

Finland



ECPA/BPC 2006

Please answer the following questions in English.

- 1. Is this your country's ECPA entry or is it an additional project? (Only one ECPA entry per country plus up to two other projects.)**

This is the ECPA entry of Finland.

- 2. What is the title of the project?**

Katujuen yö 2002 (Night of the Streets)

- 3. Please give a short general description of the project.**

The aim was to calm down the end of school year weekend which in Finland is often associated with young people's vast alcohol consumption. This often causes public disturbances and other problems. In addition, binge drinking is a health risk for youngsters. Due to the previous year's fatal events in Kerava it was decided in 2002 to take a joint responsibility of young people and organise them diverse activities which did not involve alcohol and other intoxicants. The programme consisted of various sports events, barbecues and movies among others and of a larger event – free concert where local bands took the stage. In addition, parents and organisations patrolled on the streets until the small hours as it was hoped that young people's partying – and inevitable drinking – would happen under control. The visibility of parents calmed down the celebrations and brought a sense of security to the youths. The police also exercised strengthened control. The free food and free non-alcoholic beverages held back the levels of intoxication. According to the organizers and participants the project was successful in calming down the weekend. The two day event has now become a yearly practice.

- 4. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?**

The concrete aim of the project was to make sure that the end of school year weekend would go without problems, be safe and violence free as well as to prevent similar events as took place in 2001. That year three intoxicated under aged youths killed two elderly people and seriously assaulted a third. The homicides were characterised by robberies and unusual violence. In addition the group committed to other less severe crimes. There were also half a dozen other youths hanging out with the main perpetrators.

On the wider perspective the project aimed at boosting communal spirit and supporting children and young people.

5. How was the project implemented?

The street event was carried out as a co-operation programme led by the city's youth services. The idea of the street event was born only in April 2002. Thus there was not much time for the planning and preparations for the first event (the date for the end of the school year was Saturday 1st of June, 2002). The possible co-operation partners as well as parents were invited to take part with a challenge letter. Despite the fast schedule the different parties were eager to join along. The events on the year before were still in close memory which probably helped in getting people to join the project. The expertise of the National Council for Crime Prevention was also used in planning of the programme. The event was planned in meetings in which the co-operative parties took part and the responsibilities were distributed carefully. The different parties took care of their part of the programme independently. The programme consisted e.g. of presentations of the different sports clubs, street floorball, barbeques and a concert. An integral part of the event was street patrolling and the visibility of adults in the town centre. All the events were free of charge. Voluntary work and sponsorships from different companies made it possible to carry out the event. A press conference was organised prior to the event and it was promoted to the young people on the internet and by posters. Attention was paid on the maintenance of order on both days and especially during the concert. Young people's media centre made a video of the event and it has been shown later in different occasions. A post event evaluation meeting where all the parts of the project were thought through and where future improvements were planned was organised.

6. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

The main responsibility for organising the event was with Kerava city's youth services. In addition the city's other services (social-, school-, library- and sports services), parishes, the police, Finnish Red Cross, sports clubs, youth organisations, parents and local companies were involved in planning the project. For example the library organised cultural programme, sports clubs and sports services arranged games, other organisations and parents took part in street patrolling, local companies gave away free food and drinks and the police took part in the planning process and heightened monitoring.

7. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project?

It was decided to organise a post event evaluation meeting between the parties who took part on the project.

8. Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

No evaluation research has been done. The parties responsible of the project took part in an evaluation meeting where e.g. the police and those involved in street patrolling expressed their views on the project.

9. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The project was successful in calming down the end of school year weekend. No serious violence took place and in the opinion of the police as well as the street patrols the weekend was calmer than in the years before. As police surveillance was heightened, it was expected that the numbers of police recorded crime and disorder would also increase in Kerava during the project weekend. This did indeed happen with the police recorded violence and disorderly conduct statistics. However, in comparison with the year 2001 the numbers decreased somewhat in the next years despite the increased police surveillance. This then would support the conception that the end of school year weekend calmed down permanently. The police recorded statistics on minors (aged 15-17) arrests due to drunk and disorderly conduct give even more clear evidence of the conception that young people's alcohol use calmed down. In 2001 there were 35 youths arrested, in 2002 five less and in the following years the number stayed consistently below 30.

In the evaluation meeting it was questioned whether some of the more heavily drinking youngsters had 'escaped' to Helsinki in order to party there, but there is no evidence that displacement like this took place.

The organised programme reached a large number of youths, though some parts of the event (like the library being open until 11pm) did not work. During the following years the event has been modified so that there is only an organised street floorball tournament on Fridays and otherwise the programme is concentrated on the day of the end of school year, which in Finland is the first Saturday of June.

The 2001 events seem to have had a great impact on the feeling of security among the Kerava residents. Calming down the end of the school year day appears to have contributed to the fact that in the opinion of the Kerava residents the street security levels increased (in 2001 58% thought that the general safety and order was good when in 2002 the percentage had increased to 78%).

The fact that the project has been made into a regular practise is an indication of the successfulness of the project. In addition, taking joint responsibility of the youths has been actualised through the street event.

10. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

A concise description of the first year of the project can be found in the Kerava-magazine 2/2002 which is published by the city of Kerava (in Finnish).

The 2002 events during the evening, night and the next day have been documented on a video film which can be obtained from the city's youth services.

There is research data on the 2001 events which were the underlying reason for creating the project.

Annual feeling of safety surveys conducted among Kerava residents.

Please, write here a one page description of the project

Kerava is a town of 31 000 people located 30km away from Helsinki. The idea of organising the Night of the Streets on the school ending weekend of 31.5-1.6.2002 was mainly based on the violent acts of the year before.

In 2001 three intoxicated under aged youths killed two people and seriously assaulted a third. People were profoundly shocked of the acts of violence and many national as well as local initiatives were started in order to prevent juvenile delinquency.

After the events of 2001 the mayor of Kerava called together a working group whose aim was to think of strategies to prevent young people's social exclusion. On their report the working group made many recommendations of which central was the recommendation to increase the number of personnel working with children. Also e.g. creating more opportunities for directed leisure time activities as well as the visibility of adults on the streets were seen as important.

In order to develop the local safety co-operation the working group also suggested co-operation with the National Council for Crime Prevention. The city of Kerava and the National Council for Crime Prevention organised a seminar in May 2002. In one of the working groups in the seminar actions which would help in calming down the end of the school year weekend were planned. The working group went through material produced by the Danish Crime Prevention Council which gave advice on how the last school day can be made safe and organised without disturbances.

The aim of the street event of 2002 was to ensure that nothing severe would happen during the end of school year weekend. Organising activities which did not involve intoxicants and the fact that youths could party in controlled environment was central.

The Night of the Streets widened from the original plan of parents' street patrolling to a large two day event where the Danish Crime Prevention Council's recommendations were taken into account all the way from serving free soft drinks in order to curb young people from getting drunk. There were e.g. barbeques, volleyball, street floorball and 'Summernight's march' organised on the Friday night. On the actual graduation Saturday the event offered canoeing, street basket, barbeques, archery and a free concert where local bands took the stage. In addition to parents' street patrols there were a few professional security guards in the concert making sure everything went smoothly.

The city of Kerava's education and youth services shared the main responsibility of the event. In addition the city's other services along with parishes, the police, Finnish Red Cross, sports clubs, youth organisations, parents and local companies were involved in planning and carrying out the project. Also the city's elected officials were committed to the project and many of them took part in the street patrols. Co-operation, voluntary work and food, drinks and the stage building materials sponsored by the local companies made the event possible. The expenses, all together around 2900 euros were mainly fees paid for the professional guards and costs from organising the concert.

In the post event evaluation the parties involved in the co-operation regarded the event as very successful; many young people and adults (approx. 500 ppl) took part to the events, the public asked for similar events for the future and the previous year's shocking incidents were avoided.

Although there were many young people about – the same numbers as in school ending weekends in general – they behaved well. Even though the events were alcohol free it was not an intention to prevent young people from drinking, rather to supervise it. The police for example did not pour youths' drinks to the ground – even though they had a right to do so – because it was hoped that young people would not move to somewhere else to binge.

In the opinion of the street patrols and the police the end of school year weekend in 2002 was

calmer than in the years before. In the yearly service survey conducted in Kerava the general opinion on order and security was thought to be good by 85% of residents in 2005 when in 2001 only 58% thought so. The feeling of security measured by the survey improved already in 2002 (78%). According to the Safety Survey 2003 conducted by the Southern-Finland County Administrative Board 40% of respondents in Kerava thought that street safety levels had improved over the past three years. The main reason for this, according to the respondents was the increase of activities for young people, increased visibility of police patrols and security patrolling of the stations. Also adults' voluntary patrolling among youths gained more support than average.

The street event in Kerava has had a calming effect on young people's hard partying during the end of school weekends. It has become a yearly event. From the beginning the project has promoted joint responsibility of organising young people things to do, guaranteeing them support when necessary and that the end of the school year would run smoothly without major problems and misadventures.