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Evidence-Based Crime Prevention: Statistics, Indicators and Evaluation in Support of Successful Practices

Concept Note for Workshop 1 at the 14th Crime Congress in Kyoto

Committee I, 3 Meetings:

Tuesday, 21 April 2020 Morning session, Afternoon session

Wednesday, 22 April 2020 Morning session

In responding to the different layers, types and spheres of criminal activities, crime prevention efforts are a multi-level effort, reaching from the local to the global level. Particularly in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, these levels are increasingly important to provide evidence for policymaking and for ensuring that robust evaluation mechanisms and systems are in place.

Preventing crime requires concerted and well-coordination efforts among the government and other relevant stakeholders and there are many theories and practices for crime prevention which can work in one situation but fail in another. Evidence-based policymaking is essential, in particular in the context of the complexity of crime prevention as well as the overarching efforts and Goals in the 2030 Agenda. Evidence-based crime prevention aims at identifying the factors which are associated with different types of crime leading to the selection of a set of strategies and programmes which can influence the underlying factors to prevent crimes and help policymakers with correctly targeted actions.

The workshop will discuss different elements that constitute evidence for crime prevention: data, statistics, analysis, qualitative research and evaluation, at all levels, namely local, national, regional and international levels.

Statistics play a primary role in evidence-based crime prevention: they set the scene for shared understanding of criminal phenomena and their risk and resilience factors. Knowledge of basic facts about crime - such as levels of various crime types and their trends, their geographical distribution and population groups that are most at risk – is of paramount importance to set priority areas for crime prevention interventions.

National statistical systems on crime and criminal justice are making important efforts to upgrade their statistical production, implement global standards such as the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, produce data for SDG indicators in the area of crime prevention and disseminate them according to the principles of open data. Besides traditional data sources and methods, new data producers are emerging and the unlimited data supply provided by new digital sources is being explored to produce high quality data for understanding crime, its drivers as well as vulnerable members of society and factors protecting from crime.

Important challenges exist in relation to data gaps and data quality. Addressing these challenges requires methodological guidance and testing of innovative solutions. Strengthened mechanisms for data collection, dissemination and use are key to improve a shared understanding of crime for the development of comprehensive and multi-stakeholders policies for crime prevention.



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Different types of analysis are also needed depending on whether the crime prevention initiative is international, regional, national, or local in character. International level information enhances the ability to understand the dynamics of transnational criminal markets. National level data can produce evidence on crime and its connection to many factors such as inequalities, cultural practices and social tensions. Local level data generation and analysis tools such as safety audits can ensure that all relevant community level stakeholders are included in crime prevention processes.

Evaluation is one key source of evidence, which fosters engagement and ownership of various stakeholders by providing reliable evidence and thereby supporting results-based management systems.

Evaluations of crime prevention policies usually focus on three main components, namely the activity, output and impact levels, to ensure the highest utility of evaluation results to different audiences, responding to the complexity of crime prevention efforts. In this context, in particular participatory approaches in evaluations are considered essential to ensure that the universally recognized human rights and gender equality principles are fully mainstreamed throughout evaluation processes.

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, which is part of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network has assisted in the preparation and organization of the workshop.