

Sweden



ECPA/BPC 2006

Please answer the following questions in English.

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

This is the Swedish ECPA-winner

2. What is the title of the project?

The Växjö Model

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

Much of the violent crime committed in the county of Kronoberg was alcohol-related and was being committed by intoxicated youth. A questionnaire survey conducted by the national Alcohol Committee showed Växjö to be the Swedish municipality where youths found it easiest to get hold of alcohol. A crime prevention project, known as the Växjö Model, was formulated, focusing on alcohol abuse among young people. One of the police's most important objectives was to reduce levels of violence and disorder on the streets. The police have also introduced a zero-tolerance approach towards the possession of alcohol among youths. Where youths are found to be unlawfully in possession of alcohol, the alcohol is immediately forfeited, and the youths' parents are contacted. In cases where the parents show no interest, the police immediately contact the social services.

The police have also attempted to stop the illegal sale of alcohol to youths by focusing on the distributors. They have collaborated with courts, prosecutors and the tax authority, and those selling alcohol illegally have received severe court sanctions. Within the framework of the project, a systematic checklist of measures has been formulated for use by police officers in their operational work with young people and alcohol. This checklist was drawn up by a police officer working in Växjö who was born in Australia and had previously worked as an officer in the Sydney police.

As a result of these working methods there has been a reduction in the number of street assaults reported to the police in the county of Kronoberg. Reported assaults have decreased by seventeen per cent. The number of reported street assaults peaked in 2003 at 312 reported incidents. In 2004, the year in which the project was initiated, this figure fell to 286. In 2005, the number of reported street assaults fell again to

260. This trend differs significantly from that found both in neighbouring municipalities and at the national level. The drop in the number of reported offences noted in the county of Kronoberg during the project's implementation has occurred at the same time as the trend at the national level has been towards an increase in the number of reported assault offences.

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

The project's overall strategy has focused on preventing alcohol abuse among youth and reducing their access to illegal alcohol. The project has had three objectives.

1. To reduce violence and disorder on the streets. (It became clear to the police at an early stage of the project that the majority of street violence was committed by intoxicated youths)
2. To identify a number of actors that were illegally selling alcohol to youths and to secure convictions against these actors.
3. To reduce alcohol consumption among young people.

5. How was the project implemented?

- The project was implemented through the police responding actively to signs of alcohol abuse or disorder involving youths (a form of zero-tolerance approach). If an individual is under eighteen years of age, the alcohol is confiscated by the police. If the youth is unable to provide a credible explanation for possessing this alcohol, it is then forfeited on the spot.
- The police immediately contact the parents of youths who are under the influence of alcohol, or who are discovered to be unlawfully in possession of alcohol. Collaborations with several other actors, such as social services, prosecutors, the tax authority, parents and youths themselves constitute an important factor in the model's success. One example of this collaborative work involved the police immediately informing the social services in cases where parents were found to be disinterested when contacted by the police.
- Within the framework of the project, the police have also attempted to stop illegal alcohol sales to young people by identifying known suppliers.
- The project has formulated a checklist of measures to assist the police in their operational work with young people.
- Information evenings have been organised at which the police bring together affected pupils and parents.

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

In addition to the police, the following actors have participated in the project:

The social services: Field workers from the youth services group have worked in collaboration with the police and have assisted in contacts with parents and in driving youths home.

“Systembolaget” (the state owned alcohol sales monopoly): Staff have assisted the police in their investigative work and have informed them when “known suppliers” have purchased alcohol.

The tax authority has calculated the value of the alcohol supplied to youths by the suppliers. In addition to the sanctions specified by the county court, the suppliers have also been required to pay purchase tax duties as an additional, tough sanction. At most, a single supplier was required to pay 447,000 SEK (approximately 50,000 Euro) as a result of unpaid sales tax duties.

Property companies have assisted the police in their investigative work by providing keys and a pre-fabricated cabin.

Schools and youth club workers have assisted the police in the identification of youth suspects.

Prosecutors have collaborated with the police in the course of criminal investigations and have attempted to prosecute the arrested suppliers for “aggravated alcohol offences”.

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

The following constituted important measurements used to ensure that the project was on target to achieve the overall objectives.

- Police immediate forfeiture reports: These reports record how many times alcohol confiscated from youths has immediately been forfeited.
- Police seizure reports: These reports record how many litres of alcohol have been seized from suppliers in connection with searches.
- The number of calls to parents from police and social services

Converted into concrete figures for 2005:

The police declared alcohol confiscated from youths to be immediately forfeit on 150 occasions. Altogether, police operations involved the seizure or forfeiture of 6,840 cans of beer, 517 bottles of wine, 410 bottles of spirits and 86 bottles of cider. 150 calls were recorded from the police or social services to the parents of youths found to be in possession of alcohol.

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

The project has not been evaluated scientifically, but has had a substantial impact on levels of violent crime.

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

The project's three objectives have been achieved in the following ways:

1. Reducing violence and disorder on the street.

One notable result of the methods employed in the project has been a seventeen per cent reduction in the number of reported street assaults in the county of Kronoberg between 2003 and 2005. In 2003, the number of incidents of street assault peaked at 312 reported offences. In 2004, when the project was initiated, this number dropped to 286. In 2005, the number of reported street assaults dropped further to a total of 260. When these figures are compared with those of neighbouring municipalities and the country as a whole, they represent a very different trend. In contrast to the reduction noted in Kronoberg, the trend in the country as a whole has been towards an increase in offences of this kind.

2. Identifying a number of actors that were illegally selling alcohol to youths and securing convictions against these actors.

Nine suppliers have been arrested and convicted. The most severe sanction imposed was a two-year prison sentence, in connection with the discovery of what police described as a "mini off-licence" in the apartment of the individual concerned. In addition, one supplier was required to pay 447,000 SEK (approximately 50,000 Euro) in tax duties.

3. Reducing alcohol consumption among youths.

It is difficult to measure levels of alcohol consumption among young people. According to the police, however, a reduction they have noted in the number of calls received from youth discotheques constitutes an indication of a drop in levels of alcohol consumption. Prior to the project, the police were often called upon to intervene at various bars, clubs and restaurants as a result of problems caused by intoxicated youths. The number of such interventions has dropped and bar, club and restaurant staff report that fewer youths are intoxicated on their premises.

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

Please, write here a one page description of the project

The Växjö Model

Problem

Every year, a number of people are subjected to violent assault. The victims of assaults often suffer not only physically but also psychologically. In addition to this human suffering, violence also creates a sense of insecurity within society at large. The police in the county of Kronoberg were of the view that a large part of the violence taking place on the streets was alcohol-related and was caused by intoxicated youths. Reducing violence and disorder on the streets thus became an important objective for the police. In order to achieve this goal, crime prevention work was required that would focus on alcohol abuse among young people, and on producing improved levels of public safety.

Measures

The police formulated a strategy, known as the Växjö Model, to combat drinking among young people. The operational strategy involves the police responding actively to signs of alcohol abuse or disorder among youths. If the individual concerned is under eighteen years of age, the alcohol is confiscated by the police. If the youth is unable to provide a credible explanation for possessing the alcohol, it is forfeited on the spot. The police immediately contact the parents of youths who are found to be under the influence of alcohol, or who are discovered to be unlawfully in possession of alcohol. Collaborations with several other actors, such as social services, prosecutors, the tax authority, parents and youths constitute an important factor in the success of the model. One example of this collaborative work has involved the police immediately informing the social services in cases where parents were found to be disinterested when the police contacted them. Within the framework of the project, the police have also attempted to stop illegal alcohol sales to young people by identifying known suppliers. The project has formulated a checklist of measures to assist the police in their operational work with young people.

Results

One notable result of the methods employed in the project has been a drop in the number of cases of reported street assaults in the county of Kronoberg. In 2003, the number of incidents of street assault peaked at 312 reported offences. In 2004, when the project was initiated, this number dropped to 286. In 2005, the number of reported street assaults dropped further to a total of 260. When these figures are compared with those of neighbouring municipalities and the country as a whole, they represent a very different trend. In the country as a whole, the trend has been towards an increase in the number of reported offences of this kind, in contrast to the reduction noted in the county of Kronoberg during the period of the project's implementation. As a result of the project, the number of reported alcohol offences has increased dramatically. In 2004, 349 alcohol offences were reported in the county of Kronoberg. The corresponding figure for 2005 was 1,352 alcohol offences. The national Alcohol Committee has taken note of the project and has produced an instructional film showing the work of the Kronoberg police with alcohol-related crime among young people.