



Preventing drug-related crimes

Achieving effective
behavioural change

Toolbox
Series No 16

“

Know what you are dealing with and act accordingly. It sounds simple, but in practice it is rather hard to follow. This Toolbox is a guide to help you achieve your goals and prevent drug-related crimes effectively.

”

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CONTENTS

<u>Acknowledgements</u>	3
--------------------------------	----------

<u>Preface</u>	6
-----------------------	----------

<u>Executive Summary</u>	8
---------------------------------	----------

<u>Introduction</u>	14
----------------------------	-----------

01	<u>Know what you are dealing with...</u>	17
-----------	---	-----------

The chicken or the egg?	18
Different pathways, different approaches	18
Crime and substance use among young people	21
Drug-related crime among substance users	21
Understanding the problem	23
Local realities	25

02	<u>...and act accordingly</u>	28
-----------	--------------------------------------	-----------

Preventing problematic behaviour among young people	29
Preventing drug-related crime among substance users	35

03

Recommendations

38

The European Crime Prevention Award 42

- 1. First place Sofielund Approach (Sweden)..... 44
- 2. Second place: Bengalo (Germany)..... 45
- 3. Third place: Netstof.dk (Denmark)..... 46

Endnotes

48

Bibliography

54

Annex: ECPA entries

57

PREFACE

This 16th toolbox in the series published by the EUCPN Secretariat deals with the main theme of the Finnish Presidency: the reduction and prevention of drug-related crime and the harm caused by drug use among young people. The Presidency explained their choice as follows:

The offending of the adolescents has diminished in many European countries. Even though increasingly few young people commit serious crimes, the repeated offending accumulates on a small group of young people. This group of youngsters has been recognised as a target group of crime prevention activities. These youngsters are often school drop-outs and they suffer from various social and mental health problems, substance use, unemployment, lack of life-skills, experiences of victimisation and risk of social exclusion. These various symptoms of persistent offending and deviant behaviour have driven them to marginal positions and exclusion from society.

During the Finnish Presidency, the main focus will therefore be on the reduction and prevention of drug-related crime and harms caused by drug use among young people.

This Toolbox can be used to guide and support practitioners working within this field. Part One describes the phenomenon and offers a way of knowing what you are dealing with. Once this is established, Part Two complements the first with an overview of effective approaches. A dedicated section with recommendations lists the core ideas and ties Parts One and Two together. Part Three presents the winners of the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA), while all entries can be found in the Annex.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the second half of 2019, the Finnish Presidency of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) focused on the prevention of drug-related crime and harms caused by drug use among young people, and called for evidence-based approaches. This Toolbox is a direct response to that call. By stressing the need to know what you are dealing with and act accordingly, we provide support to practitioners working in this field.

Drug-related crime is a complex phenomenon. Research shows that the relationship between substance use and crime is not the same for everyone and changes over time. Working with this highly dynamic and complex relationship, it is imperative to **know what you are dealing with**. Unfortunately, due to the often politicised nature of this phenomenon, ‘doing without knowing’ has led to a proliferation of all kinds of activities. The goals are always laudable, yet this could lead to misdirecting or misusing scarce resources, or worse: adding to the problem.

Substance use and crime are linked, yet the relationship will differ depending on your target group. This calls for tailored approaches, attuned to the needs of who you are working with. If your target group shows no signs of problematic behaviour yet, then you can address some of the common factors that drive both drug use and crime. School failure and family management problems are examples of those risk factors. If your target group does experience harm due to its substance use and commits crimes to, for example, sustain this behaviour, then your approach needs to shift.

This complexity is fuelled by dynamic criminal and drug-using pathways. Not all drug users develop substance use disorders and experience social harms. The same goes for criminal careers. Despite high levels of offending during adolescence, most of them ‘grow out’ of this behaviour. Knowing what influences these developments and how they interact with each other will allow you to intervene in that process.

Assessing the needs of your target group is thus a crucial step. The golden rule: the more granular your understanding, the better informed and targeted your work can be, and the more effective you are likely to be. (Inter)national data can inform your activity, however local data will be crucial to understand the problem. Be sure to incorporate multiple perspectives. Relying on police data only, for example, will skew your understanding of the problem and will direct the response in a way that might not be reflected in the entire community. Also, keep in mind the developmental stage of your target group. Ten-year olds are not the same as sixteen-year olds and what drives their behaviour will obviously change. Peer pressure will be more important for this later age group.

Continuing with our argument – different problems need different approaches –, we offer a menu of options. There is not one ready-made solution for preventing drug-related crimes. Once you have a thorough understanding of the problem, you should **act accordingly**. Matching the identified needs and problems with the right intervention is instrumental in ensuring you reach your goal. If your aim is to **prevent problematic behaviour among young people**, a number of approaches have shown their effectiveness. For example, influencing the family processes in a positive way can promote healthy and safe behaviour now and in later stages of life. You can find a number of these effective approaches in the Xchange prevention registry,¹ an online database of evidence-based prevention interventions.

A large number of the activities within this field focus on providing information on the risks of problematic behaviour. The assumption is that youngsters will make the right choice after being informed of the potentially harmful and dangerous consequences of their behaviour. While this assumption certainly has face-value, research has not identified lack of knowledge as a risk factor. Since these approaches do not actually target a relevant factor, they miss their goal. Think about it: you know that eating fast food is unhealthy, but you still do it.

Even more disturbing is the fact that these approaches can worsen the problem. Some youngsters might feel peer pressure to engage with the behaviour you set out to prevent, since the common narrative often assumes that ‘everybody does it’. Moreover, others might feel triggered to take that risk, fully aware of those consequences.

Using scare tactics does not overcome this issue, rather the opposite. Showing graphic images or role-playing performances, designed to shock individuals into the right behaviour, has not proven effective and could even be disputed based on

ethical concerns alone. The infamous example of this approach is *Scared Straight*, a programme that involves vulnerable youngsters visiting adult prisons. The reasoning behind the programme is that through first-hand observation, youngsters will be deterred from future offending. This train of thought is unfortunately still followed in the EU, despite rigorous evaluations showing that such approaches cause more harm than doing nothing.

If your target group is already experiencing harms from substance use and drug-related crime, approaches other than traditional prevention might be needed. **Harm reduction** is one of those and aims to decrease the harmful effects users may experience. In addition to the benefits to the user's health, harm reduction programmes can help decrease drug-related crimes and/or feelings of insecurity in the neighbourhood. Drug consumption rooms, for example, can reduce harm at community level, as drug litter and public nuisance decline.

Preventing recidivism is another approach and targets people who experience use-related harm and have committed crimes because of this. The goal here is then to prevent reoffending and/or to treat people. An effective example here is therapeutic communities. Within prisons, this approach has been proven to reduce re-incarceration, criminal activity and reoffending.

Of course, not all problems will have a tried and tested solution. In the absence of evidence, a precautionary approach should be followed. As a minimum, your approach should be theoretically informed. However, and for all intents and purposes, **all your activities should be evaluated**, regardless of their prior effects. What has to change, is the behaviour. Awareness-raising activities – if evaluated – will often focus on knowledge transfer: 'do you remember the message?'. This is only the first step. Whether or not your target group changed its behaviour because of your intervention is the real question.



PREVENTING drug-related crime

01 Know what you are dealing with...

Avoid 'doing without knowing' and make sure you target the right problems and causes

- › The relationship between drug use and crime is dynamic; your approach should respond to that
- › Local realities are complex and involve many factors; your understanding should do so too
- › Young people age and change; how you try to influence them will have to change as well

02 ...and act accordingly

Go beyond good intentions and make a real impact

- › Match the identified needs and problems with approaches that effectively tackle them
- › Informing youngsters of the risks or scaring them to convey your message can be counterproductive
- › Effective, evidence-based approaches do exist

03 Evaluate from the start

All your activities should be evaluated, as this will help you reach your goal

- › Have an informed plan of action and evaluate your process
- › Although people might like your activity, this does not imply effectiveness
- › Behavioural change is what you are aiming for, and what you should evaluate

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between drugs and crime has been a persistent concern for our contemporary society. Combined with perennial worries about the state of the next generation, drug-related crimes committed by young people provide for a heated debate about what should be done to prevent this type of crime.² During the second half of 2019, the Finnish Presidency turned the European Crime Prevention Network's attention to this topic. Stressing the need for evidence-based approaches, Finland kicked off the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) competition in search of good practices within the European Union.

The drugs-crime literature is vast, and almost any attempt at exhaustiveness would be flawed.³ Drug-related crime is also notoriously hard to define, as this will inevitably result in a reduction of this complex phenomenon.⁴ People can commit crimes while trying to support their substance use, commit crimes due to intoxication, commit crimes due to the illicit nature of the drug market, commit crimes due to drug law offences related to use or possession, commit crimes and use drugs as part of a broader criminal lifestyle, etc.⁵ At the same time, a large amount of activities aim to prevent drug use and crime altogether among young people, as a common set of risk and protective factors drives both. Therefore, drug-related crime will be understood purposively and pragmatically in the framework of this toolbox as crime and substance use among young people and drug-related crime among substance users.

Despite this complexity – or perhaps *because* of this complexity – this toolbox aims to arm you, practitioners, with the means necessary to support your activities. The highly complex and politicised nature of this societal concern has led to a proliferation of all kinds of prevention activities. The goals are always laudable, yet few have thoroughly evaluated their actual behavioural outcomes.⁶ Not only does this entail a risk of misdirecting or misusing scarce resources, it might also cause unnecessary harm.⁷ Surely, this cannot be the goal. For this reason, this toolbox subscribes to the principle of evidence-based crime prevention as an approach to avoid these mistakes, by “ensuring that the best available evidence is considered in any decision to implement a programme or policy designed to reduce crime”.⁸

Additional disclaimers are necessary for readers of this toolbox. The drug field is characterised by the sides of demand and supply. Although these are intrinsically linked, this toolbox will mostly address the former. The activities gathered within the ECPA competition all focused on drug-related crime in relation to substance use.⁹ Furthermore, this toolbox will not enter the contemporary discussion on

policy initiatives regarding the legal status of drugs and drug use. Some countries (for example Luxembourg) have recently adopted legislative steps at national or other institutional levels, fundamentally changing the nature of their drug policy.

Consequently, when discussing the prevention of drug or substance use, the legal status of the substance concerned is not the issue. Following the European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC), by “substance use” we mean, “the use of psychoactive substances that affect feelings, perceptions, thought processes and/or behaviour when consumed”.¹⁰ We refrain from terms such as substance abuse or addiction, as these might appear to be judgmental and/or ambiguous. Instead, again following the EUPC, we will use the term “substance use disorder” when referring to substance use associated with significant harm. This is also in line with current EU policy on drugs, stressing a public health approach to the demand side.¹¹

This toolbox consists of three parts. First, we define our scope and take a closer look at the relationship between drugs and crime in general and the involvement of youth in particular. The second part addresses the question of *what works* in preventing drug-related crimes and offers an overview of effective interventions depending on your target group. The third describes the ECPA competition and the Annex lists the projects that entered the competition.

01

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH...

01

The drug-crime nexus receives a great deal of attention, more often than not mediated by some kind of moral panic narrative. Media reports of a drug “epidemic” or “plague” frequently carry with them assumptions about the link between drug use and crime, yet fail to account for the actual scope and relationship between them.¹² Moreover, they stress one particular causal pathway: drug use leads to crime. This train of thought is mostly derived from a skewed understanding of drug use in general, which is nearly always portrayed as problematic.¹³ The literature suggests that this dominant discourse might not (always) hold true and depicts a far more complex image of this relationship.¹⁴ Here, we want to help unravel this relationship and offer you possible sources of data to inform your activities.

The chicken or the egg?

The question for practitioners working on this relationship quickly becomes: which came first and how can we prevent or stop drug-related crimes? The answer is – as one could expect – not straightforward: **it depends on your specific problem and local situation.**

Numerous scholars have studied this relationship and have been busy drafting general conclusions.¹⁵ Within this diverse array of studies, scholars agree on the existence of a relationship between drug use and the committing of crimes, although one can appear without the other. Differences arise concerning causality.¹⁶ There is a notable *correlation* between drug use and criminal activities, however research shows no clear evidence of *causality*. In short, although drug use and crime are closely linked, not all drug users will commit (non-consensual) crimes.¹⁷

The implication of these findings is this: the relationship differs across target groups and this necessitates tailored approaches. On the one hand, the same developmental risk factors can cause criminal behaviour and substance use among youth; on the other, substance use can – but does not necessarily have to – be linked to drug-related crime.

Different pathways, different approaches

An important argument for this shifting relationship relates to the complexity and changing nature of both drug and crime careers.¹⁸ Not all people follow the same problematic pathway through drugs and crime, and age is a particularly relevant factor.¹⁹ It is to this complex, interactional and developmental issue that we will now turn.

There are likely to be variations as young people make transitions through different types of drug use, desist or persist, or move from recreational use to substance use disorders.²⁰ Whether and how they will initiate substance use, continue their use and potentially develop problems are affected by several personal, environmental and pharmacological factors. Depending on the phase within this pathway, these factors will have a different impact and the harms related to the type of use will differ as well.²¹ Logically, this will also have an effect on the relationship with crime.

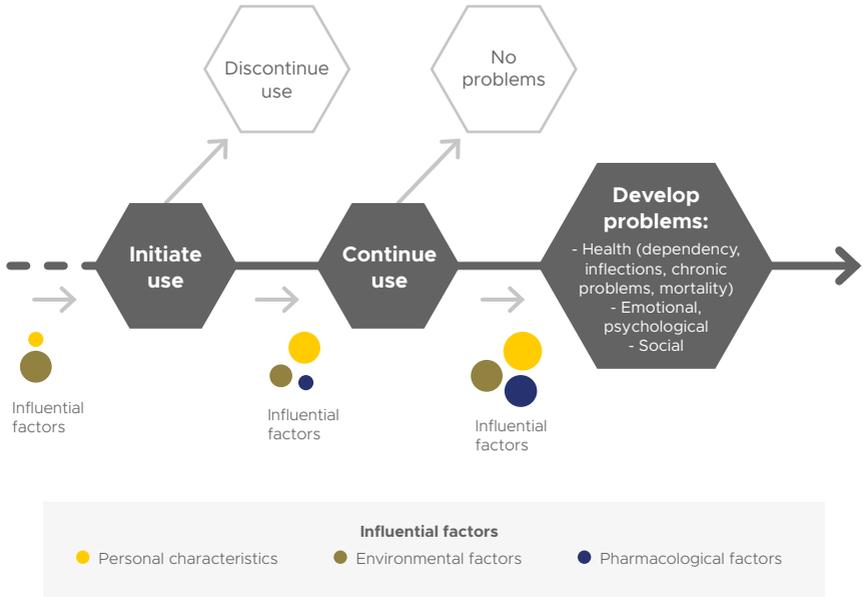


Figure 1 Pathways of substance use.

Source: EMCDDA, *European Prevention Curriculum*, 2019.

Likewise, the seminal work by Moffitt and other life-course theories on crime have made us aware of the age-crime curve: an offending pattern across the life-course showing a peak in the late teens and a decline throughout adulthood. These adolescence-limited offenders will mostly commit crimes during their teens and will 'grow out of it'. A small group of so-called persistent offenders will continue their criminal pathway after reaching adulthood, is more likely to have initiated offending earlier, and will be responsible for the majority of the crimes committed.²² Again, the relationship between drug use and these different types of offender will be different, as will be the underlying factors.²³

PREVALENCE ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR

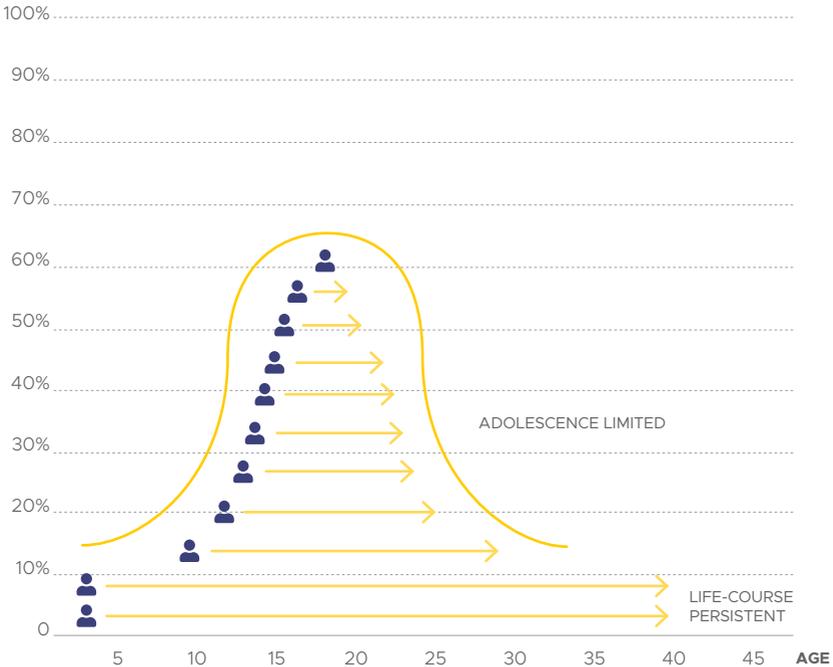


Figure 2 Age-crime curve.
Source: Moffitt, 1993.

Considering both complex pathways, prevention activities should take account of the different stages of life and the corresponding factors that will influence substance use and/or crime.

We will emphasise this developmental focus throughout this Toolbox, especially when discussing the need to know your target group (see Part One, 'Understanding the problem') and assessing the prevention activities (Part Two). For now, it is important to stress that some youngsters will show increased levels of risk of both types of behaviour.²⁴ Being young is a risk factor in itself,²⁵ yet these 'vulnerable young people' are more prone to a range of problems due to, for example, social-economic inequalities, school dropout, poor impulse control, ...²⁶ Obviously, these groups have different and extra needs to address in your prevention activities.

Crime and substance use among young people

Now that we have established that pathways through substance use and crime are highly complex, we can understand why we need tailored approaches. If your target group are children or adolescents with no particular signs of problematic behaviour, and your goal is to prevent crime and drug use initiation, then you can target the same underlying risk factors.²⁷ Indeed, both problematic behaviours can be prevented by focusing on risk factors that have been identified as predictors for both and other types of behaviour. A growing body of research has shown that **a common set of factors drives both crime and drug use**.²⁸ These factors are typically referred to as risk and protective factors. Risk factors would predict an increased probability of crime and/or drug use, whereas protective factors would predict the opposite.²⁹ The accumulation of these psychological, sociological, environmental or biological factors can lead to substance use and/or crime.³⁰ The following figure shows this common set of risk and protective factors.

Drug-related crime among substance users

However, focusing on school achievement or early antisocial behaviour, for example, will have little effect if the actual problematic behaviour is already occurring. Moreover, this group will also be in an older age group, which makes some approaches less effective. **If you are working with people who are already experiencing harms from their use or commit (more) crimes because of it, other approaches than 'traditional' prevention are advisable.** Studies demonstrate that harm reduction and treatment interventions might have more merit in reducing drug-related crime among these populations.³¹

For example, the strength of the drug-crime relationship will vary according to the type of substance used. Bennet, in a meta-analysis of 30 different studies, shows that the chances of offending are higher among crack users than among non-users, and are also higher than the chances of offending among heroin or cocaine users. Moreover, the same study found the association between crack, heroin or cocaine to be higher for income-generating property crimes or, in other words, economic compulsive crime, compared to other types of crime (e.g. systemic crime).³² Not only the type of substance, but also a mixture of factors concerning personality traits, social structure and the drug's pharmacological effects will most

Risk factors		
	Community	Availability of drugs
		Community laws and norms favorable to drug use, firearms, and crime
		Transitions and mobility
		Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization
		Extreme economic deprivation
	Family	Family history of the problem behavior
		Family management problems
		Family conflict
		Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior
	School	Academic failure beginning in late elementary school
		Lack of commitment to school
	Peer and Individual	Friends who engage in the problem behavior
		Gang involvement
		Early and persistent antisocial behavior
		Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior
		Early initiation of the problem behavior
		Constitutional factors
Protective Factors		
		Cognitive competence
		Social and behavioral competence
		Belief in the future
		Pro-social norms
		Opportunities for positive social involvement
		Recognition for positive behavior
		Bonding to pro-social others
		Healthy and clear standards for behavior

Figure 3 A common set of factors. Adapted from Fagan, et al., 2018, 10-2.

likely affect the relationship between drug use and crime.³³ Additionally, local drug policies will influence which types of crimes are most prevalent.

Understanding the problem

Gauging the situation is crucial for informing any prevention activity, as it is part of your needs assessment.³⁴ The golden rule? The more granular your understanding, the better informed and the more targeted your work will be. Our aim here is not to bombard you with data. Instead, we offer possible resources and highlight some findings where necessary.

The EMCDDA is the main provider of EU-wide comparable data on the substance use situation at the European level. Every year, the Agency publishes its 'European Drug Report'³⁶, analysing the most recent trends in and responses to the drug situation in the European context.³⁷ Together with this analytical report, more detailed information is provided on every EU Member State in country reports.³⁸ These reports are published in an interactive format and as easily-accessible documents, and allow the user to gather information on the drug use situation, problematic use, the national drug policy, prevention approaches, etc. The EMCDDA also publishes the datasets in the statistical bulletin.³⁹ This way, you can delve into the data yourself and look at, for example, last month's prevalence of cannabis use in people aged 15-24.⁴⁰

Glossary³⁵

- > **Prevalence:** estimated number of consumers among the population
- > **Lifetime prevalence/lifetime experience:** any use during the person's life
- > **Last 12 months prevalence/recent use:** any use during the previous year
- > **Last 30 days prevalence/current use:** any use during the previous month.

In analysing the prevalence and patterns of drug use, the EMCDDA combines aggregated data from several self-reported data sources, such as national and school population drug surveys.⁴¹ Figure 4 gives an overview of the estimates

of drug use in the EU for both adult (age 15-64) and young adult (age 15-34) populations.

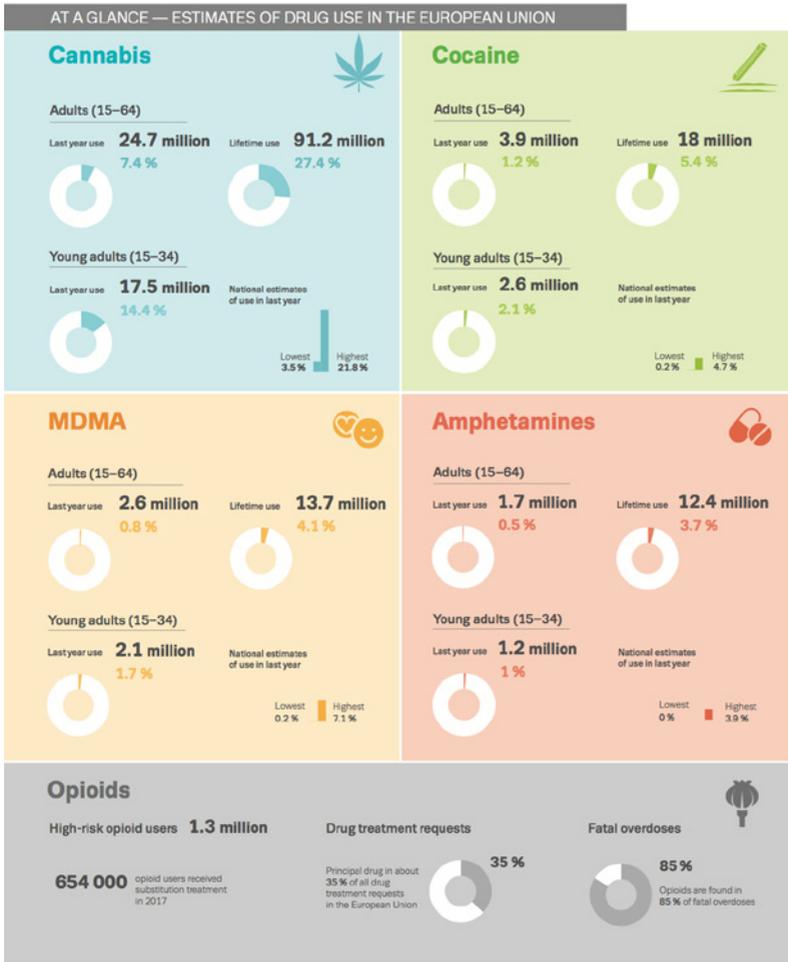


Figure 4 At A Glance - Estimates of Drug Use in the European Union.
 Source: EMCDDA, European Drug Report 2019, 2019.

ESPAD

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), produced in cooperation with the EMCDDA,⁴² is another vital source of information, and specifically offers comparable data on substance use among 15-16-year-old students in European countries.⁴³ As with the European Drug report, the ESPAD results are summarised in a report and the datasets are also published online.⁴⁴

The results of the survey from 2015 mark the sixth sweep and the 20th anniversary of the survey, which offers the unique possibility of identifying long-term trends in use since 1995. For example, trends in lifetime and current use of cannabis between 1995 and 2015 indicate an increase from 11 % to 17 % and from 4 % to 7 % respectively. The administration of the survey every four years allows a more nuanced picture: since 2003 the numbers show a decrease in cannabis prevalence. Aside from this temporal analysis, the ESPAD study also reports on polydrug consumption and the conditional probabilities of substance use.⁴⁵

Local realities

The high-level data sets discussed above are crucial for our understanding of the substance use situation in the European Union, but additional data is needed to inform your prevention activities and while assessing your local needs. National and/or local data are available in every country. Be cautious, however, with using national data to inform your local project. They might support the identification of the needs of your community, but working at a local level requires a local needs assessment. You should collect and analyse new data using quantitative and/or qualitative methods, such as surveys, focus groups and observational approaches, to draft your plan of action.⁴⁶ Not only will this allow for a more targeted approach and understanding, it will also help you with the evaluation of your prevention activity. Moreover, it will ensure your intervention targets the right problems and causes and moves beyond superficial 'doing without knowing'.⁴⁷

In addition, try to incorporate multiple perspectives. Building your intervention solely around police data, for example, will not necessarily reflect all community actors' perspectives and needs. In order to have a holistic understanding, you will need to consult other key stakeholders and your target group. Knowing what type of substance is most commonly used among which populations and insights

into settings of use will be critical for ensuring your intervention matches the target group's situation and/or targeted problem.⁴⁸ Active participation of youth can not only help inform your needs assessment, but also help in the design, implementation and evaluation of your activities.⁴⁹

Needs assessment: ⁵⁰

Knowing substance-use-related policy and legislation: your activities should be guided by the applicable substance-related policy and legislation.

Assessing substance use and community needs: assess the substance use situation in the general population or specific subpopulations. Relying on assumptions or ideology is not sufficient to inform your prevention activity.

Describing the need — justifying the intervention: the findings from the community needs assessment are documented and contextualised to justify the need for intervention. By examining other existing prevention interventions or policies, you will also be able to understand how your activity can complement the current services and at least prevent duplication.

Understanding the target population: more detailed data needs to be collected on the prospective target population, such as information about risk and protective factors, and the target population's culture and everyday life.

An interesting instrument, that would need local adaption of course, is the Communities that Care Youth Survey. This survey is free to download at: <https://www.communitiesthatcare.net/userfiles/files/2014CTCYS.pdf>

The EUPC repeatedly stresses the importance of having a developmental understanding of the target population. Every stage is associated with a certain range of intellectual abilities; language development; cognitive, emotional, and psychological functioning; and social competencies. Working within that range is a necessary precondition for achieving success.⁵¹ In addition, the factors that influence behaviour vary across the developmental stages of the child or youngster.⁵² Parental influence, for example, is stronger during middle childhood than it is during (early) adolescence. During the latter period, peers are starting to become a more powerful driver and influencer of behaviour. Activating the right driver for behavioural change will help ensure you reach your goal.

Having an understanding of what influences a child or adolescent in its specific developmental stage, and intervening accordingly, is one of the crucial steps if you want to effectively prevent problematic behaviour.⁵³

02 ...AND ACT ACCORDINGLY

The second part of this Toolbox discusses several activities aimed at preventing drug-related crime, understood purposively and pragmatically in the framework of this Toolbox as crime and substance use among young people and drug-related crime among substance users (see Part One). Several activities, since covering all activities could only be an attempt at exhaustiveness. The highly politicised nature of this topic has led to a proliferation of activities throughout the European Union. Unfortunately, not all of them move beyond superficial intentions of proving that “at least something is being done now”.⁵⁴

Some of the projects that were presented at the EUCPN's Best Practice Conference will be highlighted in this section; others you can find in the annex. In more generic terms, we will discuss the principles underlying most projects here and also some of the pitfalls they showcased. While doing so, we offer a ‘menu of options’ for dealing with drug-related crime.⁵⁵ As discussed in Part One, differences in the relationship between drug use and crime exist between and within groups and this calls for different approaches. We discuss the following two activities:

1. Preventing problematic behaviour among young people;
2. Preventing drug-related crimes among substance users.

Preventing problematic behaviour among young people

Prevention science is an entire field in itself – and rightly so.⁵⁶ Stressing behavioural change as the final outcome, evidence-based prevention activities in this field focus on reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors across several life domains; the individual level, peers, family, environment, and the community.⁵⁷ Figure 5 covers the bulk of these factors for substance use in particular, yet we have seen above that many of them will also increase the likelihood of committing crime. Interestingly, a lack of awareness of the dangers and consequences of substance use is not one of these factors.⁵⁸

It is important to be aware that one single factor is not sufficient to cause problematic behaviour, but the combination of several factors is. For some 'vulnerable youngsters', this combination works cumulatively and puts them at higher risk than the general population. This calls for an even better understanding of their situation. Additionally, you need to consider the developmental phase of your target group, and assess which factors have the most impact on behaviour at that time.⁵⁹

There have been multiple efforts from research and practice to draft guidelines and standards for effective substance use prevention. Recently, the EMCDDA published the *European Prevention Curriculum*⁶⁰, which builds on earlier work by the Agency and by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.⁶¹ The focus is on preventing substance use and related problems, but it is also widely applicable to other risky behaviours such as crime and antisocial behaviour. It offers an introduction to prevention science, emphasises key insights into the effectivity of several approaches and, overall, provides you with the right tools to work within this field.

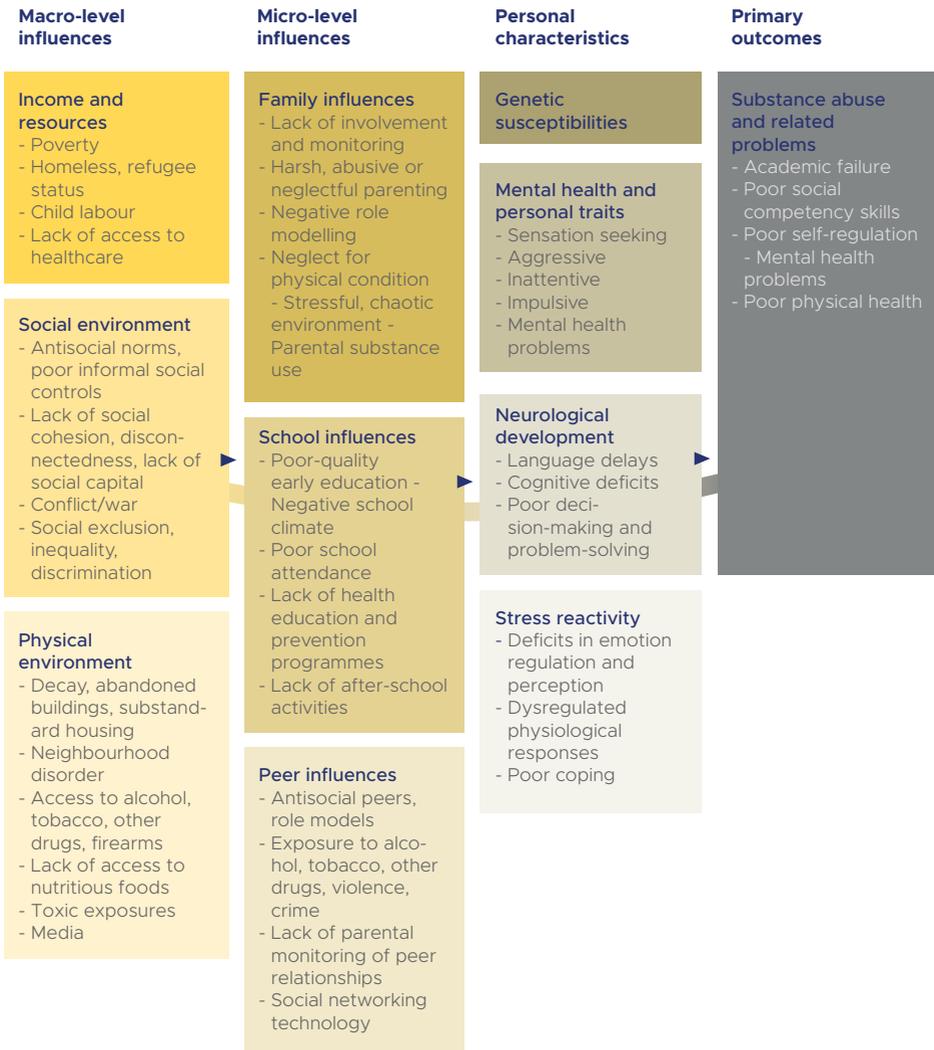


Figure 5 Risk factors that can be addressed by prevention interventions.
 Source: EMCDDA, *European Prevention Curriculum, 2019, 35.*

Search for programmes

by age group by setting by outcomes targeted by risk factor

Enter search terms...

Reset search form

All All All All

List of programmes

Programme title ↕	Date added	Countries where evaluated	Xchange rating
Planet Youth - "The Icelandic Model": application of environmental prevention principles based on a systematic local assessment of risk and protective factors	27.02.2020	Iceland	Additional studies recommended
Empecemos (let's start) - an indicated prevention programme for children with early-onset conduct problems, their families and teachers	26.02.2020	Spain	Additional studies recommended
My Healthy Diary - a school-based programme to enhance subjective well-being and health by strengthening emotional and social skills and parent-child relationships	19.02.2020	Italy	Additional studies recommended
Life Skills Training in Lombardy (LST) - a classroom-based universal prevention programme to reduce the long-term risk of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in middle-school	04.12.2019	Italy, Spain, USA	Additional studies recommended

Figure 6 Xchange Prevention Registry. *Source: EMCCDA, 2020.*

The EMCCDA also hosts several other interesting tools. Through its Best Practice Portal,⁶² you will be able to find information on evidence-based approaches, national and international standards and guidelines, easily accessible policy and practice briefings on several topics, instruments for evaluating your programme, and more. The Xchange prevention registry⁶³ is particularly relevant as it is a repository of evaluated practices in Europe which have shown positive preventive effects on crime and substance use. You will be able to narrow your search according to age, setting (school, family, community, etc.), targeted outcomes and risk factors. The registry will then show you results from evaluation studies and, interestingly, additional information on implementation experiences, such as the obstacles encountered and how these were addressed.⁶⁴

The best example of the evidence-based approach to drug-related crimes is *Communities that Care* (CtC).⁶⁵ At its core, CtC is a community planning system and not an intervention in the strict sense. It aims to prevent multiple problematic behaviours among youngsters, such as crime and substance use, by tackling common risk and protective factors that were identified in the community. It does so by creating community coalitions which support and use manualised evidence-based programmes.⁶⁶ Originally from the US, this implementation strategy has been implemented in several EU Member States, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.



Community coalitions are a well-established framework for crime prevention.⁶⁷ The winner of this ECPA, the Sofielund Approach, is another good practice in this regard. By strengthening the collective efficacy of the community, the neighbourhood can find a new positive drive. Their partnership approach is an example for all activities.

There have been multiple efforts from research and practice to draft guidelines and standards for effective substance use prevention.

One key aspect of CtC is that the locally identified risk factors are met with effective interventions that focus on lowering them. **Family interventions** are among the most (cost-)effective approaches here.⁶⁸ Improving parenting skills and helping parents abandon harsh and coercive discipline practices are part of these interventions.⁶⁹ By positively influencing family processes, healthy behaviour will be promoted and this will prevent the development of problematic behaviour now and in later stages of life. The Triple-P or Positive Parenting Program is an example

here. This programme aims to prevent behavioural, emotional and developmental problems in children by supporting parents to:

- ensure a safe and engaging environment;
- create a positive learning environment;
- use assertive discipline;
- have realistic expectations; and
- take care of themselves as parents.⁷⁰

School-based prevention activities have also proven their effectiveness.

Examples include rewarding prosocial behaviour in middle childhood and strengthening refusal skills for withstanding peer pressure in later adolescence. School-wide programmes will not have school-wide effects, as you are dealing with a variety of age groups.⁷¹ A well-known and effective example is the Good Behaviour Game, a classroom-based behavioural management strategy working with six- to ten-year olds that works alongside the regular curriculum. Here, children are learning to take up the role of a student in a game format that rewards positive behaviour for both the individual students and their teams. After establishing a set of rules, these students learn how to behave accordingly and work together in a team. At the same time, they are also asked to monitor their personal and team's behaviour. Over time, "the game evolves from being highly predictable in timing and occurrence with immediate reinforcement to being unpredictable with delayed reinforcement, so that children learn that good behaviour is expected at all times and in all places".⁷²

When working with **vulnerable youngsters**, reaching out is more effective than expecting them to turn up. In addition to the interventions described above, activities aimed at improving impulse control, or focusing on school achievement are relevant and effective approaches for this target group.⁷³ Be sure to create an open and positive setting. There is a risk that your target group might be stigmatized because of their involvement in your programme. Rules on confidentiality and on external communication are crucial here.⁷⁴ (Rapport Rachele)

Another set of activities that have proven their effectiveness are **environmental strategies**. Instead of focusing on changing people's norms, attitudes or habits, this approach alters the environment.⁷⁵ Environmental interventions will try to limit exposure to unhealthy and risky behavioural opportunities and promote better

options.⁷⁶ For example, hot spot policing efforts will lead to higher police visibility and might activate law-abiding choices.⁷⁷ Other examples might include city planning and neighbourhood renewal in deprived areas.⁷⁸

Linking the right solution to the identified problem seems straightforward, yet practice has shown that prevention activities are often implemented based on intuitions and lay assumptions.⁷⁹ Most clearly, this is the case when providing information on the risks of problematic behaviour. Many practitioners and policy makers quickly board this gravy train, lured in by face value and visible activities, yet research has shown that these activities are ineffective at best and harmful at worst.⁸⁰ Contrary to the identified risk factors shown earlier, it is assumed that youngsters will make the right choice after being informed of the potentially harmful consequences of their behaviour. These **awareness-raising activities** are especially attractive since they can be easily distributed through mass media campaigns, spreading their message to a large audience at a low cost.⁸¹ Getting your message across, however, is only your first step.⁸² What needs to change is the behaviour of your target group, and because of the mismatch between identified risk factors and this approach, behavioural change is often lacking.

Research has shown that these approaches are missing their goal of changing behaviour, since lack of knowledge does not cause the initiation of drug use or the committing of crime.⁸³ On the contrary, drug users are more aware and knowledgeable about the risks of use than non-users.⁸⁴ Think about it: you know that eating fast food is unhealthy, but you still do it. Informed as you are, you still make the decision to eat that cheeseburger.



These approaches not only have little effect, they can even **worsen the problem**.⁸⁵ In an effort to justify the intervention, drug prevention messages will often start by describing 'the drug problem', showing absolute numbers of use and depicting all types of use as problematic. This information can actually lead to normative pressure. Youngsters might get the idea that this type of behaviour is

normal since ‘everyone does it’ and try it out for this reason.⁸⁶ On another level, some youngsters might become more attracted to taking that risk. Especially during puberty, teenagers and adolescents are testing their limits and experiment with drug use and petty crimes, as we have seen in Part One. Showing extreme examples, or testimonials from ex-drug users or criminals, might trigger the youngsters even more, due to this developmental proneness to risk-taking.⁸⁷ Thus, despite good intentions, these activities might have a negative effect on the behaviour they set out to prevent.

Using **scare tactics** or fear-based messages adds a different layer to the logic of informed decision making, by exaggerating the harmful effects of risky or problematic behaviour.⁸⁸ Graphic images or role-playing performances, designed to shock individuals into the right behaviour, have not shown their effectiveness and could even be disputed based on ethical concerns alone.⁸⁹ These activities misrepresent the actual dangers and often contradict the personal experiences youngsters might have.⁹⁰ If the youngsters cannot relate to your description of the problem, your preventive message will have no use.⁹¹ The infamous example of this approach is *Scared Straight*, a programme that involves vulnerable youngsters visiting adult prisons. The reasoning of the programme is that through first-hand observation, youngsters will be deterred from future offending. Through systematic reviews, this programme and similar activities have been shown to cause more harm than doing nothing.⁹²

Preventing drug-related crime among substance users

We have discussed above the different relationships between drug use and crime. If your target group is already experiencing harms from substance use and drug-related crime, other approaches might be needed. **Harm reduction** is one of those and could be labelled a more pragmatic approach.⁹³ The EMCDDA defines harm reduction as “interventions, programmes and policies that seek to reduce the health, social and economic harms of drug use to individuals, communities and societies”.⁹⁴

This strategy has an explicit focus on a health-approach, in line with current EU policy,⁹⁵ and detaches itself from the rather naïve dream of achieving a drug-free

society. Instead, it more realistically aims to lower the harmful effects users can experience.⁹⁶ Effective approaches include safe injection sites or drug consumption rooms, needle and syringe programmes, on-site pill testing, etc.⁹⁷

Harm reduction has rarely been studied in terms of its criminal outcomes, and due to its explicit focus on health and substance users, the wider community benefits are sometimes not stressed enough.⁹⁸ However, **in**

addition to the benefits to the user's health, harm reduction

programmes can help you decrease drug-related crimes and/or feelings of insecurity in the neighbourhood.⁹⁹

The medical prescription of heroin, for example, has been shown to reduce criminal activity and, more specifically, crimes committed to financially sustain the substance use disorder.¹⁰⁰ Drug consumption rooms have been reported to reduce drug-related harm at community level, as drug litter and public nuisance might decline. It will be crucial, however, to have the local community on board with your activity.¹⁰¹ The ICPC has a couple of key recommendations here to ensure the effectiveness of your harm reduction programme:

- drug users must participate in the design and implementation of your programme;
- the programme must be easily accessible;
- the service must be adapted to local conditions;
- local law enforcement organisations must facilitate access to the services;
- the entire local community must be both consulted and involved.¹⁰²

Much like harm reduction, **preventing recidivism** is an approach targeted at people who experience harm from their use and/or have committed crimes because of it. The goal here is then to prevent reoffending and/or to treat people. This can be done through the use of criminal justice programmes, through public health approaches or a mixture of both.¹⁰³



A report from the Swedish National Council on Crime Prevention (Brå) looked into drug treatment programmes and their effects on crime, and found that most were effective in reducing criminal behaviour.¹⁰⁴ Therapeutic communities and supervision programmes were associated with the largest reductions in crime (51% and 47% respectively). Multidimensional family treatment is another effective approach when dealing with adolescents who use drugs and engage in crime.¹⁰⁵ The programme consists of four inter-linked:

- adolescent module: addresses developmental issues such as identity formation, peer relations, etc.;
- parent module: enhances parenting skills in the areas of monitoring and limit-setting, fostering parental participation in the teenager's life, etc.;
- family module: facilitates changes in the family relationship by helping them develop social and communication skills;
- extrafamilial module: helps to establish positive relationships within all social systems in which the adolescent participates, as for example the school.

Treatment can also be made available from within the criminal justice system, as part of probation services or within a prison programme. Also in this particular context, therapeutic communities have been proven to reduce re-incarceration, criminal activity and reoffending.¹⁰⁶ This approach stresses the concept of 'community as a method', by purposely using the peer community to facilitate social and psychological change in its intervention group.¹⁰⁷ Re-integration programmes have also proven their merit. Typically, these support participants in obtaining housing, education and/or employment prior to release.¹⁰⁸

The German Bengalo project finished second in the ECPA competition. The intervention is delivered in a youth custody centre and aims to foster the self-regulation skills of its participants, to reduce impulsive, aggressive and dissocial behaviour, to motivate participants to abstain from illegal substances and risky alcohol use, and to establish a future lifestyle without resorting to criminal offences.

03 RECOMMENDATIONS

Know what you are dealing with and act accordingly. It sounds simple, but in practice it is rather hard to follow. This Toolbox is a guide to help you achieve your goals and prevent drug-related crimes effectively.

Before starting out with your activities, **be sure to tailor these activities**. Part One of this Toolbox zoomed in on this needs assessment. A sense of urgency or the idea that something needs to be done is not enough.¹⁰⁹ You need to know your target group and look at how substance use and crime are related. Your approach will be different depending on the relationship. If your target group shows no particular signs of problematic behaviour (yet), you can target a common set of risk factors to prevent crime and substance use initiation. However, if there are signs, harm reduction or treatment options might be more advisable.¹¹⁰ Whichever is the case, look at what drives this behaviour locally. Knowing the problem and its causes will ensure your intervention is not in vain and is what the community actually needs. It will also be crucial to understand the developmental stage of your target group. What influences behaviour changes as young people age. Your approach should change too.

Once you have identified all of this, you need to match the right interventions and **work in an evidence-based way**.¹¹¹ We have seen that this is not always the case, at the risk of misdirecting scarce resources or, worse, spending money on measures that can actually worsen the situation.¹¹² By working in an evidence-based way, we can try to avoid these mistakes and use the best available evidence to guide and inform your work.¹¹³ Part Two of this Toolbox gave an

overview of approaches that have proven their effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Raising awareness of the potentially harmful consequences of risky behaviour has little preventive effect. Scaring children to convey your message does not help; quite *the contrary*.

Of course, not all problems will have a tried and tested solution. In the absence of evidence, a precautionary approach should be followed. As a minimum, your approach should be theoretically informed. Should you plan to introduce an innovative intervention, you would do well to at least be sure that the activity is not associated with negative effects. To minimise this risk, a small-scale test which is thoroughly monitored and evaluated could indicate the probability of your success.¹¹⁴ However, and for all intents and purposes, **all your activities should be evaluated**, regardless of their prior effects. What has to change is the behaviour. Awareness-raising activities – when evaluated – will often focus on knowledge transfer: do you remember the message. This is only the first step.¹¹⁵ Whether or not your target group changed its behaviour because of your intervention is the real question. This can only be assessed through an impact evaluation.¹¹⁶ Although equally important, a process evaluation is not an impact evaluation and does not replace it. The fact that people liked a project, or that hundreds of schools have implemented a programme, says something about how the activity has been received by the target group, or about implementation volume, but says little to nothing about the actual effect it had.

HOW TO evaluate your project?

STEP **01** **Plan and design your evaluation, before the actual start of your project**

This involves thinking about the evaluation budget, team, plan (for example to decide time intervals for data collection) and design (pre/post-test design, randomised control trial, etc.) and, most importantly, deciding on what you want to evaluate: what do you aim to achieve.

Make your indicators SMART!

- › Specific
- › Measurable
- › Achievable
- › Relevant
- › Time-bound

STEP
02**Collect data throughout the implementation and analyse these findings****PROCESS EVALUATION: HOW DID THE PROJECT WORK?**

- > Implementation costs
- > Programme fidelity
- > Accessibility
- > Feasibility
- > Participation rate
- > Retention rate
- > External confounding factors

...

IMPACT EVALUATION: DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE ITS GOALS?

- > Registered drug-related crime (within target group)
- > Self-reported drug-related crime (within target group)
- > Victimisation rates
- > Reconviction rates
- > Fear/perception of crime
- > Displacement
- > School achievement
- > ...

STEP
03**Communicate the results and use them in continued or subsequent activities**

This allows others to learn from this experience, but also allows you to reflect on your work and perhaps improve your activities. In this sense, evaluation should be a continuous part of your work.



THE EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION AWARD



Each year, the Chair of the EUCPN organises the Best Practice Conference and European Crime Prevention Award (BPC-ECPA). The main objective is to exchange information and good practices about crime prevention. In the second half of 2019, the Finnish Presidency organised the BPC-ECPA around the theme of “drug-related crime and harms caused by drug use among young people”. Further explaining its call for projects, the Finnish Presidency specified the topic as follows:

“A project can aim to have young people stop drug use (and mixed use of intoxicants) or to reduce the harmful and adverse effects of drugs. The objective of the project can also be to reduce crime or public disturbances related to young people’s drug use or to improve the sense of safety in public places, especially in the vicinity of treatment and housing facilities. The participating projects can utilise various crime prevention methods. Projects that solely focus on reduction and prevention of alcohol-related crime and harms caused by alcohol use are excluded.”

Fifteen Member States competed for the ECPA. These projects were rated by a Jury:

- experts on the prevention of drug-related crime, accounting for 25% of the vote: Professor Silva (Mid Sweden University), Doctor Burkhart (EMCDDA), Professor Pauwels and Professor Colman (Ghent University);
- four Member States, accounting for 50% of the vote: representatives from Romania, Finland, Croatia and Germany¹¹⁸;
- the QUALIPREV tool, accounting for 25% of the vote.¹¹⁹

In the following sections, you will find the top three projects from the ECPA, with a brief description of the project¹²⁰ and the explanation from the Jury.



1. First place Sofielund Approach (Sweden)

Brief description

Extensive work in Sofielund has reversed a negative trend in the area, which has experienced major problems involving both serious criminality, above all open drug trafficking, and minor criminality, such as graffiti and vandalism, which has created a significant sense of unsafety. The difficult problems have been solved by strengthening the collective ability of those who live and work in the area. A broad spectrum of efforts has been carried out by civil society, businesses, and public entities, such as the municipality and police, for example security cameras and efforts to increase social cohesion. Researchers have followed and evaluated the work. A strong and vigorous local network, where all parties contributed in different ways, has formed the basis for success. The efforts have led to increased stability in the area and signs of a decline in the recruitment of young people in the risk zone to criminality and drug use, among other things.

Jury explanation

The project was chosen because the Jury appreciated the involvement of the most important stakeholders and partners, who work together to tackle a community-wide problem. By doing so, the project increases the collective efficacy of the neighbourhood. In addition, the project has the potential to become a manualised programme or exemplary strategy for other Member States to use.



2. Second place: Bengalo (Germany)

Brief description

The aim of the project was to develop, implement and evaluate a new innovative educational and treatment intervention (called BENGALO) for young male offenders, who currently serve a close custody sentence and have a history of aggression and addiction problems. The project was successfully implemented on the socio-therapeutic ward of the secure youth custody centre of the city of Hamburg in Hahnöfersand (Jugendstrafanstalt Hahnöfersand). The project was conducted by the German Centre for Addiction Research in Childhood and Adolescence and was funded by the Justizbehörde of the city of Hamburg (legal authority). The evaluation of BENGALO followed a non-randomised controlled approach. The BENGALO intervention was delivered in weekly group sessions over six months. The BENGALO intervention aimed to foster self-regulation, reduce impulsive and aggressive behaviour, and encourage abstinence from substance use, which are key processes for illegal conduct. The evaluation showed significant effects on central outcomes.

Jury explanation

The runner-up project, 'Bengalo', in Germany was particularly popular because of its rigorous evaluation and its evidence-based approach. The positive results have been translated into a manualised intervention, opening it up to possible EU-wide dissemination.



3. Third place: Netstof.dk (Denmark)

Brief description

Substance abuse is one of the biggest societal problems, with major consequences for individuals, families and society. Few youngsters who have an incipient or established substance abuse problem seek help in traditional counselling. Netstof.dk is therefore playing a major role in preventing substance abuse problems, such as crime, among youngsters. Netstof.dk is a digital counselling site where youngsters can remain anonymous. As a result, they dare to address their concerns about drugs, which is a highly taboo topic, both in close relationships and at community level. On Netstof.dk they find information about the effects and side-effects of various substances and write anonymously to professionals, in different letterboxes. They also write to peers who give them both negative and positive perspectives on different drugs and their effects and consequences. The digital-pedagogical methods of Netstof.dk mean early and competent help, leading to fewer young people ending up with a substance abuse problem which is expensive for individuals, families and society.

Jury explanation

The Jury appreciated the online focus of the project, which potentially allows it to reach a group that is harder to target with traditional methods. In addition, this approach increases the perceived accessibility of health services. Besides, the website does not use fear in its communication, which opens up a non-judgmental atmosphere. The project also started out from a thorough needs assessment, a trait the Jury particularly liked.



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- 119 The EUCPN commissioned a study to provide an overview of relevant indicators and their application in the evaluation of crime prevention projects. This study resulted in the QUALIPREV method (for more information, see www.eucpn.org).
- 120 Written by the project managers themselves, as part of the ECPA entry form.
- 121 Descriptions as written by the project managers.

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ANNEX: ECPA ENTRIES¹²¹

All the ECPA entries are listed in this annex, where they too are accompanied by a brief description, displaying some of the dos *and* don'ts described earlier. For more detailed information and contact details of project managers, please visit our website (<https://eucpn.org/>).

FINLAND: **Action for youth**

“Action for Youth” is a project for young offenders and prisoners aged 15 to 29. The objective is to reach clients and to encourage them to receive the support that is provided by Action for Youth and other meaningful stakeholders. The project provides a safe and intoxicant-free space and community in which the clients are treated as equals and with respect. The most common activities are music, sports and creative arts, including methods such as wraparound support, peer support, intensive individual support and guidance. The project provides support throughout imprisonment in the form of music production, and individual and group support. The objective is to motivate, provide tools for emotional support and allow freedom of expression in a positive manner. The project is reliant on cooperation between stakeholders and Action for Youth. In particular, cooperation with the Criminal Sanctions Agency enables the project to reach out to the clients.

CROATIA: **My responsibility is our safety**

“My responsibility is our safety” is a prevention-based project, targeting youth/students between 15 and 18 years of age, high-school students, their parents, teachers, and also the local community. It aims to improve the safety of youth, prevent crimes related to substance abuse and increase safety and citizens’ personal sense of security in the local community. This is a project comprising several interrelated components, whose relevant activities are aimed at promoting a positive lifestyle as opposed to vandalism, violence, hooliganism, hate and intolerance. The activities broaden the perception of youth in relation to their identity; through the spectrum of youth crime prevention, they are empowered to be ready to act responsibly, which is an important part of the decision-making process. On an organisational level, this is a very broad and complex project. However, its successful implementation creates a sense of general satisfaction in celebrating youthfulness and the end of a stage in the life of the younger generation.



GERMANY: **Bengalo**

The aim of the project was to develop, implement and evaluate a new innovative educational and treatment intervention (called BENGALO) for young male offenders, who currently serve a close custody sentence and have a history of aggression and addiction problems. The project was successfully implemented on the socio-therapeutic ward of the secure youth custody centre of the city of Hamburg in Hahnöfersand (Jugendstrafanstalt Hahnöfersand). The project was conducted by the German Centre for Addiction Research in Childhood and Adolescence and was funded by the Justizbehörde of the city of Hamburg (legal authority). The evaluation of BENGALO followed a non-randomised controlled approach. The BENGALO intervention was delivered in weekly group sessions over six months. The BENGALO intervention aimed to foster self-regulation, reduce impulsive and aggressive behaviour and encourage abstinence from substance use, which are key processes for illegal conduct. The evaluation showed significant effects on central outcomes.

PORTUGAL: **Spring Break**

The GNR (National Republican Guard), through the Special Community Policing Programs, carried out markedly social activities in the field of human rights, in order to protect vulnerable citizens, specifically young people. To achieve this goal, the GNR has been working since 2014 to develop the “Spring Break” Operation, which aims to raise awareness among young people who will make their final year trips. Their age ranges from 13/14 to 17/18 years and many of them are away from their families for the first time and may be exposed to risky behaviour associated with the excessive consumption of alcohol and narcotic substances. In the 2019 event, 360 community police officers contacted 9,473 youths during this operation, raising awareness of the risks inherent in drug and alcohol use. Another action is joint activities in coordination with the Guardia Civil, inspecting the main land border access routes, specifically focusing on checking the buses hired to transport young people to the southern Spanish border and using drug detection dogs to check the possible transportation of narcotic substances in luggage. Actions are also carried out to supervise commercial

establishments where alcohol and products may be consumed and where products and alcohol may be sold to adolescents and young adults.

CZECH REPUBLIC: “Revolution Train” Anti -Drug - Prevention Train & follow- up Program “That’s the law, mate!”

The project is a unique primary drug prevention programme presented in an actual working train with six carriages. There are multimedia cinemas in which visitors watch a film based on a true story, about young people who start taking legal drugs and then experimenting with illegal ones. The programme shows the causes, developments and consequences of addictions. The programme also uses 5D technology (we strive to evoke all the senses) and interactive rooms that involve the visitors and create interaction. Visitors can feel and touch the environment of drug-addicts in a true-life lesson that will aid them in making the correct decision in the future. Innovative, intense, effective but safe! The project aims to create a healthy attitude - freedom

- legal awareness - responsibility - safety – and a healthy lifestyle.

SWEDEN: Sofielund Approach



Extensive work in Sofielund has reversed a negative trend in the area, which has experienced major problems involving both serious criminality, above all open drug trafficking, and minor criminality, such as graffiti and vandalism, which has created a significant sense of unsafety. The difficult problems have been solved by strengthening the collective ability of those who live and work in the area. A broad spectrum of efforts has been carried out by civil society, businesses, and public entities, such as the municipality and police, for example security cameras and efforts to increase social cohesion. Researchers have followed and evaluated the work. A strong and vigorous local network, where all parties contributed in different ways, has formed the basis for success. The efforts have led to increased stability in the area and signs of a decline in the recruitment of young people in the risk zone to criminality and drug use, among other things.

SPAIN:

Master Plan for Peaceful Coexistence and Security Improvement in Schools and their Environments

The Ministry of the Interior launched a preventive tool in 2007 to reduce and combat drug use by young people, in view of concern relating to the lowering of the age at which drug use starts and the increase in drug use in a school environment. The experiment, resulting from successive quarterly and annual evaluations, has been using a new approach which improved the Master Plan method since 2013. This preventive work has reinforced the participation of the educational community (students, parents and teachers) alongside law enforcement, the National Police and the Guardia Civil. The cost-benefit analysis shows great results, taking into account the resources invested, without any specific added cost outside the public budgets already planned for security. This Spanish public project can be replicated in another European Union Member State, establishing cross-sectoral channels of cooperation between different stakeholders to fight drug use by young people.

BELGIUM:

Action plan on drugs Kempen: a multidisciplinary and integrated approach

The Action plan on drugs Kempen is based on the fact that the drug problem is expanding and transcends the region. At the same time, a new, innovative approach was needed in this region. A steering group brings all the relevant partners together so that inter-organisational pilot projects can be launched (local authorities, social services, prevention work, doctors, assistance, police, public prosecutor's office, etc.). These pilot projects are innovative and different, but also allow new methodologies to be tested.

The Action plan on drugs Kempen strives towards less problematic substance use in an efficient and humane way and, by extension, less individual and social damage in the long term. Through this plan, the project group wants to decrease:

- the number of addicted citizens;
- the chronic issue;
- the individual physical and psychosocial damage caused by substance use;
- the negative consequences for society (safety risks, nuisances and crime).

HUNGARY: **Re-Action**

The road show, together with the National Crime Prevention Council's Experiential Education Training, the 'Parents' Academy' educational video clips and the "FÜGE" Deviance Prevention Program operated by INDIT Public Foundation, is a complex package of drug prevention programmes. The Experiential Education Training aims to develop social competences, conflict-solving techniques and self-awareness among participants during a four-day off-the-job training course. Those who are comfortable in their own skin are in less danger, since they have more self-confidence, are more successful and therefore do not need to compensate by using alcohol or drugs, and are less likely to become offenders or victims of a crime. The Re-Action road show is a spectacular programme that involves hundreds of kids each time in crime prevention activities, using drama pedagogy, situational games, and lectures to deepen the crime prevention knowledge of the participants. In the episodes of 'Parents' Academy', professionals answer the most common questions raised by parents regarding drugs. The "FÜGE" Deviance

Prevention Programme is a project run by the INDIT Public Foundation for addiction and holistic health that focuses on crime prevention, using universal and targeted prevention elements and methodologies, with preventive activities in schools or community settings. It aims to promote social and communication development and sensitisation.

POLAND: **Wrong Set – Change Settings**

This social media campaign is a universal prevention project aimed at all people aged 16-20 in Poland. Its main goals are to limit initiation in risky behaviours and reduce psychoactive and psychotropic substance use. The message of the campaign is to be aware of the potential risks of substance use and be able to react adequately in situations that carry threats to the health and safety of a person or his/her environment. The campaign teaches the factors that influence human life, how to avoid problems connected to drug use, and how to find help if problems arise. The title phrase – Change Your Settings – means managing your behaviour in such a way as to enjoy life and youth;

changing your “settings” forever; assuming attitudes of positive and healthy behaviour. Activities include a simple internet game and knowledge-based promotion.



DENMARK: **Netstof.dk**

Substance abuse is one of the biggest societal problems, with major consequences for individuals, families and society. Few youngsters who have an incipient or established substance abuse problem seek help in traditional counselling. Netstof.dk is therefore playing a major role in preventing substance abuse problems, such as crime, among youngsters. Netstof.dk is a digital counselling site where youngsters can remain anonymous. As a result, they dare to address their concerns about drugs, which is a highly taboo topic, both in close relationships and at community level. On Netstof.dk they find information about the effects and side effects of various substances, and write anonymously to professionals, in different letterboxes. They also write to peers who give them both negative and positive perspectives on different drugs, and their effects and

consequences. The digital-pedagogical methods of Netstof.dk mean early and competent help, leading to fewer young people ending up with a substance abuse problem which is expensive for individuals, families and society.

LITHUANIA: **I am responsible for my future**

Different people use drugs for different reasons (escape, relaxation, curiosity, to fit in, boredom, rebellion, experimentation, etc.), but all of them want to change something in their lives. They think drugs are a solution, but eventually the drugs become the problem. The main objectives of the project are to protect members of society (in particular children and youth) from a harmful environment, and to help them eliminate and/or reduce the risk factors that determine the use of psychoactive substances and the development of various addictions. It also seeks to improve the situation involving drug-related offenses (both criminal and administrative) in Šiauliai. Drug-related problems have no simple solutions, but knowing the facts can help people deal with them and make the correct choice.

SLOVAKIA: **Drugs - the way into the darkness**

'The dark trip' is a modern drug multimedia theatre performance. It is an autobiographical play - a story that the actor Martin Žák experienced, wrote and passes on. The main idea behind the multimedia theatrical production is drugs and drug prevention, presented in an attractive and motivating way which, in addition to prevention, provides hope for a better life and has a therapeutic and resocialising effect. 'The light trip' is a continuation of the dark trip. It encourages young people to discover and develop talent and help others, using joy and strength to overcome obstacles in life. Its inspiration helps and guides pupils and youth to find their place in life and society. It encourages social feelings, leads to empathy and the right approach to people who have disabilities or are socially disadvantaged, and shows the hope and example involved in the application of talent in practice and in life. As an effective tool for prevention, therapy and education, art encourages strong values. 'After party' is a modern, moderated follow-up meeting, with interconnecting theatrical experiences, performances, humour, music, discussion, experts as friends, and young

people, many of whom have gone through drug hell, survived and found the meaning of life as they discovered their talent and direction, leading to a happier life.

CYPRUS: **Protocol of Cooperation for the Referral of Young Offenders from Drug Law Enforcement Unit – Cyprus Police to Public and NGO Treatment Centres**

This project is an effort to develop social and treatment policies and measures in the framework of the criminal justice system, in order to support drug-addicted individuals in their rehabilitation and social reintegration. The "Protocol of Cooperation" operates within the framework of the criteria set by the Cyprus Police. Within a short timeframe, the "Social Intervention Officers" of the DLEU (specialised personnel - Police Officers with an academic background in social sciences, with specialised education, appropriate training and expertise in addressing addiction problems of all types) contact, motivate and refer the service users (arrested drug users) to the relevant Treatment Centre, according to their age and needs. Provided that the

arrested person fulfils the above criteria and attends a meeting, they will be encouraged and briefed orally by the “Police – Social Intervention Officer” about the Treatment Centres and the possibilities of mitigating the potential legal consequences of completing a Treatment Programme provided by State and NGO Services. If the arrested person responds, the DLEU sends the referral form for this person to the respective Treatment Centre. The DLEU is informed in writing if the person stops attending the Treatment Centre they have been referred to. If the DLEU receives a Certification of Completion of a Treatment Programme from the Treatment Services within two years, the case is filed as “Otherwise disposed of” (case closed), provided that the relevant General Attorney has granted their consent. In the opposite event, the case will be taken to court.

from their problems. An analysis of these facts reveals the necessity of developing scientifically and practically significant measures for prevention and the support of young people in the fight against drug addiction. These measures are socio-economic, organisational and management, legal, health and cultural education. The project was developed with the idea of it being expanded into a national programme and being successfully implemented in other EU Member States. Given the broad-ranging partnership between the public, non-governmental and private sectors, as well as planned preventive actions, the project is expected to achieve an overall positive result for the community. Together Against Drugs is a project that embodies common efforts targeting young people by institutions, non-profit organisations and citizens.

BULGARIA: **Together against drugs**

The needs of a busy and stressful daily life mean that young people are increasingly resorting to drugs, tempted by curiosity and a desire to escape

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