

Irish Youth Justice Service

Conference 2010

Crime Prevention in Scandinavien

Since 1971 all the Nordic countries have developed national Crime prevention Councils, most recently in Finland with the creation of the Crime Prevention Delegation and, this year, with the establishment of an agency in Iceland under the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs.

A common denominator for the national Crime Prevention Councils is an overall effort to develop and promote all types of crime prevention activity based on solid research with special attention directed towards local initiatives. The objective is to establish interagency and crossdisciplinary initiatives with the police service as an important and also equal partner in cooperation. Special efforts to involve individual members of the public, for instance parents, in the activities.

A number of constant components are common to the Nordic views on crime prevention:

1. There exists a perception that the criminal justice system only exerts a restricted influence on the crime rate. Therefore, equal importance is attached to delinquency prevention and crime prevention.
2. The incorporation of elements of social policy, not least targeted at reducing marginalisation and social isolation, receives high priority.
3. Elements of social as well as cultural policies are incorporated especially to establish networks, so that all children and young persons may lead as good an everyday life as possible. "A good life" is a theme which is key to all the Nordic countries, especially youths. in relation to children and youths.

4. Throughout basic schooling deliberate efforts are directed towards identifying methods which may contribute towards the shaping of norms and social skills which are also presumed to have a lasting crime prevention impact.
5. The great many situational initiatives attempt deliberately to involve the general public and all types of organisation and group both when it concerns an improved quality of everyday life of children, young persons, and the elderly and when it concerns various forms of technical safeguarding, neighbourhood watch, and Operation Marking. It is a distinctive feature that in the Nordic countries the police will be involved in initiatives within all the areas referred to. This is done as a result of a systematic endeavour to involve the police as an equal partner in those areas.
6. Especial importance is attached to the involvement of the local community, its professionals, and the local residents in coordinated cooperation both as far as social and cultural policies and as far as situationally determined activities are concerned. Cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary working methods receive high priority, and on the local level it is endeavoured to establish decentralised types of organisation which can promote these endeavours. Every attempt is made to coordinate public-sector and private initiatives.

Crime Prevention

Inherent in the shaping of crime preventive strategies in all the countries is the fact that it should be based on scientific research - both in the search for causes and patterns as well as in the assessment of the efficiency and effect of crime prevention initiatives. The crime prevention policies defined by central Government, which is predominantly reactive, is deliberately complemented by a Government-supported general crime prevention doctrine, defined by the respective national Crime Prevention Councils and their initiatives and guidelines.

Crimeprevention in Denmark

In Denmark the delinquency crime prevention policies by the threat of punishment defined by central Government, which is predominantly reactive, are deliberately completed by a Government

supported general crime prevention doctrine, defined by the National Crime Prevention Council and its initiatives and guidelines. (The council is established in 1971)

It follows from this that there is a close connection between the crime-preventive work of the National Crime Prevention Council and the Danish police districts and the municipal authorities and the various/private organisations. A connection which initially can be described as a fairly close and uniform network structure.

The network structure has been developed over a period of nearly 40 years and is characterised by the fundamental values co-operation - cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary - co-ordination - mutual understanding - a tolerant view on people - and training of professionals at all levels. The network is also based on a careful balance between demands for co-ordination and demands for autonomy.

The network was introduced by the national level (top-bottom) but operates bottom-up in the daily work, i.e. with the national authorities and the National Crime Prevention Council as fora compiling the experience gained at local level.

The network has been developed with full respect for all official and professional competencies and is based on an agreement and is based locally on the so called SSP network.

The Crime Prevention Council and the SSP network in Denmark

SSP stands for a form of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral co-operation involving schools and after-school programmes (S), the social services and health care services (S) and the police (P).

The SSP Committee under the Danish Crime Prevention Council was set up in 1975. The objective of the SSP committee is to guide and assist local authorities in establishing SSP co-operation in the communities. In 1996 the SSP Committee expressed the declaration of their intentions for the SSP co-operation in the following way: The central aim of SSP-co-operation is:

The aims of SSP- cooperation.

The actual aims of SSP- cooperation are

- to build a local network,
- that has a crime preventive effect on the daily lives of children and young people.

Ways of organisation, kinds of effort, work methods, and circle of people should be suited to local conditions, an overall impression of the children and young people's situation and the criminal tendencies and phenomena found locally.

It is the long- term formation of attitudes and the consequent behaviour that should be worked with by influencing it every day.

These are the aims that have to a certain degree been achieved during almost 20 years effort. And it is in this context that SSP-cooperation should be assessed. These aims are clear enough as such with regard to local work, but the overall outline may result in a somewhat flickering picture that has led to the allegation that the aims of SSP cooperation are unclear.

Therefore it is necessary to put the aims and basis for crime preventive efforts into words.

We must look for answers to the following questions:

- Have we the right organisation for the work. Centrally – regionally – locally?
- Which tendencies are there in the development of conditions of children and young people. How may these have crime preventive importance?
- Which tendencies are there in the development of crime that may be assumed to be important to children and young people locally
- What options are there for efforts locally, on an intersectorial and interdisciplinary basis, seen in relation to the individual areas: school, the police, the social area, the cultural area, the spare time activities area, the housing area, the institutions and carried out through projects.
- How is it possible to work with children and young people in a unified effort.
- How is it possible to incorporate SSP cooperation into the usual work methods and routines of work in: the school, the police, the social authorities, the county authorities and voluntary work.

When these questions have been answered in local SSP-cooperation, the aims may be carried out.

The Crime Prevention Council's SSP committee must assist with authoritative expertise and ensure that this expertise is passed on effectively to the parties they cooperate with regionally and locally. The Crime Prevention Council's SSP committee recommends that in local SSP cooperation a work method is established which includes the following components:

- Aims are put into words locally describing the individual crime preventive efforts.
- Systematic work is carried out to express specific agreements between the different parties involved in cooperation.
- Locally considerations are made as how to incorporate clear rules for how to delegate daily work.
- Considerations are made as how to follow up on these delegations from a practical and from a leadership point of view.
- The individual crime preventive efforts must have an assessment according to a previously determined standard.

Approved on ordinary committee meeting.

In short:

- to build up a local network that
- has a crime preventive effect on the daily lives of children and young people

The central SSP Committee works primarily with planning initiatives that may reinforce interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral co-operation locally. The central SSP Committee encourages all municipalities to establish formalised SSP co-operation - and offers advice and guidelines to municipalities and the police on how the work may be planned and which initiatives are to be taken. (Fig. 4) More than 95% of Danish municipalities have now established SSP committees in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the CPC.

When the expression "formal" co-operation is used, it is not legally binding co-operation but co-operation based on the municipalities' decision to work in interdisciplinary and cross-sectional SSP

co-operation.

Due to local government of the Danish municipalities it would not be possible centrally to demand that municipalities establish interdisciplinary and cross-sectional co-operation. This would only be possible if the Danish Parliament (the Folketing) passed a law saying that this must be so.

Legislation covering SSP co-operation

Legislation obliges the school system, the social services and the police to carry out crime prevention work in its broadest sense.

This obligation is not expressly mentioned in the Primary Education Act. However, the objectives state that the individual pupil should acquire all round personal development, something that is very difficult to realise if the young person is involved in alcohol and drug abuse or crime.

Legislation on social services obliges staff to supervise the conditions children and young people live in. This includes the possibility of supporting them in creating the best possible conditions for growing up.

Legislation covering the social services, health care and education ensures that the population can maintain a certain standard of living and receive free treatment under the National Health Service and free education in Danish primary schools. Legislation concerning housing regulations, including planning and urban renewal programmes, ensures healthy housing standards. All these things play a long-term part in bringing down crime.

The obligations of the police are stated in §§ 1- 3 in the Danish Police Regulation Law from 1.st of July 2004, according to which the police must do whatever is necessary to prevent crime.

It should be added that provisions in section 115b of the Danish Administration of Justice Act enable the laws concerning professional confidentiality to be disregarded to a limited extent in connection with SSP work.

The SSP co-operation is to build up, use and maintain a local network that has a crime preventive

influence on the daily lives of children and young people. The networks are also to be used to detect, at an early stage, danger signals and new tendencies in the development of crime. Moreover they are able to notice the development in the conditions of life for children and young people.

Another aim is to clarify which local prevention options there are on an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral basis, as well as on a professional level in specific fields, school, social services, police, institutions, housing areas, recreational areas and cultural areas. Projects and specific efforts are made to try to prevent young people and groups of young people from engaging in inappropriate social behaviour, including criminal behaviour. And to prevent this type of behaviour from spreading.

SSP co-operation (between schools, social services and police) is the cornerstone of crime prevention work with children and young people. By successive steps, over 95% of all municipalities have established SSP co-operation, and at the present time discussion is taking place on how the quality of the co-operation can be improved and extended.

Quality development of SSP co-operation

The Council is working on a project in which the country's municipalities will be offered the assistance of consultants to develop plans of action for SSP co-operation. Eleven ad-hoc consultants have been trained and they will support the municipalities in the process up to when the plans of action are ready. Agreements have been made with 23 municipalities across the country - these include both large and small municipalities.

A member of staff from the Council will establish contacts with new municipalities and administer the corps of ad-hoc consultants.

As support to the ad-hoc consultants, "model plans of action" will be worked out for small, medium-sized and large municipalities.

Activities Relating to Young Persons over 18 (SSP +) (Fig. 5)

The work with the over-18 age group is another area the Council is focussing on. It has been necessary to involve new partners in the co-operation so that young people with social problems, in particular, can be given better prospects for the future.

For many years the Council has recommended - and contributed towards - organising crime prevention initiatives for both pre-school and post-school age groups, so the idea of working with a target group of over 18-year olds was not new.

It is, however, essential to discuss how the traditional SSP co-operation can be developed to include other educational institutions than primary schools. The background for this is that many state and county institutions (business schools, high schools, vocational colleges, production schools and others) have come forward with specific problems and would like to be included in the existing SSP co-operation in their neighbourhoods.

Many municipalities have followed the Council's recommendations on involving new partners in the co-operation. The results show that groups are chiefly set up with representatives from public services, educational institutions etc that all have in common the fact that they usually work with individual cases, counselling or education.

A typical group will be made up of people from the following:

- Social Services
- Child and Youth Welfare Service
- Cultural Affairs Service
- Prison and Probation Service
- Police
- Integration Group
- Outreach Youth Education Programmes
- Youth School
- Youth Guidance Service
- Production School
- SSP co-ordinator
- Consultants working with drug abuse
- Psychological advisors

The SSP+ work can be characterised by the term "crime prevention of recidivism", as many of the target groups or individuals are in one way or the other already convicted for criminal activities.

In short, in Denmark this currently means:

- Action against marginalisation and social isolation of children and young persons from the normal areas.
- Handling socially unstable children and young persons who at an early age fall outside the normal offers of help provided under special systems.
- Development of working methods and organisation of the work with young persons, who socially are severely unstable and marginalised in relation to social initiatives and offers in the broadest sense and who are in a situation where they are not within reach of even sophisticated preventive offers of a socio-education nature but rather need real treatment.
- Concretisation of co-operative relationships to be developed around socially unstable young persons between the age of 18 and 24 years.

The Concept of "Network in Crime Prevention"

As stated above, the concept of crime prevention should generally be viewed in a wider context. In Denmark, it is often characterised by cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary views and practices; it is marked by rather floating forms of cooperation involving a large number of interests and interested parties and we have, consequently, developed a working method along the attached guidelines (fig. 6).

The central SSP-committee of the Danish Crime Prevention Council was finished November 2007 and a "new committee for youngsters and children" was formed.

The aims are the same, but a new policereform and a new local government reform have created new partners – a “police municipality board” in the 12 policedistricts and “local board” for each municipality.

The core of the SSP-systems remains.

The Danish Crime Prevention Council

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