

Participatory and community-oriented crime prevention

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Participatory and community-oriented crime prevention¹

Summary of presentations made by Anika Holterhof and Johannes de Haan during the thematic session on “Participatory and community-oriented crime prevention”

I. Introduction

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the lead United Nations entity to assist Member States in addressing the threat posed by drugs, crime and terrorism. Established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention and headquartered in Vienna, Austria, UNODC operates in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field offices covering over 150 countries. The Office facilitates the ratification and implementation of the relevant United Nations conventions, as well as the application of the standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice as an essential component of the United Nations wide effort to promote human rights and the rule of law globally, through a range of actions including: generating, analysing and exchanging comparative data on transnational threats; promoting cross-border cooperation; ensuring access to technical expertise, global knowledge products and best international practices to prevent and fight crime; and promoting criminal justice reform, law enforcement, drug demand reduction, and HIV and AIDS prevention.

UNODC has participated in the German Congress on Crime Prevention with a view to informing and updating its participants on international developments related to crime prevention and criminal justice.² In early 2017, the Office and the DPT strengthened their cooperation and UNODC became an official partner of the Congress and organized a Thematic Session (‘Themenbox’) on participatory and community-oriented crime prevention at the 22nd DPT, together with the European

¹ The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United Nations.

² See, for instance, contribution to the 2009 Congress held in Hanover, ‘An Overview of Crime Prevention at the International Level’, available online at http://www.praeventionstag.de/dokumentation/download.cms?id=1545&datei=5-Stolpe_F833-1545.pdf.

Forum for Urban Safety (Efus). This article summarizes two presentations that were made by Anika Holterhof and Johannes de Haan, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officers at the UNODC.

II. Frameworks and principles

The prevention of crime lies at the heart of the work of the UNODC, which is the custodian of the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)*, the *United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)*, as well as standards and norms, including the *Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Urban Crime Prevention and the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime* – the guiding framework of the Office’s work.³ The standards and norms reflect what has grown to become the guiding understanding for crime prevention efforts: the knowledge that the factors that cause crime and violence to increase or decline comprise many different social, economic and environmental factors. They outline the considerable benefits that well-planned crime prevention can bring to societies, from enhancing the quality of life of citizens, to reducing expenditures on criminal justice and health, and facilitating sustainable development.

Recognizing multiple causes of crime, UNODC promotes strategies and programmes which are multi-sectoral and evidence-based, and which favour a participatory approach. United Nations guidance, in accordance with what is stated in the *Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime*, rests on a set of basic principles:

- Government Leadership
- Socio-economic Development and Inclusion
- Cooperation and Partnerships
- Sustainability/Accountability
- Knowledge Base
- Human Rights/Rule of Law
- Interdependency (local – international)
- Differentiation/Gender-Responsible Strategies

³ UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolutions 1995/9, Annex, and 2002/13, Annex.

The need for a participatory approach to crime prevention, by taking into account local communities, including youth, in data collection, planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and initiatives runs like a red thread through the above principles. The importance of such participation is also highlighted in the Outcome Document of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Doha, Qatar, in 2015. This Doha Declaration,⁴ stresses the importance of developing and implementing consultative and participatory processes in crime prevention, so as to engage all members of society, including those at risk of crime and victimization, to make prevention efforts ‘more effective and to galvanize public trust and confidence in criminal justice systems.’ In addition, it stresses the fundamental role of youth participation in crime prevention efforts, as well as the importance of holistic prevention through addressing social issues and root causes of crime: States should ‘plan and implement comprehensive policies and programmes that foster socioeconomic development, with a focus on the prevention of crime, including urban crime, and violence.’ Member States also highlighted the importance of the sharing of information on innovation and lessons learned, stressing the need ‘to support other Member States in such endeavours, in particular through the exchange of experience and relevant information on policies and programmes that have been successful in reducing crime and violence through social policies.’⁵

Later that year, Member States adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*⁶, recognizing that reducing conflict, crime, violence, discrimination, and ensuring inclusion and good governance are key elements for people’s wellbeing and essential for securing sustainable development. Aiming to build on the Millennium Development Goals⁷ and adding new focus areas, the 2030 Agenda provides for a plan of action guiding its implementation by way of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related targets. It aims at, *inter alia*, combating inequalities within and among countries; building peaceful, just and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; protecting human rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The reduction

⁴ UN General Assembly Resolution 70/174, entitled ‘Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.’

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 10 (a).

⁶ UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1, entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.’

⁷ UN General Assembly Resolution 55/2, entitled ‘United Nations Millennium Declaration’; United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report* (2015).

of crime and violence (Goal 16) and the creation of safe, inclusive and resilient cities (Goal 11) have been placed at the heart of global efforts to promote sustainable development. In 2016, the importance of an inclusive approach to prevention was also highlighted by Member States in the context of cities during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador. The Implementation Plan for the *New Urban Agenda*⁸ adopted at Habitat III, calls on States to ‘engage relevant local communities and non-governmental actors [...] in the development of policies.’ The New Urban Agenda creates a clear connection between urbanization and development. This demonstrates an explicit commitment to integrate inclusive measures for safety and crime and violence prevention through inclusive measures, closely linked to achieving SDG 16 in ensuring that a new vision of sustainable settlements and cities is grounded in good governance, the rule of law and justice for all.

III. Presentation of two technical assistance projects⁹

Whether developmental or situational, crime prevention measures should be based on a broad, multi-disciplinary foundation of knowledge concerning crime and victimization at the local and national levels and apply promising and proven practices. Within this context, city governments have an important role to play in identifying and addressing risk and protective factors, involving relevant stakeholders, targeting at-risk groups, and monitoring impact of prevention initiatives over time. Indeed, many innovative policies and programmes emerge in cities and inform national strategies. Within the context of the mentioned international frameworks, UNODC, in cooperation with partners, recently initiated two new initiatives to promote more effective crime prevention and strengthen community resilience, including a project on participatory crime diagnosis and policy development, and a project that looks at using sports for early crime prevention.

a. From participatory crime diagnosis to policy development

For many years, UNODC has been promoting safety audits to identify and describe the different dynamics through which violence and crime occur, establishing flows and links between actors and locations. For

⁸ UN General Assembly Resolution 71/256, entitled ‘New Urban Agenda.’

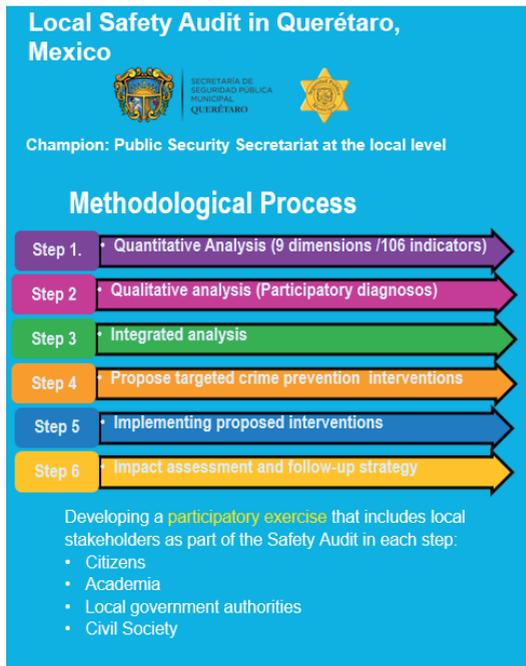
⁹ As referred to in the presentation of Ms. Anika Holterhof, entitled ‘Moving from participatory crime diagnosis to policy change’ of 20 June 2017.

example, researchers look at the occurrence of homicides or other violent crime in a particular neighbourhood, analyse the perpetrators and victims, and the impact on the behaviour of persons. These audits may help city governments to understand the dynamics of crime, determining internal and external causes through gathering of quantitative and qualitative data, analysed with techniques combining academic and field work. Their results enable informed decision-making with a view to formulate evidence-based urban policies, improve the allocation of public resources, and – besides strengthening prevention – ultimately promote local security and the rule of law in the urban context.

More concretely, a number of UNODC Field Offices have implemented local projects that aim at strengthening crime prevention at the city level using safety audits. In Medellín, Colombia, for instance, UNODC's safety audit methodology was implemented successfully by the Country Office, in close cooperation with the local government, in four phases between 2012 and 2015: from extensive analysis and detailed research to the identification of priorities, communication and consultation with relevant stakeholders, culminating with the promulgation of a 10-year public safety policy approved by the City Council. The process involved a range of sectors, including academia, the private sector, civil society organizations and local communities.

In order to enhance and strengthen United Nations guidance on urban crime prevention and participatory approaches, UNODC and UN-Habitat established a joint technical assistance project 'Developing evidence-based policies for improved community safety in Latin American and African cities.' Financed by the UN Development Account. The project involves experts at Headquarters and Field Offices from both organizations, and covers the entire cycle from situation assessment, data collection and analysis, to development and monitoring of implementation of local government-led, evidence-based policies for crime and violence prevention in urban spaces in the cities of Santiago de Cali (Colombia), Querétaro (Mexico) and Durban (South Africa). Under this project, UNODC and UN-Habitat bring together a wealth of experience and expertise on crime and violence reduction, as well as urban safety and city planning.

Recognizing that in addition to collection and analysis of police-recorded crime data, there is incremental use of data generated from participatory crime diagnosis to inform crime prevention and urban safety policies and programmes, this project aims to fill the gap caused by a largely centralized nature of security policies and justice systems



in the target countries by helping local authorities to strengthen their data collection, analysis and monitoring capacity to inform evidence-based policies for prevention in urban spaces. The project ultimately seeks to promote the institutionalization of local government-led crime prevention and urban safety policies and programmes, considering methodological advances in addressing crime and victimization challenges in urban areas. Local safety audits will follow a methodological process from quantitative and qualitative data collection

and analysis, to an integrated analysis, proposed targeted interventions, implementation of selected interventions and impact assessment with recommendations on a follow-up strategy – in cooperation with the local government and other relevant stakeholders. Implementation has begun in all three of the project cities, and results are expected by the end of 2019.

b. Youth crime prevention through sport¹⁰

As part of its efforts to support the implementation of the Doha Declaration, and with support from the State of Qatar, UNODC launched a global youth crime prevention initiative that builds on the power of sports as a tool for youth crime and drug-use prevention by building resilience of at-risk youth.¹¹ The initiative works with government and

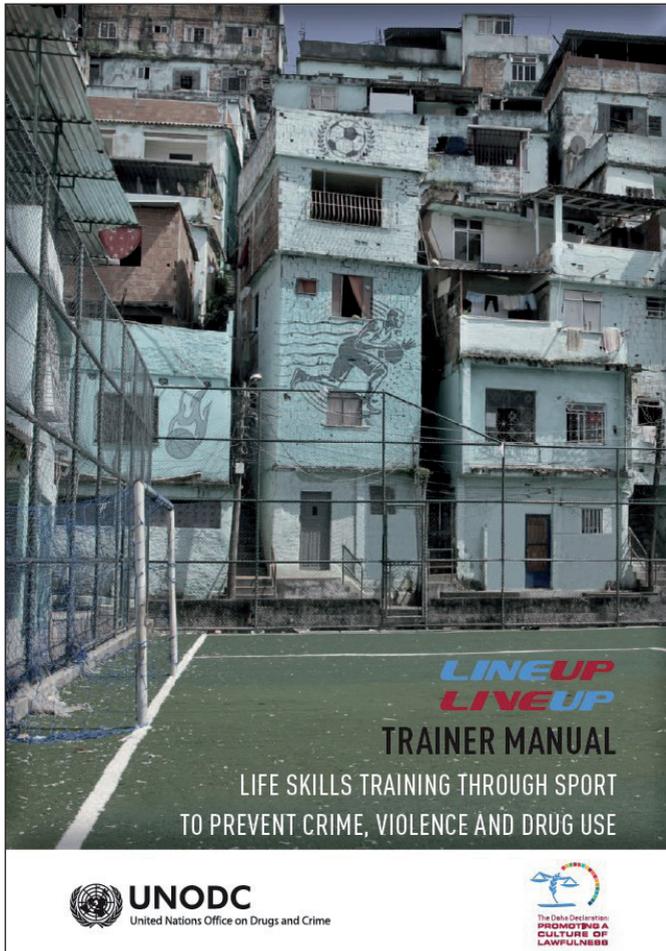
¹⁰ As elaborated on during the presentation of Mr. Johannes de Haan, entitled 'Crime prevention with a focus on youth' of 20 June 2017.

¹¹ The Doha Declaration Implementation Programme (GLOZ82) runs from 2016 till the end of 2019. More information can be found at: www.unodc.org/dohadeclaration.

non-government stakeholders at various levels, targeting youth centres and after school programmes. Through the programme, UNODC offers technical assistance in the form of advisory services and tools to use sport in a meaningful way to address relevant risk factors. In addition, it raises awareness on the use of sports for youth crime prevention by facilitating the sharing of promising practices.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines the growing contribution of sports as a tool for peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect. It also highlights the contributions that sport can make to the empowerment of communities, to individuals – particularly women and young people – as well as to health, education and social inclusion. Within this context, and guided by research that shows that child skills training can be effective for early prevention,¹² the UNODC youth crime prevention through sport initiative includes the development and piloting of an innovative sports-based life skills training programme called “Line Up Live Up.” The training manual for this programme was completed by mid-2017 and was translated into Arabic, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

¹² D.P. Farrington and B.C. Welsh, ‘Saving Children from a Life of Crime: Early Risk Factors and Effective Interventions’ (New York, 2007).



Inspired by existing school-based life skills training initiatives¹³ “Line Up Live Up” takes a life skills education and social influences approach, targeting youth aged 13-18 years. It aims to increase knowledge of consequences of crime and substance abuse; develop personal and social skills; positively influence attitudes; and to prevent anti-social, risky and delinquent behaviour.

Through 10 one-hour sessions with physical exercises and sport games, youth can learn skills such as coping with stress and emotions, critical

¹³ In particular the European Union Drug Abuse Prevention (EU-DAP) “Unplugged” programme – www.eudap.net.

thinking, decision making and problem solving, but also effective communication skills, self-awareness and empathy. In addition, several sessions focus on refusal skills to resist negative peer pressure. The programme has been designed so that it can be implemented with mixed-gender groups in sport centres, schools (either as curricular or extra-curricular activities) or other community settings. Each session includes an introduction, one or two sport activities and a debriefing session. Although playing the games will help youth to reach some of the learning objectives, much of the learning needs a debriefing phase that should take place on the sport field immediately after the exercises. The debriefings are about sharing experiences whereby the group becomes a resource for learning.

Following a testing phase in sport centres in Brazil, including the organization of youth dialogues to get input for the design of the training tools, UNODC started piloting the programme in Brazil, South Africa and Kyrgyzstan during the second half of 2017. It is expected that by the end of the year, approximately 1000 youth have been exposed to “Line Up Live Up”. An impact assessment is foreseen for 2018-2019 whereby data will be collected through a structured questionnaire using validated scales to measure the multi-dimensionality of the intended programme outcomes. The findings from the pilots are expected to feed into the adaptation and national or local efforts to scale-up sport-based life skills training.

In order to raise awareness amongst policy makers and practitioners at national and global level about ways to use sport and physical exercise for the prevention of youth crime and drug-abuse, UNODC works with partners to organize a number of events, including sport tournaments, roundtable discussions and conferences. Where possible, and with a view to stimulate the development of new and promising initiatives, UNODC will award small grants to civil society organizations that use sport to address risk factors at the individual or community level in marginalized communities. Throughout the project, youth will be engaged as agents for change. By sharing their experiences on how sports and life skills training helped them to stay away from crime, the project hopes to promote meaningful participation of young people in prevention efforts.

IV. Concluding remarks

Involving communities and individual citizens in the planning and execution of crime prevention measures that effectively target known risk-factors, is paramount to ensure that activities have an impact and

are sustainable in the long term. From initial data collection to implementation and post-implementation measures such as monitoring, citizens have an important contribution to make to ensure that results and action taken are based on and aiming at improving the status quo – while considering as a basis the aforementioned basic principles of effective crime prevention as promoted in the *Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime*.

The growing importance of implementing more effective prevention that is participatory in nature and community-focused, can be observed in the agenda of the upcoming Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to be held in Japan in 2020. The substantive focus of this Congress is ‘Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.’ As such, the Congress will allow follow-up on discussions held in 2015 on participatory, evidence-based crime prevention, in particular under its Item 1, ‘Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development.’ Experts will be given the opportunity to discuss practical approaches and measures and provide guidance in two workshops on ‘Evidence-based crime prevention: statistics, indicators and evaluation in support of successful practices’ and ‘Education and youth engagement as key to making societies resilient to crime.’¹⁴

¹⁴ See UN General Assembly Resolution 72/192, entitled ‘Follow-up to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.’

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