

EVALUATION FOR CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES: SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP ON EVIDENCE-BASED CRIME PREVENTION AT CRIME CONGRESS IN KYOTO

8 March 2021 – a workshop on *Evidence-based Crime Prevention: Statistics, Indicators and Evaluation in Support of Successful Practices* was held at the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Crime Congress) in Kyoto. The third segment on evaluation was organized by the Independent Evaluation Section (IES), UNODC, in cooperation with the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch (RAB) and carried out together with the help of a panel of experts in crime prevention, criminal justice, policy development, policy/program design and evaluation.

This was the first time that evaluation was on the agenda at a Crime Congress, paving the way for the future, linking in this innovative workshop research, statistics and evaluation. As Ms. Katharina Kayser, Chief, IES/UNODC, put it “This workshop today is a signal that evidence-based decision needs to inform

Mr. John Mathiason, Senior Senior Evaluation Expert, Lecturer of Evaluation of International Programs and Projects, Cornell University, USA;

Ms. Christina Wright, Acting Manager, Crime Prevention Research and Evaluation Unit, Public Safety Canada;

Mr. Cristian Crespo, Head, Public Policy Evaluation Department, Undersecretary of Crime Prevention in Chile;

Ms. Karin Svanberg, Head of Division, Development of Crime Prevention, National Council for Crime Prevention, Sweden.

Mr. Adan Ruiz-Villalba, Head of Evaluation at WIPO and co-chair of UNEG

crime prevention programmes and strategies”. Mr. John Mathiason, senior evaluation expert, placed evaluation in the context of global challenges : “We must now deal with the four problems of the apocalypse: pandemics, climate change, nuclear weapons and cybersecurity, and their crime prevention aspects.”

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the event was held in an innovative hybrid format of on-line and limited presence in Kyoto, using the modality of presentations and panel discussions. It was moderated on-line by Ms. Kayser together with the co-moderator, Mr. Adan Ruiz Villalba, Head of Evaluation at WIPO and Co-Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). Ms. Angela Me, Chief of UNODC RAB, further moderated from the floor in Kyoto.

During the workshop, the panel focused on the increasingly strategic role of independent evaluation in the UN reforms, as well as vis-à-vis the targets of the SDGs, pointing to the fact that “evaluation offers evidence at local, regional and global levels to inform crime prevention efforts and respond to emerging challenges.”

The transformative power of evaluation was further highlighted by the panel and elaborated on with concrete examples at the country-level and beyond, contextualising and responding to the current pandemic. Moreover, the need for increased investments into strong Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks for crime prevention strategies were discussed, thereby providing independent evidence of when and why interventions were effective and to inform future crime prevention programmes and strategies.

Ms. Wright further emphasized that “if evaluation systems and structures are set up at the outset of an intervention or policy, the impact of crises, like COVID-19, can be carefully monitored and mitigated”. In this context, Mr. Crespo agreed that “evaluations, especially of programmes targeting vulnerable population, need to adapt in the covid-19 context” and need to be informed by evidence

Draft Kyoto Declaration: “Develop, implement and evaluate crime prevention strategies, including their effectiveness, that address the causes, including the root causes, and risk factors that make different segments of society more vulnerable to crime, and share best practices to strengthen our capacity;

Also, in the context of the SDGs and measuring results at the national level, different types of evaluation, from process to impact evaluations, were identified as useful tools to inform policy making. Particular emphasis was placed on measuring results of interventions with vulnerable populations, in particular youth. In this context, Mr. Crespo highlighted that “by aligning the indicators of success for local and national interventions with those of the SDGs, all countries will be able to demonstrate their contribution towards the 2030 Agenda.

Draft Kyoto Declaration: “Enhance evidence-based crime prevention strategies through the collection and analysis of data using systematic and coherent criteria, bearing in mind the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, and evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies”

The panel further urged that “utilising evaluation results and other sources of knowledge is key to adapting to a rapidly changing environment, as was witnessed during the current pandemic.” Against this backdrop, the benefits from utilising a variety of sources – from research and statistics to evaluation – for evidence-based decision-making were reiterated. As Ms. Svanberg mentioned, “evaluation is only one part of the process, but essential for development. All kinds of data are needed to make

good decisions and policies for crime prevention”. Mr. Ruiz-Villalba concluded: “

“Reduce uncertainty, prevent crime connecting the dots investing in the Continuum of evidence. Use Evaluation, Research and Statistics to make long lasting transformational impact happen for the most vulnerable”.

Moreover, cooperation was identified as a key enabler for success at the national and international level, for example through engagement with UNEG. Furthermore, strengthening national evaluation capacity in the context of General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/237 and the 2030 Agenda was deemed essential. As Ms. Svanberg concluded: “Evaluation and data is nothing without the interpretation of it – that calls for collaboration and education for good practices”, with Ms. Wright adding that planning for evaluation and policymaking ought to be a joint endeavour.

Further information:

7 March 2021 Press Release - Kyoto Crime Congress agrees declaration to tackle growing crime threats and promote inclusive COVID-19 recovery:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2021/March/kyoto-crime-congress-agrees-declaration-to-tackle-growing-crime-threats-and-promote-inclusive-covid-19-recovery.html>

Crime Congress – UNODC website: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crimecongress/about.html>

Evaluation at UNODC: <https://www.unodc.org/evaluation.html>