

# European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

## 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.

Finland

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

ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

Action for Youth

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

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The organisation is Kritis – Finnish Foundation for Supporting Ex-offenders

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.

1.3.2016-31.12.2019, project is running until end of the year 2019 and we are applying for funding for 2020.

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).

**Website for the organisation:** <https://www.kritis.fi/foundation-for-supporting-ex-offenders-in-english/>

**Link to a music video made by our clients:** <https://youtu.be/W0EZnEDGZak>

**Facebook:** KRITS – Nuorten toimintakeskus

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

The target group is young offenders and prisoners between 15-29 -years old. The objective is to reach clients and to engage them to receive the support that is provided by Action for Youth and other meaningful stakeholders. By starting the cooperation whilst the clients are in prison, it is aimed to provide support for the transitional phase between imprisonment and release in the prevention of relapse.

The project provides a safe and intoxicant free space community in which our clients are treated as equals and with respect. Recovery orientation is the basis of the way we interact with our clients. The foundation for recovery and desistance is supported with a healthy and supportive community. Using positive theories such as positive criminology and psychology as a method, aimed to support the growth of a new identity. Subsidised employment is also one way to support change in identity, providing a new way to see oneself as a part of society.

### **Community activities**

Most common activities are music, sports and creative arts. Which include methods such as wraparound support, peer support, intensive individual support and guidance. The aim is to provide new experiences and ways to maintain sober and crime free lifestyles. Preparing food everyday with the clients to provide them at least one hot meal per day, promoting their daily living skills and giving them nurture to make them feel welcomed and taken care of.

In community activities, the atmosphere is supporting individual recovery and desistance. The meaning of the community is to provide a healthier peer group that supports inclusivity and commitment.

### **Imprisonment and community services**

The aim is to walk alongside our clients through their whole prison sentence. Support is provided on an individual and cooperative basis with the prison system. By providing group activities connections are established with new clients, supporting different kinds of emotional needs through group activity such as recording music and writing lyrics. Working in cooperation with The Finnish Reading Center. The Finnish Reading Center is a well-established NGO, which promotes reading, literacy and literature skills. It has been established based on feedback from prisoners and staff members, that writing music provides credible ways for young prisoners to recognize and process emotions.

In Finland, a prisoner may be placed outside the prison in probationary liberty under supervision (aka supervised probationary freedom) affected by technical and other means for maximum of six months before conditional release or the release from serving the entire sentence.

The prisoner is presumed to comply with abstinence from substances and other conditions of the probationary freedom. Probationary freedom requires a release plan, which includes information on, e.g., the housing and livelihood of the released offender, the obligation to participate in an activity, the daily schedule and the supervision of the probationary freedom. The Action for Youth provides a place for the activities that are needed. It also provides a place for other community sanctions like the community service. These sanctions provide enough time to work with client's motivation for recovery and desistance.

### **Individual support**

Individual support is the most meaningful and effective method. The life situations that the clients have vary from each other and so does their motivation in change. The aim is to provide support that the client is ready for, such as housing assistance. Support provided will benefit and strengthen positive factors in client's lives, rather than clients relying on negative factors, such as criminal activities or use of intoxicants. Keeping in mind that recovery and desistance is a long process, the message to the client is that they are always welcomed back when they are ready for the support they want and need.

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

8. How does the project contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Does it focus on raising citizens' awareness or does it apply other mechanisms? (**Max. 200 words**)

The project's main target is to provide support for the young offenders and prisoners so that they can affect their own recovery and desistance process-which influences recidivism.

In cooperation with the [Criminal Sanctions Agency](#) (CSA), a support system is provided throughout their entire prison sanction. This will help them to engage with the support that is offered, such as: individual support, group activities, care planning and wraparound support, both in and out of imprisonment.

Krits's mission is to support ex-offenders and their close ones by developing new types of services and supporting rehabilitation-oriented punishment and after-care systems. Krits also supports other organisations and volunteers.

**II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives.<sup>1</sup>**

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**)

Before this project there was the Gang Youth Support Project that was started in 2012. The results from that project indicated that peer support was important in supporting young people. It was found that there were no meaningful, safe and intoxicant centres for young people to take part in.

In March 2017 Mirja Salo took over as project leader. At that time the project was re-evaluated in cooperation with the project steering committee. The outcome was that the project would start to build up the cooperation with the CSA to be more effective in providing services for young prisoners. The main target group in the beginning were young people undergoing community sanctions. Today the main target group include young prisoners. It was decided that the project would start building up the cooperation with the clients at the start of their sentences. The combination of control and support would be used to engage the clients. This has resulted in a positive and successful outcome for both the project and client.

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

Application for funding (The Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations STEA) 2019-2020, the main objectives are:

- To promote the motivation for change and through that influence recidivism.
- To encourage sobriety, support of recovery and prevention of relapse.
- To reinforce client's skills in everyday life by participating them in activities and providing them wraparound support.
- To provide support for parenting and relationships.
- Improve the evaluation and statistics to provide more efficient and well-planned support.
- Integrate clients back to society through subsidised employment and helping them find their own object of interest career wise.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on evaluation, see Guidelines on the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives (EUCPN Toolbox No.3): <http://www.eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate>

11. Has there been a process evaluation? 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**) - for more information on process evaluation, see EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.9-10 & part 2 - section 2A

There has not been a formal process evaluation. Changes in project leader affected and gave an opportunity to reflect what works, what needs to be reassessed and to reinforce the objectives in the project. One of the objectives has been interaction between the network and the steering committee. With this objective the aim has been to guarantee process evaluation through out the process. A lot of changes have been carried out during the project. The idea has been to carry out the changes as needed.

One of the assessment methods has been creating an attendant list that shows visits and contacts. Number of attendants, individuals, how many times an individual has attended on monthly or on annual basis can be seen from that list. The purpose is to highlight the engagement of the attendants participating in activities even after their sanctions.

Feedback from the clients and network is also gathered for evaluation. In the latest feedback the result was that clients thought that participating in activities has had a significant positive impact on their life situation and on a scale of 1-10, the median was 8. The atmosphere is considered to be positive, supportive and the clients feel like they are treated as equals. The possibility to have conversations and to get help for daily needs were considered to be the most important factors. When asked whether participating in activities has helped them in distancing them from crime, 82% of the respondents gave a grade of 8 or higher on a scale of 1-10. The remainder of the respondents did not feel they needed support. They felt like they had moved on from a criminal lifestyle.

The funder STEA, requires assessment and evaluation on annual basis, based on funding.

12. Has there been an outcome or impact 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**) - for more information on outcome or impact evaluation, see EUCPN Toolbox No.3, p.7-9 & part 2 - section 2A

Our project was part of a national research "Who will respond to crimes committed by young people? Services seen from the perspectives of professionals, young people and costs." In this four-part research project, 1) a systematic qualitative literature review was carried out on research into the effectiveness of measures and cost benefits, 2) intervention practices related to

crimes committed by young people were examined in Finland by means of phone interviews, 3) operating models were studied ethnographically in four towns, and 4) opportunities for a register-based analysis of cost effects were explored.

The conclusion was that Action for Youth appears to provide fairly unique activities from a research perspective. Experience based expertise, the skills within the foundation and a strong network cooperation guaranteed very effective ways for young people from marginalised groups to cope.

Data has been collected about the clients participating in activities. Between March and end of December 2018, 116 clients had participated and 54 of them participated regularly in the activities. In 2019 between January and end of July 92 clients participated and 62 of them participated regularly in the activities. Some of these clients had already participated the year before.

Self-evaluation has been done internally on a weekly basis with all staff members contributing. Occasionally, clients have taken part in these evaluations. Once a month our meeting is supervised by an outside supervisor from [Miracle Members](#) that offer guidance to different organisations.

*Supervision provides to professionals, practitioners, managers, teams and workplaces a contractual, supportive and developmental process to explore and learn in practicing, working and collaborating. Supervision facilitates reviewing work-related experiences, emotions and challenges and finding a new perspective to them.*

**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**)

Action for Youth is one of the few services that provides activities aimed at this target group in Finland. It is also an exception because services provided by Action for Youth are based on evidence-based practises. For example, recovery orientation is a guideline, positive criminology and psychology are the ways to see the situations and the clients. By providing support based on needs, Action for Youth operates on a holistic approach.

One of the new ways to cooperate and main factors for success is the cooperation with CSA. Cooperation has created new ways of engaging young offenders and prisoners to the support. Combining support to control has been effective. It gives times to make a difference in clients lives. It also means that clients are sober when participating in activities.

Writing lyrics and recording music inside prisons has been one of the most successful new methods.

**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**)

[CSA](#): Cooperation with CSA has been the most worthwhile. As said earlier, the lack of commitment by the young offenders and prisoners has been the challenge with the CSA as well as with the NGO's. By cooperating with each other new ways have been found to influence that challenge. There has been three people from CSA in the steering committee.

[NAL](#) has provided housing for the clients.

[Lukukeskus](#) in cooperation with Action for Youth, Aleksis Salusjärvi from Lukukeskus organises workshops for prisoners on a weekly basis. Salusjärvi provides language support and feedback to the clients through music.

City of Helsinki, Services for young persons. Client's are directed between City of Helsinki. The right assistance is provided through this direct link between social workers working for City of Helsinki and Action for Youth.

A few of the other stakeholders include Valo-valmennusyhdistys ry and Vailla vakinaista asuntoa ry to name a few. For the benefit of the client's Action for Youth works hand in hand with similar organisations. Objective is to fully engage and take advantage of activities and services that may not be available in house.

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

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

[STEA](#) is the funder of the project. The funding is applied on annual basis. The project has been funded with project funding until the end of 2019. For 2020 and further funding applied is for limited well-established activities of general interest. If the funding is granted, the funding will cover all the costs.

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

Salaries with three employees: -120 570,30€  
Material and other costs: -44 440€  
Annual total budget 2020: -165 010,30€

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis 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**)

Cost-benefit analysis has not been carried out. It is however possible to estimate how much savings can be achieved from getting even one young offender out from criminal lifestyle. Finnish Ministry of Justice recently published a report according to which young offenders create a cost of 5,8 million euros solely for criminal justice system. The whole expense of exclusion from society would be around 2,1 billion euros during the whole lifespan. In addition to costs that can be measured financially the human suffering to young offenders themselves, their close ones and the victims of the offences must be considered.

Action for Youth costs about 10 euros per client per workday. One day in closed prison in Finland costs 214 euros. One day in an approved school costs around 400-600 euros.

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

The biggest adjustment would be to modify the activity to Member State's own legislation. Finnish legislation has provided a possibility for this kind of cooperation. It is possible to walk alongside with the clients through the prison sentence and because the clients can complete sanctions at Action for Youth

action centre, we have plenty of time to make a difference. The most valuable factor is the way clients are engaged and treated, that can also be adjusted to any kind of activities. The activities should be chosen according to Member States cultural factors and knowing the youth's interests.

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

Project manager recently took a placement in Kilmarnock, Scotland in an organisation called Centrestage. The object was to learn and experience the Scottish methods and practices to support people with addictions and criminal behaviour. The outcome was that there are common factors in most of the NGO's and other services upon visiting. The four common factors that were noticed are:

- Recovery orientation
- Wraparound support
- Community
- Activities

These factors can be adopted and implemented in any activity aimed at young offenders and prisoners. The engagement and participation are the keys to the success of the project. Equalness and interaction are factors for engagement. The activities are the reason clients participate. On a social level it would be beneficial to combine sanctions to rehabilitation as early as possible, so that there would be no exclusion or discrimination.

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

Action for Youth project is for young offenders and prisoners between 15-29 - years old. The objective is to reach clients and to engage them to receive the support that is provided by Action for Youth and other meaningful stakeholders. Project provides a safe and intoxicant free space community in which our clients are treated as equals and with respect. Most common activities are music, sports and creative arts. Which include methods such as wraparound support, peer support, intensive individual support and guidance.

Project provides support throughout imprisonment in forms of music production, individual and group support. The objective is to motivate, give tools for emotional support and allow freedom of expression in a positive manner.

The project is reliant on the cooperation between stakeholders and Action for Youth. Especially the cooperation between CSA that enables us to reach out to the clients.