

# **Some experiences by the Lower Saxony Crime Prevention Council (CPC) to establish quality-oriented and evidence-based prevention policies**

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In preparation for the Jacobs Foundation Conference „Good Enough: When is Evidence-Based Intervention Ready for Dissemination?“ (Marbach 30 May – 1 June 2013) Erich Marks was asked for a discussion paper including ratings on the following questions: What is the process of assuring that evidence-based practices are used? Who are the people in the ministry who actually make these decisions, and what is their network to find out about evidence? What do you do when you have multiple programs and have to choose? What is the difference between evidence-based prevention programs and use of data (comparison of different successes in crime prevention across different cities)? What are some central differences between crime prevention and health promotion or other preventative efforts?

Caused by the federal structure of the Federal Republic of Germany the approaches, strategies and structures of the crime prevention differ rather clearly between the 16 German federal states. For a better understanding of some of the central developments in the interface of science, politics and practice it is referred exemplarily to the experiences and working perspectives of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC).

## **1. Basic information of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC)**

The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony (CPC) was founded in 1995 on the basis of a resolution of the Lower-Saxony State Government. It is an independent advisory body of the government as well as of local committees and bodies in the field of the prevention.

Primary goal is the reduction of crime occurrence in Lower Saxony and the improvement of the subjective feeling of security of the Citizens of Lower Saxony. The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony is oriented to society as a whole, strengthens crime prevention at the municipal level, coordinates and supports networking in crime prevention. (see appendix 1: Objectives of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony)

Currently 15 employees with a wide spectrum of professional experiences and qualifications (social sciences, administration, social work, police, psychology, educational theory,

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sociology, department of public prosecution, etc.) working (part and full time) in the secretariat of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony.

Contemporary activities of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony of Lower Saxony:

- Communal Crime Prevention
- Customized Prevention. CTC in Lower Saxony
- Prevention against Violence and Protection of Victims
- Prevention against Right-Wing Extremism
- Beccaria-Standards: Quality through Competence
- Co-operations in Lower Saxony
- National and international Networking

The secretariat is part of the Department of Justice. It develops concepts and coordinates sustainable crime-prevention strategies, necessary to obtain the objectives mentioned above in accordance with the board of directors of the Crime Prevention Council which represents about 270 member organizations from all relevant social sectors. Beside approximately 200 local prevention bodies, belong non-governmental organizations, ministries and their subordinate agencies and academic institutions to the member organizations. In more than 200 cities and communities in Lower Saxony, so called local prevention bodies and networks contribute with their expertise to concepts concerning public security and support their realization. Supporting them and linking up their efforts is the primary task of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony and its secretariat, which is part of the Department of Justice (further information is provided on the website of the CPC.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Examples of first efforts for quality-oriented and evidence-based prevention politics on federal state-level**

The following concepts outline examples and approaches to national Crime Prevention Politics that is more and more based on knowledge, quality management, effect orientation and systematic evaluation. This alignment of evidence based crime prevention and criminal politics is characterized by a steady use of the currently state of knowledge.

Numerous basic questions are topical in a motivated discourse: What is our understanding of prevention? How do we define prevention from intervention? Do we speak, e.g., also of "evidence-based intervention"? Can evidence-based crime prevention be thought outside of programs and projects?

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<sup>2</sup> [www.lpr.niedersachsen.de](http://www.lpr.niedersachsen.de) (german and english); [www.beccaria.de](http://www.beccaria.de) (german); <http://www.beccaria-standards.net> (english and 18 other languages); [www.beccaria-portal.org](http://www.beccaria-portal.org) (english); [www.gruene-liste-praevention.de](http://www.gruene-liste-praevention.de) (german)

The current projects and focus of work of the CPC are grown essentially pragmatic, they are not yet based on an overall political strategy for a nationwide preventive action, an interdepartmental prevention plan. Department-bound individual decisions and condition still have great influence on the actual prevention behavior from different funding programs, for example at a national and European level. Furthermore, the cooperation between the key fields of work of prevention (prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research) are not developed systematically yet and thus still in the early stages of development.

## **2.1 Community coaching in a federal structure**

The Lower Saxon Government stated in 1995, that in spite of a general decline of the criminal activity, an „intensification of the crime-preventive efforts on local- and state level“ was required. This development corresponded with the insight that repressive measures only have not a sustainable effect on criminal activity. The demand for a „societal prevention“, in Lower Saxony was fulfilled i.e. the cooperation of all departments as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, who can contribute to prevention. As a consequence the CPC was founded.

The reasons for criminal behavior have to be looked for primarily in the milieu of offenders. Crime prevention is primarily a community task, adequately supported by the state and regional actors. In this view, the principle of the subsidiarity takes effect as it is spread in federal states. Hence, that task, actions and problem solutions ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized authority capable of addressing that matter effectively. Only if this isn't possible gradually larger groups, public collectives or higher levels of an organization should have a subsidiary function. Related to crime prevention, this implies that primarily citizens, public groups like municipalities, towns and administrative districts shall be responsible for criminal prevention and then countries and federation.

In lower Saxony crime prevention is the responsibility of communities, supported by the CPC when necessary. Local communities should be supported and advised to develop prevention bodies and practical structures in crime prevention. Out of this, the secretariat of the CPC has developed a model of intensive "on site-consulting", which lead to a dramatically increase of the prevention bodies, especially in the 90s. In 2000 the number of the municipal prevention bodies supported by CPC had nationally trebled on a total of 99 (in 1995: 33) and on a total of 138 in 2002. Since 2002 the CPC is also funding projects and supporting municipal prevention projects in Lower Saxony. Beside consultation, "support" was added as a further instrument.

Since then, the municipality as a field of action of societal prevention has gained significantly in meaning.

Currently 200 local prevention bodies and networks contribute with their expertise to concepts concerning public security and support their realization. Community prevention bodies are working on city level, in larger cities at the level of city districts, in collective municipalities, on municipal level as well as on state level. Many prevention bodies have been founded by a council order, several have originated from representatives of the police or youth welfare service and in some places by engaged citizens. Municipal prevention committees are characterized by a great variety of organizational forms and a big spectrum in the personal structure. Often Prevention councils are connected to the administration, in this case often the mayor or district administrators are chairmen of the committee – according to the motto “prevention is matter for the boss”. The binding to the management has turned out especially effective.

Due to the immediate and manifold communication between the different institutions - police, school, youth welfare service, justice – information and networking processes have been initiated, that lead to more acceptance of other professions and to an acceleration and simplifying of certain procedures.

The improvement of the dialogue and the cooperation between the actors is an important benefit of the municipal crime prevention. Meanwhile, we can find considerable qualitative changes in the daily working practice. Range, complexity and reach of the subjects have become bigger and more varied since the origin of the first Lower Saxon committees in the early 90s. Furthermore, there is an increasing public perception and acceptance referred to the work of the municipal prevention bodies.

Lower Saxony is a big country with approx. 1000 local authority districts. Concerning the number of the committees, and there is still „place for more“. Above all, especially in the rural areas is a lack of prevention committees. A proactive consultation approach or a big campaign, which cannot be performed due to financial reasons, would be necessary. Furthermore, up to now there are no instruments to reach municipal top representatives, to instrumentalize them as a „door opener and key people for prevention“methodically and argumentative. Besides, consultation approaches must be improved and diversified. It is obviously that directive consultations are often contraindicated referring to the individual actors and problem constellations on site. It makes sense beside the individualized consultation, to develop in the long term "tools" for „frequent problems and questions“in the area of the local crime prevention, which can be used municipality wide. A tool which points in this direction is the control instruments for the municipal prevention "CTC" (Community That Care). This is suited for urban and rural areas. It is based on knowledge from the scientific long term research referring to risk- and protective factors and requires no scientific education of the users. The implementing quality of the method is rather the key. The meaning of quality management in the municipal prevention has to be underlined.

## **2.2 Funding Program Communal Crime Prevention**

Since 2002 the CPC is funding crime prevention projects and scientific surveys especially on the municipal level. Numerous measures had been realized since then. Primarily with aimed at children and juveniles. The promoted projects as well as the funding guidelines were also evaluated. With the priority program in 2013 and 2014 "Communities that Care - CTC" (see 2.9) specifically positively evaluated programs will be implemented for the first time. In future the funds will promote organizations and communities that perform their prevention work data based, quality-oriented, structured and willing to implement evidence based programs. The respective programs and content priorities are not predetermined by the Funder (C PC) but rather based on scientific data collected on site.

## **2.3 Beccaria standards for quality in the criminal prevention**

The Beccaria standards are named after Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), the pioneer of modern criminal politics. The Beccaria standards include measures and requirements for quality planning, execution and assessment of crime prevention programs and projects. They apply to the following seven key steps of a project:

1. Description of the problem
2. Analysis of the conditions leading to the emergence of the problem
3. Determination of prevention targets, project targets and targeted groups
4. Determination of the interventions intended to achieve the targets
5. Design and execution of the project
6. Review of the project's implementation and achievement of objectives (evaluation)
7. Conclusion and documentation

The Beccaria standards describe an overall program of requirements to ensure quality. A satisfactory guarantee for the quality of a project can only be achieved by complying with the overall program. The individual requirements are always in step with each other. Selective attention or inattention to particular steps of the Beccaria standards would be detrimental to the level of quality. The Beccaria standards offer a manual for developers, players in the field and other people with responsibility in crime prevention to ensure the quality of their crime prevention work. Whoever is responsible should ensure that

- they align the planning, implementation and review of crime prevention projects with the quality criteria outlined in science and literature.
- projects are designed in such a way that they can be evaluated
- Scientific experts, advisors, contracting bodies and sponsors are at hand to provide a technical basis for judging the project's targeting of objectives and quality.

The standards are currently available on [www.beccaria-standards.net](http://www.beccaria-standards.net) <http://www.beccaria-standards.net> in different languages: Arabic, Chinese, German, Croatian, English, French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Czech, Hungarian, Lithuanian and Polish. „Interactive Beccaria-Steps” as a special practice supply lead online through all important questions in the process of the project management. They are available in English on [www.beccariaportal.org](http://www.beccariaportal.org) <<http://www.beccariaportal.org>> and in German on [www.beccaria.de](http://www.beccaria.de) <<http://www.beccaria.de>>

## **2.4 Beccaria Qualifying Program**

Since 2008 the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony offers annually the “Beccaria Qualifying Program Crime Prevention” to improve the quality of the work on site. The reason for the design and implementation was the increasing demand for interdisciplinary prevention training. The modular qualification "Specialist Crime Prevention" is aimed at all those working in crime prevention that wants to expand their knowledge of criminology, crime prevention and project management. The Qualifying Program comprises four key modules: Criminology, Crime Prevention, Project Management and Practical Project Work. The contents are application-oriented and based on scientific evidence. The knowledge acquired is directly applicable into daily prevention work. Upon completion, participants are qualified to evaluate criminological theories and empirical studies, to plan, implement and review crime prevention projects with the quality criteria outlined in science and literature. To apply methods of project management and to use the knowledge (criminological, crime preventive) acquired in daily practice. The standard period of study for the qualification program is one year. Every module is spread out over two weekends. The qualification is designed as an in-service training and limited to a number of 25 participants per module. Upon successful completion of the four modules, the degree “Crime Prevention Specialist” is awarded. Currently there is a total of 120 Specialists. The “Beccaria Qualifying Program Crime Prevention” was external evaluated in 2012.

## **2.5 Further qualification offers and perspective for a Beccaria Academy**

The CPC provides with his professional advanced training offers topical and interdisciplinary knowledge and educates further actors need- and work-oriented. The following qualification offers count to the modular qualification measures: The „Beccaria-Qualifying Program Crime Prevention”/“The Qualification victims counseling in the field of right wing extremism”/ the education certified trainer/in the method "Communities That Care - CTC". In addition, the CPC designs regularly practice seminars and training series on various prevention topics. The long term goal is to build a Beccaria Academy, under leadership of the CPC.

## **2.6 Beccaria-Master and perspective for an advanced master study program**

2011 the Ostfalia-University of Applied Sciences in Wolfenbüttel, started the consecutive Master's program "Preventive Social Work focusing criminology & crime prevention". The concept for the program emerged from the "Beccaria Project: Education and training in crime prevention" of the CPC. [www.master-kriminalpraevention.de](http://www.master-kriminalpraevention.de). The advanced study program (standard period of 4 semesters) is addressed to persons aspiring to executive positions in fields related to crime prevention. The educational and admission requirements include a degree in Social Work or comparable courses and work experience in a related field. According to the understanding of prevention as a societal cross-cutting issue the course is designed interdisciplinary. A targeted goal is to offer an application oriented study program "Crime Prevention" in form of Distance Learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) or Blended Learning, didactically useful attendance courses combined with virtual learning on the basis of new information and communication media.

## **2.7 Regional analysis and audit guidelines**

Criminological regional Analysis (CRA) and local audits are intended to provide local prevention bodies and actors a data base for planning prevention activities. CRA usually consist of a small-unit evaluation of the data, the police crime statistics and a dark-field survey of the population about their victimization and/or fear of crime. So far only 10 municipalities in Lower Saxony have performed such analysis. Moreover, it is usually at CRA to "one shot" - activities that are carried out only once. Very few municipalities use CRA as a regular instrument. In many cases it seems to be unclear how significant the data collected is for the specific project planning. Here, at the formulation of local audits are necessary in perspective, so that the reliable data analysis, the systematic implementation and final evaluation is carried out regularly.

Since 2013, due to his membership in the German-European Forum for Urban Security e.V. (DEFUS), the CPC is involved in a triennial EU project focusing on the improvement of safety audit process. In this project, an overview of existing methods is being developed, best practice procedures sought all over Europe and a handbook with recommendations is created. A manual of the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS) translated into German in 2007 by the CPR can be used for this.

## **2.8 Systematic national data processing in preparation**

To support the Lower Saxon municipalities in crime prevention, relevant data sets should be presented and interpreted in their scope and meaning. In the long term, an annual small-scale monitoring of crime prevention in Lower Saxony is intended. This would include the presentation of current, valid and small-scale data that represent the starting point for crime and violence prevention measures in Lower Saxony and can be verified by the implementation of appropriate changes.

A first inventory is being started. The target data mirror refers to the crime rate of the population and their subjective sense of security, i.e. to the starting position, which is not yet sufficiently systematically collected and documented in the prevention activities of the Lower Saxon communities. This data mirrors cannot provide a complete and clear picture, but will have many blind spots. It should show what data are available and where ideally be updated regularly. In addition, it is supposed to represent what data would be included in a preventive monitoring.

## **2.9 Model Project SPIN and national rollout of „CTC-Customized Prevention“**

In the pilot project (SPIN: 2009 - 2012), the CPC has adapted and implemented the method developed in the USA "Communities That Care - CTC" for the first time in the German-speaking world. The intention was to provide the municipalities and the municipal bodies an evidence-based planning and controlling tool for the prevention. In the pilot phase, CTC could be implemented successfully in the three pilot locations in Lower Saxony. As a result of the pilot of the CPC is now offering CTC to all interested municipalities in Lower Saxony. With the beginning of 2013, 6 new locations in Lower Saxony are implementing CTC. A national survey with the CTC-Youth Survey in 2013 provides nationally representative data on the extent of problem behavior of youth and their exposure to risk factors or protective factors.

## **2.10 Green List Prevention**

In Germany plenty of prevention programs are on the market. Within the CTC-model project the CPC developed a recommendation list of evaluated prevention programs, primarily to allow users to select suitable measures to develop local action plans.

The "Green List Prevention" will reflect the status of the development of selected program approaches as precisely as possible. Therefore, the recommended prevention programs are divided into three stages with respect to the evidence of effectiveness: (1) effectiveness theoretically approved, (2) effectiveness likely, and (3) effectiveness proven

A review "on the threshold" is reached, if not all criteria fulfill the level for a theoretically convincing model, i.e. if necessary information for classification is not available or no evaluation was made. The database "Green List Prevention" allows specific searching criteria, such as problem behavior treated by the programs, the age of the target group, or the range (institution) in order to promote a further development of local supply structures. The database "Green List Prevention" is available online and contains a unique overview of evaluated prevention programs, differentiated by a transparent evaluation system. A regular platform with recommended programs has been established. There is a strong demand from practice for the "Green List Prevention" beyond CTC. Therefore an expansion is planned to include additional fields of prevention (e.g. indexed programs) and an extension of the evaluation system to aspects of the implementation quality of programs.

## **2.11 Cooperation in the field of prevention research**

The CPC has developed the goal to promote the transfer of knowledge in crime prevention by initiating their own research projects, or through collaborations with research institutions. Currently, for example, there is collaboration with the University of Hildesheim (Institute of Psychology) for further development and use of the CTC - Youth Survey (see above). Based on the results of the national CTC - Youth Survey further research questions should be developed and processed. For the future it is planned to expand the cooperation in the field of prevention research. There are regular contacts at the national level and international level, for example, to Society for Prevention Research (SPR) and the European Society for Prevention Research.

## **2.12 Development of QM-strategies**

From 2013 the work area "prevention of right wing extremism" and in particular the Experts-network are (nationwide association of approximately 60 persons and institutions working in the field against right wing extremism) according to the "customer focused quality of counseling organizations (KQB)" certified . KQB is a method for quality development and has its starting and reference point in the specific consultation process. In the coming years, all counseling services are performed according to audited standards, reflected, monitored and evaluated.

In addition to the "quality testing for consulting organizations (KQB)" is aimed at an external quality attestation of CPC educational opportunities in the long term. Caused by the "LQB process" the quality of the overall design of the CPC trainings are checked and certified by an independent, neutral body.

## **2.13 Project CTC Europe**

With the start of the CTC - model project the CPC also has encouraged a regular exchange of information with the European CTC-users and researchers. So far, the networking at the international level was limited to the exchange of experience, apart from individual bilateral research projects (USA - Australia, USA - The Netherlands). For the years 2013 - 2015 the European network receives an EU project financing (the project partners come from the following countries: Germany, Great Britain, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Cyprus). In process of planning:

- transnational comparison of the results of the CTC-Youth Surveys
- the development of an European database of effective prevention programs
- a transnational comparison of CTC - evaluation studies with the aim of developing a European CTC - evaluation manual

## **2.14 Collaborations at national and international level**

For a contemporary work in the field of crime prevention, it is essential to establish, evaluate and to expand contacts with other actors in this field of action. Since 2008 exists the weekly meeting working group „National and international Networks“. They look systematically on single working main focuses of the CPC and maintain existing national and international contacts. The participation of single employees in conferences and congresses is planned and evaluated there. The participation of the CPC in projects and programs of different national and international partners is co-ordinated as well as the acquisition of third- party funding at national and international level. Moreover, in this working group are discussed cross-project issues and current developments relevant for prevention. Planned are a targeted analysis of the "environment" of national and international actors and the establishment of additional contacts in adjacent fields of prevention.

## **2.15 Evaluations of own measures**

The CPC understood evaluation as a mandate to describe all areas of work with appropriate empirical methods. To analyze, to evaluate and to derive improvement and processes of change. This basic understanding also in future refers to the organization of conferences, advanced training and training programs, (model) projects, studies, funding programs, and all other working areas.

## **2.16 Acceptance of other areas in evidence-based prevention strategies**

The section "prevention of right wing extremism" is currently implementing state and federal programs. They inform and prime on one side (target group are interested) and on the other side they help and give advice in problem situations (target group are affected). In the future, could if the order is formulated for this purpose, especially primary and secondary or universal, selective and indicated evidence-based prevention programs could be implemented in the field of development of prejudice and the inclination to aggression (as at least two of the major theoretical explanations of right wing extremism) exemplarily and controlled in relevant locations.

## **2.17 National project- database NIMAP**

The NiMaP database (Lower Saxon measures of prevention) was developed in 2010 under the aegis of the CPC in cooperation with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Justice, of Internal Affairs of Education and the State. It is a system for the electronic management and selective research of specific data, concerning specific measures and projects of Lower Saxony in the

fields of violence prevention, crime prevention, drug prevention, child and youth protection, and prevention against extremism.

The database provides to the public at large a comfortable and extensive research opportunity for activities and projects of Lower Saxony. Perspective other areas of prevention should be included in this database. Also, the existing information base should be better used for a continuous and regularly exchange of ministries. In view of current and planned measures, the database should be used more for networking and cooperation between the departments in an efficient, resource-saving and interdisciplinary prevention work of Lower Saxony.

The findings on the overall situation of available measures led to a lively exchange of departments regarding requirements, parallel structures and redundancy. As a result, resources are better targeted. The cash flow is determined by the nationally data available. This would be to identify in advance a comprehensive "prevention-oriented picture" of the situation.

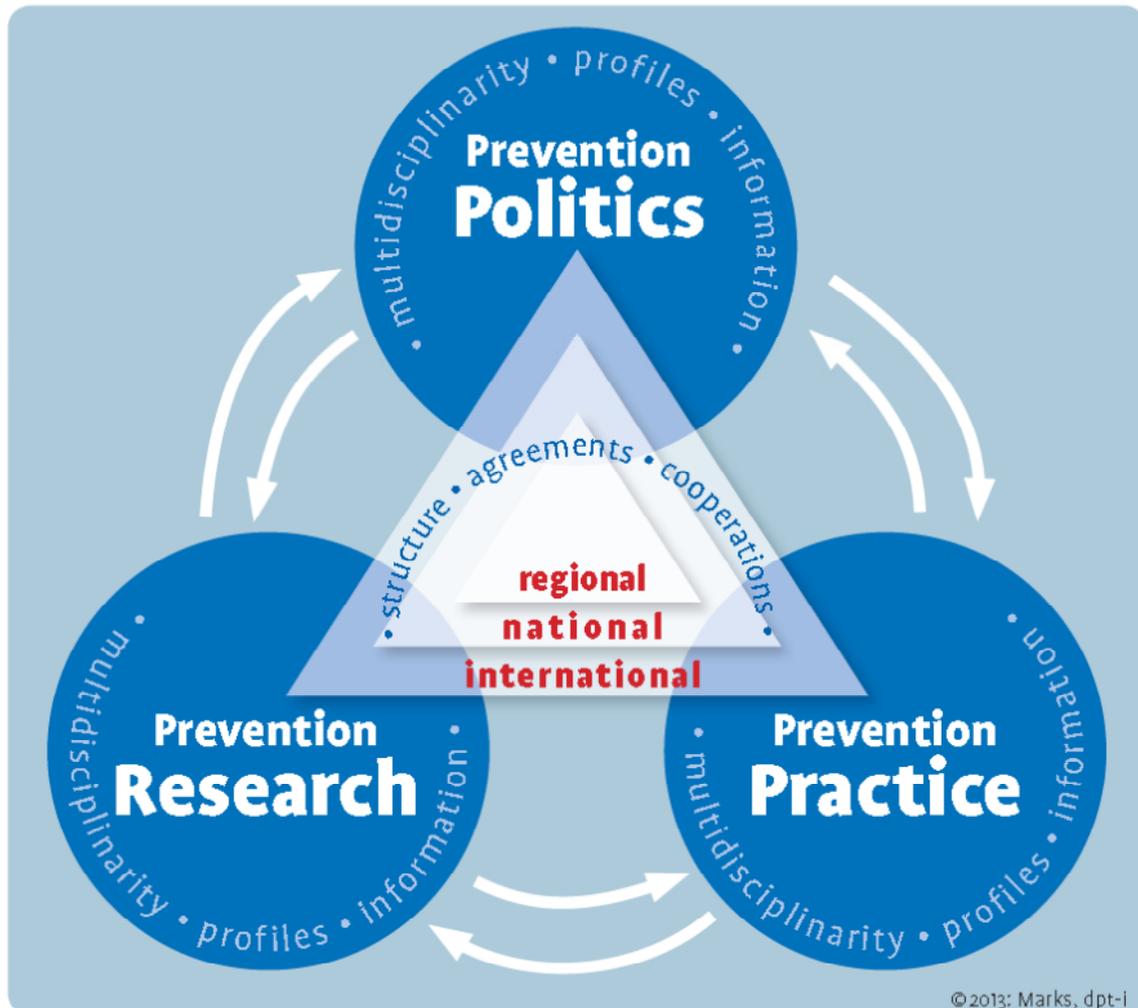
### **3. Appraisals and recommendations**

Prevention Politics, Prevention Practice and Prevention Research can be seen as the central focus areas of a holistic and sustainable orientation in prevention. perspective and for all three fields of work similarly is understood consciously far and not limited on the sections of crime prevention, addiction prevention, poverty prevention or the disease prevention, for example. The necessity of a structured and intensive cooperation of these three fields of work should be at least respectively carried out at the levels of the communities/regions, at the national level as well as at the international/global level. Multi-disciplinarity, profile formation and information are such indispensable tasks and qualities for each of the three prevention fields: Prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research.

The following diagram represents an ideal-typical model of the interdependences and network formations on the one hand as well as the work levels regional, national and internationally on the other hand between the fields of work prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research

In particular the profiles of the fields of work prevention politics, prevention practise and prevention research should be communicated in future better and more offensively. Every field of work should make his profile proactively with a high degree of general intelligibilit as well as freely accessibly.

**Diagram: Ideal-typical model of the interdependences in prevention**



### **Multidisciplinarity**

Interdisciplinary collaboration should be systematically organized and guaranteed in every field of prevention work. In the field of work prevention politics representatives of political parties, the legislative, the various departments of the executive and the judiciary should be involved. In the field of work prevention practice representatives of youth, education, health and social services, the police, non-governmental and voluntary organizations should be represented. Within the field of work of prevention research, public, government and private research institutions with relevant disciplines and sub-disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, biology, medicine, political science, law, economics, criminology, victimology, etc.) should also be involved also as research funding organizations and scientific associations.

## **Profiles**

An important requirement for a successful societal prevention orientation is a clear self-conception of the individual fields of work. Definitional requirements, self-conception and responsibilities should be formulated by prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research. To clear profiles and portfolios in each of the three areas of work belong to clear descriptions of the existing resources, capacity and structured offers.

## **Information Policy**

In particular, the profiles of the work of prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research should be communicated in future more offensively. Each work area should make their profile proactive easily accessible with a high degree of comprehensibility.

## **Structure**

On the three key levels of communication, the local/regional level, the national level and the international/global level; prevention politics, prevention practice, and prevention research should equally cooperate in permanent body structures and possibly include also other partner organizations. In such permanent body structures mutual information, basic agreements and concrete cooperation could be implemented transparently and sustainably.

## **Agreements**

Besides an efficient communication within and between the respective fields of prevention and prevention levels, it becomes increasingly important to agree on terms, definitions, objectives, criteria, methods, different profiles and responsibilities and priorities, strategies and specific projects and programs.

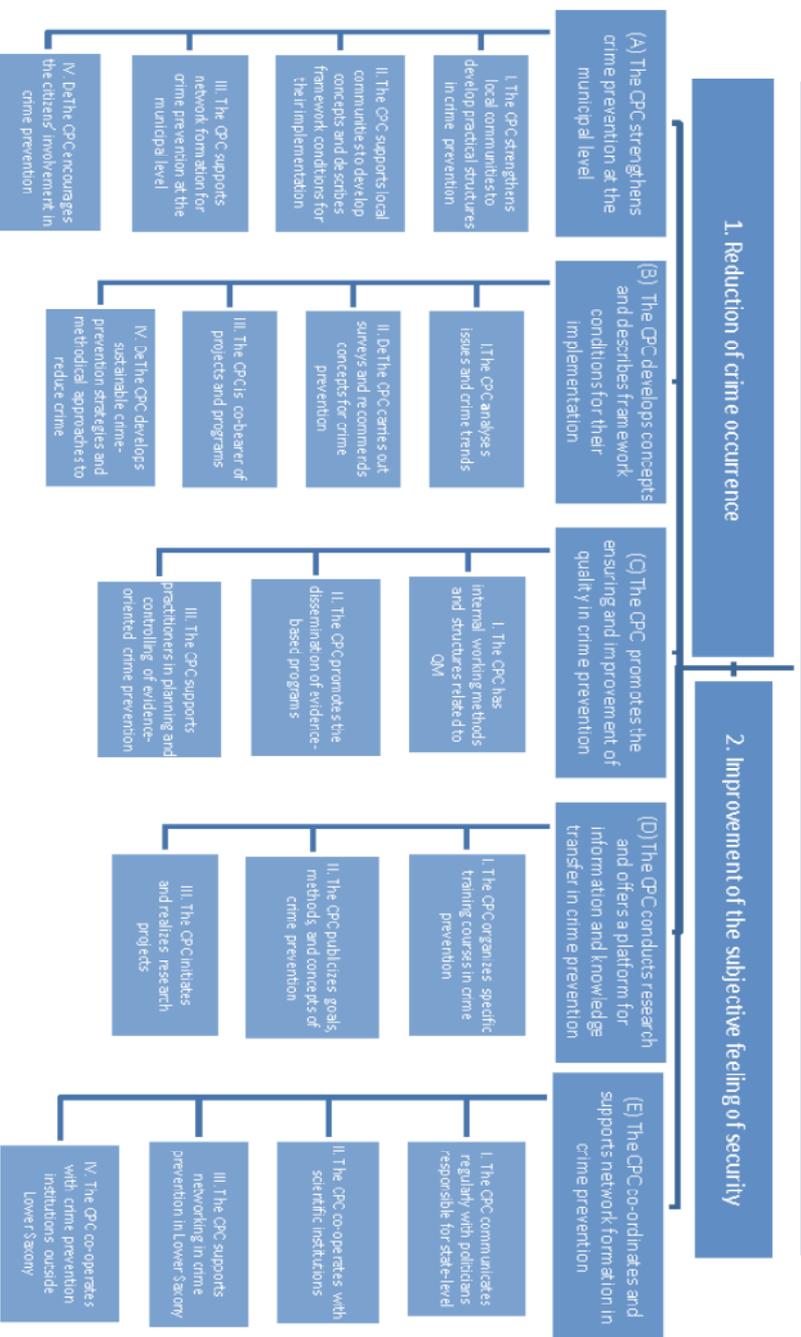
## **Cooperations**

Through a formalized and consistent communication between the working areas prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research joint positions could be published, concrete project proposals prepared, implemented and evaluated.

“Good Enough”: When is Evidence-Based Intervention Ready for dissemination ". Besides the subject-specific methodological responses from the respective views of the participating disciplines and prevention actors, more fundamental and extensive structural changes are needed, if prevention and intervention measures should be effectively and successfully developed, implemented and evaluated. Crucial is a new culture of communication between the three centrally involved fields of prevention; prevention politics, prevention practice and prevention research which are mutually highly dependent on each other.

# Objectives

## The Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony is a centre of excellence in crime prevention



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