no available intervention matches the needs and therefore it is necessary to develop a new intervention, we need to go back to the development stage.

When an intervention is chosen, the expected outcomes are then defined. For example, when using the *Multisystemic Therapy – Problem Sexual Behavior* (Henggeler & Borduin, 1990) it is expected that there will be a decrease of 75% in rearrests for sexual crimes and a decrease of 50% in rearrests for non-sexual crimes (Borduin, Henggeler, Blaske, & Stein, 1990) among those individuals who participate in the program.

It is important to define the inputs or resources that are necessary in order to apply the intervention under specific conditions. The same intervention may require different amounts resources depending, for example, on how big the target group is. The instructions and guidelines defined by the designers must be strictly followed and a process evaluation must be used to measure the fidelity of the implementation.

The evaluation of outcomes at this stage is broader and concerns not only direct outcomes on the target group or the target geographic area, but also the short-term and long-term impacts on the whole community. Likewise, the cost-benefit analysis produces a better understanding of the extension of the outcomes when the intervention is implemented in a specific context. In the end, managers will want to know: *Was the program useful to solve the specific problems and associated needs?* Evaluation at this stage informs about the external validity of the intervention. Here, again, it

is necessary to find plausible explanations if the outcomes are not as expected. *Was the intervention not appropriate to solving the problems and associated needs? Was there a lack of resources (i.e., inputs)? Were the baseline measures not reliable? Was the intervention not implemented as it should have been? Were there side effects or unexpected factors that were not initially considered? Were there factors moderating the effect of the intervention?* The data that are collected during the evaluation will have an impact on the capacity to answer these questions.

In crime prevention in general, the data necessary for the evaluation can be obtained from one or more of three sources – existing information, people, and observations. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with each type of data collection method. For example, using existing information (e.g. crime reports) might be easier but might not contain all the information necessary to answer the evaluation questions, and frequently a portion of the information is missing. Conducting surveys with persons involved in the program (e.g., persons from the target group), might provide valuable insights about the intervention processes. However, these methods are vulnerable to the influence of response bias (e.g., people respond favorably because they fear the consequences of responding critically) and self-selection bias (e.g., the experience of sub-groups might not be captured if they chose not to respond). The best approach is often to collect data from multiple sources because this allows the triangulation of findings and builds a more thorough evaluation. Evaluators need to keep in mind that the data they collect should be meaningful for answering the evaluation questions.

The report of positive and negative outcomes at the implementation stage provides further empirical evidence of what works and what does not work in the specific contexts, thus generating cumulative information about the validity of the intervention.

Evaluating the design and implementation of multi-level interventions

Strategies are complex plans used to solve complex problems. In order to construct an evidence-based strategy to prevent or reduce a crime problem, it is necessary to first perform a situation analysis to understand the problem's dimensions (e.g., how many people are affected, which places are affected, what are the characteristics of the criminals and the victims, how are the crimes being committed, what are the consequences for the victims and closer and broader social environment, etc.).

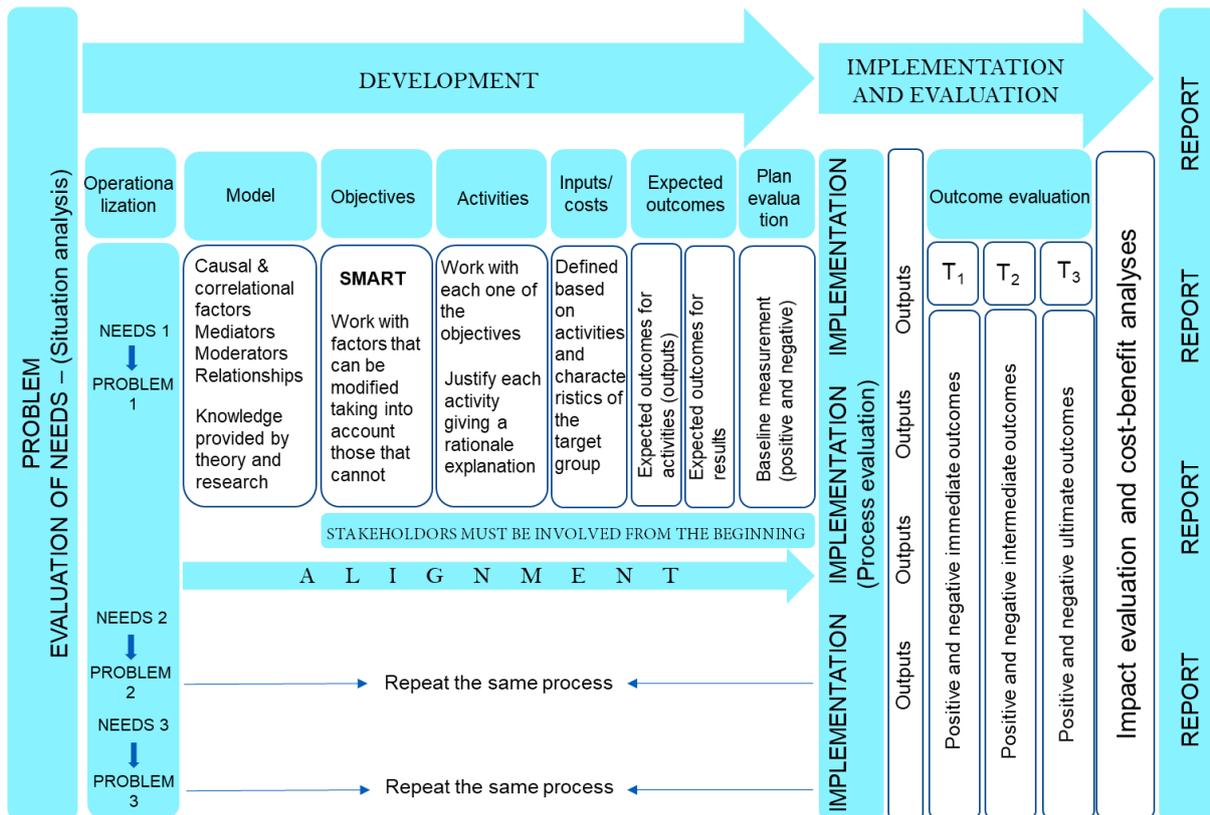
As described above for individual interventions, the analysis of the situation is a necessary first step to be able to operationalize the problem (see Figure 6). For example, the strategy for reducing drug-related crime by youth in a city might be operationalized by looking at different settings (i.e., school, home, community, leisure environments, etc.). All the contributing factors are thus individually analyzed by setting. *Program Theories* and *Logic Models* are also developed individually at first, but afterwards need to be integrated into a general model with common objectives. When working with strategies, it is critical that stakeholders are involved in determining the objectives and developing the work plan.

In the implementation of the strategies, careful planning of the resources that must be employed is essential. Eventually the resources can be shared among the different levels of the intervention. For example, premises used to give talks to parents about drug use among adolescents can be also used as premises to provide leisure activities for the youths. The professionals who work in schools and who advise about the school environment can also work in the community and visit places where the young people gather. The police might work at increasing their presence among the street-based drug scenes, but also might participate in workshops jointly prepared for the young people.

Furthermore, each one of the activities needs to be individually monitored. Monitoring (i.e., process evaluation) should not be mistaken for outputs. For example, the number of workshops delivered to young people is an output, while the number of individuals who attended the workshops and their level of satisfaction is information that needs to be monitored.

As was described for the intervention, the strategy managers should also ask: *Are the activities being delivered according to the initial plan? Is any kind of adaptive management occurring? What are the variations between the plan and effective implementation of the activities and how is this affecting the basics of the strategy?*

Figure 6. Design and evaluation of multi-level interventions



Furthermore, they should ask questions such as: *Are the immediate outcomes being achieved? To what extent are these outcomes contributing to solving the situation or problem that gave origin to the strategy? What is working well and what is not working well? What other circumstances are affecting the delivery of the activities or the achievement of the outcomes?* When these questions are promptly answered, this allows corrections to be introduced in a timely fashion.

In a strategy, the outcomes of a certain activity might be conditional on the outcomes of other activities, and a negative impact from one activity might negatively affect other activities. For example, if the workshops with parents produce an unexpected effect of increasing parental conflict, this could lead to the young people increasing their use of drugs and their involvement in the drug-scene. This secondary outcome might then be mistaken as a negative effect of the activities that are working directly in the drug-scene environment. A coordinator or strategy manager needs to be able to disentangle all of these effects.

Every strategy should undergo an impact evaluation and cost-benefit analysis. Long-term positive and negative consequences of the strategies can reorient policies so that crime prevention efforts can effectively meet their goals.

Creating a culture of evaluation

Evaluating interventions is part of the normal procedures in quality management such as inspections, auditing, benchmarking analysis, etc. Policy-makers, politicians, and persons occupying senior management positions are being pressured to demonstrate rational decision-making and to work based on evidence. While in some countries and international organizations evaluation is well accepted as a tool for management control, Europe in general still lacks a culture of evaluation in many areas (Stockmann & Wolfgang, 2013), crime prevention among them.

Many barriers for performing evaluations of interventions have been identified by different authors (e.g., Diaz, Chaudhary, Jayaratne, & Warner, 2019; Holosko, Their, & Danner, 2009; Lagford, 2008). A major factor is that evaluations are often seen as a threat to the interventions themselves and to the staff running the interventions. Evaluation is often seen as a thankless task by overworked employees and is perceived as too difficult, too expensive, and too much time-consuming to be done properly. Taut and Alkin (2003) found that factors such as evaluator's lack of social competence and program staff's lack of trust in evaluators (i.e. human elements) increase the resistance toward evaluation.

Developing a culture of evaluation implies creating habits of performing evaluations that rely on positive attitudes toward evaluation procedures among all the personnel involved in the design and implementation of interventions. A culture is not created because the top hierarchy of an organization decides or demands that evaluation must be done, and such a way of working could create or increase resistance among those at the bottom of the organization hierarchy and might interfere with the performance of the evaluation. Creating a culture of evaluation is possible only if evaluation is deemed essential by all the actors (i.e., practitioners, managers, and policy makers) and if a climate of trust exists between those responsible for the intervention and those responsible for the evaluation. Creating a culture of evaluation implies, at its core, a change in the motivation to engage in evaluation. As a general rule, the greater the intention that individuals have to perform a certain task (i.e., motivation), the more likely it is that they will do it. Motivation is the result of dispositional elements such as the willingness to try and the amount of effort planned to perform the task. Ajzen (1985) hypothesized that if the required opportunities and resources are available and there is an intention to perform the behavior, the person should succeed in doing it.

The *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991) postulates that the intention to perform a certain behavior depends on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control (see Figure 7).

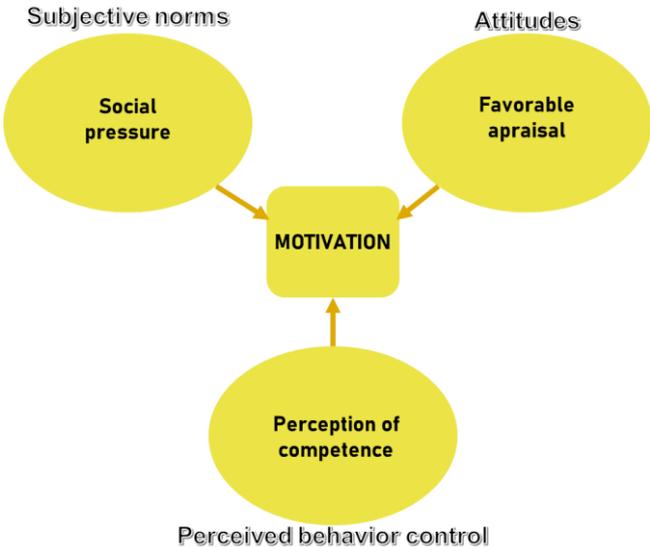
While attitudes refer to an individual disposition, subjective norms are, basically, a social factor and refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. A third component refers to the perceived degree of difficulty in executing the behavior and a judgment of one's ability to do so. Following the *Theory of Planned Behavior*, it is possible to motivate people to perform evaluations, if we can instill in them a favorable attitude regarding evaluations (i.e., stimulate favorable appraisal), make them feel that others appreciate and approve of it (i.e., increase social pressure), and increase their self-confidence in their ability to do so (i.e., increase the perception of self-competence).

Attitudes are directly related to beliefs that link the behavior to a certain outcome (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Favorable attitudes arise when we favor behaviors that we believe have desirable

consequences. Therefore, in order to boost favorable attitudes toward evaluations, we need to give people a deep understanding of the benefits of evaluations. The greater the perceived benefit of performing evaluations, the more positive attitudes people will have about evaluations.

At the same time, having role models or respected groups approving and incentivizing the performance of evaluations will encourage their use. In this case, it is essential to identify who are the individuals or groups that people see as references or role models. Managers and higher positions on the hierarchy of the organizations might not work as a model and even might have a negative effect. Instead, people seen as competent because they have an academic background and who have been performing evaluations for many years or who come from an institution perceived as having expertise (e.g., national councils for crime prevention, The EUCPN, etc.) might work much better.

Figure 7. Motivation to perform evaluations



The perception of competence that people have in their ability to perform the evaluation is most likely due to a mix of knowledge of methods and theories, past experiences, vicarious experiences from acquaintances and friends, and information obtained from secondary sources. Factors such as the complexity of the intervention might also affect the perceived difficulty in evaluating the intervention, and therefore the perception of one’s competence to perform the evaluation. By educating people on the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions, we will be able to increase the perception of competence and contribute to the development of a culture of evaluation in crime prevention within the EU.

The EUCPN as a referent of crime prevention in the EU

The EUCPN aims at being a primary source of crime prevention within the EU by spreading crime prevention knowledge and promoting good practices among the Member States (Council Decision (2001/427/JHAA of 28 May 2001).

The EUCPN has the specific tasks, among others, of facilitating cooperation and the exchange of information and experience between actors and collecting, assessing and communicating the evaluated information, including good practices on existing crime prevention activities. The target groups of the network are practitioners and policy makers at both the local and national level as well as international agencies, organizations, working groups, etc. Therefore, the EUCPN is an available

resource that the Member States can easily access and use as a referent when planning crime prevention work.

The EUCPN promotes the use of *Best Practices* when planning, implementing, and evaluating crime prevention interventions. In its goal to disseminate knowledge and support, the network has produced several documents and toolboxes in different languages that are publicly available on its website. In 2013, in collaboration with the Irish Government, the network developed a thematic paper focused on evaluation procedures based on the existing scientific literature. The paper covers topics such as evaluation designs, literature searching, developing evaluation questions, data collection and analysis, and communication of the findings. The paper thus promotes favorable attitudes toward evaluation by explaining “how” and “why” to evaluate, and it increases the competence in evaluation by providing a minimum standard of knowledge and skills. Jointly with the paper, a toolbox has been developed that proposes practical guidelines for evaluating crime prevention interventions. These tools are directed at persons engaged in evaluation who have limited competencies, limited resources, and limited access to information and support. The toolbox advises in favor of *Program Theory*-driven evaluations by offering examples of how to construct *Logic Models*, and offers practical examples of projects and programs in different EU countries briefly explaining the evaluation process.

Another way that the EUCPN has of promoting evaluation is through the criteria used to appraise projects that compete for the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA). Specifically, the projects need to have been evaluated and need to have demonstrated that they have achieved most or all of their objectives. Experts who assess the projects are required to judge (1) the overall quality of the evaluation, (2) the degree to which the project’s activities were implemented as originally intended (i.e., process evaluation), and (3) the effectiveness of the project (i.e., outcome and impact evaluation). The experts also judge the projects’ potential for serving as an exemplary model of good practices within the EU, for which the evaluation procedures are, of course, essential.

In 2015, the EUCPN commissioned Ghent University to perform a study with two objectives to demonstrate the most important indicators for the identification of best practices in crime prevention and to develop a user-friendly evaluation tool (Rummens, Hardyns, Laenen, & Pauwels, 2016). The researchers conducted a systematic review of the scientific literature and concluded that the most important indicators for process evaluation are (1) cost associated with implementation of preventive measures, (2) correct implementation of preventive measures, (3) accessibility and feasibility, (4) participation rate, (5) retention rate, and (6) external confounding factors. The indicators for outcome evaluation are (1) recorded crime, (2) victimization, (3) fear/perception of crime, and (4) displacement, among others. The evaluation tool (QUALIPREV) was meant to quickly and easily assess the quality of projects, based on the presence of key criteria such as the quality of the analysis of the crime problem, the process and outcome evaluation, and the dissemination and publication of the results. The tool was developed to be used by both project designers wanting to evaluate the potential of their own projects and external evaluators wanting to select promising practices.

The study that we will describe in the next sections, departed from this previous work developed by the EUCPN in order to determine what else is still necessary to do to achieve a greater level of evidence based crime prevention practice and policy making among the EU Member States.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Previous research about the measurement of the effectiveness of crime preventive interventions done or commissioned by the EUCPN has followed a top-down approach. The present study intended to shift to a bottom-up approach to obtain an overview of real-life evaluation practices that the EU Member States engage in. The ultimate goal was to identify possible shortcomings and gaps and to make recommendations accordingly.

The objectives and research questions that oriented the study were determined by the EUCPN as follows:

Objective 1: Gain insight into existing practices when it comes to the evaluation of interventions aimed at crime prevention.

- Questions:**
- 1- How are interventions aimed at crime prevention, evaluated in the EU Member States?
 - 2- Are process evaluations being carried out in the Member States? How?
 - 3- Are outcome evaluations being carried out in the Member States? How?
 - 4- What are the best practices when it comes to evaluation?

Objective 2: Make recommendations on the evaluation of interventions aimed at crime prevention based on the experiences in the Member States.

- Questions:**
- 1- Are there any specific shortcomings in the performance of evaluation in the Member States?
 - 2- How can these shortcomings be remedied?
 - 3- How can the EUCPN further support the Member States in their evaluation activities?
 - 4- Are there any additional research needs when it comes to the evaluation of interventions aimed at crime prevention?

METHODS

The study had one-year timeframe and was performed between March 2019 and February 2020. A mixed quantitative and qualitative design was employed. In addition, a scoping review of the literature on best practices in evaluation was performed to support the final recommendations specified in the second objective.

The data collection took place from early summer until late fall 2019. A timeframe for the inclusion of crime prevention interventions was set between 2014 and 2018, or the starting date should have been in 2013 or later. Two main reasons supported this specific timeframe (1) the data were supposed to produce knowledge about what is currently being done by the Member States and (2) in 2013 the EUCPN released the *Evaluation of Crime Prevention Initiatives Manual* (EUCPN, 2013) which was supposed to work as a reference manager within the EU. The guidelines for the evaluation practice explained in the manual served as the starting point to developing the questions about the process and impact evaluations that were performed.

According to the objectives, the study focused on the EU 27 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden). The quantitative part of the study focused on the crime prevention interventions themselves, and therefore one person could answer the questionnaire on more than one occasion, although this only happened on very few occasions. The qualitative part of the study focused on the opinions and experiences of persons responsible for the design, implementation, or evaluation of the interventions.

Quantitative study

Material

The quantitative study aimed to accomplish the first objective. A web-based questionnaire, including both closed- and open-ended questions, was developed for data collection. The content of the questionnaire was based on the principles and guidelines for the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives that the EUCPN disseminated in thematic paper No. 5¹ and toolbox No. 3². More specifically, the questionnaire inquired about any process and outcome evaluation procedures that were performed to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. It included questions about the planning of the evaluation, data collection, data analysis, and communication of the results. Topics such as needs assessment, definition of the evaluation objectives, involvement of stakeholders, budget, and advisory teams, among others, were also explored. Furthermore, items asking the opinion of participants regarding the evaluation of interventions were introduced in order to scrutinize their motivation to perform evaluations within the framework of the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991). The items addressed themes related to (1) openness to criticism, (2) perceived control, (3) expectation of skills, (4) perceived knowledge, skills, and abilities, (5) resources management, (6) perceived impact of evaluation on service delivery, and (7) the legitimacy of evaluations. The items

¹ EUCPN (2013), *Thematic paper No 5 – Evaluation of Crime Prevention Initiatives : The Principles of Evaluation* <https://eucpn.org/document/eucpn-thematic-paper-no-5-evaluation-of-crime-prevention-initiatives-the-principles-of>

² EUCPN (2013), *Toolbox No 3 – Evaluation of Crime Prevention Initiatives Manual* [WWW] <https://eucpn.org/document/toolbox-evaluation-crime-prevention-initiatives-manual>

were rated in a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) and were selected from an initial list of 70 items by a panel of five experts in evaluation.

The questionnaire was translated into the 22 official languages of the EU Member States. The translations were made in four steps – (1) native speakers translated the whole survey, (2) a second native speaker reviewed the translations, (3) the translated questionnaires were uploaded to the web platform (Qualtrics), and (4) before making it available and starting the distribution among participants, a third translator reviewed it as a respondent would see it.

The questionnaire was validated in a small Swedish sample. Six persons out of 15 invitees accepted to participate. On the basis of the validation, three questions were reworded. Because the impact of these changes was considered minimal, the six respondents were counted as participants and included in the descriptive statistics.

The questionnaire is available in any of the 22 languages and can be requested to the first author.

Procedure

Considering that the study goal was to attain a bottom-up approach, the first step in searching for participants was the identification of interventions that were carried out within the established timeframe. A multisided strategy was used, involving the following.

1- EUCPN contacts points

We appealed for collaboration with the contact points in each country so that they would provide us with the contact information of persons and organizations working with crime prevention interventions within their countries. They had an important role in spreading information about the project through their network. The approach to the contact points started on May 2019. Some countries delayed their collaboration until November, and in the case of Ireland and Slovenia we obtained no response to our appeal of collaboration. Countries differed in the number of contacts they provided to us. Some countries helped by directly distributing the link to the questionnaire, and in the case of Hungary the contact point took that responsibility upon itself.

2- Participants in the ECPA

The ECPA competition takes place every year, and the participating projects are announced on the EUCPN webpage. We contacted all those that met the timeframe condition and that had available contact information on the web.

3- Consultation of abstracts from criminology conferences.

We reviewed the abstracts of the annual conference of the European Society of Criminology, the Stockholm Criminology Symposium, and the biennial Crime Prevention and Communities Conference. For the small number of cases that were classified as potential targets, we tried to find the email address of the first author, and when available we sent information about the project and an invitation to participate.

4- Scholarly databases

We performed a search on scholarly databases and Campbell Collaboration for articles that identified the implementation of crime prevention interventions in Europe. The procedure was the same as for the consultation of conference abstracts. In this case, a small number of invitations were sent to the corresponding authors.

5- Social media

Information about the study was shared on the Mid Sweden University communication webpage as well as on Twitter, both from the EUCPN Twitter handle and from the CriminologyMIUN Twitter handle.

6- Personal contacts

Informal contacts of the researchers in countries such as Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Slovenia, France, and the Netherlands were also made.

Emails requesting collaboration were sent to all persons or organizations that, one way or another, were found to be the target group for the project. Reminders were sent to every contact at least once. Because the entire number of potential participants reached by this strategy is unknown, it is not possible to calculate the response rate to the questionnaire. The number of participating interventions from each country is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of interventions for each participant country

Country	n (%)	Country	n (%)
Austria	3 (1.6)	Italy	1 (0.5)
Belgium	6 (3.3)	Latvia	3 (1.6)
Bulgaria	1 (0.5)	Lithuania	30 (16.5)
Croatia	1 (0.5)	Luxembourg	3 (1.6)
Cyprus	5 (2.7)	Malta	3 (1.6)
Czechia	3 (1.6)	Netherlands	8 (4.4)
Denmark	16 (8.8)	Poland	3 (1.6)
Estonia	6 (3.3)	Portugal	6 (3.3)
Finland	10 (5.5)	Romania	4 (2.2)
France	1 (0.5)	Slovakia	2 (1.1)
Germany	8 (4.4)	Slovenia	0 -
Greece	3 (1.6)	Spain	5 (2.7)
Hungary	37 (20.3)	Sweden	14 (7.7)
Ireland	0 -		

The interventions are identified in the annex (p. 71)

Analysis

A unique database that gathered information from all of the Member States was imported and analyzed using SPSS 24.0. A large number of entries in the database were considered invalid because less than the 65% of the questionnaire was completed. This cutoff point represented the ending point of the questions related to evaluation procedures. After cleaning the dataset, a total of 182 questionnaires were considered valid. The results section shows a description of the information obtained. For comparison among variables, we estimated the Odds Ratio in order to identify those indicators related to a higher likelihood of performing formal evaluations. Regarding the items proposed to support the discussion on the culture of evaluation, it is important to consider that they do not constitute a scale. We offer only the descriptive value (i.e., the mean value and standard deviation) for each of the individual items. Items differed in the direction of the opinion. For some

items higher scores indicated a more positive opinion about evaluation, while for others lower scores indicated more positive opinions. The reverse-scored items are identified in the tables in the results section.

Qualitative study

Material

The qualitative study aimed to answer questions related to both the first and second objectives, and a semi-structured interview was developed for data collection. The goal was to know in more detail the evaluation procedures, the opinions of the participants about shortcomings, how these shortcomings could be remedied, and the state of the evaluation culture.

The interviews were conducted based on an interview guide. After the initial questions aimed at establishing a good rapport, the interview focused on three topics – (1) process evaluation, (2) outcome evaluation, and (3) support that is needed in order to be able to improve the evaluations in the future. A final closing question enquired about the participants' own experiences and thoughts with evaluation (or the lack of evaluation) of interventions.

Procedure

Our initial intent was to interview at least two participants per country. Part of the respondents (79%) had previously accepted to be contacted by the personnel of the study and provided their email contact when they responded to the questionnaire. Through email, a date for the interview was agreed upon. The first interviews took place during July 2019. Due to the small number of persons that accepted to participate until later in September, we decided to extend the invitation to the contact points or persons designated by them. Twenty-one per cent of the total number of participants in the interviews were contacted this way. The last interview took place in late November. In total 19 persons participated. We decided to close the qualitative data collection because of time restrictions and because we achieved data saturation after 15 or 16 interviews.

The interviews took place in the web-based meeting room Zoom or alternatively by phone because some of the participants had internet restrictions in their workplace, for example, the police. All the interviews were at least audio recorded. One participant sent written answers by email. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English, but also in Swedish, Portuguese and Spanish.

The interviews had an average time length of 20 minutes, ranging from 11 minutes to 33 minutes. The participating countries were Belgium ($n = 1$), Czech Republic ($n = 2$), Denmark ($n = 2$), Estonia ($n = 2$), Finland ($n = 3$), Germany ($n = 1$), Latvia ($n = 1$), Luxembourg ($n = 1$), Malta ($n = 1$), Poland ($n = 1$), Portugal ($n = 2$), Spain ($n = 1$), and Sweden ($n = 1$). The participants in the interviews reported different backgrounds and different assigned working tasks but it was most common that they had worked as program managers or project leaders and were from both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Analysis

The information provided during the interviews was analyzed using inductive semantic thematic analysis. We proceed with the analysis in six steps following the recommendations by Braun and Clarke (2006) – (1) familiarize with the data, (2) generate initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review the

themes, (5) define and name themes, and (6) produce the report. The process was not linear but rather moved backward and forward through the steps. The analysis was primarily done by the second author and revised by the first author.

Scoping review of the scientific literature on best practices in evaluation

The scoping literature review aimed at supporting the researchers in achieving the second research objective. The review targeted the literature about evaluation in general, and not specifically on the area of crime prevention. Evaluation is a translational discipline that, in the case of preventive interventions, incorporates methods of design and analysis from social and behavioral sciences. In this context, the search of the literature intended to provide a broad view of the subject. Therefore, the review focused on best practices in evaluation while specific procedures of design, implementation or evaluation of individual programs, projects, or initiatives were left out. The starting point for the review was a systematic search of scholarly databases. After identifying the initial materials (i.e., articles, books, and theses) we proceeded with a snowball strategy to find other written documents. Furthermore, information available on the webpages of key organizations such as the European Evaluation Society, the American Evaluation Association, the Australian Evaluation Society, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development³, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention⁴, among others, was also consulted.

The recommendations for improvements provided at the end of this report are therefore based on (1) the shortcomings on evaluation found in the empirical study, (2) best practices defined by different expert individuals and organizations and (3) suggestions from the literature of topics to take into consideration when evaluating interventions.

³ <https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm>

RESULTS I – QUANTITATIVE STUDY (questionnaire)

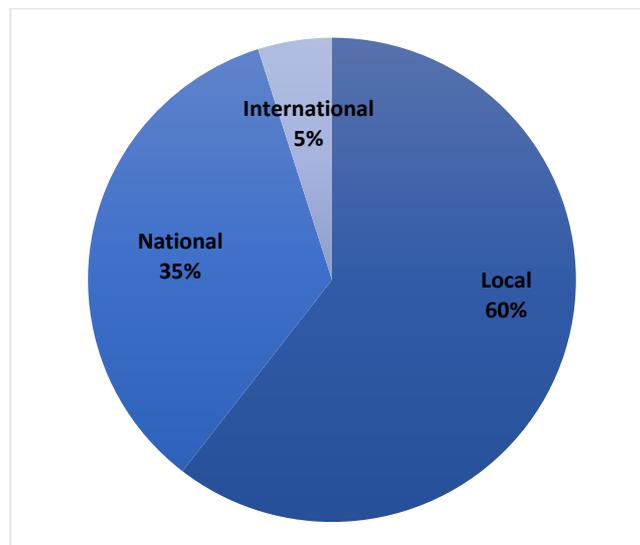
This first section of the results shows the findings of the quantitative study. It starts with a description of the general characteristics of the interventions ($n = 182$). Afterwards, indicators related to the design of the interventions, the process evaluation, and the outcome evaluation are presented. Regarding outcome evaluation, formally evaluated, informally evaluated (i.e., evaluated by staff members or other persons, but not systematically measured or registered in an official report), and not evaluated interventions are described separately. Finally, interventions that were formally evaluated are compared to those that had been informally or not evaluated.

The respondents had different assigned roles. The majority were responsible for or were part of teams in charge of designing, implementing, or evaluating the intervention. A small proportion identified themselves as expert consultants, stakeholders, or working in management teams. Seventy-seven per cent self-reported to have played more than one role in the intervention that was the subject of their answers.

General characteristics of the interventions

The geographical scope varied, but the majority of the interventions (59.3%) were implemented at a local level (see Graph 1).

Graph 1. Geographic scope of the interventions



Different Institutions and authorities were primarily responsible for implementing the intervention, but the police were most frequently in charge (see Table 2). In 45% of the cases, the responsibility was shared by two or more authorities or institutions.

Sixty-five per cent of the respondents reported that the intervention included a public information campaign in addition to other preventive mechanisms. Only 2.2% of the cases focused solely on reducing the fear of crime, while 54.4% were directed at preventing or curbing the criminal activity without a special concern for the fear of crime. The rest of the interventions included both objectives.

The interventions targeted different types of crimes and in many cases were expected to achieve multiple targets. The crime typologies that were more frequently identified were juvenile delinquency (50.0%), general crime (47.8%), and drug-related crime (29.7%).

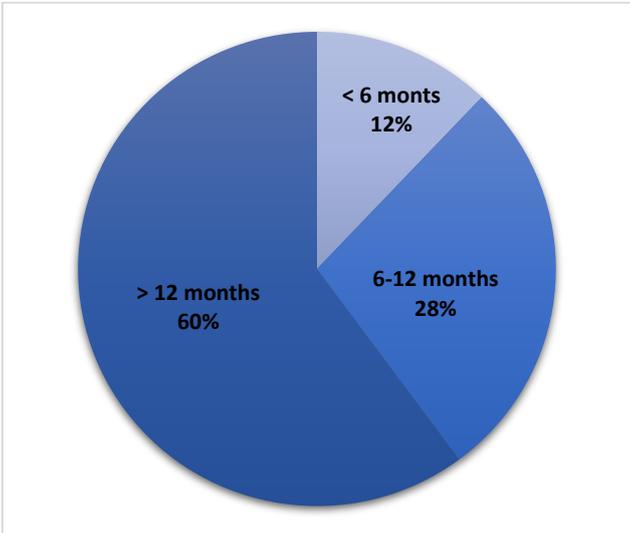
In 56.6% of the cases, the intervention was associated with individual prevention because the activities were directed at curbing individuals' likelihood of engaging in criminal activity. In 46.2% of the cases the intervention was associated with social prevention because it focused on the social or economic factors that contribute to crime in the community. In 44.5% of the cases, the intervention was associated with situational prevention because it had implied the use of techniques that manipulated situational factors aimed at reducing criminal opportunities. In 90.6% of the cases, the interventions used more than one type of preventive approach.

Table 2. Institutions responsible for the intervention

Authority responsible for the information	n (%)
Police	107 (58.8)
Social services	31 (17.0)
Department within the local, regional or central government	56 (30.8)
Prison authorities/justice department	13 (7.1)
Higher education institution	18 (9.9)
Other public institution	50 (27.5)
Other private institution	42 (23.1)
Unknown	4 (2.2)

The length of the period of implementation varied, but in most of the cases (60.1%) the interventions had long periods of implementation (see Graph 2).

Graph 2. Length of the implementation



The majority of the interventions (54.4%) were directed at specific groups, and these included mainly young people (68.4%), parents or teachers (31.6%), and groups of offenders (30.6%). A total of 17.3% of the respondents reported that the interventions were directed at persons at risk of violent victimization.

The rest of the interventions (45.6%) did not target specific groups but instead were directed at the community and the public in general.

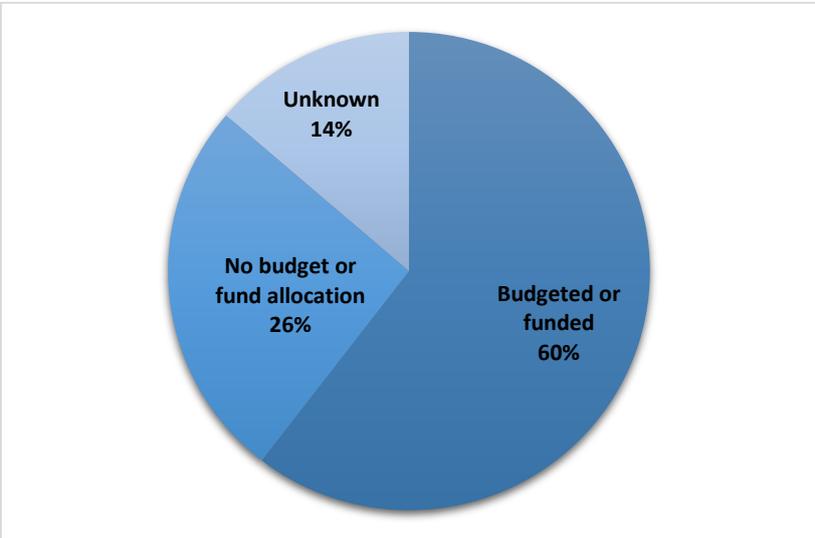
The main settings where the interventions were implemented varied, but the community (27.5%) and the school (23.6%) stood out as more frequently identified by the respondents (see Table 3). In 17.5% of the cases, the implementation of the intervention implied more than one setting.

Table 3. Settings where the interventions were implemented

	n (%)
Community	50 (27.5)
School	43 (23.6)
Home	12 (6.6)
Foster home, residential, or other social services facility	16 (8.8)
Treatment center or mental health institution	7 (3.8)
Criminal justice institution	14 (7.7)
Other public or private spaces (e.g., environmental prevention)	35 (19.2)
Cyberspace	14 (7.7)
Other	23 (12.6)

A specific budget allocation or funding was provided for 60.5% of the interventions, and among these the amount of financial resources varied from less than 5,000 euros (21.8%) to more than 100,000 euros (23.6%). A total of 25.8% received no budget or funding because they were considered to be part of the normal functioning of the institutions (e.g. police activity) (see Graph 3).

Graph 3. Financial resources



Design of the interventions

The respondents were asked about the way the needs of their specific intervention had been assessed, and we explicitly asked, how was concluded that such an intervention was necessary. A total of 25.3% reported that the needs had been informally assessed by professionals working in the area, while 23.1% reported that the professionals working in the area had employed structured instruments. In 17.6% of the cases there had been an assessment performed by crime prevention experts. For 9.3% of

the interventions, the needs had been informally assessed in some other ways such as through local associations of volunteers, workshops with citizens, or field visits with potential stakeholders. A total of 8.2% of the respondents indicated that the needs had not been assessed at all, but that an intervention such as the one they had used is always necessary. In addition, 8.8% reported that the needs of such an intervention had been on the agenda of managers or policy makers for some time, and in a small proportion of the cases (4.4%) the information about needs assessment was unknown.

The respondents were asked whether the intervention had been previously developed by others or, conversely, if it had been tailored to cover specific needs. The majority (47.3%) reported that the intervention had been entirely developed with the purpose of covering specific needs, while 26.9% reported that the intervention was inspired by programs, projects, or initiatives that had been developed previously by others but that there had been a need to introduce major changes to adapt it to the specific needs of the population or setting. In these two situations we enquired about the eventual development of a *Program Theory*. Only 43.9% of the interventions were supported by a criminological theory or a theoretical model, and only 44.5% had been linked to previous empirical research. Furthermore, only 58.7% of the respondents reported that the crime prevention mechanism underlying the intervention (i.e., the way the intervention works to prevent crime) had been identified beforehand.

In 14.8% of the cases, the intervention had been developed and already administered by others and had been implemented by the team group without any modifications or with only small changes that did not represent a modification of the original intervention. Among these cases, the participants reported of several motives for choosing the specific intervention, but mainly because its efficacy had had already been demonstrated (59.6%) and that it seemed to be the best to meet the objectives (55.6%). With a lower frequency, participants offered explanations related to budget limitations (25.9%) or the easy access to the implementation instructions (7.4%).

Process evaluation

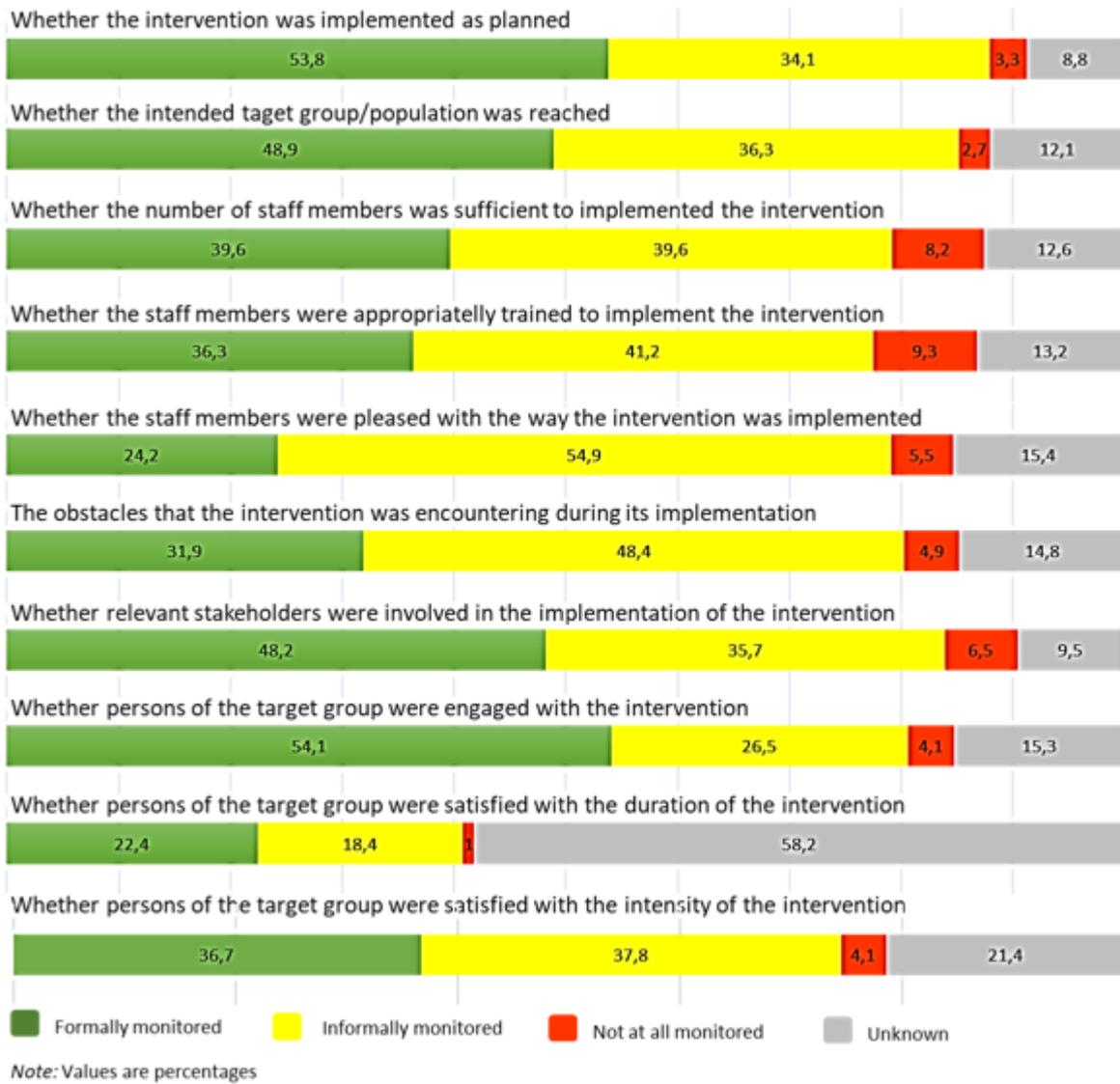
Regarding the implementation of the intervention the participants were asked whether different indicators had been formally monitored (i.e., formally evaluated and registered), informally monitored (i.e., informally evaluated by members of the staff but not registered in an official formal report), or not monitored at all. The low frequency of formal monitoring in all the indicators was striking. As can be seen in Figure 8, only two indicators were formally monitored in more than 50.0% of the cases, namely whether the intervention had been implemented as planned and whether persons in the target group were engaged with the intervention.

Outcome evaluation

The respondents were asked about outcome evaluation procedures. Surprisingly, only 44.0% ($n = 80$) of the interventions had been formally evaluated, while 45.6% ($n = 83$) had been informally evaluated or not evaluated at all (see Graph 4).

Countries differed in the percentage of interventions that were formally evaluated (see Table 4). However, these results are not conclusive because it is not possible to make statistical comparisons due to the small number of interventions in the majority of the countries.

Figure 8. Monitoring of the implementation process



Graph 4. Outcome evaluation procedures

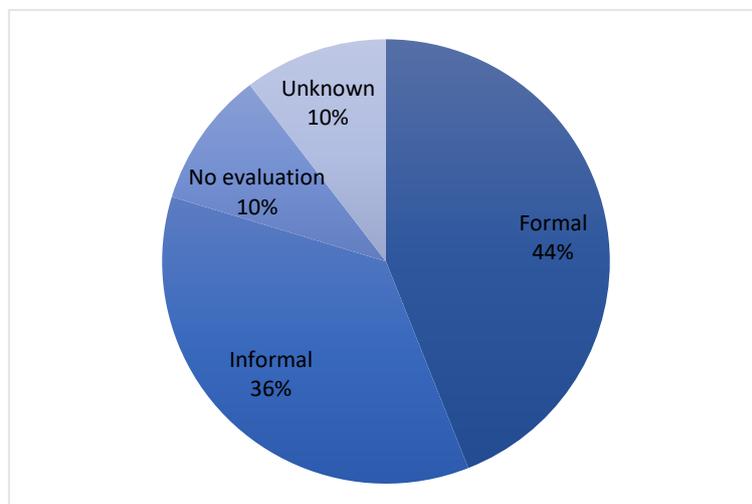


Table 4. Percentage of interventions that were formally evaluated in each Member State

Country	n (%)	Country	n (%)
Austria	1 (50.0)	Italy	0
Belgium	2 (40.0)	Latvia	1 (50.0)
Bulgaria	1 (100)	Lithuania	9 (34.6)
Croatia	0	Luxembourg	1 (33.3)
Cyprus	1 (25.0)	Malta	1 (33.3)
Czechia	3 (100)	Netherlands	4 (57.1)
Denmark	8 (61.5)	Poland	2 (66.7)
Estonia	4 (66.7)	Portugal	3 (50.0)
Finland	4 (44.4)	Romania	4 (100)
France	1 (100)	Slovakia	1 (50.0)
Germany	6 (85.7)	Slovenia	0
Greece	1 (50.0)	Spain	4 (80.0)
Hungary	13 (37.1)	Sweden	5 (41.7)
Ireland	0		

Formal outcome evaluation

For those interventions that had been formally evaluated ($n = 80$), we asked the respondents about the evaluation procedures. While 67.5% ($n = 54$) indicated that the evaluation had been totally planned for before the implementation period (i.e., during the design stage), 28.8% ($n = 23$) reported that the planning had been only partially done at that stage or occurred afterwards.

A total of 58.8% ($n = 47$) of the respondents reported that the cost of the outcome evaluation had been taken into account in the initial budget of the intervention, and 36.3% ($n = 29$) reported that the cost of the evaluation had not been at all considered beforehand.

In 46.3% ($n = 37$) of the cases, the persons responsible for the design or implementation of the intervention were the ones primarily responsible for conducting the outcome evaluation, and for 22.5% ($n = 18$) the responsibility relied on members of the staff that implemented the intervention. When asked whether experts had been consulted to plan and conduct the evaluation, 50.9% ($n = 28$) reported that experts had been consulted, 41.8% ($n = 23$) reported that this had not been the case, and 7.3% ($n = 4$) did not know.

For 17.5% ($n = 14$) of the interventions, the outcome evaluation was delegated directly to a third party, in general someone from the academic or research environment. For 11.3% ($n = 9$) the outcome evaluation was delegated to a third party through competitive bidding (i.e., several agencies competed to perform the evaluation). In both kinds of cases that involved external evaluators, only 26.1% ($n = 6$) reported that the third party was involved at the intervention's planning stage, while 56.5% ($n = 13$) were involved when the intervention was already being implemented and 8.7% ($n = 2$) were involved when the implementation period ended. This information was unknown for 8.7% ($n = 2$) of the respondents.

For all the interventions that had been formally evaluated, the participants reported that in 68.8% ($n = 55$) the criteria for evaluating the outcomes had been defined beforehand (i.e., during the design

period) and were included in the original documentation of the intervention. Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents ($n = 71$) reported that there had been a concern to align the evaluation with the objectives of the intervention.

In 82.5% ($n = 66$) of the cases, the information collected for performing the outcome evaluation included both quantitative and qualitative data, and in 65.0% ($n = 52$) it included both primary and secondary data. For 68.9% ($n = 51$) of the interventions, the evaluation implied the use of structured instruments such as questionnaires, scales, surveys, etc. The large majority (90.0%, $n = 44$) employed structured instruments developed purposefully to do the evaluation, but of these, only 45.4% ($n = 20$) were validated before they were applied.

Regarding the study design used to perform the outcome evaluation, 36.2% ($n = 29$) of the cases employed a pre-post design, 11.3% ($n = 9$) employed a quasi-experimental design and only 7.5% ($n = 6$) made use of an experimental design. Thirty per cent ($n = 24$) employed another type of design, and for 15.0% ($n = 12$) of the respondents this information was unknown.

Only 43.8% ($n = 35$) of the cases reported that possible unintentional effects were measured during the evaluation.

For 78.8% ($n = 63$) of the interventions, the results of the evaluation had been communicated in some way. This included final reports (65.1%, $n = 41$), press conference or media events (47.6%, $n = 30$), conferences and seminars (46.0%, $n = 29$), and presentations to community groups or local authorities and organizations (57.1%, $n = 36$).

Finally, we requested the opinion of the participants about whether different factors had had a negative impact in the evaluation. As can be seen in Table 5, all the indicators were identified as having an impact at some level.

Table 5. Factors that negatively affected the outcome evaluation

	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Unknown n (%)
Negative attitudes of staff members that implemented the intervention	15 (18.7)	50 (62.5)	15 (18.8)
Lack of expertise of the people responsible for the evaluation	19 (23.7)	52 (65.0)	9 (11.3)
Lack of involvement of all the parties (e.g., stakeholders, persons of the target group/population, etc.)	29 (36.2)	40 (50.0)	11 (13.8)
Difficulty in having access to the necessary data	23 (28.8)	45 (56.2)	12 (15.0)
The large amount of time required to do the evaluation	26 (32.6)	41 (51.2)	13 (16.2)
The high cost of the evaluation	15 (15.1)	55 (68.7)	13 (16.2)

Informal outcome evaluation

From those cases that performed an informal evaluation ($n = 65$), 83.6% had planned for it at some time before or after the implementation period, while 16.4% reported that the informal evaluation was not planned at all. Those involved in the informal evaluation were staff members who implemented the intervention (57.0%), persons responsible for the design of the intervention (55.4%), stakeholders (26.2%), and persons who were not involved in the design or implementation processes (9.2%). The informal evaluation involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods (38.5%),

only qualitative methods (26.1%), or only quantitative methods (13.8%). This information was unknown for 21.5% of the respondents.

Non-evaluated interventions

In those cases in which the interventions had not been evaluated at all ($n = 18$), we asked about factors that might have lead to this. As can be seen in Table 6, difficulty in getting access to the necessary data, the high cost of the evaluation, and the large amount of time required to perform the evaluation were the most frequent factors pointed out.

Table 6. Factors that lead to the lack of outcome evaluation

	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	Unknown n (%)
Lack of expertise of the person(s) who were supposedly in charge of the evaluation	3 (16.7)	10 (55.6)	5 (27.7)
Negative attitudes of staff members that implemented the intervention	4 (22.2)	10 (55.6)	4 (22.2)
Lack of the involvement of the parties (e.g., stakeholders, persons of the target group, etc.)	6 (33.3)	8 (44.4)	4 (22.2)
Difficulty in having access to the necessary data	9 (50.0)	6 (33.3)	3 (16.7)
The large amount of time required to do the evaluation	8 (44.4)	5 (27.7)	5 (27.7)
The high cost of the evaluation	9 (50.0)	5 (27.7)	4 (22.2)

Comparing formal and informal/non-evaluated interventions

We compared those interventions that had been formally evaluated ($n = 80$), and those that had been informally or not at all evaluated ($n = 83$) in order to identify associated factors. We found no statistical difference for indicators such as the geographic scope of the intervention, institutions responsible for the implementation, time period of implementation, or settings where the interventions were implemented. The only statistically significant association with formal evaluation was financial resources. Those interventions that had a budget allocation or had been funded were 2.6 times more likely to have been evaluated (CI 95% 1.21–5.38) than interventions that had not been formally evaluated.

Culture of evaluation

One hundred seventy respondents provided answers for the items that reflected the motivation to practice evaluation in the frame of the *Theory of Planned Behavior* (Ajzen, 1991). The mean value is provided for each of the items. A higher value indicates more positive opinions (i.e., direct scored) about evaluation procedures, except for those items identified with * (i.e., reverse scored). In such cases the lower values are the ones indicating a more positive opinion. As can be seen in Table 7, in general the direct-scored items rated above 4, which indicates a positive opinion, while reverse-scored items rated bellow that score, likewise indicating a positive opinion about evaluation.

However, for the great majority of the items, the values were not extreme (i.e., either close to 1 or close to 7), but rather close to 3 (i.e., somewhat disagree), 4 (i.e., neither agree or disagree) or 5 (i.e., somewhat agree).

Table 7. Respondents' opinions about evaluation of interventions

OPENESS TO CRITICISM	M (SD)
An evaluation is a good opportunity to improve a program	6.3 (1.0)
Negative comments as a result of an evaluation, presented in a constructive way are as useful as positive comments for improving a program	6.2 (1.0)
Evaluations create opportunities to learn and evolve	6.3 (0.8)
Negative comments , as a result of an evaluation, do not mean that a program is bad, but rather that it could be improved	5.8 (1.1)
Evaluations only find shortcomings and never reveal the strengths of a program *	2.3 (1.3)
PERCEIVED CONTROL	
An evaluation allows mistakes to be rectified, thereby providing better control of service delivery	6.3 (0.9)
Members of staff should feel more secure that they are delivering the service the way they are supposed to when a program is evaluated	5.6 (1.2)
When an evaluation of a program is planned, program managers feels more in control	5.1 (1.4)
The result of an evaluation might recommend so many changes in a program that it would no longer suit the initial objectives*	4.2 (1.6)
The results of an evaluation might eventually invalidate a good program*	3.4 (1.6)
EXPECTATIONS OF SKILLS	
The rigorous methodology that evaluation entails is no excuse to avoid doing it	5.4 (1.4)
Cooperation with evaluation experts makes it easy to plan for and perform evaluations	5.5 (1.2)
Planning an evaluation is exciting because it will reveal the truth about the results of the program	5.3 (1.3)
A valid program evaluation can be too difficult to do*	4.2 (1.6)
A proper evaluation is so hard to plan that people just don't want to do it*	3.6 (1.5)
PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY	
If a staff member learns how to conduct a program evaluation, it doesn't always have to be carried out by a third party	4.8 (1.6)
Like most things, in order to conduct a valid evaluation you must learn the most appropriated methods	5.9 (1.1)
Knowing how to commission, conduct or interpret a proper program evaluation is an important skill for program development and prevention service delivery	5.6 (1.2)
The lack of knowledge to conduct valid evaluations among staff members is a burden for the development and execution of a program*	4.5 (1.4)
The perceived lack of skills to conduct valid evaluations generates anxiety among staff members	4.1 (1.5)
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	
The resources that the evaluation uses are just as important as the rest of the program resources	5.5 (1.3)
Funders should always require a specific budget for evaluation in applications for program funding	5.5 (1.4)
Evaluations are too expensive and overburden the program budgets*	3.5 (1.6)
A proper evaluation requires extra staff, which programs usually don't have*	4.5 (1.5)
Only a few very well-funded programs can afford a proper evaluation*	3.8 (1.6)
PERCEIVED IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY	M (SD)
Evaluations allow the timely correction of problems or errors in program content and the delivery process, avoiding negative consequences	5.8 (1.1)
With a valid evaluation you get to know what works and what can be improved	6.2 (0.8)
The only thing evaluation appear to be useful for is delaying the delivery of the preventive service*	2.6 (1.5)
Evaluations may disrupt the proper delivery of the preventive service, negatively impacting the results*	3.0 (1.5)
When an evaluation is planned, the staff become so concerned that they fail to do their jobs properly*	3.0 (1.5)

Table 7. (Cont.)

LEGITIMACY	
Evaluation is an essential part of any program	6.1 (1.2)
Evaluation of a program is necessary in order to know its efficacy	6.0 (1.0)
Evaluations are not really necessary if programs are well planned*	2.7 (1.6)
An evaluation might not provide findings which show that program objectives have been met*	4.7 (1.5)
Programs that are not evaluated are as valid as programs that are*	3.6 (1.8)

Limitations of the quantitative study

The findings of the quantitative study should be interpreted cautiously in light of some limitations related to the data collection

First, the number of participant interventions most likely reflects only a small part of the total number of crime prevention interventions that have been or are being implemented in the Member States. Due to limitations of time (a one-year study), we had to close the data collection with different numbers of participating projects for each country, and with two countries not represented (Ireland and Slovenia). This limitation prevented the possibility of any type of comparison between countries.

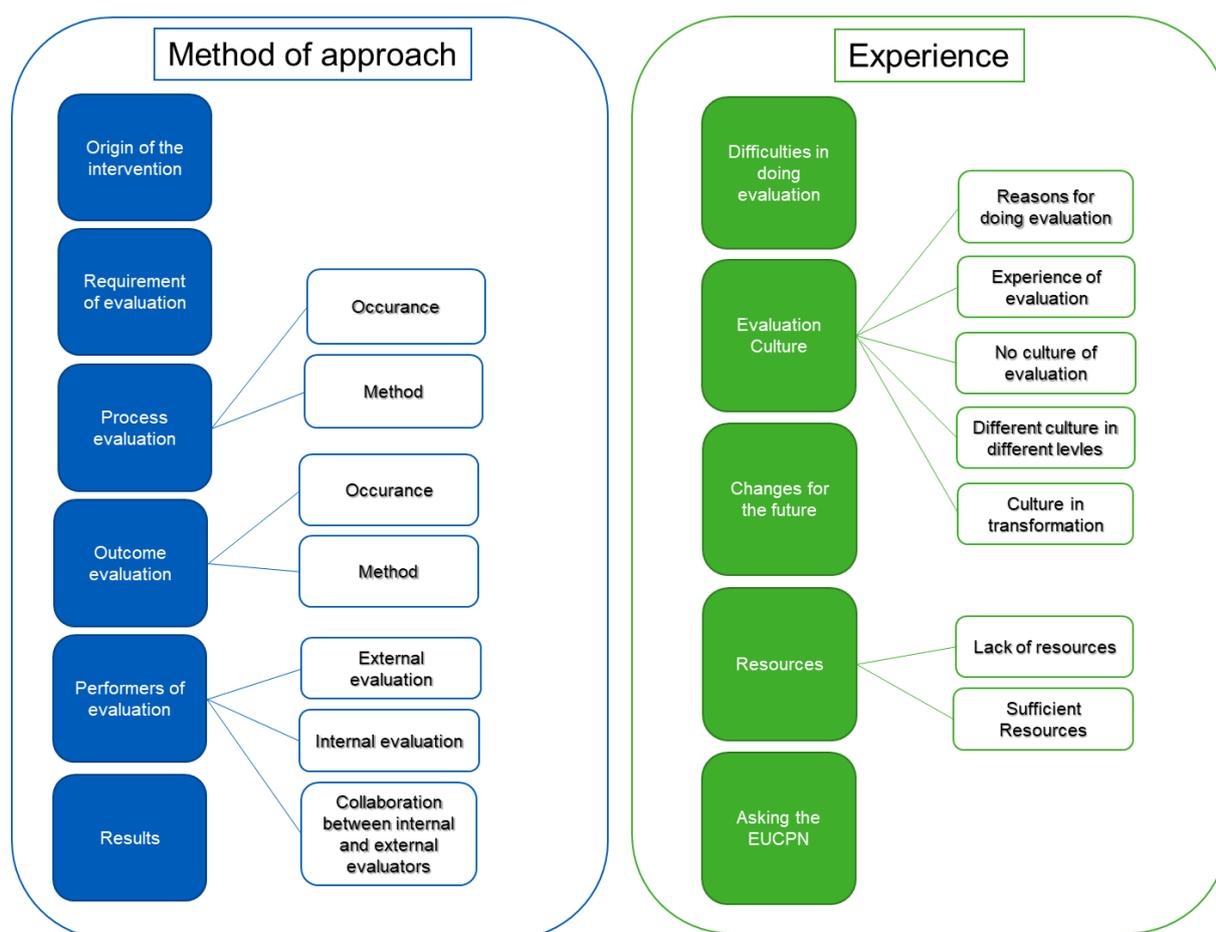
Second, the respondents had different roles and assigned tasks in the design, implementation, or evaluation of the intervention, or played different roles on any of the teams responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation. The majority (77.0%) of the respondents had more than one role. It is possible that the level of knowledge of the whole intervention varied depending on the role, and therefore the accuracy of the information might not be homogeneous among all the respondents.

Third, there was no sampling procedure because we do not know the universe of crime prevention interventions that were developed and implemented in the Member States in the timeframe of the study. Therefore, the results are very likely biased, and we feel that it is likely that projects that were funded and evaluated were more likely to have answered the questionnaire. This is because a great number of respondents were contacted through the contact points of the countries. This means that the number of projects with formal evaluation (44%) is likely to be overestimated.

RESULTS II – QUALITATIVE STUDY (interview)

The qualitative findings are described on the basis of the superior themes, themes, and sub-themes resulting from the thematic analysis of the interviews. Two superior themes emerged that we named “Methods of approach”, and “Experience” (see Figure 9). Both superior themes included several themes and sub-themes. The themes are displayed in filled boxes and the sub-themes are displayed in white boxes.

Figure 9. Hierarchy of themes



Methods of approach

This superior theme gathers the information about the methods of evaluation described by the participants. It comprises six themes – *Origin of the intervention*, *Requirement of evaluation*, *Process evaluation*, *Outcome evaluation*, *Performers of evaluation*, and *Results*. Some of the participants reported that the interventions in which they had participated had not been evaluated. This is also described and further discussed. The content of this superior theme can be seen in Figure 10. The themes are displayed in filled boxes, the sub-themes are displayed in white boxes, and the codes are displayed in ovals. There is no hierarchy among the themes.

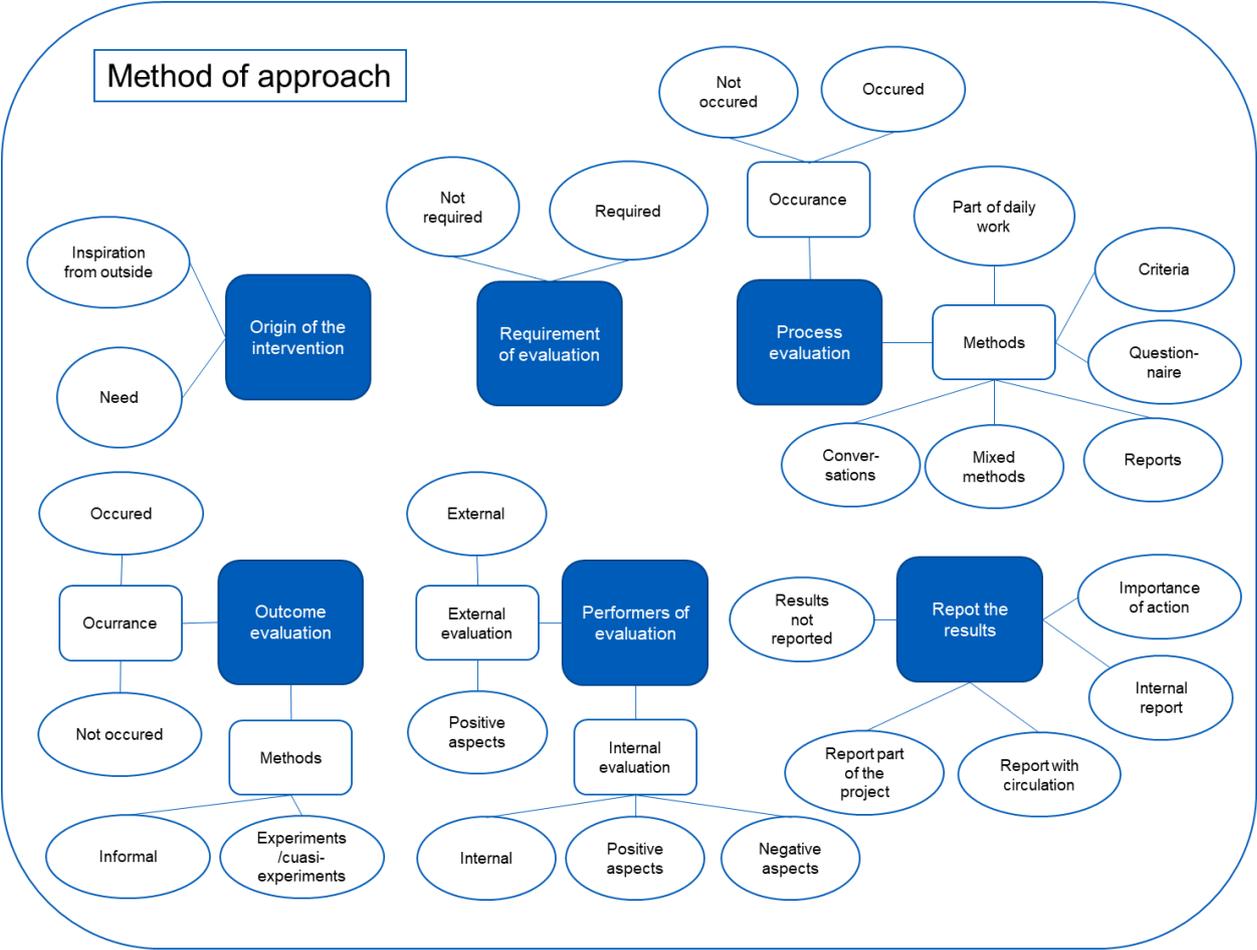
Origin of the intervention

This theme describes how the idea of developing a crime prevention intervention emerges because a need is identified or because of inspiration from external sources, and occasionally because of both.

The identified needs included feelings that it is necessary to do something to prevent a crime problem even without any statistical evidence to supports these feelings. Some participants reported that they talk with the public to know their needs, for example, their perceptions of safety, and what can be done to make them feel more secure. On the base of that knowledge, the team creates an intervention. Some participants reported that the crime prevention intervention they helped to implement was, in fact, a crime needs assessment. They described how they assess the needs in such a way that at the same time they use crime prevention practices. They also described how the results from this needs assessment can be the foundation to start new activities.

That’s a part of the research that you do before you actually start something new. Instead of just saying “let’s do this”, you try to figure out what has been done and what is going on before you start something new, something else. (7)

Figure 10. Content of the superior theme *Method of approach*



When the intervention is inspired from the outside, there are three main sources. First, the intervention might be created by a university and therefore has scientific credibility. Second, the intervention might be based on materials (e.g., fliers) developed by international organizations, and the team translates and adapts them to their own context. Third, the intervention might have already been used in the country or might have been developed by other countries and the team adopted it to make it suitable to their own circumstances.

It was the police who started the campaign, but the idea came from Germany. Every year we attend the German prevention days, and there you present your projects, and they had similar project, not the same but a similar project. So, yes the idea came from there. (2)

Requirement of evaluation

Either one of two situations are possible. First, the intervention is financed by public institutions, authorities, or by the EU and therefore the evaluation is a requirement. External funding requires some level of structured evaluation on almost every occasion.

Yeah, I work for the international cooperation, so all the projects were funded with European Union funds. It means that one of the mandatory requirements is properly do evaluation at the end of a project (PP)

However, occasionally, in spite of being a requirement the evaluation is not performed.

Second, although externally funded by governmental agencies the evaluation is not a requirement, and in such cases whether or not to perform the evaluation is a decision of the team. This was not common but did occur.

And also the government at this time it wasn't so important for them [...] how do I say... they were happy for the results of course, but they didn't encourage us to do it, it was more our own wish (3)

Process evaluation

Process evaluation was considered important by the participants although they reported that it had not always been performed. For some interventions, the process evaluation was described as a follow up task to certify that the work had been done as planned. The frequency of the follow up varied, and it might occur every month or more often.

We monitored, of course, the implementation. If you have a project planned, it tells at what point you have to have certain things done, and if they are done, how they are done, or if they are not done, why, what are the obstacles. We did it depending on the tasks, usually monthly basis but some tasks we evaluated also more frequently (3)

Other interventions did not go through a process evaluation. The participants thought it was not necessary in cases in which the implementation only had a short timeframe or when the same person had the responsibility for planning for the intervention and for implementing it.

No, there was none [monitoring the intervention], because I was the service provider as well as the person conducting the service so obviously I made sure that I follow the implementation as good as possible (10)

While some participants reported that the process evaluation was a structured activity, others reported that it was performed in a much more informal way. In those cases in which it was implemented as a structured activity, evaluation tasks were part of the daily routines and were seen as a normal part of the work. Therefore, it was perceived that it did not disturb the normal course of the intervention. Some participants reported that they used checklists, for example from the EUCPN, when planning for the evaluation. However, what the participants reported as process evaluation seems to be closer to the register of outputs than a proper evaluation procedure.

Evaluation is always integrated in the whole project process. So we define the criteria in the beginning of the project and then we have, I'm not sure, it's kind of a score card, a kind of evaluation planning so that we know, what do we have to do at which moment in the project to be able to say that this or that happened or that this was the outcome. And in the end, there is evaluation report that we also use to justify the subventions that we got, the grants that we got for our project. (8)

Some of the interventions that underwent process evaluations, used criteria decided on by experts so that the persons on the intervention team could collect objective information and easily follow the given criteria. Some participants reported that there had been a concern to align the process evaluation, the objectives, and the type of activities that the intervention involved. The criteria differed depending on the intervention.

For each one of these projects or strategies there are activities and indicators that we monitoring in order to know if we achieve the objectives proposed. There are specific objectives for the police activity and therefore we are responsible for such monitoring. In this case, we develop reports depending on the period of time of each one of the projects or strategies. (PP)

The methods of data collection for process evaluation differed. Some used questionnaires to know target group participants' opinions about the intervention.

We have also evaluated what victims think about the activities, we collect these data through questionnaires inquiring about all the care and support they receive in relation with the victimization problem. (S, author's translation from Spanish)

Some interventions collected data in a structured manner using both quantitative and qualitative methods depending on the type of information to be collected, although this seemed more an exception than the norm.

Well, it's a mix of evaluation criteria; a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria. Quantitative criteria mostly related to the number of participants, to evaluation questionnaires on, well, that depends on the target group but, for example, women with learning disabilities, one of the evaluation criteria is the accessibility of the intervention for them, do they understand what you are talking about. [...] And then there are qualitative criteria such as, for example, if you organize a training of trainers, after a time of practical application we ask trainers if the training is useful for the practice and what's missing and that kind of stuff. (8)

Others, in general smaller activities, employed unstructured methods and performed the evaluation mostly through informal conversations with persons on the implementation team and with intervention target group participants. The informal talks with persons on the implementation team were described as meetings where problems and possible solutions were discussed. The informal interviews with participants from the intervention's target group aimed at understanding their experiences and opinions about the intervention.

So, they were also able to collect interviews right after the event, so we had these door side interviews where people were exiting and we asked if we could talk. So that I think is a good thing. (5)

One last way to collect information for the process evaluation was through reports written by persons on the implementation team working on the field. In such cases, reports were required on a weekly basis.

It was in July so I was in holidays but they were reporting it weekly so the people who were working in the youth centre, they filled out this report weekly, like how many people were there, what were they doing and also we had a survey for the youth that what would they had done if the centre wouldn't been open and answers were like sleeping at home or spending time with friends or basically nothing they were the three main answers, honestly. (1)

However, some skepticism about the quality of such reports was raised by the participants when the salary of the person responsible for writing the reports depended on whether the reports were

presented or not. When the salary was the only motivation to write the report, the accuracy of the information was deemed to most likely be low.

Outcome evaluation

While, in general, the participants reported some type of formal or informal process evaluation, outcome evaluation seemed to occur less often, especially when it was not mandatory or a requirement from funding agencies.

The value that the participants saw in performing outcome evaluation seemed to be related to external reinforcement, in other words positive external appreciation because the intervention had been evaluated.

It was formally evaluated before, because this is a... you know this is a continuation of the previous project, that was the same activity implemented and there was evaluation and it was very good valued by that. (13)

However, as we stated above, it was common that outcome evaluations had not been performed. Participants disclosed several reasons such as lack of time to properly plan for it because they had not thought about the necessity of doing it or because they were not aware that they should do it.

I think it was not like evaluated at all. [...] Because I don't know who would like to evaluate it. I just presented the results for the management and everyone was happy about it and it was like excellent experiment that we did but it was never evaluated *per se*. (1)

For some participants who reported that their interventions were still ongoing, the questions during the interview seemed to encourage them to undertake an evaluation of outcomes even when they had not planned for it.

Regarding the methods employed to perform the outcome evaluation, frequently no specific method had been used because the evaluation had been performed in an informal fashion. In general, this implied talking with persons in the target group or persons on the team responsible for its implementation in order to get their opinion on whether the intervention had worked as expected or had produced any changes at all.

Yes partly through an oral process, let's say, because they were in a small network and through that we have been able to control how it is but we have not used any, we have not done it in a systematic way. (12, author's translation from Swedish)

One participant reported the use of pre-post test design for the outcome evaluation. On this occasion, the attitudes of persons in the target group were measured before and after the intervention. Furthermore, in an anger management program, a quasi-experimental design was employed by comparing the number of anger incidents before and after the intervention in the intervention group and in a control group.

First, we wanted to see whether it worked or not. People would have to be identified as having expressive anger problems. We took one group, which was the group of where the piloting was done, and we had a control group chosen from the waitlist [...] We just measured to see whether this anger management program actually managed to reduce anger or not, with the idea that obviously if anger was linked with the crime, [...] technically the crime [rate] should decrease as well. (10)

Performers of evaluation

On some occasions the evaluations were performed internally by persons responsible or by part of the team responsible for the intervention, while on other occasions the interventions were externally evaluated.

Positive and negative aspects were identified when the outcome evaluations were performed internally. In general, the participants indicated that doing the evaluation internally was easier because the evaluators were involved with the intervention from the start and therefore knew how it worked. Furthermore, in their opinion, any results of the outcome evaluation would allow them to make improvements faster when the evaluation is done internally. A negative aspect highlighted by the participants was the possible effect that the relationship between the evaluator and the persons on the intervention team had on the evaluation. The objectivity might be compromised in such situations. Moreover, the lack of methodological expertise and competence within the organizations might also negatively affect the outcome evaluation.

Those interventions that underwent external evaluation were evaluated by universities, police schools, ministries, or other departments within their organizations. Two main reasons seemed to explain the use of external evaluators – lack of time by the team responsible for the intervention and lack of competence in evaluation methods.

The participants were very positive to external evaluations, and they judged the external evaluators to be more credible and trustworthy than any possible internal evaluator. Furthermore, the exchange of information between the persons on the implementation team and the evaluator could be easier in those cases in which the evaluator was not someone higher up on the hierarchy of the organization or a direct supervisor. Finally, the participants pointed out that an external evaluator might perceived details that could easily escape the view of an internal evaluator.

I think it was fine because there was not a person who can see my work from a different point of view, and I can share with him something a bit different then I was able to share with my boss. So it was very useful feedback for me. (13)

Occasionally, the outcome evaluation was done by internal evaluators in collaboration with external evaluators. This could be due to specific circumstances like, for example, when an external individual working on a project involving the organization responsible for the intervention is hired to do the evaluation. On occasions, the external evaluators decide on the interventions and the analysis of the information, but persons within the organization are the ones responsible for the necessary data collection.

Yes so we, because of the limited funding for the evaluation we had the therapists do the data collection, you know administrating the forms to the families, pre- and post-treatment. But the researcher in charge is me at the University of Southern Denmark. (D)

Reporting the results

The results of the evaluations were handled and reported in different ways. For example, informal process evaluations were frequently not written down in a formal report.

We haven't, I'm not sure if we wrote it down, as in saying "This is the conclusion of what we have discussed" [...] because everyone, everybody knows what we have discussed. We moved forward. We have documented everything that we have done, but I'm not sure if we have documented these discussions [that were seen as part of the process evaluation]. (7)

Conversely, sometimes the report on the process evaluation was planned as part of the development of the intervention and ended up as a guidebook to be used by others who might want to implement the same intervention.

But then, not to just leave it at that, we kind of took the extra mile or took the extra step to create a guideline based on the findings of these evaluations. So we kind of did an evaluation and development project (5)

In cases in which the results of the outcome evaluation were gathered in a written report, this was done with two purposes – for dissemination externally to the public or to be treated as internal information for funders or managers. For some interventions, the results were disclosed in scientific articles, reports, and conferences. Some interventions spread the results on the media and organizational webpages. The participants valued the transparency that reporting the results give to their interventions.

And we also publish our project reports on our website, so we try to be transparent about what we do, how it works, what we do. (8)

The participants thought that it is important to perform outcome evaluation in order to make decisions about the intervention, otherwise the evaluation would be pointless.

So the evaluation has to lead to something, so that's why I'm thinking, you know if we would've evaluated someone or something that would've been kind of similar, it would've increased our knowledge as well (5)

Experience

This superior theme includes the participants' experiences, thoughts and attitudes about evaluation. It comprises five themes – *Difficulties in doing evaluations*, *Evaluation culture*, *Changes for the future*, *Resources*, and *Asking the EUCPN*. In figure 11 the themes are displayed in filled boxes, the sub-themes are displayed in white boxes, and the codes are displayed in ovals. No hierarchy among the themes was found.

Difficulties in doing evaluations

The participants reported different obstacles while doing the evaluation. The most important obstacles were difficulties in identifying what data are needed in order to demonstrate the efficacy of the intervention, how indicators should be measured, and the collection of the necessary data. If the data collection requires the availability and collaboration of persons from the target group, for example to do follow-up control, this can also make the evaluation difficult.

You have difficulties obviously when working with people. Now people tend to be very unpredictable when it comes to appointment and dropout rates, those are all defects of the system. And obviously numbers, numbers sometimes can play a part, when you started the evaluation, tools like statistics for example, it won't look very good when you have very small numbers, so you try to implement something which will meet the needs of a lot of people. (10)

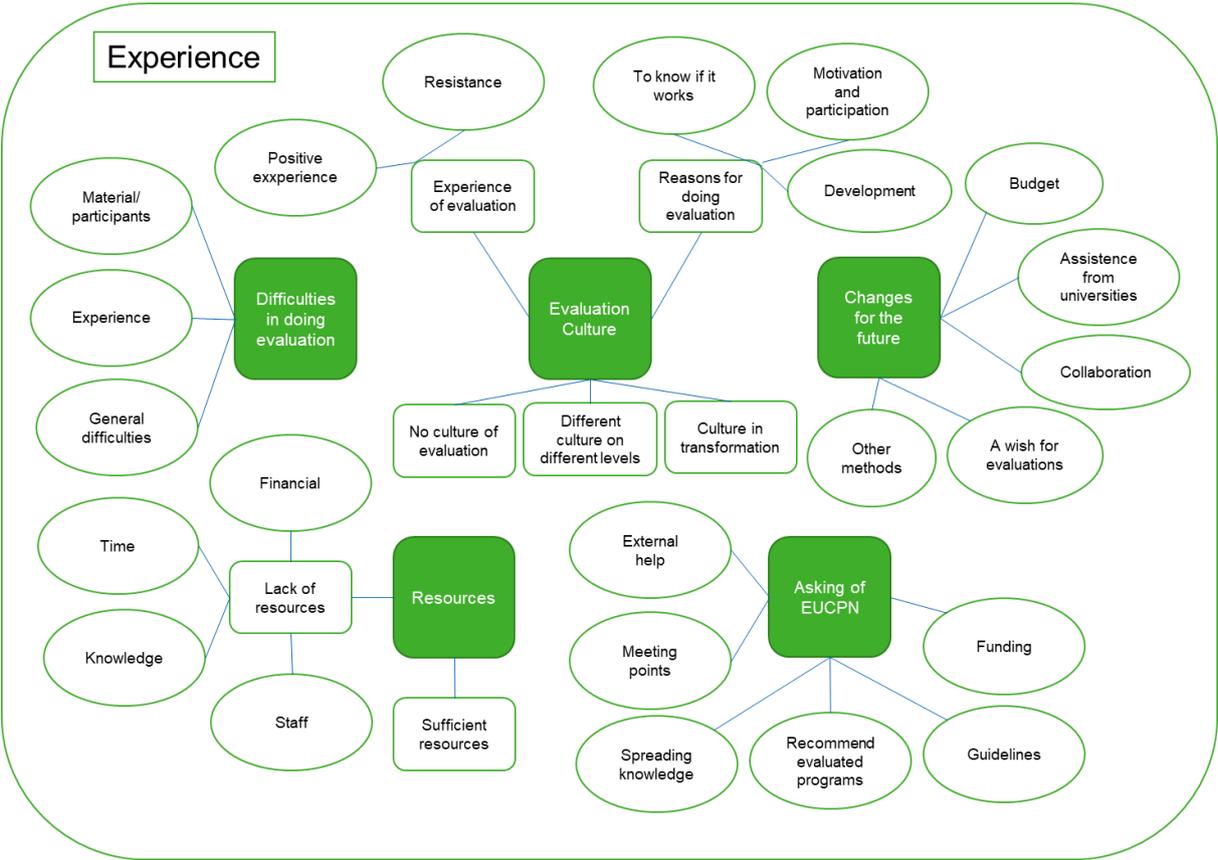
Here again, the lack of expertise is seen as an obstacle, but it can be mitigated with experience.

We did it [evaluation] actually four times in a row, so it went, every year it was easier and easier because we already knew how it should go and we learned from the mistakes from the last time, so the finale study, the last study, was already a like a routine. (3)

Other obstacles pointed out by the participants were the GDPR, because complying with the law complicated the follow-up of individuals, and working in NGOs, because access to detailed crime statistics was almost impossible.

However, as an NGO we don't have the means to do impact assessments in a more broader sense. Like, measuring if there is really less violence afterwards. So, what we can say is that our activities to bring down fear of crime, and increase self-defense, what's it called, self-efficacy, self-defense efficacy. (8)

Figure 11. Content of the superior theme Experience



Evaluation culture

This theme reflects the extent to which the organizations have the habit of doing evaluations, why people do evaluations and their experience of evaluations. The theme is constructed through the description of the overall experiences, attitudes and thoughts about evaluation that together compose the evaluation culture. The theme consists of five sub-themes – *Reasons for doing evaluation*, *Experience of evaluation*, *No culture of evaluation*, *Different culture on different levels*, and *Culture in transformation*.

The participants reported mainly three reasons for doing evaluations. First, the evaluation provides feedback that can be used to improve the intervention and avoid pitfalls. Process evaluation offers the possibility of changing the intervention during its implementation according to current circumstances.

It's mostly a very positive experience because it allows us to learn how to do our work better and how to avoid problems and pitfalls and that kind of stuff. And it points out things that we don't necessarily see when we are in the field from our perspective. (8)

The evaluation is, therefore, perceived as a driving force to further develop the intervention or to design and plan new interventions.

A second reason to do evaluations is because they positively motivates the persons who work with the intervention. It was first and foremost the process evaluation that was seen as a way of motivation and of keeping the intervention moving forward, especially when the results were as expected. The process evaluation is perceived as a way of encouraging the persons working on the implementation to manifest their ideas and thoughts. It was also suggested that process evaluation guarantees that the team members are doing what they are supposed to do.

It's absolutely necessary to do [process evaluation], to keep momentum going for the project, but also to make sure that people are still invested, and they know what they're doing. (7)

The third reason for doing evaluation pointed out by the participants is that it allows one to know the efficacy of the intervention. It ensures that the intervention is, in fact, effective, that the target group is reached, and therefore that the resources are well employed (i.e., the intervention is cost-effective) and thus provides incentive for the intervention to be implemented by others.

For us it is important to have an evaluation. Because for the moment we don't know if we reached the public. Our fliers are everywhere but we don't know if they read them, if they talk about it, if they inform enough. That is something we want to know for the future campaigns. Because also, this campaign, the cost was very high to organize and if nobody understands what we want to inform... Yes, that is important for us to know. (2)

The experience of doing evaluation, in general, was judged by the participants as positive. Evaluation was perceived as necessary by both participants who had done it and by those who had not. The experience of those who had done it is that it helped persons on the team to feel involved, it improved their work, and the feedback they got was reinforcing. According to the participants, evaluation is appreciated by both persons working directly in the intervention and by external people who are important for the intervention, such as stakeholders.

The participants highlighted that negative results uncovered by the evaluation (i.e., lack of efficacy of the intervention) were seen as something positive

It's necessary to get feedback then you know how we are doing as teachers and how school is doing. Positive and negative responses are both welcome. It's not like we need to hear always, "it's cool" "it's going good". But all the negative information also gives us the knowing how we are doing and that we can do better. (4)

Evaluations are not always seen as necessary, however. In the opinion of a small percentage of participants, evaluations are a bureaucratic burden that someone says must be done but no one is able to explain the benefit of doing so. Some participants did not see any benefit in performing evaluations when the results are not used for any purpose and managers just ignore them.

Evaluation is very much an afterthought, as far as I can see. And people do it when they are forced to do it but not really very willingly. Which is also linked to the fact that people see evaluation, especially if it's with forms and questions, as just another aspect of all that bureaucracy and administrative work that they are forced to do. [...] Maybe communicate about what evaluation was able to change to make things better, would help people seeing the interest of doing it. (8)

Persons who design or implement the intervention, according to the participants, are sometimes afraid of the evaluation, even when the expected results are being achieved. People are not accustomed to their work being evaluated, and they do not like it. Some of the participants pointed out that the evaluation should not be an aim of the intervention, and due to limited financial resources interventions should be prioritized and evaluations should come in second.

So you know, sometimes I have this feeling that those people who are in tune with evaluation, whose job is to promote evaluation sometimes over promote it. They kind of... you know, over emphasize its importance. Sometimes it is maybe too much pressure and too much time and effort that is put into evaluation but the evaluation *per se* is useless.(5)

Part of the resistance shown to evaluation seems to be due to the fact that the results of the evaluation are not used with any purpose and therefore persons on the teams responsible for the intervention do not understand the necessity of doing evaluations.

It was clear from the interviews that some countries and organizations have no culture of evaluation or that they are not used to doing it in a structured scientific manner.

We tend to like doing new things, however we never evaluate them. (10)

In those countries that seemed to have some habit in doing evaluations, the culture and approach can vary depending on the type or organization that is in charge of the intervention. It is more common that ministries and national organizations do evaluations than, for example, local police agencies. Sometimes doing or not doing an evaluation depends on the person who is responsible for the intervention.

I think, what I've read here and there, I think sometimes there is some evaluation, but I think it depends a lot on who's doing the research and who's, at what level it's on. I think it's not... it's not very consistent. [...] If it's a government funded research project it will be evaluated to the highest standard, I'm sure. But if it's a local initiative done by the municipality or, even the police or, whatever, I think evaluation means less to people. I'm sure people talk about how they felt the project went on, but a structured evaluation that will help them move forward to the next project, I am not convinced that they do. (7)

The participants reported that they perceived some "culture in transformation" because each time more evaluations are being done when implementing crime prevention interventions. It is their opinion that people in general are more accepting that evaluation is necessary each time it is done. One of the participants reported that his group was a pioneer in doing scientific evaluations in his country, while another participant reported that his country had just implemented its first evidence-based crime prevention policy. According to the participants, it is possible that the resistance toward evaluation is attenuating, that the culture of evaluation is positively transforming, and that people are just getting used to doing it. Some of the motives that the participants pointed out are (1) more competent professionals are being hired, (2) the evaluation is being budgeted or funded, and (3) the benefit of the evaluation is being explained to those involved in it.

Basically, I think it was resistance to change. But, all that resistance that we used to feel some years ago, is decreasing importantly. It is a slowly process but you can see it. And, this happens due to two things. First, because the people has already started to get familiarized with evaluation practice, and second, because the profile of the professionals that we have in nowadays has changed. And this helps that each time more we have less resistance [to evaluation]. (S, author's translation from Spanish)

The way of doing evaluations has also changed. While previously evaluation was a more unstructured activity, one of the participants described a digital platform that had been developed with the specific purpose of monitoring all the crime prevention work and that would help to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions.

In previous years, it was done some monitoring, some data used to be displayed in yearly reports about the activities or for example incidents in the program safe school; criminal and non-criminal events that the police registered. However, [...] didn't exist a consistent, systematic and in-depth

practice of monitoring. That started with the implementation of a new digital platform (P2, author's translation from Portuguese)

Changes for the future

The participants reported their wishes and things they would like to see changed in their approach of doing evaluation. Methods, collaborations, budgets, and a wish to increase their experience in doing evaluations were the emergent topics. For some of the participants the outcome evaluation should always be mandatory, when working in crime prevention.

Just preparing a project, working on whatever topic it might be and I don't get any feedback, and it would be nice to see if my work had had an impact. (11)

Some participants expressed their willingness to change the methodology of evaluation they had employed on past occasions by introducing crime statistics. Methods of data collection were also identified as a weakness and that required changes in order to be able to reach more people in the target groups and to increase participation rates. From the perspective of the participants, evaluators should be more active while the intervention is being implemented, and monitoring should occur more frequently. Clear structure for doing the evaluation was a request from many participants so that they would know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

Sometimes I would like more structure, to have a plan for the evaluation that will then tell you what the next step is. That would be nice sometimes. But on the other side, I also like that it's, that you do it when it's necessary and you tailor it to the project or the group that you work with. (7)

The participants would like to be able to collaborate more with universities and hoped that more college students would engage in the evaluation of the interventions. Participants who reported that they worked in academia expressed the necessity of having research assistants to help them collect the data and to ensure that the data are collected properly.

So hiring... you know research assistants to do the data collection and make sure that they track the family, pre- and post-treatment. Because when that's left on the therapist, if the family doesn't want to continue then it's very hard for the therapists to keep trying to engage both treatment and also getting them to complete the post-treatment questionnaire. (D)

In the opinion of the participants, the outcomes of evaluations of crime prevention interventions should be made publicly available and shared. This would strengthen ties among people working in crime prevention and would help to optimize resources.

We intend to avoid that professionals need to start the work from the beginning each time an activity is implemented in a new place or by different agents. If someone has already developed an activity in a certain topic so we should be able to use it again, or to improve it, etc. (authors translation from Portuguese P2)

Finally, the participants expressed the necessity of having specific budgets to do the evaluation, and in their opinion it is a task for which the professionals should be rewarded in some way.

It's more about having more tools and also being funded for doing so [evaluation] and being rewarded for doing so, which is not always the case. (8)

Resources

Regarding the resources available to do evaluations, there were two opposing opinions. While the majority of the participants indicated that they had experienced a lack of resources, a small fraction of the participants reported that the resources were sufficient.

The lack of resources was felt mainly in four areas – financial, time, knowledge, and personnel. These four areas are connected because the lack of financial resources might lead to a lack of personnel and therefore to a lack of time to do the evaluation. Moreover, the lack of knowledge can be due to the lack of expert staff.

The lack of financial resources was highlighted by many participants. In general, evaluations are not budgeted, and the budget to implement the intervention does not cover the costs of an external evaluator. In the opinion of the participants, this is due to political decisions and that the organizations themselves do not prioritize the financial support of the evaluation.

But it's very difficult as an NGO to do evaluation of good quality because we don't get specific funding for that, so we have to kind of put it in the funding that we get for doing activities but not for the evaluation. (8)

Even when people are willing to evaluate the interventions, the lack of time prevents it. Evaluation takes time to plan, prepare, and carry out, and to analyze the results. The timeframe of the interventions are, in general, limited, which makes the outcome evaluations even more difficult.

People who were working in the youth centre, they told that the time for the whole experiment was so short that we didn't have like time to plan the evaluation, we couldn't put effort in thinking beforehand what we're going to measure. (1)

In the opinion of the participants, the organizations lack competences (i.e., persons who have knowledge of the methods that good evaluation requires) and a general understanding of the importance of doing proper evaluation.

If it goes about some small project especially at this local level [...], it can be difficult for this people. One because they had no knowledge in that matter, twice because it takes time and they have not much time. (PP)

Some organizations solved the problem by hiring an external expert evaluator. The participants themselves revealed that they did not know much about how to do proper evaluations.

The interventions also deal with a limited number of staff, who already usually have many different daily tasks to take care of. In such cases, the evaluation represents an overload and therefore requires extra staff. When contracts to do evaluations do not pay well, people do not want to work with them.

I think it's the lack of staff more than anything, its lack of adequate staff. In some situations, we don't have the resources or staff since one of the biggest drawback is human resources. (10)

On some occasions, internship students working within the organizations were used as extra resources and were assigned evaluation tasks.

In a few cases, the participants reported that they had enough resources to do evaluations. Although not common, it is important to consider that the lack of resources was not always the case. When there was a specific budget for evaluation, it was because it had been calculated as a cost of the project. When the interventions were considered as part of the normal activity of an organization (i.e., a daily register of police activity), the participants did not mention a lack of resources.

It was a public procurement and it [evaluation] took approximately 10 percent of the budget of the whole project. (13)

Asking the EUCPN

When closing the interview, the participants were asked in what ways the EUCPN could assist them in making better evaluations. Six topics emerged – *external help, meeting points, spreading knowledge, recommend evaluated programs, guidelines, and financial support.*

The participants would like to have the external support of the EUCPN for planning and developing the evaluations. It was clear, though, that any support must be given in the local language, because many people within the organizations would not be able to understand the instructions if they were in English only.

It is always useful if an external institution give you a help because sometimes, you know... if you live in one environment you can't properly see the problem, where it is. So the person who is a bit apart from the environment can be more fresh maybe in ideas. It would be nice if somehow the EUCPN could do it, not only give you help to preparing the questionnaire, but also giving some advice in that situation. (PP)

Regarding the meeting points, the participants would like to have a forum for meeting colleagues working with evaluation in order to exchanges experience with people from other countries but also to receive education and practice in doing evaluations. In this case, the participants were asking for a closer collaboration with the EUCPN and that the EUCPN would coordinate organized activities, as well as a call for cooperation with other EU countries.

I think it would be great to have some spaces where people can change experiences about how they evaluate and what it brings to the organization, evaluating that kind of stuff. Because as far as I can see, many people just don't know anything about evaluation, and panic if you bring it up, and creating that kind of spaces can create learning experiences but also can make it feel safer for people. (8)

It was the opinion of the participants that the EUCPN should spread knowledge about evaluation and how to do it so that a culture of evaluation would be promoted in the EU.

I think is important that the idea of evaluation is more disseminated, that is known not only by few of us. It is necessary to grew and root the culture of research and evaluation. Also, it is important to root the best practices; practice based on evidence. And it is also important to show the benefit of these practices in comparison to the work that don't use them. (S, author's translation from Spanish)

Another request from the participants was that the EUCPN would make a compilation of evidence-based crime prevention interventions and evaluation tools. The EUCPN should advise about crime prevention interventions that have already demonstrated their efficiency and that are in accordance with best practices.

To collect good experiences, to extendedly inform about these alternatives to prevention crime and for pointing economic resources to long-term projects (9, authors translation from Swedish)

The participants also asked for guidelines and handbooks in order to perform methodologically sound evaluations. Such guidelines should be practical and easy for everyone to understand, even for those who do not have experience in doing evaluations. The guidelines should be applicable to different countries so that the results of the evaluations can be compared. Examples of how to do proper

outcome evaluations were also a request. Additionally, the participants would like to have guidelines for the use of specific methods and for performing cost-benefit analyses and qualitative analyses.

We need that you give us not only the manuals that provide more theoretical information about how to do the evaluation, but rather practical information like some kind of checklist or more practical documents in a way that we can apply immediately and without wasting time with the evaluation methodology. (PP)

Finally, the participants asked for financial support from the EUCPN to do the evaluation of long- and short-term interventions.

What we need is the budget (2)

Limitations of the qualitative study

The number of interviews was limited. Although we started to find data saturation after 15 or 16 interviews, the margin was small for guaranteeing that the themes, sub-themes and categories were exhausted. The language might have been an important factor here because the interviewers could not manage other languages than English, Swedish, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Not all the countries participated in the interviews. Therefore, the perception and opinion of persons from other countries might be different from the ones we interviewed.

The persons interviewed had different backgrounds and different roles and tasks assigned on the intervention. This is positive because it gives a broader perspective on the topics but in some cases it was clear that the participants had little knowledge about the design, the structure and the outcomes of the interventions. In some cases there was a certain difficulty in establishing the frame of the intervention because the participants could not accurately define who the target group was or what the outcomes were. In general, it was easier to frame and discuss process evaluations than outcome evaluations.

RESULTS III – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON BEST PRACTICES IN EVALUATION

The review of the literature on best practices in evaluation uncovered seven important topics that we used to support our final recommendations and that we think are of importance to bring to discussions in crime prevention.

Planning the evaluation

In planning for an intervention, and thus the evaluation, a *Program Theory* is of great importance for guiding the design and aim of the intervention, the implementation, and the evaluation (Harrington, Palmgreen & Donohew, 2014). When doing an evaluation it is important to understand what the intervention is designed for, and one effective way of doing this is to analyze the underlying *Program Theory* and *Logic Model* (Longest, 2015). Depending on whether a *Program Theory* has been developed or not, the evaluation of the intervention will vary (Longest, 2015). When the underlying theory is unknown, it is hard to interpret the outcomes and the results of the evaluation. By extension, any improvement, if any is introduced at all, would be done blindly. By using an underlying theory, the professionals working with the intervention are able to understand how it is working. A *Logic Model* is useful to guide the evaluation and to improve the intervention (Huddleston, 2010).

A needs assessment should always be carried out before an intervention is decided on (Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Kreps, 2014a). A needs assessment will tell about the goals that the intervention must have and what the gaps are between the current situation and the goal (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). When doing a needs assessment, an analysis of the target group should be included (Kreps, 2014a). Persons in the target group should be mapped because this will clearly inform on what the needs are. The evaluation will be a prolonging of the needs assessment because it will tell if the goals are reached or not (Guerra-Lopez, 2007).

The planning of the evaluation should be done in the initial phase of the intervention, and good planning can make the evaluation easier to execute (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). In interviews with policymakers and evaluation researchers, it was found that evaluations are often thought of too late in the intervention process (Schneider, Milat, & Moore, 2016). This can lead to missing important information that was not gathered at the beginning of the intervention. If the evaluation process starts late it can, according to the policymakers and researchers, lead to weaker evaluations that are more focused on the process than on the outcome. It is thus important to understand that the evaluation is not a procedure happening at the end of the intervention, but an ongoing process that starts when the intervention planning starts. Evaluations should be a part of, and have an essential role in every step of the intervention (Harrington, et al., 2014; Kreps, 2014a; Neuhauser & Kreps, 2014). Formative and summative evaluations provide different information at different stages and together can give a richer and deeper understanding of the real outcomes (Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Kreps, 2014a). Evaluation in early steps of the design and implementation can give valuable information about the intervention (Neuhauser & Kreps, 2014). Neuhauser and Kreps (2014) discuss how planning and deciding on the whole evaluation process at the beginning of a project when the intervention has never been tested before can be problematic. An evaluation cannot be planned if the intervention is not yet fully planned itself and an intervention cannot be fully planned until it is tested on the intended target group. Neuhauser and Kreps (2014) argued that *Design Science* theory and methods can contribute to an iterative evaluation design where the development and evaluation of an intervention are tightly linked to each other. Feedback regarding problems and possible solutions and revisions is emphasized. There

is no single evaluation design that suits all activities (Blake, 2013; Kreps, 2014b). As Kreps (2014b) discussed, the best evaluation design is the design that collects data from multiple stages of the intervention and that matches the specific characteristics of the intervention that will be evaluated.

Before planning the evaluation, the motivations and reasons for the evaluation need to be clear (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). It also needs to be clear who is responsible for the evaluation and what the aim of the evaluation is. The aims and questions should be anchored with the stakeholders' visions but also with the ideal vision of the intervention. Guerra-Lopez (2007) describes the process of planning for an evaluation and points out that all steps should be linked in a chain and based on the aim of the intervention.

Guerra-Lopez (2007) argues that both internal and external stakeholders should be involved in the planning and execution of the evaluation. Different actors/stakeholders might have different goals and expectations about the evaluation, which can be a barrier for its execution (Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Schneider et al., 2016). It is thus important to know what the expectations are and to discuss at what level they can be fulfilled through the evaluation (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). Making a common goal for the evaluation that both evaluators and stakeholders agree with will facilitate the evaluation. In order to make the data collection easier, persons who are affected by the evaluation should be made part of the planning and execution of the evaluation (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). It is necessary to designate one person to be responsible for leading the evaluation, and it is advisable that such a person has a higher position in the hierarchy of the organization (Schneider et al., 2016).

Hauser (2015) describes the acronym SMART(ER) that can be used as a model for keeping the focus on the goal while doing an evaluation. Using the acronym will make it easier to develop objective measures, and will ensure that the results of the evaluation are objective and reliable. Drucker (1955) is usually given the credit for the acronym, which stands for (Hauser, 2015, p. 97-98):

- S = Specific. The goals need to be clear and unambiguous. The goals should at least answer the question of; why, who, when, where, and what.
- M = Measurable. The goals need to be measurable and in an empirical, preferably quantitative, manner. The means for measuring should be concrete.
- A = Achievable. The goals need to be realistic, sustainable, and reachable with the given resources.
- R = Relevant. The goals need to be relevant and significant for the activity.
- T = Time oriented. The goals need to have a logical, time-bound frequency and endpoint.
- E = Evaluated.
- R = Reviewed.

Evaluation consume resources

When doing evaluations different financial, expertise, and time resources are needed. Huddleston (2010) describes five factors that improve the multi-level success and comprehensiveness of an evaluation – (1) resources in the forms of adequate and consistent funding, (2) expertise of evaluators, (3) strong internal capacity for evaluation, (4) access to information that guides evaluation, for example the *Logic Model*, and (5) flexibility to modify the evaluation plan.

When planning for an intervention, it is essential to think about how to fund the evaluation, in order to ensure that the evaluation can succeed (Schneider et al., 2016). When resources and funding are lacking, evaluations are not prioritized. According to policymakers and evaluation researchers, inadequate funding is a problem for the quality of evaluation (Schneider et al., 2016). They find that

money is allocated to design and implement the intervention, but there is no funding for evaluation in the initial stages. Long-term funding for an intervention can encourage proper evaluations because staff and knowledge will be consistently available (Huddleston, 2010). A multi-level intervention with different stakeholders and areas requires more complex evaluations. Huddleston (2010) suggests that in such cases having one sole source of funding, or merging the different sources, is highly advisable in order to minimize the administrative burden and to improve the cohesion in the intervention. No funding allocation, or scarce financial resources, prevents external evaluations from being performed (Moreau, 2012; Schneider et al., 2016).

Good evaluations demands competent evaluators. According to Moreau (2012), evaluators need to know (a) the various forms of evaluation, (b) how context influences evaluation, (c) why they are doing the evaluation, (d) the various approaches for evaluation, and (e) the consequences of evaluation.

Short timeframes for evaluation are a limitation well known by policymakers, academics and evaluation researchers (Schneider et al., 2016), and it should be taken into account that complex evaluations and complex analyses require even more time.

Methods used in evaluation

Many different designs and methods can be employed to do an evaluation, but simply put evaluations are just comparisons between expectations and results (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). According to Proudfoot et al. (2011), there are three components that evaluations should investigate – efficacy, effectiveness, and readiness for mass dissemination, including cost-efficiency. Kreps (2014a) argues that an economic analysis of the benefits and costs determines the relative value of the intervention. There are different types of evaluation (e.g. process, outcome, formative, summative, cost-effectiveness, etc.), and which of these to choose depends on the aim of the evaluation (Longest, 2015).

The method to be employed by the evaluation needs to be decided on early (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). The measurable indicators, or the observable phenomena, need to be chosen along with the data sources, data collection instruments, and data analysis tools. The questions to be addressed with the evaluation should be based on the aims and objectives of the intervention that is being evaluated (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). To answer the aim and the questions of the evaluation, data needs to be collected. The questions proposed decide what kinds of data are needed, and questions should not be chosen in the basis of the data that are already available. The data to be collected need to address the questions, must be trustworthy, and must be consistent over time. It is possible though, to use information that already exist within the organizations, for example, strategic plans, project plans, reports, and financial information (Guerra-Lopez, 2007).

After deciding what data are needed, the methods to collect that data can then be selected. The kinds of instruments necessary to collect data depend on the sources that will provide the data. The reverse is also true, and the instruments that are employed will affect the data collection. When collecting the data, it is important that variables are properly operationalized and validated so that it is ensured that they measure what they are supposed to measure. Kreps (2014a) argues that there is a tendency for evaluators to use existing validated research tools and standardized scales they are familiar with even if such tools are not appropriate to measure the relevant variables that the evaluation requires.

Evaluations can use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods (Hauser, 2015). Qualitative and quantitative data can be used as complements to each other, and together they allow an in depth and precise analysis (Bonell et al., 2012; Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Kreps, 2014a). The best evaluation research

applies multiple methods, for example surveys, text analysis, and experiments among others (Kreps, 2014a; Kreps, 2014b; Moreau, 2012). Different methods have different strengths and weaknesses, and by combining them it is possible to obtain a richer description of the intervention. Kreps (2014a) argues that cross-sectional data are used too often in evaluations and in general only gives a partial impression of the intervention outcomes. When doing an evaluation, it is advisable to establish different measurement moments, the most basic being the baseline so that there is something to compare the results to (Kreps, 2014a). A pre-post experimental design is an ideal choice (Kreps, 2014a). Experimental methods, especially randomized control trials (RCTs), allow one to answer cause-effect questions (Bonell et al., 2012). However, RCTs have been criticized for not being able to specify for whom, how, and under what circumstances an intervention is working. In this context, Bonell et al. (2012) suggested realist RCTs because in this way mechanism of change can be uncovered and *Program Theories* can be validated.

In addition to the problem with cross-sectional studies, Kreps (2014a) thinks there is an over-reliance on self-reported data. When using self-reported data, it is advisable to have other information available in order to be able to triangulate and validate the data (Kreps, 2014a; Kreps, 2014b). Kreps (2014a) additionally claims that there is an over-reliance on shallow data that does not provide essential information for the evaluations.

Another consideration within the topic of methods is the problem of representativeness of the samples. When selecting individuals to be the object of evaluations, it is important that sampling strategies achieve the best possible representative sample of the population (Kreps, 2014a).

Evaluations methods for specific situations

Two specific situations were found in the literature that deserve special attention. Huddleston (2010) discusses the evaluation of multi-level interventions and Moreau (2012) discusses the evaluation of a family-centered-service approach.

When multi-level interventions are evaluated, there are some elements to be considered in addition to the ordinary considerations and steps. Each level of the intervention needs a plan and a data collection, and needs to undergo a process evaluation. The activities at different levels should be linked along with the short, intermediate and long-term outcomes. It is important to clearly defined and reliably measure the outcomes (Huddleston, 2010).

Moreau (2012) investigated the evaluation of pediatric programs and the use of a family-centered-service approach and developed a theoretical framework in which the central component is intervention evaluation. Intervention evaluation assesses needs, theories, processes, impacts, and efficiency. Furthermore, there are four other evaluation concepts that influence the central component, namely context, purposes, nature of practice, and consequences (Moreau, 2012). These concepts influence each other. To improve the evaluation of the family-centered-service approach, Moreau (2012) suggests increasing the families' involvement in the evaluation process. However, practitioners need more training in how to engage families in the intervention design and evaluation. The essence of Moreau's (2012) thesis is that there is not one evaluation process that fits all kinds of interventions and that the evaluation should be adapted to the specifics of the intervention.

Using checklists for evaluation

In contrast with the previous arguments advocating the individualization of interventions, other authors defend the use of standardized instruments. Longest (2015) argues that when doing an evaluation an overarching framework can be useful in organizing and conducting the evaluation. An evaluation framework can help the evaluators to produce more useful information with higher quality and credibility. It also helps the evaluators to be more time- and resource effective. Kost, Reider, Stephens, and Schuff (2012) emphasize that to improve the evaluation of a certain type of interventions a standard outcome measure should be developed and used. This standard must take into account the complexity and heterogeneity among that specific type of interventions. One of the benefits would be high comparability between interventions of the same type. Proudfoot et al. (2011) created a framework of guidelines that can assist in the executions, reporting, and evaluation of Internet-based interventions. They make it clear that Internet-based interventions are a quite new field and that more research work is needed before extending the framework for use by everyone in the field. The guidelines consist of 12 different facets. The first facets focus on making it thoroughly clear what kind of intervention it is, who is responsible for the design, who the target group are, how it is implemented, and if there is any ethical issues when applying it. Another facet in the framework is to make sure that the *Theory of Change* underlying the intervention is clearly described and that the expected outcomes are discussed. The last facet is intervention evaluation and discusses how the measurement of efficacy, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness should be done. Proudfoot et al. (2011) claim that the lack of a commonly used framework makes it hard to compare different activities and that this leads to conceptual and methodological difficulties with evaluation. Blake (2013) conducted a meta-evaluation on the Guerra-Lopez Impact Evaluation Process (IEP), which is a tool developed with the purpose of evaluating interventions. She found that the IEP produces evaluations of good quality and that using criteria can help to guide evaluators in the right direction so that they are able to produce valid and reliable data.

Contrary to the previous authors, Gorman (2019) advises against the use of lists of criteria that need to be fulfilled during an evaluation. The use of such lists can lead to poor evaluations because intervention designers and evaluators might feel tempted to work as little as possible in order to say that the intervention was evaluated. In this context, evaluators might choose to do small-scale experiments to produce isolated statistically significant results or the evaluators might customize the data so that it fulfills the criteria for being “evidence-based”.

Even if researchers have not agreed on the use of specific criteria for evaluation, Schneider et al. (2016) found that policymakers and the persons responsible for the evaluations were hoping for having checklists available.

Use the results of the evaluation to improve the intervention

When data are collected they need to be analyzed. Data analysis is that part of the evaluation in which a large volume of information is organized and summarized in a meaningful way that can be communicated to others (Guerra-Lopez, 2007).

The results of the evaluation should be communicated as soon as they are produced and not be seen as a final product that is disseminated only when the intervention ends (Huddleston, 2010). The reporting of the evaluation should be continuous in order to involve the stakeholders in the process and in that way improve the evaluation (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). Involving the stakeholders in the evaluation process by communicating the ongoing work will improve the chances that the solutions

proposed by the evaluators will be implemented. When developing the report, it is advisable to share drafts with the stakeholders and to ask their opinions and comments (Guerra-Lopez, 2007).

The final report should be easy to understand so that it reaches a wider audience that also can make use of the findings (Huddleston, 2010), and the language and format of the report should be adopted to the audience. There are several considerations when writing an evaluation report (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). First, it is important to identify the key messages of what is needed to be done based on the evaluation and how will it be implemented. Second, distinctions and linkages between recommendations, interpretations, and findings should be transparent, and the decisions for improvement must be based on the findings. Third, it is necessary to state clearly the responsibilities of the stakeholders. If solutions are recommended, it should also be clear which entity should be responsible for what. It is not only the results of the evaluation that need to be reported, and the procedure that the evaluation employed should also be disclosed (Guerra-Lopez, 2007).

As stated above, the results of the evaluation must produce an action plan; otherwise there is no point in performing the evaluation (e. g. Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Hauser, 2015; Kreps, 2014b; Schneider et al., 2016). Guerra-Lopez (2007) developed the following framework for recommending solutions: (1) define the issue to be resolved, (2) identify the requirement for resolving the issue, (3) identify possible alternatives, (4) identify pros and cons (including estimated costs), (5) rank alternatives, and (6) make decisions.

Any change or improvement of an intervention as a result of an evaluation should rely on rational explanations of why such changes are helpful and necessary (Hauser, 2015). The results of an evaluation are useful for improving the intervention if the stakeholders and decision makers believe the results (Hauser, 2015). Additionally, stakeholders and decision makers need to agree and decide on what needs to change and to take action so that the improvement actually happens. In some cases it can be useful if the persons who have suggested the changes oversee their implementation (Hauser, 2015).

Conflicts of interests

Evaluation can be both internal and external. Internal evaluation means that it is performed by those who designed and by those who implemented the intervention. External evaluation means that it is executed by persons or organizations that are not directly engaged in the development and implementation. Sanders, Kirby, Toumbourou, Carey, and Havighurst (2019) describes two ways of doing evaluation – developer-led and independent. Both ways have strengths and weaknesses, and the authors argue that neither one is better than the other. Using both ways at the same time reduces bias in the research process and improves knowledge of the effectiveness of the intervention (Sanders et al., 2019). Guerra-Lopez (2007) and Kerps (2014b) argue that involving key stakeholders improves the evaluation because they reinforce the collection of meaningful data and contribute to the suggestions for improvements. Huddleston (2010) emphasizes that having access to external evaluators is not enough, and there should be an internal group of trained and easily contacted evaluators who can assist in getting access to and handling data.

Conversely, Gorman (2019) argues that developers and stakeholders should not evaluate their own interventions. For Gorman, an external evaluation from a third party ensures the quality of the intervention because designers and stakeholders might give more emphasis to the positive results. Policymakers and evaluation researchers advocate the necessity of knowledge and skills to perform the evaluations (Schneider et al., 2016). It is not only the evaluators who need to have knowledge in

evaluations, but the persons who develop the intervention should also have that knowledge in order to make evaluations happen and to ensure the evaluability of the interventions. Policymakers and evaluation researchers emphasize that when a more complex evaluation is needed, it should be done by experts. For example, when multi-level interventions are evaluated it can be good to at least consult an external evaluator who has the experience in working with large-scale and complex evaluations (Huddleston, 2010). Moreover, external evaluators usually improve the credibility and objectivity (Moreau, 2012).

As in any other research setting, when doing evaluations of interventions it is important that evaluators put their own personal attributes and biases to the side (Kreps, 2014a) and avoid situations that might affect their objectivity (Hauser, 2015). It is also important to consider any possible conflict of interest (Sanders et al., 2019). Political, personal, financial, academic relationships can all be conflicts of interest. Sanders et al. (2019) discuss how conflicts of interest need to be handled. It is important to avoid bias, and it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that any possible conflict of interest is thought of and handled. If it is not managed effectively, the research findings might not be valid and might not be able to be replicated. To anticipate and manage issues regarding conflicts of interest Sanders et al. (2019) developed a checklist containing six different tasks – (1) identify intellectual property and ownership, (2) clarify any conflicts of interest, (3) prepare a conflict of interest disclosure statement, (4) use the conflict of interest disclosure statement to document issues and interests, (5) publicize the conflict of interest disclosure, and (6) regularly review conflict of interest disclosures (Sanders et al., 2019, p. 7).

If there are external evaluation pressures from stakeholders, these need to be handled in the evaluation (e.g. Hauser, 2015). For example, politicians might try to influence the evaluation so that it fits their political interests (Schneider et al., 2016). According to policymakers and evaluation researchers, politicians might ask for specific results from the evaluation. Politicians distribute resources and might decide if, when and how an evaluation takes place. The time to the next election might also affect the timeframe for the evaluation if there is pressure to know the results before the election.

In sum, ethics is another aspect to take into account when planning and executing and evaluation. Hauser (2015) identifies five basic components to guide evaluators – systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, and responsibilities for general and public welfare.

Culture of evaluation

Kreps (2014b) argues that it is better to do some kind of evaluation, even if it is a small-scale evaluation, than no evaluation at all. The funders should always require that interventions are evaluated (Huddleston, 2010). Accordingly, funders need to provide necessary financial support and to facilitate cooperation with experts. Doing so will increase the chances that the evaluation is completed. Another way of promoting evaluation is to integrate it within the intervention (Schneider et al., 2016). Evaluations can be used to build continual improvement in organizations and a self-evaluation framework can be of great usefulness (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). Neuhauser and Kreps (2014) argue that the process of identifying problems, developing solutions (i.e., interventions), and performing evaluations should be done continuously. Kost et al. (2012) emphasize that to improve the evaluation of interventions, these should be framed as an evolving process where existing data sources are gathered to evaluate the impact of the ongoing intervention. Even though several authors emphasize the importance of doing continuous evaluation and that evaluations should be a part of the

intervention, Schneider et al. (2016) found that, in general, there are time limitations to making evaluation part of the everyday work.

Persons involved in the intervention might be afraid of evaluations because they feel threatened when their work is criticized and might perceive that the whole project is in jeopardy (Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Hauser, 2015). In interviews with policymakers and evaluation researchers, it was found that negative evaluations are feared, especially for large-scale interventions (Schneider et al., 2016). The personnel fear that program funding will be withdrawn or not renewed if the evaluation produces negative outcomes. It is therefore important that managers make clear that the aim of evaluations is not to find someone to blame or a scape-goat but rather to uncover the positive aspects of the intervention and to identify areas for improvement (Guerra-Lopez, 2007; Hauser, 2015; Kreps, 2014a; Kreps, 2014b; Longest, 2015). Performing good evaluations can save time and money (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). It is often more cost-effective to do an evaluation instead of just implementing interventions without knowing if they work or not. The results of the evaluations, therefore, must be used. Otherwise the evaluation is a waste of time and resources (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). Policymakers and evaluation researchers reported the frustration that arises when nothing changes subsequent to an evaluation (Schneider et al., 2016). A good evaluation aims to improve the performance of the intervention, and if the evaluation finds something is not working it should be able to tell what is wrong, why and what must be done to improve it (Guerra-Lopez, 2007). Those who use the evaluation should submit it to critical appraisal (Hauser, 2015) and should take into consideration the entire evaluative process and the quality of the evaluation product.

ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How are interventions aimed at crime prevention evaluated in the EU Member States?

The first concern regarding the evaluation of interventions is their evaluability. The capacity of an intervention to be evaluated is directly related to the quality of the needs assessment and the development of a *Program Theory* and a suitable *Logic Model* aligned with the objectives and the crime problem that the intervention was designed to prevent.

We found that needs assessments are in general unstructured and done by professionals working in the area, but lack the methodological support of experts in crime prevention. A small portion of the participants even reported that needs assessment did not occur at all and that the decision to implement the intervention resulted from managerial and political pressures. During the interviews, participants revealed that needs assessments are occasionally the result of a feeling among the professionals that something must be done even without any statistical evidence for such reasoning. In such context two questions immediately come up; *to what degree is the crime problem that the intervention is supposed to prevent known by those responsible for designing and implementing the intervention* and *what objectives are proposed to prevent a crime problem that has not been properly studied?* The lack of detailed knowledge about what the problem is and what needs it produces are obstacles for appropriate alignment, and therefore the evaluability of the intervention is compromised. Crime problem analyses and needs assessments are part of the design of an intervention, and the scientific quality of the intervention depends on it.

Needs assessment is at the core an analytical procedure. The objective is to gain knowledge about what needs to be done and therefore cannot be considered a prevention activity by itself, contrary to what was disclosed in the interviews.

A second finding of this study indicates that the great majority of interventions were tailored to address particular crime problems and needs and thus, as we mentioned above, were not likely to be well known. Other interventions, although inspired by previously developed ones, introduced major changes in order to adapt them to the specific circumstances. This indicates that crime prevention practice in the EU is not taking advantage of validated and scientifically demonstrated work. As long as this is the case, it will be necessary to employ resources and skilled manpower in developing and testing interventions before applying them to large groups of the population.

More than 50% of the participants reported that the development of the interventions that they implemented made no use of any particular theoretical or empirical foundation. Furthermore, more than 40% of the participants reported that the crime prevention mechanisms underlying the intervention were not identified *a priori*. This most likely leads to a second problem of alignment between the objectives and the activities. The *Logic Model* runs the risk not being at all logical and once again the evaluability of the interventions is compromised.

The intervention outcomes were formally evaluated in only 44% of the cases, while 36% had been informally evaluated, and 10% reported not being evaluated at all. This is not good news. Our crime prevention vaccines might be closer to innocuous home remedies, or to harmful biological weapons, than to miracle cures. Why would managers and policy-makers want to employ resources in doing something for which there is no evidence for its efficacy? Are the crime rates in the EU countries the result of our inefficient interventions and strategies? These questions naturally arise from the analysis of the information of our study.

The good news is that in general the experience of doing evaluations was seen as positive and necessary by both those participants whose interventions had been evaluated and by those whose interventions had not. Three arguments in favor of doing an evaluation emerged during the interviews – (1) provides feedback that can be used to improve the intervention and avoid pitfalls, (2) it is a driving force to further develop the intervention, and (3) it motivates the persons who implement the intervention. However, it was also suggested that evaluations might be considered a bureaucratic burden when someone says that an evaluation must be done without explaining its purpose. When resources are scarce, evaluations are not seen as a priority and practitioners might have negative attitudes towards evaluations if they perceived that the results of the evaluations not useful for improving the interventions.

The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire revealed that, in general, informal evaluation is carried out by persons involved in the design and implementation of the interventions. Although experience in the field and in planning interventions is a plus for any evaluation team, the competence of these professionals to properly plan the evaluation is not beyond question. If managers and policy-makers insist on considering interventions that have not been formally evaluated as acceptable, we must put effort into educating these professionals on evaluation theory, methodology, and practice.

Participants who reported that the interventions had not been evaluated, indicated factors such as difficulty in having access to the necessary data, the high cost of the evaluation, the large amount of time that the evaluation requires, and the lack of involvement of the involved parties. These are all factors that managers need to take into account if they want to encourage and develop an evaluation culture within their organizations. Furthermore, the only indicator that showed an increase likelihood for an evaluation to occur was if the intervention had a budget allocation for the evaluation, most likely because the evaluation was a requirement for receiving the funding. Participants reported, however, that even when the evaluation is a requirement it is not always carried out.

Factors such as the type of institution responsible for implementing the intervention or the type of intervention in itself did not have an impact on the practice of evaluation. This suggests that any potential solution for encouraging the evaluation of interventions must be applied across all institutions and organizations responsible for crime prevention practice in the EU, without exception.

Are process evaluations being carried out in the Member States? If so, how?

The formal monitoring of the implementation process (i.e., the formal evaluation and registration of different indicators) was performed in less than 50% of the cases. Important indicators such as whether the intervention was implemented as planned and whether the persons in the target group were engaged with the intervention were monitored in only 53.8% and 54.1% of the cases respectively. Other indicators such as obstacles the intervention was encountering during the implementation and the level of satisfaction of the personnel and persons in the target group with the intervention were formally monitored in only a minority of cases.

Informal process evaluation is done, for example, through conversations with persons on the team that implements the intervention or with persons in the target group and is based on their perceptions of whether the intervention is working or not. Although these conversations may produce important information about the process of delivery, they need to be systematically registered, analyzed, and triangulated with data from other sources.

It is concerning that process evaluation is not always seen as necessary, mainly in small projects where the team that designs the intervention is also responsible for its implementation. Furthermore, interventions that have short implementation periods are also seen as lacking a need to go through monitoring. When evaluation is an obligation but is not encouraged, the task is carried out but our respondents questioned the quality of such evaluations.

Are outcome evaluations being carried out in the Member States? If so, how?

As we stated before, only 44% of the interventions had been formally evaluated. This percentage could be higher because in some cases it was not known if the interventions had, in fact, been formally evaluated. However, even if that were the case for all of the unknown cases (10%), the percentage would still be low.

In this section we make reference only to those interventions that were formally evaluated.

Only in one third of the cases had the outcome evaluation been budgeted within the initial budget of the intervention. Taking into account that the allocation of financial resources increases the likelihood of an intervention to being formally evaluated, managers and policy makers should rethink budget allocation in order to guarantee that evaluation is considered when planning for the intervention.

The majority of the projects that were formally evaluated had planned the evaluation before the implementation period. Likewise, for the majority of the cases, the criteria for evaluating the outcomes had been defined beforehand, and almost 90% of the participants reported that there had been a concern to align the evaluation with the objectives of the intervention. This is positive and shows that a sector of the crime prevention work in the EU is following evidence-based practice. Our effort should be focused on extending this practice to as many interventions as possible.

Almost 30% of the cases indicated that the outcome evaluation involved external evaluators, and when we asked at what time the external evaluators were involved, only 26% reported that they were involved during the planning stage. This means that although a majority of the evaluations had been planned while planning the intervention, external evaluators were only enrolled later in the process. This raises the concern that those who are not involved from the beginning might find shortcomings in the planning that might hinder a proper evaluation (e.g., lack of measurement of essential indicators at baseline).

Our participants pointed out advantages of doing evaluations internally. The persons in charge of the evaluation know the intervention better and improvements can take place faster because the results of the evaluation are known sooner than when the evaluation is performed externally. The participants pointed out as negative aspects of internal evaluations the fact that methodological expertise is lacking, and that objectivity might be compromised when evaluating co-workers. The lack of expertise was the strongest motive to enroll external evaluators. One aspect revealed by the participants in the interviews was that managers must take into account that the professionals are more encouraged to do an evaluation when it is reinforced by positive appreciation.

A large number of formal evaluations included some type of quantitative and qualitative data, which is positive. Likewise, the majority of the evaluations involved some type of structured tool to do the data collection, from which the majority were developed purposefully, therefore requiring them to be validated. However, in less than 50% of the cases were these tools validated before applying them.

Regarding to the scientific design employed in the evaluations, less than 20% employed experimental or quasi-experimental designs. The great majority used pre-post designs without a control group. Taking into account that the majority of the interventions had been tailored to address the needs of or had introduced major changes in previously developed interventions, we would expect extensive work in testing and validation involving experimental designs before applying the intervention to a target population. This does not seem to be the case. The question is, then, are we inoculating the population with our anti-crime vaccines before making sure that they are useful? Harmless, ineffective interventions are a waste of resources, but that is not the biggest of our problems. Only 50% of the participants indicated that the formal evaluations included the measurement of possible unintentional effects. In sum, in many cases we do not know if the interventions are useful, if they are harmless, or if they have unintentional effects that can produce more problems than the ones we are trying to solve.

Factors such as lack of involvement of all the parties (e.g., stakeholders, persons of the target group, etc.), the large amount of time required to do the evaluation, difficulty in getting access to the necessary data, and the lack of expertise among the people responsible for the evaluation were seen as factors that negatively impacted the outcome evaluation. In general, the participants perceived obstacles to performing evaluations to be the difficulty in identifying which data are necessary in order to perform the evaluation properly, how the different indicators should be measured, and how to collect the necessary data. This reflects a lack of knowledge in methodology. In addition, the lack of time to properly plan for the evaluation, the lack of awareness about the necessity of doing it, problems related to data protection, and the difficulty in getting access to certain data, were also brought up as obstacles.

What are the best practices when it comes to evaluation?

Six areas are essential for moving in the direction of best practices.

1- The evaluation must rely on the objectives, the *Program Theory*, and the *Logic Model* of the intervention. Before starting to plan for the evaluation, the intervention should be put under the lens of the microscope to determine its evaluability. The evaluator needs to know the crime problem and the results of the needs assessment in order to make a first judgement about the suitability of the objectives. Furthermore, the evaluator should review the *Program Theory* to make sure that the preventive mechanisms underlying the intervention can in fact be useful to preventing the crime problem. Afterwards, the evaluator judges the appropriateness of the *Logic Model* on the basis of the alignment between needs, objectives, resources, activities, and expected outcomes. Only after that can the evaluator define the evaluation questions.

2- The evaluation must be planned at the same time that the intervention is designed. Therefore, if the evaluators are external personnel, they should be enrolled at very early stages. Working as a consultant, the evaluator can be a precious asset for developing a well-designed evidence-based intervention. The work of the evaluator is parallel to the work of the intervention designers. Furthermore, evaluations must engage stakeholders in an active way.

3- The objectives and the expected outcomes define the evaluation questions and how to measure the indicators. The evaluation questions must be concise and must address each of the objectives individually. The indicators should be carefully chosen because they allow a final judgment about the level at which the objectives were achieved. In the case of multi-level interventions, the evaluation plan should reflect their complexity, should evaluate each of the levels, and should use a common

indicator to determine the impact of the whole strategy. The evaluator should provide a report in which the rationality for choosing the questions and the indicators is explained.

4- The methodology of research design and analysis must be adequate for the objectives of the evaluation, and the instruments and tools used for measurement need to be validated before applying them. Here again, the evaluator must provide rational explanations for the motives for choosing the selected methodology and the methodology's advantages and disadvantages. Eventually, the evaluator might provide alternative plans for evaluation indicating the level of evidence for each of the plans.

5- The intervention should be test before extensive implementation. The evaluation must test the capacity of the intervention to address the crime problem and the cost to do so, as well as any side effects the intervention might have. Crime prevention professionals and managers must think of interventions as any other product that can affect human health or wellbeing. Three questions are critical for making rational decisions about any product, *What is the product useful for? How much will it cost? Is it safe?* These same questions are the ultimate goal of the evaluation of crime prevention interventions.

6- Evaluations must be ethical and legal. There are constraints to the design of research and data collection. It is not ethical to expose people to situations that might entail hazards. It is also not ethical to subject individuals to unnecessary measurements or observations. The use of personal and sensitive data needs to be justified. Evaluations need to be transparent in terms of their methods in order to ensure that they can be replicated. The results of the evaluation must be communicated to those directly interested in its results, but also to the community at large, without burying or disguising unwanted outcomes. Conflicts of interest need to be dealt with beforehand.

Are there any specific shortcomings in the performance of evaluations in the Member States? How can any shortcomings be remedied?

Our findings indicate that a small percentage of respondents reported good practices when doing evaluations. We also found that there is an openness to evaluate the interventions. However, we identified many shortcomings that need to be addressed if we want crime prevention in the EU to be based on best practices. These shortcoming are directly related to gaps in four major areas:

1- Lack of education on the methodology of evaluation by those responsible for doing it when evaluations are done internally. Managers should decide between appointing external experts, who are able to provide evaluations of high quality, each time they need to evaluate an intervention or to educate their own professionals. In one way or another, it is necessary to guarantee the competence of the people who design, implement and evaluate crime prevention interventions. The education should imply academic literacy jointly with effective practice on crime prevention and on evaluation. It is necessary to master the principles of design science, prevention science, and criminology and to know how to apply them effectively. Furthermore, it is necessary that managers, stakeholders and policy-makers have enough knowledge to understand what evaluators do and to be able to communicate with them. Encouraging a culture of evaluation among institutions and organizations would help to intensify the evidence-based crime prevention practice, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our practices, and to make our work more valuable for individuals, communities, and governments.

2- Lack of personnel. Evaluation requires the employment of human resources. Although planning for the evaluation can be done by one person or a small group of experts, the implementation of the evaluation procedures, especially the data collection, requires manpower. Whether or not the team employed to do the data collection is the same that implements the intervention, the time for performing the evaluation tasks should be calculated separately. The planning of the evaluation should indicate the personnel that are required to execute each of the evaluation tasks in each of the follow-ups or evaluation periods. The managers should ensure the availability of sufficient resources to accomplish the evaluation plan. The quality of the evaluation depends on it. Moreover, the evaluation plan should disclose the strategy for enrolling stakeholders and persons in the target group and to keep them enrolled as long as necessary.

3- Lack of financial resources. Evaluation costs money, and good intentions are not enough. The budget of the evaluation should be calculated apart of the budget of the intervention. Managers should ensure that the evaluation will be financed before they decide to go ahead with the implementation of the intervention. No matter whether the intervention and evaluation receive financial support from different funding budgets, it is important to secure the evaluation funding as soon as possible before the intervention starts. Funds from the evaluation should not be diverted to the intervention. It is not a matter of priority as some of our participants suggested. If financial resources for the evaluation are not available then the intervention should be delayed or canceled.

4- Lack of access to data. Access to necessary data was pointed out as a problem by the participants in our study. As we stated before, the evaluation plan should provide logical arguments about the data required to do the evaluation properly. As a matter of ethics, unnecessary data should not be requested or collected. It might be necessary, for example, to have access to detailed crime statistics, social profiles of young offenders, financial information of groups of people, etc.

In sum, there are specific shortcomings in the performance of evaluations of crime prevention interventions that can only be solved if all parties take evaluation seriously.

How can the EUCPN support the Member States further in their evaluation activities?

The EUCPN is a referent within the EU for practitioners and managers working in crime prevention. The network has already developed several projects to encourage and support the practice of evaluation and has long been promoting a culture of evaluation. From our perspective, it is essential to strengthen the network and to increase its competencies in education, research, and different services, so that it can close the gaps between the EU Member States when carrying out evaluation.

The EUCPN can further support the Member States by increasing its offering of educational resources. Organizing workshops and seminars where professionals can learn and practice the principles and methods of evaluation is one way to do this, and arranging meetings where the professionals in different organizations and different countries can exchange experiences is another. Writing documentation and manuals and making them available in the local language was suggested by the participants in our study. Elaborating a best practices manual and operationalizing the manual in a tool, digitally if possible, would reinforce the message and promote a culture of evaluation.

The network could have a consultant role in the planning of evaluations, perhaps not at an individual level, but by being an advisor for managers and eventually for evaluators. Because language might be a barrier, the network could work hierarchically to promote the education of those persons responsible for educating others within their own countries.

In its role as a model for the organizations working in crime prevention within the Member States, the EUCPN has a responsibility to continue promoting research as was done in this study. Identifying needs, gaps, and strengths is the way to find solutions. Supporting Member States in doing research in more detail within their borders can further help to find individualized solutions.

Another way of helping the Member States would be by making a compilation of those interventions implemented in the EU that indicate best practices and by classifying them on the basis of their quality. In this way the network would facilitate crime prevention practitioners in applying interventions already developed by others instead of going through the process of developing, testing, and implementing a new intervention. Those who would apply the intervention would evaluate its external validity and extend it to other contexts, contributing to strengthening ties among the Member States. Likewise, the compilation of validated and reliable evaluation tools translated into local languages would be a valuable resource.

The participants in our study also suggested that the network could act by channeling funds specifically for use in the evaluation of crime prevention interventions.

Are there any additional research needs when it comes to the evaluation of interventions aimed at crime prevention?

After completing this study, it is our opinion that there are two areas that should be prioritized for further research on evaluation – the evaluability of the interventions and the competence of the organizations to perform such evaluations. From our point of view, we do not need to discuss anymore whether it is necessary to evaluate the interventions in crime prevention or not. Although the results of our study indicate that there is still a long way to go to achieve full commitment in every organization working in the field, and that the EU still lacks a culture of evaluation in crime prevention, in general people are aware and receptive to the idea of performing evaluations. We think that in the medium- to long -term, all interventions in crime prevention will eventually be evaluated. Our concern now is with the quality of such evaluations, with evaluability and competence being two crucial topics to discuss. Here, again, the example of vaccines is illustrative. First, the medical community would not inoculate the population with a product that had not been tested through the highest standards of quality, and second no government would leave the testing in the hands of secondary school biochemistry teachers. Although very few of us know exactly how the vaccines were developed and tested, we have the greatest confidence that they conform to rigorous standards of quality and we blindly surrender our children to the hands of the health care system. Citizens should have the same confidence in our capability to protect them from criminal activity.

Evaluability, as we stated before, is the capacity of an intervention to be evaluated. Ideally, the evaluators should be involved in the intervention from the beginning during the stages of problem and situation analysis and should advise on the development of the intervention's *Program Theory* and *Logic Model*. This forward-looking approach as we showed in the introduction is the best way to guarantee that all the components of the intervention are aligned and that the evaluation will produce reliable indicators of the intervention's efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency. Nonetheless, as we perceive from the outcomes of this study, the forward-looking approach does not seem to be commonly employed. When the evaluator becomes involved with the intervention in later stages of development, during the implementation, or after the implementation period ends, he or she needs to go through the process backwards. This approach leaves the evaluator without the possibility of introducing any amendments and often without the possibility of measuring essential indicators of the changes produced by the intervention. The quality of the evaluation might be severely compromised

in such circumstances. Therefore, from our perspective, future research should choose random interventions that are being implemented in the Member States and should make evaluability assessments in order to estimate how good or how bad the conditions are for carrying out evaluations.

The results of our study seems to also indicate that only a small proportion of interventions are using proper methods of design and analysis to produce the evaluation. Besides the problem of lack of resources, we suspect that this might be due to the lack of competence among the persons responsible for the evaluation. Lack of competence means lack of knowledge and lack of experience in applying proper methodology and theory. Although the professionals are open to and understand the necessity of evaluating the interventions, good will is not enough. In the same way that we would not commission the testing of vaccines to the biochemistry teacher, we should not leave the evaluation of crime prevention interventions in the hands of persons who lack expertise. It would not be fair for them or for those who place their confidence in the institutions that are supposed to protect them from crime. Therefore, future research should randomly choose crime prevention interventions and measure the level of knowledge in methodology and theory of evaluation, as well as the experience of performing evaluations among those whom the organizations delegates such responsibility. This will allow us to classify the organizations in terms of their competence to perform evaluation work.

When the evaluability of the programs is high, the professionals are competent to perform the evaluations and there are enough resources available, quality is then just a matter of good practice.

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ANNEX – PROJECTS PARTICIPATING IN THE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

(The name of the interventions were translated to English using Google Translate)

Austria	
Dialogue instead of hate	Dialog Statt Hass
Crime prevention in the field of computer and internet crime	Kriminalprävention im Bereich der Computer- und Internetkriminalität
Watchlist Internet, www.watchlist-internet.at	Watchlist Internet, www.watchlist-internet.at
Belgium	
Expert session April 18th Brussels EUCPN on High Impact Crime	Expert session April 18th Brussels EUCPN on High Impact Crime
Preventing nuisance	Voorkomen van overlast
ODAS drug prevention	Prévention drogues ODAS
Prevention of social nuisance	Preventie sociale overlast
Online early detection of individuals vulnerable to extremism	Online vroegdetectie van individuen kwetsbaar voor extremisme
Feminist self-defense	Autodéfense féministe
Bulgaria	
Prevention of gender-based domestic violence	Превенция на основаното на полов признак домашно насилие
Effective criminal law strategies and practices to combat gender-based domestic violence in Eastern Europe	Ефективни наказателноправни стратегии и практики за борба с основаното на полов признак домашно насилие в Източна Европа
Croatia	
Together against hate speech and hooliganism	Zajedno protiv govora mržnje i huliganizma
Cyprus	
Prevention against drugs	ΠΡΟΛΗΨΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΝΑΡΚΩΤΙΚΩΝ
"Neighborhood watching" program	ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ "ΠΑΡΑΤΗΡΗΤΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΓΕΙΤΟΝΙΑΣ"
Parent prevention program "Adolescent Skills"	Πρόγραμμα Πρόληψης για γονείς "Δεξιότητες για την Εφηβεία"
Protocol of cooperation governing the procedure for referral of youth arrested by the Cyprus police (YKAN) to the mental health services and non-state treatment centers	Πρωτόκολλο Συνεργασίας που Διέπει τη Διαδικασία για Παραπομπή Νεαρών Συλληφθέντων από την Αστυνομία Κύπρου – YKAN σε Θεραπευτικά Κέντρα του ΟΚΥΠΥ Διεύθυνσης Υπηρεσιών Ψυχικής Υγείας και σε Μη Κρατικά Θεραπευτικά Κέντρα
Crime prevention	Crime Prevention
Czech Republic	
Brně city crime prevention program -2018	Městský program prevence kriminality v Brně v roce 2018
On the Right Path! II A project of Operational Programme Employment (European Social Fund)	On the Right Path! II A project of Operational Programme Employment (European Social Fund)
Crime prevention project "Senior in Cyberspace"	Projekt prevence kriminality "Senior v kyberprostoru"
Denmark	
My digital self-defense	Mit digitale selvforsvar

Social Bearing - Working with Social Exaggerations / Social Norms	Social pejling - arbejde med sociale overdrivelser/Social Norms
Conflict Wire Impact Project	Konfliktråd Impact Project
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	Funktionel Familieterapi (FFT)
Night names - see https://natteravnene.dk/	Natteravnene - se evt. https://natteravnene.dk/
Social search	Socialsøg
Co-Creation: Break the food chain to the gangs	Co-Creation: Bryd Fødekedden til banderne
Hjørring Free of Burglary	Hjørring Fri for Indbrud
Co-creation initiative regarding young people's parties / journey at Vigen beach park in Roskilde municipality.	Co-creation initiativ vedrørende unges fester/færden på Vigen strandpark i Roskilde kommune.
Drug and gang relationship at Bornholm	Narkotika- og banderelation på Bornholm
Fist zone - zero drug Næstved	Næverzone - nul narko Næstved
Joint Emergency Team (FUT)	Fælles udrykningsteam (FUT)
Work to minimize recruitment to gang environments from the SUB areas	arbejde med at minimere rekruttering til bandemiljøerne fra SUB-områderne
Social search	social søg
Pilot project concerning concerns with the 18+ target group v. Copenhagen Police, the Local Police Department, the Crime Prevention Section	Pilotprojekt vedr. bekymringssamtaler med 18+ målgruppen v. Københavns Politi, Lokalpolitiafdelingen, Den Kriminalpræventive Sektion
Elderly and safe	Ældre og Tryghed
Estonia	
The cyber defense field of study at Põltsamaa Coeducational Gymnasium	The cyber defence field of study at Põltsamaa Coeducational Gymnasium
Prevention Program VEPA Good Behavior Game	ennetusprogramm VEPA Käitumisoskuste Mäng (Good Behavior Game)
Neighborhood Watch	Naabrivalve
Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) program	Mitmedimensioonilise pereteraapia (MDFT) programm
Neighborhood Watch	Naabrivalve
Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT)	Mitmedimensiooniline pereteraapia (MDFT)
Finland	
[No name]	
Shoe	Antura
Security survey and co-creation experiments to decrease the feeling of insecurity	Security survey and co-creation experiments to decrease the feeling of insecurity
Asylum and Refugee Support Center	Turvapaikanhakijoiden ja pakolaisten tukikeskus
Naapuruusovittelu / community mediation	Naapuruusovittelu/yhteisöovittelu
Developing a children's law enforcement network: Preventing and combating serious crimes against children by: 1) finding and training children's law enforcement lawyers	Lasten oikeusturvaverkoston kehittäminen: lapsiin kohdistuvien vakavien rikosten ennaltaehkäiseminen ja torjunta seuraavin

interested in children's rights 2) launching a children's law enforcement network, 3) opening an information service for victims 4) cases where a serious crime against a child is suspected but is not properly investigated	tavoit: 1) lasten oikeuksista kiinnostuneiden juristien etsintä ja koulutus lasten oikeusturvakysymyksistä 2)lasten oikeusturvaverkoston, juristiverkoston käynnistäminen 3) tietopalvelun avaaminen tapauksiin, joissa rikoksen kohteeksi joutunut lapsi jäänyt ilman apua 4) maksuton juristineuvonta tapauksiin, joissa epäillä lapsen kohdistuvaa vakavaa rikosta, mutta rikosepäilyä ei tutkita asianmukaisesti
The city belongs to everyone	Kaupunki kuuluu kaikille
We have been involved in a project to prevent fraud and maltreatment of the elderly 2017-2018	Olemme olleet mukana ikääntyneisiin kohdistuneiden petosten ja kaltoinkohtelun ehkäisemisen hankkeessa 2017-2018
Online self-help programme for those who are sexually attracted to children (Child protection and the Finnish hotline Nettivihje, Safe the Children Finland)	Online self-help programme for those who are sexually attracted to children (Child protection and the the Finnish hotline Nettivihje, Safe the Children Finland)
Neighborhood Mediation Center, Finland	Naapurussovittelu, Naapurussovittelun keskus, Suomi
France	
Prevention of delinquency. Decentralize state administration	Prévention de la délinquance. Administration étatique déconcentrée
Germany	
Advice for men - against violence Evaluation house of youth law	Beratung für Männer - gegen Gewalt Evaluation Haus des Jugendrechts
implementation of the prevention strategy "Communities That Care - CTC" in German municipalities	Umsetzung der Präventionsstrategie "Communities That Care - CTC" in deutschen Kommunen
Communities that care	Communities that care
First EU-wide Focus Day on domestic burglary "K-Burglary": prevention by pyramid scheme Police and cooperation partners from the business world launch public campaign on burglary protection www.k-einbruch.de	first EU-wide Focus Day on domestic burglary „K-Einbruch“: Prävention durch Schneeballsystem Polizei und Kooperationspartner aus der Wirtschaft starten Öffentlichkeitskampagne zum Einbruchschutz www.k-einbruch.de
"Hello Grandma, I need money!"	"Hallo Oma, ich brauch' Geld!"
"Security potential in older age; Promotion of security-related action in old age and prevention of fraudulent property offenses against the elderly "	„Sicherheitspotenziale im höheren Lebensalter; Förderung des sicherheitsbezogenen Handelns im Alter und Prävention von betrügerischen Vermögensdelikten an älteren Menschen“
Greece	
POLICE	ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΑ
Planning, implementation, evaluation of anti-crime policy at the Ministry of Citizen Protection	Σχεδιασμός, εφαρμογή, αξιολόγηση αντεγκληματικής πολιτικής στο Υπουργείο Προστασίας Πολίτη

Citizens information seminars on safe internet navigation.

Ημερίδες ενημέρωσης πολιτών για την ασφαλή πλοήγηση στο διαδίκτυο.

Hungary

The right place in bad weather 2.

Rossz időben jó helyen 2.

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county police headquarters

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megyei Rendőr-főkapitányság

Crime Prevention Department

Bűnmegelőzési Osztály

BM-16-MA-0064 "Community Security and Prevention"

BM-16-MA-0064 „Biztonság és Prevenció Közösségi Összefogással”

Implementation of the "Road to Security" project

"Út a biztonsághoz" projekt megvalósítása

Development of a GIS application for the prevention of crime-statistics database.

Prevenációs Bűnözés-Statistikai Adattár térinformatikai alkalmazás fejlesztése.

Child protection program, parent competence development

Gyermekvédelmi program, szülői kompetenciafejlesztés

Unity is strength! - BM-17

Egységben az erő! - BM-17

Application for complex and sustainable reintegration programs at Szombathely national prison institute BM-15-MI-0018 for the implementation of crime prevention projects.

bűnmegelőzési projektek megvalósítására kiírt "Komplex és fenntartható reintegrációs programok indítása a Szombathelyi Országos Büntetés-végrehajtási Intézetben" BM-15-MI-0018 pályázat.

"Everything for safety" competition

"Mindent a biztonságért" pályázat

SPARK. Innovative training for professionals on the basics of re-integration

SZ.I.K.R.A. Szakemberek Innovatív képzése a Reintegráció Alapjairól

Crime prevention programs in Csobád 2017

Bűnmegelőzési programok Csobád településen 2017.

"Reintegration Improvements at the Baranya county prison institute"

„Reintegrációs fejlesztések a Baranya Megyei Büntetés- végrehajtási Intézetben”

BM-15 Crime prevention project "From Guilt to Consciousness"

BM-15 Bűnmegelőzési projekt "Bűntudattól az öntudatig" címmel

Creative crime prevention in Kiskunfélegyháza Together

Kreatív bűnmegelőzés Kiskunfélegyházán Együtt, közösen

Municipal crime prevention program

Települési szintű bűnmegelőzési program

Lake Tisza tourist project.

Tisza-tavi turisztikai projekt.

Step by step - together for safety!

Lépésről lépésre - együtt a biztonságért!

Young people from Jászágó for crime prevention

Jászágói fiatalok a bűnmegelőzésért

Artravaló

Artravaló

Safety net project

Védőháló projekt

Leisure time reloaded!

Szabadidő újratöltve!

Reducing juvenile delinquency

Ifjúsági bűncselekmények csökkentése

BM-15-MA-0052 Improvement of Public Security in Székesfehérvár project on the promotion of settlement security and youth protection

BM-15-MA-0052 Közbiztonság fejlesztése Székesfehérváron a településbiztonság és az ifjúságvédelem előtérbe helyezése projekt

In the framework of a crime prevention, personality development and health drama education program	Bűnmegelőzési színdarab, személyiség fejlesztő és egészségmegőrző drámapedagógia program keretében
Stage crime prevention	Színpadon a bűnmegelőzés
Enhance experiential learning through interactive tools to improve the quality of services provided by the Police Museum	Az élményszerű ismeretszerzés fokozása interaktív eszközök alkalmazásával a Rendőrmúzeum által biztosított szolgáltatások színvonalának emelésére
Music is a must ... 2018	Zene az kell... 2018
Re-Action program, visits to crime prevention institutions at Tököl National Prison and Juvenile Prison, lectures on crime prevention in primary and secondary schools	Re-Akció program, bűnmegelőzési célú intézménylátogatás lebonyolítása a Tököli Országos Büntetés-végrehajtási Intézetben és a Fiatalkorúak Büntetés-végrehajtási Intézetében, bűnmegelőzési célú előadások megtartása általános és középiskolákban
Prevention of crime and victimization	Bűnelkövetés és áldozattá válás megelőzése
Mission Possible - Mission Possible	Missión Possible - A lehetséges küldetés
Open Justice	Nyitott Igazságügy
Komplex program	Komplex program
Year of patronage: Prepare for liberation!	A pártfogás éve: Készüljünk a szabadulásra!
Safe in Bács-Kiskun	Biztonságban Bács-Kiskunban
Lifetime prevention	Életrevaló prevenció
Investigation of the efficiency and effectiveness of crime prevention activities	Bűnmegelőzési tevékenységek eredményességének, hatásosságának vizsgálata
Italy	
"Neighborhood Watch"	"controllo del vicinato"
Latvia	
Preventing repeated victimization of property crimes in high risk areas	Preventing repeated victimization of property crimes in high risk areas
Crime prevention	likumpārkāpumu prevencija
Fighting dissemination of child sexual abuse materials in Latvia	Fighting dissemination of Child sexual abuse materials in Latvia
Lithuania	
Supporting police preventive activities	Policijos prevencinės veiklos rėmimas
Installation of CCTV cameras in Biržai city and region	Vaizdo stebėjimo kamerų įdiegimas Biržų mieste ir rajone
Juvenile delinquency	nepilnamečių nusikaltimai
Šiauliai city municipality crime prevention program	Šiaulių miesto savivaldybės nusikaltimų prevencijos programa
Crime prevention activity	crime prevention activity
Prevention of domestic violence (information campaigns, day centers, psychosocial and other help).	Prevencija dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje (informacinės kampanijos, dienos centrai, psichosocialinė ir kt.pagalba).

Crime prevention program	Nusikaltimų prevencijos programa
Services for young people in the Open Youth Center	Paslaugos jaunuoliams atviraime jaunimo centre
"OLWEUS"	"OLWEUS"
Failure to comply with regulations on cleaning and cleanliness	Tvarkymo ir švaros taisyklių nesilaikymas
Safe neighborhood activities	Saugios kaimynystės veikla
Prevention of domestic violence against minors.	Smurto artimoje aplinkoje, nepilnamečių atžvilgiu prevencija.
Crime prevention programs, projects	Nusikalstamumo prevencijos programos, projektai
Safe School Prevention Program	prevencinė programa "Saugi mokykla"
Trafficking in human beings	Prekyba žmonėmis
Prevention program "Be Safe"	Prevencijos programa „Būk saugus"
Kretinga district municipality and Klaipėda CPSU Kretinga district police commissariat prevention program "Stop Crime"	Kretingos rajono savivaldybės ir Klaipėdos AVPK Kretingos rajono policijos komisariato prevencinė programa "Stabdyk nusikalstamumą"
"Safe Neighbor - Safe Me"	"Saugus kaimynas - saugus aš"
KLAIPĖDA district crime prevention and control program 2017-2019	KLAIPĖDOS RAJONO NUSIKALSTAMUMO PREVENCIJOS IR KONTROLĖS 2017-2019 METŲ PROGRAMA
Early intervention program	Ankstyvosios intervencijos programa
Behavior - Conversation - Exchange (EPP) program	Elgesys - pokalbis - pasikeitimas (EPP) programa
Prevention of crime in children and adolescents	Vaikų ir paauglių nusikalstamumo prevencija
Further training of public sector employees	Viešojo sektoriaus darbuotojų kvalifikacijos tobulinimas
A secure society	Saugi visuomenė
[Empty name]	
trafficking in human beings	prekyba žmonėmis
Pupils competition	Mokinių konkursas
Children and youth camp "Let's Get to Know Each Other"	Vaikų ir jaunimo stovykla "Pažinkime vieni kitus"
Procurement	viešieji pirkimai
[Empty name]	
Luxembourg	
Dear grandma, dear grandpa, don't be fooled! Protect older people against fraud.	Liebe Oma, lieber Opa, lasst Euch nicht reinlegen ! Ältere Menschen gegen Betrugsaschen schützen.
Burglary prevention during the winter months	Einbruchsprävention während den Wintermonaten
Something Missing - Prevention campaign against bicycle theft	Something Missing - Präventionskampagne gegen Fahrraddiebstahl
Malta	
Malta crime preventive strategy	Malta Crime Preventive Strategy

Introduction of cognitive behavioral programmes to reduce recidivism and offending behaviour	Introduction of cognitive behavioral programmes to reduce recidivism and offending behaviour
Upstanders Unite!	Upstanders Unite!
Netherlands	
Financial safe campaign for now and later. Campaign aimed at combating the financial exploitation of the elderly.	Campagne Financieel Veilig voor nu en later. Campagne gericht op het tegengaan van financiële uitbuiting van ouderen.
Taskforce fighting domestic burglaries	Taskforce bestrijding woninginbraken
Collective store cancellation	Collectieve Winkelontzegging
Neighborhood Information Network in Uden Zuid	Buurt Informatie Netwerk in Uden Zuid
Quality mark safe enterprise business parks & shopping areas	Keurmerk Veilig Ondernemen Bedrijventerreinen & Winkelgebieden
COSA - Circles of Support, Cooperation and Addressability. Reintegration of persons who have committed a sexual offense. Motto: no new victims	COSA - Cirkels van Ondersteuning, Samenwerking en Aanspreekbaarheid. Re integratie van personen die een zedendelict hebben gepleegd. Motto: geen nieuwe slachtoffers
Taxi safety project Peutax Breda	Taxi veiligheidsproject Peutax Breda
European Focus Day 2019 in Netherlands	European Focus Day 2019 in Nederland.
Poland	
Social prevention and education for safety implemented by the police	Profilaktyka społeczna i edukacja na rzecz bezpieczeństwa realizowana przez Policję
"I have a choice ... I choose reason"	"Mam wybór... wybieram rozsądek"
Cyber jungle	Cyberdżungla
Portugal	
CHECK IN Project - Entry to Success	Projeto CHECK IN - Entrada para o Sucesso
Bystanders – Developing bystander responses to sexual harassment among young people	Bystanders - DEVELOPING BYSTANDER RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE
Association Safe Communities Portugal and the Portuguese Ministry of Internal administration entered into a protocol at the start of 2018 promoting crime prevention awareness and other crime prevention activities in Algarve especially focusing on tourism.	Association Safe Communities Portugal and the Portuguese Ministry of Internal administration entered into a protocol at the start of 2018 promoting crime prevention awareness and other crime prevention activities in the Algarve especially focusing on tourism..
Time to Be Program - Raising awareness and educating for relationships	Programa Hora de SER - Sensibilizar e Educar para os Relacionamentos
Immigration and crime	Imigração e criminalidade
I do as FALCO says	Eu Faço como Diz o FALCO
Romania	
Project Safety School - Tedi	Proiectul Scoala sigurantei - Tedi
ROFSIP2016OS5A10P02 - Reducing the amplitude of human trafficking by better informing citizens	ROFSIP2016OS5A10P02 - Reducerea amplitudinii traficului de persoane printr-o mai bună informare a cetățenilor

Safer and Better Internet for kids Programme developed in Romania	Safer and Better Internet for kids Programme developed in Romania
Alcohol consumption doesn't make you adult	Alcohol consumption doesn't make you adult
Slovakia	
Adam and Eve of the 21st century	Adam and Eve of the 21.st century
National project: Improving crime victims' access to services and creating contacts points for victims of crime	National project: Improving crime victims' access to services and creating contacts points for victims of crime
Spain	
Gender-violence prevention	Prevención de la violencia de género
Detailed review of gender-violence homicides – Young people sub-project	REVISION PORMENORIZADA DE HOMICIDIOS POR VIOLENCIA DE GENERO- SUBPROYECTO MENORES
Police activity	ACTIVIDAD POLICIAL
Support and Responsibility Circles (COSA)	Circuitos de Apoyo y Responsabilidad (COSA)
Spatial epidemiology of gender violence in the city of Valencia	Epidemiología espacial de la violencia de género en la ciudad de Valencia
Sweden	
Parental support universal level	Föräldraskapsstöd universell nivå
Coordination	Samordning
Residential Burglary Betting	Bostadsinbrottssatsning
Crime prevention work within the police	Brottsförebyggande arbete inom polisen
Fog, scams	Dimma, bedrägerier
Effective Collaboration for Security (EST)	Effektiv samverkan för trygghet (EST)
Safety walk in smaller towns	Trygghetsvandring i mindre tätorter
Youth Fire Brigade Backdraft. Community protection Central Skaraborg	Ungdomsbrandkåren Backdraft. Samhällskydd Mellersta Skaraborg
Camera surveillance in a particularly exposed residential area	Kamerabevakning i ett särskilt utsatt bostadsområde
Early efforts and discoveries of young people heading into crime.	Tidiga insatser och upptäckter av unga som är på väg in i kriminalitet.
Nights of Football	Nattfotboll
The Finance Coalition Against Child Sex Trafficking	Finanskoalitionen mot barnsexhandel
Evaluation of the Rescue Service in collaboration with the kids	Utvärdering av Räddningstjänsten i samarbete med kidsen
Pilot project with the use of body-worn cameras on bus drivers and train hosts	Pilotprojekt med användande av kroppsburna kameror på bussförare och tågvärdar