

***Some experiences by the Crime Prevention Council of
Lower Saxony (CPC) concerning quality-oriented and
evidence-based prevention policies***

by

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Some experiences by the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC) concerning quality-oriented and evidence-based prevention policies

Nowadays a quality-oriented and evidence-based approach is perceived essential for successful and effective crime-prevention. In this article we want to contribute a practical view to this mostly academic discussion. For a better understanding of some of the central developments in the interface of science, politics and practice we refer as an example to the experiences and working perspectives of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC).

1. Basic information of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC)

The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC) was founded in 1995 on the basis of a resolution of the Lower-Saxony State Government. It is an independent advisory body of the government as well as of local committees and bodies in the field of the prevention.

Its primary goal is the reduction of crime in Lower Saxony and the improvement of the subjective feeling of security of the citizens of Lower Saxony. The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony considers crime prevention as a task of society as a whole, strengthens crime prevention at the municipal level and coordinates and supports networking in crime prevention (see appendix 1: Objectives of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony).

Currently 15 employees with a wide spectrum of professional experiences and qualifications (social sciences, administration, social work, police, psychology, educational theory, sociology, criminal law, etc.) are working part and full time in the secretariat of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony.

Current activities of the CPC:

- Municipal Crime Prevention
- Prevention made to measure. CTC in Lower Saxony
- Prevention of Violence and Protection of Victims
- Prevention of Right-Wing Extremism
- Beccaria-Standards: Quality through Competence

¹ All members of the „working group for national and International networking“ of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC)

- Co-operations in Lower Saxony
- National and international Networking

The secretariat is part of the Department of Justice. It develops concepts and coordinates sustainable crime-prevention strategies, necessary to obtain the objectives mentioned above. The secretariat works in accordance with the board of directors of the Crime Prevention Council which represents about 270 member organizations from all relevant social sectors. Besides approximately 200 local prevention bodies, non-governmental organizations, ministries and their subordinate agencies and academic institutions are among the member organizations. In more than 200 cities and communities in Lower Saxony so called local prevention bodies and networks contribute with their expertise to concepts concerning public security and support their realization. Supporting them and linking up their efforts is the primary task of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (further information is provided on the websites of the CPC²).

2. Examples of efforts for quality-oriented and evidence-based prevention policies on federal state-level

The following concepts outline examples and approaches to a national Crime Prevention Policy that is more and more based on knowledge, quality management, effect orientation and systematic evaluation. This alignment of evidence-based crime prevention and criminal policy is characterized by a steady use of the current state of knowledge. The current projects and activities of the CPC have grown essentially in a pragmatic way, they are not yet based on an overall political strategy for a state-wide preventive action, an interdepartmental prevention plan. Department-bound individual decisions and conditions still have great influence on the actual prevention activities financed by different funding programs, for example at a national and European level. Furthermore, the cooperation between the key fields of work of prevention (prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research) is still in the early stages of development.

2.1 Community coaching in a federal structure

The Lower Saxony Government stated in 1995, that in spite of a general decline of crime an „intensification of the crime-preventive efforts on local- and state level“ was required. This development corresponded with the insight, that repressive measures alone have no sustainable effect on criminal activity. The demand for a „societal prevention“ in Lower Saxony was formulated i.e. the cooperation of all departments as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, who can contribute to prevention. As a consequence the CPC was founded.

² www.lpr.niedersachsen.de (german and english); www.beccaria.de (german); <http://www.beccaria-standards.net> (english and 18 other languages); www.beccaria-portal.org (english); www.gruene-liste-praevention.de (german)

The reasons for criminal behavior have to be sought primarily in the living environment of offenders. Crime prevention is primarily a community task, adequately supported by the state and regional actors. In this view, the principle of subsidiarity takes effect: tasks, actions and problem solutions ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized authority capable of addressing that matter effectively. Only if this isn't possible, gradually larger groups, public authorities or higher levels of an organization should have a subsidiary function. Related to crime prevention, this implies that primarily citizens, civil society organizations, municipalities, towns and administrative districts shall be responsible for crime prevention and then counties and federal states.

In Lower Saxony crime prevention is in the responsibility of communities, supported by the CPC when necessary. Local communities should be supported and advised to develop prevention bodies and practical structures in crime prevention. Out of this, the secretariat of the CPC has developed a model of intensive „on site-consulting“, which led to a considerable increase in prevention bodies, especially in the 1990s. In 2000 the number of municipal prevention bodies supported by the CPC had tripled to a total of 99 (in 1995: 33) and a total of 138 in 2002. Since 2002 the CPC is also funding projects and supporting municipal prevention projects in Lower Saxony. Besides consultation, „support“ was added as a further instrument.

Since then, the municipality as a field of action of societal prevention has gained significantly in importance. Currently 200 local prevention bodies and networks contribute with their expertise to concepts concerning public security and support their realization. Community prevention bodies are working on city level, in larger cities at the level of city districts, in collective municipalities, on municipal level as well as on state level. Many prevention bodies have been founded by a council order, several have originated from representatives of the police or youth welfare services and in some places from engaged citizens. Municipal prevention committees are characterized by a great variety of organizational forms and a big spectrum in the personal structure. Often prevention councils are connected to the administration, in this case often the mayor or district administrators are chairing the committee – according to the motto „prevention is a matter for the boss“. The tie to the top management has turned out to be especially effective.

Due to the immediate and manifold communication between the different institutions – police, school, youth welfare service, justice – information and networking processes have been initiated, that lead to more acceptance of other professions and to an acceleration and simplifying of certain procedures.

The improvement of the dialogue and the cooperation between the actors is an important benefit of municipal crime prevention. Meanwhile we can find considerable qualitative changes in the daily working practice. Range, complexity and reach of the

issues have become bigger and more varied since the origin of the first Lower Saxony committees in the early 1990s. Furthermore, there is an increasing public perception and acceptance concerning the work of the municipal prevention bodies.

Lower Saxony is a big state with approximately 1000 local authority districts. Concerning the number of committees there is still „place for more“. Above all, especially in the rural areas, there is a lack of prevention committees. A proactive consultation approach or a big campaign, which cannot be performed due to financial reasons, would be necessary. Furthermore, up to now there are no available instruments to reach municipal top representatives, to make them act as a „door opener and key people for prevention“ methodically and argumentatively. Besides, consultation approaches must be improved and diversified. It is obvious that directive consultations are often counterproductive for the individual actors and problem constellations on site. It makes sense besides the individualized consultation, to develop in the long term „tools“ for „frequent problems and questions“ in the area of local crime prevention, which can be used municipality wide.

A tool which points in this direction are the planning instruments for the municipal prevention strategy „CTC“ (Communities That Care). This is suited for urban and rural areas. It is based on knowledge from scientific longitudinal research referring to risk- and protective factors and effective programs, but requires no scientific education of the users. The implementation quality of the method is the key. The meaning of quality management in municipal prevention has to be underlined.

2.2 Funding Program for Communal Crime Prevention

Since 2002 the CPC is funding crime prevention projects and scientific surveys especially on the municipal level. Numerous measures had been realized since then, primarily focused on children and juveniles. The funded projects as well as the funding guidelines were also evaluated. In particular with the priority program in 2013 and 2014 „Communities that Care - CTC“ (see 2.9) the implementation of positively evaluated programs is promoted for the first time.

In future the funding program will support organizations and communities that perform their prevention work data based, quality-oriented, structured and willing to implement evidence-based programs. The respective programs and content priorities will not be predetermined by the CPC but rather should be based on scientific data collected on site.

2.3 Beccaria standards for ensuring quality in crime prevention projects

The Beccaria standards are named after Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), the pioneer of modern crime policies. The Beccaria standards include measures and requirements for quality planning, execution and assessment of crime prevention programs and projects. They apply to the following seven key steps of a project:

1. Description of the problem
2. Analysis of the conditions leading to the emergence of the problem
3. Determination of prevention goals, project goals and targeted groups
4. Determining measures to achieve the objectives
5. Project design and implementation
6. Review of implementation and the achievement of its goals (evaluation)
7. Conclusion and documentation of the project

The Beccaria standards describe an overall program of requirements to ensure quality. A satisfactory guarantee for the quality of a project can only be achieved by complying with the overall program. The individual requirements are always in step with each other. Selective attention or inattention to particular steps of the Beccaria standards would be detrimental to the level of quality. The Beccaria standards offer a manual for developers, players in the field and other people with responsibility in crime prevention to ensure the quality of their crime prevention work. Whoever is responsible should ensure that

- they align the planning, implementation and review of crime prevention projects with the quality criteria outlined in science and literature,
- projects are designed in such a way that they can be evaluated,
- Scientific experts, advisors, contracting bodies and sponsors are at hand to provide a technical basis for judging the project's targeting of objectives and quality.

The standards are currently available online in different languages: Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, English, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish. „Interactive Beccaria-Steps” as a special practice support lead online through all important questions in the process of project management. They are available in English and in German.

2.4 Beccaria Training Program

Since 2008 the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony offers annually the „Beccaria Training Program Crime Prevention” to improve the quality of the work on site. The reason for the design and implementation was the increasing demand for interdisciplinary prevention training. The modular qualification „Crime Prevention

Specialist“ is aimed at all those working in crime prevention that wants to expand their knowledge of criminology, crime prevention and project management. The Qualification Program comprises four key modules: Criminology, Crime Prevention, Project Management and Practical Project Work.

The contents are application-oriented and based on scientific evidence. The knowledge acquired is directly applicable to daily prevention work. Upon completion, participants are qualified to evaluate criminological theories and empirical studies, to plan, implement and review crime prevention projects according to the quality criteria outlined in science and literature, to apply methods of project management and to use the knowledge (criminological, crime preventive) acquired in daily practice. The standard period of study for the qualification program is one year. Every module is spread out over two weekends. The qualification is designed as an in-service training and limited to a number of 25 participants per module. Upon successful completion of the four modules, the degree „Crime Prevention Specialist“ is awarded. Currently there are a total of 120 specialists. The „Beccaria Training Program Crime Prevention“ was externally evaluated in 2012.

2.5 Further qualification offers and perspective for a Beccaria Academy

The CPC provides with his professional advanced training topical and interdisciplinary knowledge and educates further actors need- and work-oriented. The following qualification offers count to the modular qualification measures: The „Beccaria-Training Program Crime Prevention“, the „Qualification victims counseling in the field of right wing extremism“, the education „certified trainer in the method Communities That Care - CTC“. In addition, the CPC regularly designs practice seminars and training series on various prevention topics. The long term goal is to build a Beccaria Academy under the leadership of the CPC.

2.6 Beccaria-Master and perspective for an advanced master study program

In 2011 the Ostfalia-University of Applied Sciences in Wolfenbüttel started the consecutive Master's program „Preventive Social Work focusing on criminology & crime prevention“. The concept for the program emerged from the „Beccaria Project: Professional Training in crime prevention“ of the CPC. The advanced study program (standard period of four semesters) is addressed to persons aspiring to executive positions in fields related to crime prevention. The educational and admission requirements include a degree in Social Work or comparable courses and work experience in a related field. According to the understanding of prevention as a societal cross-cutting issue the course is designed interdisciplinary. A targeted goal is to offer an application oriented study program „Crime Prevention“ in form of Distance Learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) or Blended Learning, didactically useful attendance courses combined with virtual learning on the basis of new information and communication media.

2.7 Regional analysis and audit guidelines

Criminological regional analysis (CRA) and local audits are intended to provide local prevention bodies and stakeholders a data base for planning prevention activities. CRA usually consists of a small region analysis of the data from the police crime statistics and a survey of the population about their victimization and/or fear of crime. So far only ten municipalities in Lower Saxony have performed such analysis. Moreover, it is usually a „one shot“-activity carried out only once. Very few municipalities use CRA as a regular instrument. In many cases it seems to be unclear how significant the data collected are for the specific project planning. For a good profit of local audits it is necessary that reliable data analysis, systematic implementation and final evaluation are carried out regularly.

Since 2013, due to its membership in the German-European Forum for Urban Security (DEFUS), the CPC is involved in a triennial EU project focusing on the improvement of safety audit processes. In this project an overview of existing methods will be developed, best practice procedures are sought all over Europe and a handbook with recommendations is planned. A manual of the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS) that was translated into German in 2007 by the CPC can be used for this project.

2.8 Systematic state-wide data processing in preparation

To support the Lower Saxony municipalities in crime prevention, relevant data sets should be presented and interpreted in their scope and meaning. In the long term, an annual small-scale monitoring of crime prevention in Lower Saxony is intended. This would include the presentation of current, valid and small-scale data that represent the starting point for crime and violence prevention measures in Lower Saxony and which can be analyzed according to positive changes after implementing measures.

A first inventory is being started. The targeted „data monitor“ refers to the crime rate of the population and their subjective sense of security, i.e. to the base-line, which is not yet sufficiently systematically collected and documented in the prevention activities of the Lower Saxony communities. This „data monitor“ cannot provide a complete and clear picture, but will have many blind spots. It should show what data – ideally regularly updated – are available where. In addition, it is supposed to represent what data should be included in a regular preventive monitoring.

2.9 Model Project SPIN and state-wide rollout of „CTC – Prevention made to measure“

In the pilot project (SPIN: 2009 - 2012), the CPC has adapted and implemented the method developed in the USA „Communities That Care - CTC“ for the first time in the German-speaking world. The goal was to provide the municipalities and the municipal bodies an evidence-based planning tool for prevention. In the pilot phase, CTC

could be implemented successfully in the three pilot sites in Lower Saxony. As a result of the pilot project, CPC is now offering CTC to all interested municipalities in Lower Saxony. With the beginning of 2013, six new sites in Lower Saxony are implementing CTC. A state-wide survey with the CTC-Youth Survey in 2013 provides representative data on the extent of problem behavior of youth and about their exposure to risk or protective factors.

2.10 Green List Prevention

In Germany plenty of prevention programs are on the market. Within the CTC pilot project the CPC developed a recommendation list of evaluated prevention programs, primarily to allow CTC users to select suitable measures to develop local action plans.

The „Green List Prevention“ reflects the status of the development of selected program approaches as precisely as possible. Therefore, the recommended prevention programs are divided into three stages with respect to the evidence of effectiveness: (1) effectiveness theoretically plausible, (2) effectiveness likely, and (3) effectiveness proven.

A status „on the threshold“ is reached if not all criteria for the level for a theoretically convincing model are fulfilled, i.e. if necessary information for classification is not available or no evaluation was made. The database „Green List Prevention“ allows specific searching criteria, such as the targeted risk and protective factors, the problem behaviors prevented by the programs, the age of the target groups, or the operational area in order to promote a further development of local supply structures.

The database „Green List Prevention“ is available online and contains a unique overview of evaluated prevention programs, differentiated by a transparent evaluation system. A regular platform with the recommended programs has been established. There is a strong demand from practice for the „Green List Prevention“ beyond CTC. Therefore an expansion is planned to include additional fields of prevention (e.g. indicated programs) and an extension of the scoring system to aspects of the implementation quality of programs.

2.11 Cooperation in the field of prevention research

The CPC has adopted the goal to promote the transfer of knowledge in crime prevention by initiating its own research projects, or through collaborations with research institutions. Currently, for example, there is collaboration with the University of Hildesheim (Institute of Psychology) for further development and use of the CTC - Youth Survey (see above). Based on the results of the state-wide CTC - Youth Survey further research questions should be developed and processed. For the future it is planned to expand the cooperation in the field of prevention research. There are regular contacts at the national and international level, for example, to the Society for Prevention Research (SPR) and the European Society for Prevention Research.

2.12 Development of QM-strategies

From 2013 the work area „prevention of right wing extremism“ and in particular the Experts-network (a state-wide association of approximately 60 persons and institutions working in the field against right wing extremism) are certified according to the „customer focused quality of counseling organizations (KQB)“. KQB is a method for quality development and has its starting and reference point in the specific consultation process. In the coming years, all counseling services are performed according to audited standards, reflected, monitored and evaluated.

In addition to the „quality testing for consulting organizations (KQB)“ the CPC aims at an external quality attestation of CPC educational opportunities in the long term. Caused by the „KQB process“ the quality of the overall design of the CPC trainings is checked and certified by an independent, neutral body.

2.13 Project CTC Europe

With the start of the CTC-pilot project the CPC also has encouraged a regular exchange of information with the other European CTC-users and researchers. So far, the networking at the international level was limited to the exchange of experience, apart from individual bilateral research projects (USA – Australia, USA – The Netherlands). For the years 2013-2015 the European network receives an EU project funding by the ISEC Programme (the project partners come from the following countries: Germany, Great Britain, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Cyprus). The CTC – EU project aims are:

- transnational comparison of the results of the CTC-Youth Surveys,
- the development of an European database of effective prevention programs,
- a transnational comparison of CTC-evaluation studies with the aim of developing a European CTC-implementation manual.

2.14 Collaborations at the national and international level

For an up-to-date work in the field of crime prevention, it is essential to establish, evaluate and to expand contacts with other stakeholders in this field. Since 2008 the working group „National and international Networks“ is meeting once a week. It looks systematically at the work of the CPC and maintains existing national and international contacts. The participation of its members in conferences and congresses is planned and analyzed there. The participation of the CPC in projects and programs of different national and international partners is coordinated as well as the acquisition of third-party funding at national and international level. Moreover, this working group discusses cross-project issues and current developments relevant for prevention. Planned are a targeted analysis of the „environment“ of national and international stakeholders and the establishment of additional contacts in close-by fields of prevention.

2.15 Evaluations of own measures

The CPC understands evaluation as a mandate to describe all areas of work with appropriate empirical methods, to analyze, to evaluate and to derive improvement and processes of change. This basic understanding also will refer to the organization of conferences, advanced training and training programs, (pilot) projects, studies, funding programs and all other working areas.

2.16 Acceptance of other areas in evidence-based prevention strategies

The section „prevention of right wing extremism“ is currently implementing state-level and federal programs. They inform and prime on one side (target group is interested) and on the other side they help and give advice in problem situations (target group is affected). In the future, if the mandate is formulated for this purpose, primary and secondary or universal, selective and indicated evidence-based prevention programs could be implemented exemplarily in the field of the development of prejudice and the inclination to aggression (as at least two of the major theoretical explanations of right wing extremism) in relevant locations.

2.17 National project- database NiMaP

The NiMaP database (Lower Saxony measures of prevention) was developed in 2010 under the aegis of the CPC in cooperation with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Justice, of Internal Affairs, of Education and the Prime Minister's Office. It is a system for the electronic management and selective research of specific data, concerning specific measures and projects of Lower Saxony in the fields of violence prevention, crime prevention, drug prevention, child and youth protection, and prevention against extremism.

The database provides to the public at large a comfortable and extensive research opportunity for activities and projects of Lower Saxony. Perspectively other areas of prevention should be included in this database. Also, the existing information base should be better used for a continuous and regular exchange among ministries. In view of current and planned measures, the database should be used more for networking and cooperation between the departments in an efficient, resource-saving and interdisciplinary prevention work of Lower Saxony.

The findings on the overall situation of available measures should lead to a lively exchange of departments regarding requirements, parallel structures and redundancy. As a result, resources could be better targeted. The cash flow is determined by the state-level data available. This would be to identify in advance a comprehensive „prevention-oriented picture“ of the situation.

3. Appraisals and recommendations

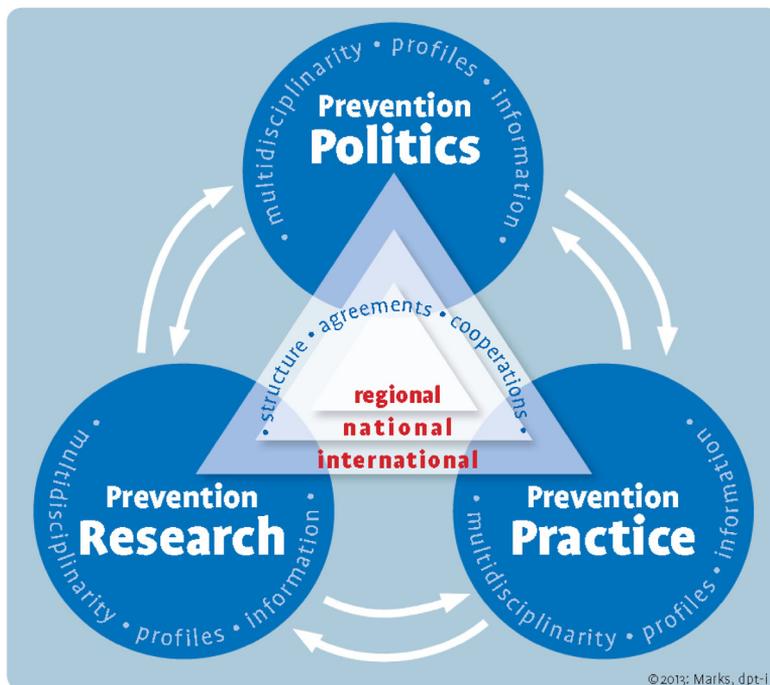
Prevention Politics, Prevention Practice and Prevention Research can be seen as the central focus areas of a holistic and sustainable orientation in prevention. Perspec-

tively and for all three fields of work similarly these three areas have to be considered holistically and not limited to the sections of crime prevention, addiction prevention, poverty prevention or disease prevention, for example. The necessity of a structured and intensive cooperation of these three areas of work should be at least carried out at the levels of the communities/regions, at the national/ state level as well as at the international/global level. Multi-disciplinarity, profile formation and information are such indispensable tasks and qualities for each of the three prevention fields.

The following diagram represents an ideal model of the interdependencies and network formations on the one hand as well as of the regional, national and international levels on the other hand between the areas of prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research.

In particular the profiles of these three areas of work should be communicated more actively. Every area of work should communicate its profile clearly with a high degree of general intelligibility as well as freely accessible.

Diagram: Ideal model of the interdependencies in prevention



Multidisciplinarity

Multidisciplinary collaboration should be systematically organized and guaranteed in every field of prevention work. In the field of work „prevention politics” representatives of political parties, the legislative, the various departments of the executive and the judiciary should be involved. In the field of work „prevention practice” representatives of youth, education, health and social services, the police, non-governmental and voluntary organizations should be represented. Within the field of work of „prevention research” public, government and private research institutions with relevant disciplines and sub-disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, biology, medicine, political science, law, economics, criminology, victimology, etc.) should also be involved as well as research funding organizations and scientific associations.

Profiles

An important requirement for a successful societal prevention orientation is a clear self-conception of the individual fields of work. Definitional requirements, self-conception and responsibilities should be formulated by prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research. To clarify profiles and portfolios in each of the three areas of work clear descriptions of the existing resources, capacity and structured offers are required.

Information Policy

In particular, the profiles of the work of prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research should be communicated in future more actively. Each work area should make their profile proactive easily accessible with a high degree of comprehensibility.

Structure

On the three key levels of communication, the local/regional level, the state/national level and the international/global level; prevention politics, prevention practice, and prevention research should equally cooperate in permanent structures and possibly include also other partner organizations. In such permanent structures mutual information, basic agreements and concrete cooperation could be implemented transparently and sustainably.

Agreements

Besides an efficient communication within and between the respective fields of prevention and prevention levels, it becomes increasingly important to agree on terms, definitions, objectives, criteria, methods, different profiles and responsibilities and priorities, strategies and specific projects and programs.

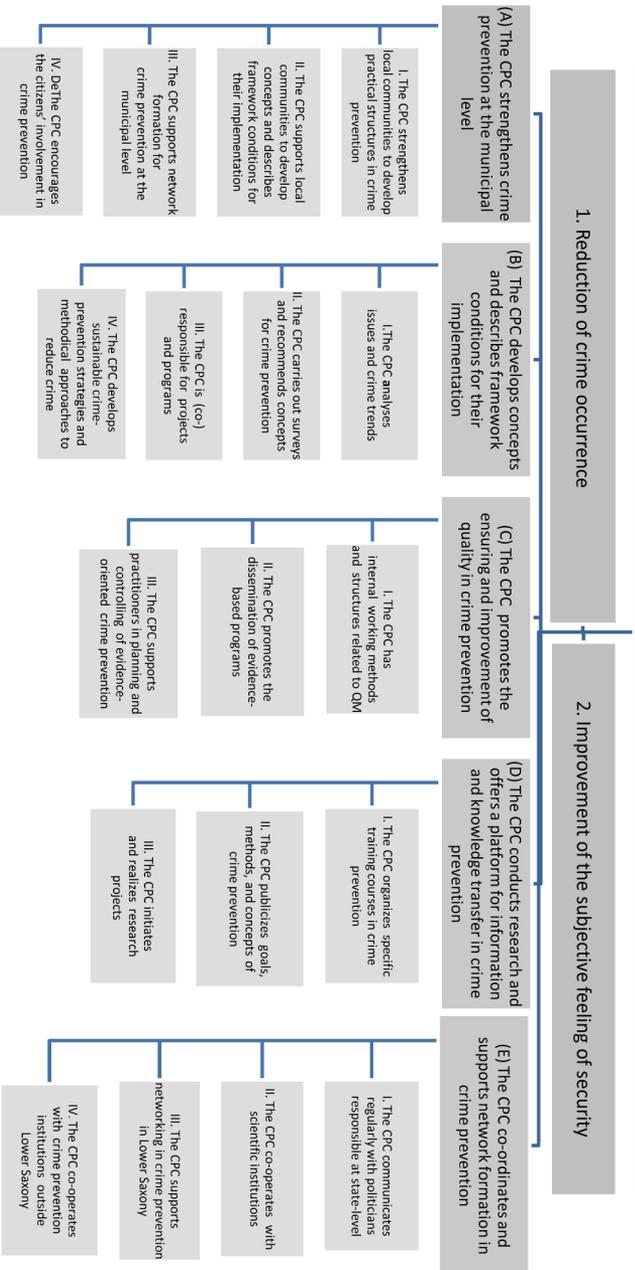
Cooperations

Through a formalized and consistent communication between the areas prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research joint positions could be published, concrete project proposals prepared, implemented and evaluated.

Besides the subject-specific methodological responses from the respective views of the participating disciplines and prevention stakeholders, more fundamental and extensive structural changes are needed, if prevention and intervention measures are to be effectively and successfully developed, implemented and evaluated. Crucial is a new culture of communication between the three fields of prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research which are highly dependent on each other.

Appendix: Objectives

The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony is a centre of excellence in crime prevention



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