

Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the Rules and procedures for awarding and presenting the European Crime Prevention Award (Par.2 §3).

General information

1. Please specify your country.

Germany

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

Country's ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

Civilian heroes - How much (digital) moral courage do you have? (*German*
Zivile Helden – Wieviel (digitale) Zivilcourage steckt in dir?)

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

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5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

01.11.2018 Das Projekt läuft noch und wird aktuell um die Präventionsthemen Rechtsextremismus, Antisemitismus und Verschwörungstheorien ergänzt

The Start date of the project was 01/11/2021. The project is still running. It is currently being expanded to include the prevention topics of right-wing extremism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories.

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

www.zivile-helden.de

<http://praedisiko.polizei-beratung.de/>

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-benefit-cost-analysis/article/benefitcost-analysis-of-social-media-facilitated-bystander-programs/6A59C98BE40E9EFF87A31D5625058D80>

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

How can we use modern information and communication technologies (ICT) to communicate security-related content with the public? How can we promote interactive and dialog-oriented communication between authorities and the public, and how can we do this in a way that is not only effective in preventing crime, but also economically efficient?

To answer these questions, an interdisciplinary research network developed a communication platform with three interactive films on it. The network chose moral courage as the main theme for the project, because it exemplifies a security-related issue that is relatively uncontroversial among the population. Accordingly, the three interactive films aimed to increase general moral courage. Each of the three films targeted a specific aspect, namely moral courage in the face of either (1) violence in public spaces, (2) hate speech on the Internet, or (3) radicalization. In making the films, the producers applied game principles and game design elements, meaning they applied the gamification approach.

The film on violence, for example, put the user in a potentially violent situation. After each scene, pop-up buttons asked users to choose between two options for action. Depending on these choices, the storyline of the film took a particular route. More specifically, if the user made good choices like getting help from other bystanders or calling the police, the storyline took a good route. If the user made bad choices or remained passive, the storyline took a bad route and escalated into violence. Afterwards, the user could play online-games that directly referred to the film. For example, she could design a virtual avatar to describe the appearance characteristics of the perpetrator in the film. For both the decisions in the film and the behaviour in the online games, the user received points and a short feedback message. She was also nudged to share her total score with her contacts on social media and encourage them to participate as well.

Members of the research network subjected interactive film and online games to rigorous outcome evaluation. For this purpose, they conducted randomized online field experiments. They conducted the first experiment on Facebook to replicate the environment in which users frequently have their interactions with online content. They randomly assigned participants to three treatment groups and one control group. Each of the treatment groups received a unique configuration of the treatment, namely (1) the interactive film, (2) the interactive film in conjunction with the online games, or (3) a non-interactive version of the film. The control group received no treatment. The results showed that the interactive film increased the individual willingness to intervene in a violent situation by 6.5%. Since willingness is the best predictor of actual behaviour, the result suggests that the film reduces the crime rate in the target group by 6.5% on average, *ceteris paribus*. The second experiment used panel data and showed that this positive treatment effect persisted after four and even after eight weeks.

Using the results as a basis, the researchers carried out a cost-benefit analysis, which, however, based on restrictive assumptions and thus tended to be of an approximate nature. Given approximately 600 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants in Germany and a 6.5% reduction, the interactive film would prevent 39 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. Reaching 100,000 users with the interactive film via Facebook would cost a maximum of 487,500€ (including production costs). Project benefit is equal to the costs that would otherwise have resulted from these 39 crimes. Assuming costs of 487,500€ to reach 100,000 users, the project would achieve a positive benefit-cost ratio, i.e. the break-even point, at an average cost of 12,500€ ($=487,500\text{€}/39$) per violent crime.

I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.

8. Which **crime prevention/ reduction mechanisms** were used in this project to contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Multiple answers are possible.

Establishing and maintaining normative barriers to committing criminal acts

e.g. 'Offenders, we are watching you' campaigns

Reducing recruitment to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social and individual causes and processes that lead to criminality

e.g. social and financial support for disadvantaged families

Detering potential perpetrators from committing crimes through the threat of punishment

e.g. decreasing the time between arrest and punishment

Disrupting criminal acts by stopping them before they are carried out

e.g. increasing police patrols in vulnerable areas

Protecting vulnerable targets by reducing opportunities and make it more demanding to carry out criminal acts

e.g. placing locks and cameras

Reducing the harmful consequences of criminal acts

e.g. initiatives to recover stolen goods

Reducing the rewards from criminal acts

e.g. restorative justice programmes

Incapacitating (or neutralising) perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts

e.g. imprisonment of key gang members

Encouraging desistance from crime and rehabilitating former offenders so they are able to settle back into a normal life

e.g. prison rehabilitation programs

Explain how this/these crime prevention mechanisms were used ((**Max. 300 words**))

The first crime prevention mechanism used by the project is deterrence. This aspect of the project originates from the seminal work of Nobel Laureate Gary Becker. Becker postulated that potential criminals follow an economic rationale by conducting a cost-benefit-analysis in order to decide whether to commit a crime. More specifically, they try to maximize expected utility from the anticipated payoffs of the crime. Notably, government deterrents reduce expected utility and make the potential criminal less likely to commit the crime. State deterrents include harsher penalties and/or an increased probability of

apprehension. This marks the starting point of the project, because if civil courage or positive bystander behavior is increased in the general population, this also increases the likelihood of apprehension for the potential criminal. The latter anticipates the increased probability of apprehension, adjusts his cost-benefit calculation accordingly, and ultimately reduces his crime supply. Thus, by promoting positive bystander behavior in the population, the project helps to increase the likelihood of apprehension and thus reduce crime levels.

Further crime prevention mechanisms used by the project include, first, disrupting, second, reducing the harmful consequences of criminal acts, and third, incapacitating. The project teaches participants various tactics for positive bystander behavior. Among these, direct tactics aim to disrupt criminal acts through direct intervention without endangering oneself. Delegation tactics involve at least one other person and a plan for cooperation. For example, one bystander could distract the perpetrator, while the other calls the police. Delay tactics apply after the violent situation has taken place. Giving first aid or consolation reduces the harmful consequences of the criminal act, while memorizing the perpetrator's characteristics and testifying as a witness help incapacitating perpetrators. As the final crime prevention mechanism, the project establishes and maintains a normative barrier to committing criminal acts.

II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives. For more information on evaluation, click [here](#)

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used?)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project was set up to explore an innovative solution approach to using information and communication technology for crime prevention. The approach is innovative in terms of both content and technology, and enables the security authorities to communicate preventive messages to the population in a dialog-oriented and interactive manner.

Before the project was set up, the interdisciplinary research network analysed the current state of research and practice in the various fields and derived implications for project implementation. For example, experts from criminology analysed existing police social media activities in terms of targeting, design and reception by users to uncover potential for improvement. Experts from communication science drew on the latest research findings to make the communication measures as persuasive as possible.

Computer scientists analysed the latest technology to optimize user engagement with the communication platform. Finally, economists gathered state-of-the-art methodologies to effectiveness and efficiency.

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

The project pursued the main objective of exploring the possibilities of promoting crime prevention in social media through development and implementation of exemplary communication measures placed on a proprietary communication platform. To ensure effectiveness, the project was supported by accompanying research, which tested communication success in selected target groups through randomised online experiments. The exemplary communication measures consisted of interactive videos that applied game principles and game design elements.

Communication success should become evident, on the one hand, in the causal effect of the measures on bystander behaviour in the target group. On the other hand, it should become evident in the economic efficiency of the measures, as expressed by the benefit-cost ratio. The secondary objective was to analyse differences in effects across different demographic subgroups (i.e., heterogeneity analysis) to provide policymakers with the scientific basis for differentiating their future policy interventions.

11. Has there been a process evaluation?¹ Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly? (**max. 300 words**)

The process evaluation was carried out externally by the Association of German Engineers (German: Verein Deutscher Ingenieure, VDI) on behalf of the funding organization, which is the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (German: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF). The process of project planning and implementation was complex, as the research network had to integrate the input of its members from different areas, during the conceptual phase. Furthermore, during the phase of implementing the communication platform and exemplary communication measures, the network had to consider the results of the conceptual phase on the one hand, and the

¹ **Process evaluation:** Also called *implementation evaluation*, or *monitoring*, this process documents **how the activities were implemented** in order to determine any deviations from the original planning. It facilitates finding explanations for when the results of the intervention are not as expected.

legal, technical, and methodological requirements of the subsequent outcome evaluation on the other.

Within the framework of the process evaluation, the challenge was to coordinate this complex and at the same time dynamic process, to ensure the timely achievement of objectives and, if necessary, to take countermeasures in the event of deviations. For this purpose, the VDI based its process evaluation on the sub-goals, schedules and milestones, which the research network jointly developed for each individual member and documented in the research proposal. Regular project meetings were held to ensure optimal coordination between the members of the network, to develop new ideas during the course of the project, and to enable the VDI to evaluate compliance with the schedule. In addition, the individual members of the research network have been able to exchange information bilaterally as needed in order to find short-term solutions to any problems that may arise. Finally, each individual member of the research network had to submit two interim reports and a final report to the VDI, in each of which they had to demonstrate the current status of goal achievement and compliance with the schedule.

12. Has there been an outcome² or impact³ evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? (**Max. 300 words**)

We had the outcome evaluation carried out internally by the network members from Leibniz University Hannover. They conducted two randomized online field experiments (RCTs) to evaluate the causal effect of one exemplary communication measure on the willingness to intervene in a violent situation. Randomized experiments represent a suitable method as they yield unbiased results given sufficient sample size. The communication measure was an interactive film placed on a proprietary website. The film put the viewer in the position of a bystander to a violent situation. After each scene, the viewer had to make choices, which determined the further plot of the film. The willingness

² **Outcome evaluation:** Measures the **direct effect** (i.e., extent of the changes) **of the intervention on the target group, population, or geographic area**. The information produced by the outcome evaluation determines at what level the **objectives were achieved**.

³ **Impact evaluation:** Measures **long-term effects** of the intervention on the target group, as well as **indirect effects** on the broader community. The information produced by the impact evaluation determines at what level the **ultimate goals** of the intervention were achieved.

to intervene is an outcome indicator suitable for our purpose for two reasons. First, intervention behaviour is almost impossible to observe under real-life conditions. Second, willingness (i.e. behavioural intention) is the single best predictor of actual behaviour according to social psychology.

The researchers conducted the first online field experiment on Facebook. They randomly assigned over 4,000 Facebook users to three treatment groups and one control group. The treatment groups received three different configurations of the communication measure: (1) a linear, noninteractive version of the film, (2) the interactive film, and (3) the interactive film in combination with a set of online-games. The researchers assessed willingness to intervene via online survey. The results show that interactive film increased the willingness to intervene among Facebook users by 6.5%. They further show that using the gamification approach enhanced the positive effect. The second experiment used panel data to assess the long-term effect. For this purpose, the willingness to intervene was assessed at three points in time. The results confirm the positive effect found in the first experiment. They further show that the effect persisted four, and even eight weeks after exposure to treatment.

III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project is innovative in several aspects First; the approach is innovative in terms of personnel, as the interdisciplinary research network is unique in this form. Second, the approach is conceptually innovative in that it builds on latest scientific findings and strategically aligns the communication of security-related content in social media. The approach of interactive and dialog-oriented communication between safety authorities and the public is also an innovative concept.

Third, the approach is technically innovative, as it is the first time in German crime prevention to use communication measures that apply the gamification approach. Outcome evaluation using online experiments on Facebook is also a technical innovation in this area. Finally, the approach is methodologically innovative because it examines not only effectiveness in terms of crime prevention but also, for the first time in Germany, the economic efficiency of the communication measures.

IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

Active project partners were the Police Crime Prevention Program of the Federal States and the Federation (ProPK), Stuttgart Media University (HdM), Leibniz University Hannover (LUH), the German Police University (DHPol) and the Internet agency MOSAIQ GmbH. The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) in Wiesbaden and the State Criminal Police Office (LKA) of Lower Saxony in Hanover acted as associated partners. The ProPK provided professional impulses from the practice of police crime prevention. The HdM contributed the theoretical foundations from the areas of media and communication science, netnography, and media ethics. The HdM also developed the concept for the website and the interactive films. At the same time, it was responsible for project coordination. The LUH conducted the outcome evaluation and cost-benefit-analysis. The DHPol assessed examined the prevention activities of German police units in social media. MOSAIQ developed and maintained the website, integrated the interactive films, and assisted LUH with outcome evaluation. The associated partners supported the project as external consultants.

V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)

PräDiSiKo was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in the course of the announcement "Civil Security - New Economic Aspects" in the program "Research for Civil Security" (project duration: 11/2016 - 10/2019).

The continuation is carried out by the police crime prevention of the states and the federal government.

From 15/11/2021, the Civilian Heroes will be supplemented by a further topic. Here, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, for Construction and Home Affairs acts as a third-party funder.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

Total BMBF grant for PräDiSiKo: EUR 1.8 million during the project period: 11/2016 - 10/2019

Personnel costs central office p.a. for a social media editor: 94,660 EUR

Third-party funding BMI: 475,000 EUR

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis⁴ been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

We had cost-benefit-analysis (CBA) carried out internally by the partners from LUH. They conducted a back-of-the-envelope calculation, since they had to rely on sample data and the cost structure may change if the project was scaled up.

The CBA based on the following assumptions: Producing the website and one exemplary communication measure cost 400,000€. Reaching 100,000 users on Facebook would cost around 87,500€. In 2020, around 600 violent crimes were committed per 100,000 inhabitants in Germany.

Results from outcome evaluation show the communication measure *ceteris paribus* reduced violent crime by 6.5%, which is equal to 39 crimes (6.5% of 600). Project benefit is equal to the costs that would otherwise have resulted from these 39 crimes. Assuming costs of 487,500€ to reach 100,000 users, the project would achieve a positive benefit-cost ratio, i.e. the break-even point, at an average cost of 12,500€ (=487,500€/39) per violent crime.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

The project can easily be replicated in another member State, just the translation has to be done. To ensure successful replications of the project in other member states, adjustments would maybe need to be made to account for cultural differences. This might consider the casting of the film but also other regional characteristics of the respective member state which should be taken into account when replicating the project.

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

The project is to be seen as basic research at the intersection of crime prevention and modern information and communication technology. The fundamental findings that digital communication measures have an effect on bystander behaviour, that this effect is reinforced by gamification, and that social media provide a suitable tool for addressing the relevant target groups in

⁴ **Cost-benefit analysis:** A type of economic evaluation that compares the direct and indirect cost of the resources employed in the intervention, with the equivalent economic value of the benefits.

a cost-effective manner from the scientific and evidence-based foundation for follow-up projects in the other member states.

In times when social polarization and political populism threaten the fundamental values and ideas of the European Union, civil courage within the population is of great value. With the present project, we have laid the foundation to make a significant contribution to strengthening this fundamental value with possible follow-up projects.

Due to the solid theoretical, methodological and technical basis, as well as the modular design, the project can be easily replicated in other member states. For example, the design of the technical infrastructure (i.e. the source code of the website) could be shared with other member states who would just have to integrate new content that matches their cultural specificities. The research design for outcome evaluation can also be easily transferred. Both would allow the project to scale quickly, i.e. to achieve high reach and impact in different member states without having to make large initial investments.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

The purpose of the project was investigating how information and communication technologies could serve for interactive and dialog-oriented communication of security-related content between authorities and the public. A particular focus was not only on effectiveness in terms of crime prevention, but also economic efficiency. Based on the findings from various research fields, an interdisciplinary research network developed a communication platform and integrated three exemplary communication measures on it. One of the communication measures, consisting of an interactive film and online games on the topic of violence, was subjected to a rigorous outcome evaluation. The results show that the communication measure was able to increase moral courage among Facebook users by 6.5%. Since moral courage increases the likelihood of apprehension, this leads an equal decrease in violent crime, ceteris paribus. Assuming costs of 487,500 €, the project would break even at an average cost of about 12,000 € per violent crime.