

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.

The Netherlands.

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

This is the Dutch ECPA entry.

3. What is the title of the project?

The 'untouchables' approach

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

Municipality of Maastricht
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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.

15-12-2013. The project is still running and incorporated in the local public safety policy and approach.

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).

https://www.veiligheidshuizen.nl/veiligheidshuizen/veiligheidshuis-maastricht-sub#.X3bR_eR7IPY

<https://www.limburg.nl/aanpak-van-onaantastbaren-maastricht-succesvol>

<https://agendastad.nl/veiligheid-en-leefbaarheid-terug-de-wijk/>

<https://www.politieacademie.nl/thema/opsporing/LaboratoriaOpsporing/Paginas/Criminele-families-in-Maastricht-succes-dankzij-integrale-aanpak.aspx>

<https://www.binnenlandsbestuur.nl/sociaal/nieuws/maastricht-tevreden-met-nieuwe-aanpak.9402710.lynkx>

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

In a Maastricht neighbourhood, local residents and professionals have been intimidated for years by families and accompanying 'soldiers': 52 'untouchable' people who commit crimes and intimidate local residents and professionals. This has created a culture of anxiety in the neighbourhood. After police intervention and imprisonment, the intimidation simply continues. The families have been 'fighting' the authorities for years.

In late 2013, the local triangle (a consultative organ comprising high-level representatives of the local police force, the public prosecutions department and local government) decided to confront the families in collaboration between the police, the municipality, and social services. The objective of the approach is to restore liveability in the neighbourhood and restore the authority of the government. The municipality took a leading role in this, by appointing an experienced project leader, working with public and private partners to create a sense of urgency and develop an administrative support base for the approach. An important condition was to ensure that all involved partners were on the same page and agreements were made about the collaboration so that everyone could work safely, with support from the police, where necessary. Another process approach involved identifying and responding to signals together.

The municipality, police, and housing corporation talk with local residents about their feelings of insecurity. They talk with the involved families, in which they indicated that their behaviour is going to stop, with or without their cooperation. They punish criminal offences but focus on a good living environment for the children, by offering social services and support where possible.

Together with all public and private partners we are mapping out the opportunities and risks per family. We also look at the family members of the criminals: what opportunities do they deserve and what is needed for this? We offer customization and decide per family whether to offer support or use repression. The 'soldiers' are removed from the sphere of influence at an early stage. We offer them opportunities if they accept support. This enables us to stop the spread of power.

A coach trains the families in being good tenants. When the coach decides that the families are ready for this, they can be relocated to a new home. This restores peace in the neighbourhood and the family can make a new start. In a support agreement that is linked to the rental contract, the families agree to accept support for two years and adhere to a code of conduct. If they successfully complete these two years, the rental contract will become permanent.

Some six years since the start, fourteen of the 52 people are still involved in the approach. Several families have not been involved in the criminal justice system for two years. The support has enabled some mothers to find the strength to depart to another region with their children, far from their criminal partners. Some people are employed or work as volunteers. All children are attending school again. The schools are closely involved in the approach. Each family has access to a social worker. Research into liveability in the neighbourhood shows that professionals and citizens experience the neighbourhood as being safer and more liveable.

The young people involved in the approach from the start now have partners and children. As well as the ongoing approach, the focus is now on breaking intergenerational transfer, by strengthening the mothers and through early identification of concerns about the children. We give the family the opportunity to tell stories about their lives via podcasts and offer attention and opportunities for those who continue to resist criminality. This prevents the creation of a new generation of 'untouchables'.

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

Deterring 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**))

- We establish normative barriers to prevent committing criminal acts by making it clear to violators that such behaviour will not go unpunished. For example by visibly impounding the criminals' expensive vehicles right in the middle the neighbourhood.
- As our links with the police and social services give us quick insight into any potential re-recruiting, we are able to reduce recruitment to criminal social environments, and deploy the approach at an early stage. This

means that the police react preventatively rather than reactively, focusing on a broad integrated approach and enabling them to intervene early in the development of criminal behaviour.

- The threat of punishment deters potential perpetrators from committing crimes. If people do not cooperate and do not stop committing criminal offences, we do not help them. Social services stay involved with the children. In several families this has led to a supervision order and even to an authorization to place a child in care. A traditional court sentence follows for those who refuse to participate.
- We reduce the harmful consequences of criminal acts. Stolen property found during large-scale police investigations is returned where possible. We interview local residents, advising them on how to handle their feelings of insecurity. We suggest ways to report offences anonymously and join forces to break through the culture of fear.
- We reduce the rewards from criminal acts. Seized property is returned. The tax office and social investigation service are also engaged to detect fraud.
- We incapacitate perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts, using police crackdowns and imprisonment.
- We encourage desistance from crime and rehabilitate former offenders. During their prison term we offer opportunities for a socially responsible role after imprisonment. We work to prevent reoffending by coaching families. We also work to address inter-generational transfer.

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 police observed a huge increase in the number of ram-raids in Maastricht and surrounding area in late 2013. Following investigation it became apparent that three families and their extended network were responsible for these offences. This group had been a thorn in the side of professionals and local residents in Maastricht for many years. The police did not appear to have any control over the situation. Previous interventions only offered short-term results. The inability to secure a long-term effect and the unilateral approach to the issue created waves of criminality and disruption around this group. The various partners often worked separately instead of with each other. This all had a negative effect on people's trust in the authorities.

No baseline measurement was established. The approach started from a crisis situation. A scan was, however, made of the neighbourhood and residents to gain insight into the approach and the vulnerability.

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

Main objectives:

- 1 Increase the feeling of safety and people's enjoyment of living in the area;
2. Dismantle the network (and with this the power) of 'untouchables';
3. Restore the relationship of trust between the authorities and citizens.

To achieve the set objectives, formulated at ambition level, sub-objectives were agreed in various stadia and in different areas.

The current sub-objectives are:

- A. Reduce the disruptive effect of 'untouchables' on the neighbourhood;
- B. Minimize the 'danger of infection' for family members of the 'untouchables';
- C. Reduce High Impact Crimes committed by 'untouchables' (burglary, attacks, muggings, aggression, violence);
- D. Improve the perspective of 'untouchables';
- E. Early identification of people who may join the 'untouchables' network;
- F. Offer support to professionals: they feel supported in their tasks by their own organization and the authorities.
- G. design the process (working method, structure) in such a way that the approach to the 'untouchables' runs efficiently.

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 approach has already been running for several years and has been modified regularly in recent years.

The support needs of professionals have changed in various areas and family members also demand different kinds of attention.

An evaluation takes place with all parties once a year;

- Are we on track?
- What do we need?
- Are we missing certain partners?
- What are the administrative bottlenecks?
- What are the focus points in the cooperation?

We are currently working to move the focus of the approach to young children. We want to monitor them at a very young age and not wait until they are at the age at which they could be prosecuted.

We are working with our partners to implement this development; breaking the inter-generational trend without relaxing the focus on repression.

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**)

The Research and Statistics team from the Municipality of Maastricht conducted research in 2016 to map out the experiences of staff working for various partners on the 'untouchables approach' project.

The research question was:

- *How do staff working for the involved partners experience the 'untouchables approach' project?*

The following sub-questions were part of the main research question:

- *How do employees experience the cooperation with other partners?*
 - *What effect do employees think the approach has had on reducing intimidation/threat by the 'untouchables'?*
 - *What do employees consider to be effect of the approach in reducing disruption for other local residents?*
 - *What effect do employees think the approach has on the three objectives?*
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The majority of the respondents assessed the 'untouchables' approach as positive or very positive; respectively 66.7% and 4%. The number of respondents that experience the approach as negative is extremely small, namely 2.7%. According to the respondents, the added value of the approach lies mainly in the short lines in the cooperation between the involved chain partners (88%), the improved knowledge exchange between the involved organizations (65.3%) and the joint approach chosen by the partners for a repressive approach or care framework (64.0%). The improvement points for the 'untouchables' approach are improvements in cooperation between the various partners (42.7%) and adhering to the agreements made by the various partners (38.7%).

Quantitative research is conducted each year in which we monitor various matters such as the number of people, minors, arrests, verdicts, days in young offender institutions or prison, PIJs issued (placement in young offender institutions), fines, relocations, evictions, etc.

Progress within the families is monitored each year by conducting a self-reliance matrix. This enables us to monitor progress per adult family member every six months on various fixed aspects of their lives. (See attachment)

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**)

Our approach breaks through traditional mindsets;

- The focus lies on a multi-disciplinary, public-private approach; public and private partners as well as partners working in both justice and social services join forces.
- The approach falls under the Safety Partnership privacy covenant. This means that social services and justice can exchange relevant information enabling us to respond quickly to any developments.
- We examine what is needed per person/family and offer customized services.

A mix of measures (criminal procedures, administrative and civil) is available that we can use as needed.

The approach is characterized by combining repression and support and offers people targeted by the approach other possibilities in a different environment. The approach demands a customized approach to all members of the criminal family. We punish criminal offences, but focus on a good living environment for family members.

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**)

- Police: investigation and safety
- Public Prosecution Service: prosecution: (following coordination with partners for advice on the type of punishment)
- Enforcement: identifying liveability problems in the neighbourhood
- School attendance officers: short link between school and the approach (rapid intervention following truancy)
- Youth Team from the Municipality: following up police reports and referrals to pedagogical support
- Child Welfare Office (Bureau Jeugdzorg): customized criminal proceedings for boys targeted by the approach
- Probation: customized criminal proceedings for adults targeted by the approach
- Housing corporation: cooperation in eviction procedure, relocation and liveability in the neighbourhood
- Stichting Trajekt, welfare work: contact with neighbourhood residents, monitoring the neighbourhood, being available for various questions from criminal family members and local residents (both youth worker and social worker)
- Coach: coaching families in being a good tenant and addressing needs with respect to work and income etc.
- VSO school: involvement in the approach as many children are in school
- Tax office in the case of fraud and money laundering
- Community Safety Partnership (Veiligheidshuis): development of an Action Plan per person/family and management of the process

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

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

The project comprises intensive cooperation between the justice system, care and service-providing partners.

Each organization contributes from their own resources, based on the idea that investing in the cooperation will ultimately result in reduced workload.

The municipality invested in the appointment of a project leader.

This makes the project easy to transfer to other regions or target groups, provided there is:

- A willingness to invest in a long-term approach
- Support from the authorities
- A sense of urgency among all partners
- A project leader
- A platform within which the crucial information can be shared (for us this is the Community Safety Partnership)

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

The additional costs for the Municipality comprise the appointment of a project leader for 20 hours (approximately €50,000 per year).

Other personnel are provided within the structural resources of each organization.

The police has prioritized this approach within the Steering Team and temporarily made an investigative team of fifteen people available. This was scaled down following completion of the research.

For this approach it applies that the benefits are more important than the costs.

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**)

No.

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

A good baseline measurement is advisable on which follow-up evaluations can take place.

A work budget makes some things that bit easier to arrange (e.g. costs for furnishing a house when the mother and child relocate or a laptop for a school-aged child whose family cannot afford this).

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

This is a problem in every city and in every country. Stop feeding the war and devising short-term solutions, but focus on an integrated and long-term approach. Help each other to do the work.

The basic 'untouchable' approach can be used in every country as an integrated customized approach to reducing criminality and disruption by 'terrorizing' families in neighbourhoods.

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

The 'untouchable' approach' from the Municipality of Maastricht is characterized by cooperation between justice, the municipality and care and service-providing partners.

The objective of the 'untouchables' approach is to restore liveability in the neighbourhood, regain trust in the authorities and restore the authority of the government. The approach is led by an independent project leader. All involved partners have developed a shared sense of urgency and a support base among authorities for a joint approach.

Using this approach, an integrated team no longer ignores criminal families and offers structural solutions for the neighbourhood, the family's criminal leaders (the soldiers) and the family members.

We combine criminal, civil, and administrative law while focusing on the criminal and looking at the responsibilities of the other family members.

There is early investment in young children (the youngest family members) and the approach aims to break the inter-generational trend.