

Analysis of the terrain visits

The introduction

One of the deliverables from this European project is the execution of 20 terrain visits in Belgium. The objective of these visits was to collect, in a direct and tangible manner, best practices related to domestic burglary prevention policy. This, therefore, is a qualitative investigation method.

A total of 21 terrain visits were executed. All Belgian provinces except two (Walloon Brabant and Luxembourg) were represented in the list of terrain visits. Thirteen Flemish, 1 Brussels and 7 Walloon terrain visits were carried out.

The Discussion of the methodology

Advantages of terrain visits

When drawing up the broad outlines of the project, this method was selected due to its tangible aspect—a terrain visit, in other words a best practice, is very tangible and concrete. Furthermore, it allows the collection of new ideas and new points of view from the bottom up. It can also be a way to achieve results on the work terrain without too many detours, if a specific project is easily transferable. After all, the best practices methodology based on terrain visits can inspire other police zones or municipalities within the European Union to implement similar initiatives.

This initiative also allows existing databases, such as the database that is maintained by the EUCPN, to be supplemented with best practices.

A terrain visit shows how policy is converted to projects in practice, and it allows improved coordination of the policy on the terrain once the feedback that is received is well assimilated. Finally, the fact that when a project is visited, the partners who are working on the project feel appreciated for their efforts, can also be noted as an advantage.

Disadvantages of terrain visits

The execution of terrain visits is a time-consuming assignment. Given that all of the projects had to effectively be visited, a great deal of time was lost in travel. Not least because an attempt was made to find projects in all of the provinces. Projects in large cities were often easier to reach with public transportation, however this was not always evident for some projects. This deliverable within the European project focusses on Belgian territory, nevertheless, of course, good projects have also been started in other member states. The analysis can therefore be carried through as far as is needed. If, for example, the methodology of the terrain visit were to be executed on a large scale throughout Europe, then 'type projects' could be used. This idea is discussed further in this analysis.

Not all of the information is always available for each project. Often, a correct cost estimate is missing, the list of partners that is submitted often requires some interpretation from the investigator and evaluations are often missing (certainly evaluations based on scientific methods).

Besides all this, finding 20 different projects spread over the entire territory is more difficult than it appears. In fact, until now, these projects were not registered anywhere.

The terrain visits and the accompanying reporting were executed by various staff members of the project group. What at first appeared to be a logical division of the work load, later proved to be a disadvantage. Although the source material (the project) is an objective given and the question list used is based on a permanent and uniform structure, it seems that not everyone paid the same attention to the same aspects of the project during the terrain visits. This does not make one report inferior to or more qualitative than another, but it does make the total analysis more difficult later on.

The step in which feedback is requested as well as the final approval for the reporting of the terrain visit appear to be obvious, and in a certain sense it is. But it also brings with it practical problems. In many cases, the fact is that a project is part of a larger whole. In some cases, this is then also emphasized by the project manager, who reports that the project in fact stands or falls by its integration into a broader whole. But in some cases, a project was selected due to a specific aspect of the project or because it can be considered a project/methodology in and of itself, which means that ideally only this distinguishing aspect is discussed in the project file. However, when the project manager has final control over the report in question and in this report he or she does not wish to detach a sub-project from the whole project, the value of the report of this well-defined project within the entire body of reports is impaired. In other words, the dependence on the approval of a report by the project manager sometimes stands in the way of the quality (or the utility) of the report.

Analysis of the terrain visits

The first remarks that must be made with regards to the methodology are related to the term 'terrain visit'. After all, it is a fact that some 'terrain visits' cannot be associated with a location or with a 'terrain'. Indeed, some 'terrain visits' refer to a method executed by persons, and, in fact, executed at a specific location. Although in these cases, the location as a detail in and of itself is of secondary importance. Therefore it is better to speak of a 'project'. In the deliverables, we keep the term terrain visit in order to avoid confusion, however in this analysis, we have chosen to replace the term 'terrain visit' by the term 'project', which, in our opinion, is a more accurate designation within the context of this investigation.

With a terrain visit, as opposed to the methodology of a World café and a focus group, there is no interference or dialectic between the various projects and the reporting of the projects. On the one side, you have those who perform the terrain visit and on the other side you have the project leader. This makes the process substantially more straightforward.

In order to be able to evaluate a project for its efficiency, one must be able to make a comparison. This means that the same project should be able to be implemented, and therefore evaluated, at different locations. It is only in this manner, taking into account the variables as much as possible (because each location has its own character and is therefore never 100% comparable), that a meaningful evaluation of a project can be made.

In that sense, the evaluation of 21 often varied projects seems to be counter-productive in hindsight. On the other hand, it must be noted that the intention here was to highlight 'best practices', and best practices by definition differ in character and purpose. An intermediate solution would be possible by specifically searching, for example, for five 'types' of project and by finding a minimum of three comparable concrete projects (and therefore locations) per

type. This would have made possible an evaluation of the 'type' of project; in other words, an evaluation of a 'type project'.

Up to a certain level, this approach was possible with the 21 executed terrain visits, given that the character of a large number of the projects overlaps. However in order to strictly comply with this methodology, you must have a minimum number of similar projects within a well-defined project type. Furthermore, a number of the terrain visits, up to a certain level, would have to be requested again, in function of the changed methodology.

Step-by-step plan

In essence, the methodology of a terrain visit consists of three phases: a selection from the project list, the visit itself and the analysis of the report afterwards. Within this project, we added a number of steps, the most important of which are a checklist and an approval of the report.

The checklist was sent to the project manager prior to the visit and was then returned to us after being completed. This served as a preparation for the visit as well as a basis for refining the list of selected projects. In fact, some projects were disqualified in this phase, for example, if a specific project proved to not be successful enough; in other words when the objectives of the relevant project were not met. After this first screening, some projects also proved to have a different character than expected, and given that we wanted to avoid overlap with regard to the character of the projects, we disqualified a number of projects in this phase of the investigation.

Searching for projects

The search for fitting projects was a continuous process. The first terrain visits had already taken place while the search for examples of projects which could be given preference to as a best practices continued on.

This search occurred in part via existing channels which we have acquired throughout the years. So, for example, the overview of the projects that were submitted in the framework of the Belgian Prize for Crime Prevention were consulted. This contest is organized by the Home Affairs Directorate-General for Safety and Prevention and is a contest in which projects aim to fight crime in an innovative manner with the emphasis on prevention. In addition, the Provincial Director of each Local Monitoring Service within the aforementioned Directorate was called upon for the purpose of gaining greater insight into the local context of each project, or the same persons proposed other projects that were unknown to us.

The Advisory Board also played a role in the search for suitable projects. During three of the four meetings, they provided input for the purpose of qualitatively expanding the list.

They also did this via Internet searches. The intention of the latter was to tap new, unknown initiatives.

In addition to a geographical balance, an attempt was also made to find a balance between individual projects with preventive, policing-related and judicial characters, however this did not prove to be an easy task. In the actual analysis, discussed below, you can see the repercussions of this.

Preparation of the terrain visit by making a guiding checklist

This checklist allows targeted questions to be asked in a uniform manner per project. In addition to this, it also helped to compile the reports in a uniform manner. Of course, the uniformity of the checklist is not the only advantage; at the time of the terrain visit, a checklist is also useful as a

mnemonic.

In broad outlines, the checklist mentions the same points as those represented in the final report. In addition to a number of necessary identification details (project name, project duration, name and contact details of the project leader) and a description of the project itself, it is primarily the 'why' of the project that is gauged (that is, the underlying problems from where the need for the project arose) along with the objectives of the project. The target group, the partners, the costs of the project, the source of the budget and the supporting materials used for the project are also identified. Finally, the transferability of the project is assessed. The transferability was after all, one of the advantages as well as one of the objectives when formulating the methodology. To this end, the question of whether the project had already been evaluated, and if so what the concrete results were, was also asked.

Below you will find an example of a blank checklist:

Name of the project

Project contact person

Project start date and (probable) duration

Why was the project developed (problem, need)?

Provide a short description of the project.

What are the project objectives?

What is the project's target group?

Who are the partners involved in the project?

What are their roles (with regard to content, communication, financial aspects, ...)?

Partners	Role

What is the (annual) cost of the project?

What is the source of the project resources?

How much manpower is required?

Has the project already been evaluated?

How (quantitatively, qualitatively, ...) has it been evaluated?

What are the concrete results of the project?

Have any supporting materials been developed?

Can the project be applied elsewhere? What must be taken into account?

Making contact with the terrain and reserving a visit day

In some cases, contacting the project managers went smoothly, and in other cases, it was substantially more difficult. Especially when the project manager was part of the operational units of the Police did it prove to be difficult to make an appointment and just as difficult to complete the appointment as planned. Furthermore sometimes it was simply that we knew about a certain project but had no concrete contact details.

To set to work in a cost-efficient, as well as a time-efficient, manner, we opted to execute all of the terrain visits in the same region at the same time, as far as this was possible.

Undertaking terrain visits with the project group

In order to be able to later compile a high-quality report, an attempt was made to have 2 people participate in each terrain visit. Initially, of course, this was always a member of the project group. This person was then accompanied, for example, by a student intern or sometimes even by a local advisor of the Directorate for Local Integral Safety from the Home Affairs Directorate-General for Safety and Prevention. The participation of the latter was added value, since this person monitors and evaluates the prevention projects within a specific province on a daily basis.

The content of the terrain visit depended on the type of project. However, the fixed pattern began with an interview with the project manager, often accompanied by one or more colleagues. The aforementioned checklist was often used as the basis for this interview. Sometimes the project leader spontaneously explained the entire project; when this happened the checklist was used at the end of the interview as a handy instrument for going over all of the important points once again to verify that all sub-questions had been answered. After this, the actual visit to the terrain took place. Depending on the type of project, this required some travel. In some cases, however, it was sufficient to be shown some demo materials at the conclusion of the interview. For example, in the case of a smartphone application designed to combat domestic burglary, a terrain visit consists simply of being shown all of the functionalities of the app on a smartphone.

Sending a thank you letter to the terrain

In practice, this step went together with the next step. Thanking the project manager is a way of showing appreciation for his or her constructive cooperation in this European project.

Writing a report of the terrain visit and mailing the report to the terrain

The reports were drafted in a fixed template. This fixed structure increases readability and, to the extent that this is possible, the comparability of the various projects. The report was compiled by both of the persons who participated in the terrain visit. This increased the completeness of the reports.

Initiating a call in which the terrain can communicate their final reflections

In practice, this step went together with the previous step. We found it important to ensure that the reports compiled corresponded to the reality of the situation. It is for that reason that the project managers were given the opportunity to communicate their reflections on the report.

Analysis of the content of the terrain visits

Brief summary per project¹

- 'Architechno' Project:

The importance of preventive measures (mostly of a structural nature) is pointed out to students of architecture, as is the importance of incorporating these measures as early as in the building's design phase. These topics are covered in several hours as a part of their lesson materials.

- 'Liveview' Project:

When the alarm system goes off in a home, the live images are sent through from the emergency call center to the Police Department (after first being filtered by the call center) in order to increase the chance of correct interpretation of the situation by the intervention police.

- 'Criminal Places' Project:

¹ More information about the various projects can be found in the project reports. These are all available on the website: www.domesticburglary.eu

Administrative resources (reinforced administrative approach) are used for the purpose of acting on a well-defined location with a high concentration of problems. The purpose of this is to 'clean up' this location.

- 'Cash Converter' Project:

Second-hand shops provide the Police with the serial numbers of the goods that are offered to them. This helps to identify stolen goods and those who offer them for sale.

- 'Pop Pol' Project:

In the event of a long-term absence (on holiday, for example), residents not only receive prevention tips from the Police, but a patrol may also be assigned to keep an eye on the home. The Police is also an intermediate in the provision of a network of neighbourhood residents who carry out their own 'patrols'.

- 'Showroom' Project:

This project includes a showroom for the purpose of demonstrating technical preventive measures under the auspices of the Local Police and a visit to the 'demo room' under the supervision of a Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant.

- 'Burglary Prevention Application' Project:

This project features an application to be installed on your smartphone. The app performs a risk analysis of your home, proposes a safety plan and allows you to register your valuable items.

- 'We don't allow any strangers in' Project:

This project strives for an increase in social control in apartment complexes by means of posters in the central entrance hall. These posters must increase the residents' awareness about the importance of not letting just anyone into the common areas of the complex, because once inside the thief can roam throughout the complex unimpeded.

- 'ANPR' (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) Project:

A network of cameras and number plate readers helps the police to fight crime and to enforce traffic law.

- 'Antigoon, Hadoc, Widca and Heklagoon' Project:

These projects feature an increased police presence in a specific area for a brief, well-defined period.

- 'DNA' (Deprived Neighbourhood Approach) Project:

With the DNA project, the four partner cities aim to work out and perform a test run of an in-depth, bottom-up approach. The goal is to involve residents in the changes going on in the neighbourhood by challenging and stimulating them. Greater involvement makes the

residents proud of their neighbourhood and also has them more easily take their own initiatives to organize projects and campaigns.

- 'Rozet' Project:

This project aims to make the citizen more aware of burglary problems by focusing on the safety of the front door by going from house to house to visit residents. If the resident is not at home, a diagnosis of the safety (or lack thereof) of the situation is deposited in the letter box.

- 'BIN' (Neighbourhood Information Networks) Project:

A network of locally anchored citizens communicates with the Police in a structured manner for the purpose of having an optimal effect on the efficiency of social control efforts.

- 'Tupperware' Project:

The purpose of this project is to increase the awareness of the population about the problems related to domestic burglary as well as to provide (technical preventive) advice via 'Tupperware' parties. With the remark that this takes place during the day and, as a rule, in the commissioner's office.

- 'DARK' (*Diefstallen Aanpakken door het Responsabiliseren en sensibiliseren van de inwoners van de politiezone Kastze* - Handling theft by increasing the awareness and the responsibility of the residents of the Kastze Police Zone) Project:

This is a campaign that aims to address the entire safety chain (prevention, Police, Judiciary and follow-up) and which is carried out in a bottom-up fashion, under strong leadership and in a time span of four months.

- 'Mandatory Building Advice' Project:

The aim of this project is to make new homes burglary-resistant by providing building advice regarding burglary safety that must be followed.

- 'Speed TPA' Project:

Anyone and everyone from the Police Zone or from the Municipal Services who has anything to do with theft or domestic burglary targets a specific district en masse and at a pre-determined time (one whole weekend). The purpose of this is to provide primarily technical preventive advice to as many residents as possible, even if it is sometimes only summarized information.

- 'HERCOSI 1-2-3' Project:

The project highlights comprehensive follow-up and monitoring after a burglary. A detective visits the victim/residence and performs an extra examination of the crime scene, an extra investigation of the neighbourhood and provides technical preventive advice.

- 'Wij-kk-ijken' Project:

Well-defined districts are cordoned off by the Police and checks are performed. At the same time, the residents of the area are informed and, where possible/necessary, given advice by the entirety of the available prevention team.

- 'S-DNA Forensic Marking' Project:

With the help of synthetic DNA, valuable items are given their own unique DNA code. This code corresponds to the personal data of the item's owner in a central database.

- 'Villa Daily' Project:

Check points are manned on a daily basis by regular teams of conspicuously uniformed officers. These check points are in different locations each day and are manned during various time slots of maximum 2 hours each. The location is always chosen in cooperation with overarching Police (Supporting) Departments, and its selection is always 'intelligence-led'.

Analysis

Who is 'leading' the project?

When we look at who is leading the project, we can make these broad distinctions: prevention services (these are under the auspices of the Police), other administrative services (can be social services or other administrative services such as Institutions and the Registry Office), Police Services in the strictest sense of the word (therefore often operational services, too) and finally the Judiciary. We see the following subdivision:

- Prevention Services (municipal or policing-related): 7
- Police services: 14
- Other administrative services: 1
- Judiciary: 2

In total, we note 24 'leaders' even though there are only 21 projects. Therefore, in some cases there is more than one 'leader' per project.

A noteworthy observation is that most of the projects are initiated by Police Services (14) and the second most by Prevention Services (7) (whether or not they are anchored in the context of the Local Police). An explanation for this is that the Local Police Zones are the ones who are first confronted with the problem of domestic burglary, and, consequently, they must also provide a first-line response to the problems. In Belgium, specific services, some of which are under the auspices of the Local Police and some of which are not, have been established to be responsible for prevention. The fact that a large number of preventive initiatives exist which are led by the Police outside of the realm of the prevention services (for example, led by operational intervention services of the Police) shows that the Local Police is well imbued with the idea of the 'prevention chain', which is based on the principle that preventive, policing and judicial actions must all be taken to combat a specific phenomenon.

Who are the partners involved in the project?

When we look at the partners named, we see a great diversity. This clearly shows that many projects work in an integrated manner. An overview follows:

- Prevention Services, domestic burglary prevention consultants etc.: 2
- Press: 1
- BINs: 2
- Mosque: 1
- Social organization: 1
- Neighbourhood houses: 1
- DICs: 2
- Federal Police: 4
- Road Maintenance Authority: 1
- Provincial Administration: 1
- Neighbourhood residents: 3
- School community: 1
- Private security companies: 2
- Local government (municipalities and cities): 9
- Administrative government (can also be the Federal government): 1
- Local Police (Police Zones): 13
- Retail businesses (or federations): 2
- Public Prosecutor: 3
- Private enterprises: 2

Yet, we must be careful when interpreting this list of partners. After all, it is sometimes difficult to work out how important a specific partner is. Some partners are considered by the project managers to be so self-evident that they forget to mention them (for example, the Local Police or the local government or the neighbourhood resident), others use an overlapping formulation, still others also include the leader of the project in the list of partners while some do not do this, and so on.

Classification according to the 'nature' of the projects

When we look at the 'nature' of the projects, we see that some projects focus on prevention, some are purely policing-related in nature, some have a judicial component and still others target follow-up. Again, there are overlaps. We see the following classification: preventive 18, policing-related 11, judicial 4 and follow-up 2.

We have seen that the majority of the projects are preventive in nature. Initiatives that are purely preventive in nature are often organized by operational police services, such as the intervention police. This is in keeping with the conclusion that was formulated above with regard to the chain idea which has been accepted by the Local Police.

There are still a number of issues that stand out when we compare the aforementioned three criteria. When a project has more than one finality (its 'nature'), then the project quickly covers almost the entire chain: prevention, policing, judiciary and to a lesser extent follow-up. You could say that throughout the entire chain, follow-up is treated somewhat like the poor relation; on the other hand, though, it is evident that the aim is to work as broadly as possible.

A second remark that must be made is that when the private sector (not including retail businesses and private security firms) is involved as a partner, this often means that technical products are involved, such as the purchase of ANPR cameras or software such as applications

for smartphones. In 6 of the 21 projects, we see that a private partner is in fact indispensable for the success of the project.

The use of media

In seven of the projects, media (or any other channel of communication with the citizen) plays no role. In ten of the cases, the traditional media or a traditional channel of communication has prevalence. Examples of traditional media are posters, TV, a demo showroom, flyers, newspapers etc. In four of the cases, modern media, such as smartphone applications and websites, predominate. Three of the four projects in which modern media are central originate from the police services, and one of these originates from a provincial administration, which we classified above under the preventive leader. A possible explanation for this may be that some of these modern media require a permanent budget, something which can be more easily guaranteed from a larger organization. This is in contrast to the prevention services, where work is done with smaller budgets on projects that are clearly delineated in time and in which traditional media is usually chosen.

Theft Prevention Advisors, Neighbourhood Information Networks, district police agents and community watches

In Belgium, a number of functions which play a specific and noteworthy role in crime prevention are the Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants (DPAs), the Neighbourhood Information Networks (BINs), district police agents and the community watches. Three of the four functions are somewhat specific for the Belgian context and therefore require a word of explanation.

The position of Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant was created in the mid-1990s (originally they were called 'technical prevention advisors') as a concrete response to the need for coupling a preventive component to the policing and judicial components, which already existed. The basis for this was the idea that a criminal phenomenon is best handled with an integral and integrated approach, in particular the idea that the entire chain, from prevention, the Police, the Judiciary and follow-up, is equally valuable and must be implemented simultaneously. The role of the Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant includes the analysis of specific weak points in the home and the formulation of fitting solutions and recommendations for the purpose of delaying, as much as possible, a burglary attempt. A Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant can be someone from the Local Police, someone from the municipal administration or someone who works for the province. He or she is provided with specific training for this position.

A **Neighbourhood Information Network (BIN)** is a collaboration between the citizens and the Local Police within a specific neighbourhood. The project's actors are the citizens (those who participate), a coordinator (who leads) and the Local Police. The objective is to increase the general perception of safety, to promote social control and to communicate the importance of prevention. Within a Neighbourhood Information Network, there is a permanent exchange of information between the Local Police and the citizens which occurs by means of the communication of prevention tips with the emphasis on the dissemination of useful operational information. All of this is attuned to the specific needs and requirements of the citizens involved.

Since 1 January 2008, all non-police, public safety positions in Belgium exist under one overarching designation: **community watch**. This way it is no longer possible to confuse the city watch, the park watch, the stewards (not to be confused with the football stewards), the Lijnspotters (appointed to keep an eye on public transportation), authorized supervisors etc. Community watches have no policing authority. They also do not have the same authority as a private security agent. Their dissuasive presence in the districts increases the feeling of safety of the citizens. They are the link between the municipality and the population, and they report the problems they encounter to the authorized municipal services or to the Police.

We investigated to what extent these four functions were essential to each project. After analyzing the projects, we see that Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants are indispensable in nine projects. The Neighbourhood Information Networks play a central role in two projects. Community watches and district agents appear to be essential in five and six of the projects, respectively.

From this, we can conclude that the use of Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants is widespread. However, we are missing prior measurements of this type, which would allow us to measure a potential evolution in this domain. We do, however, observe steady growth in the number of Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants since 2009.

For years now, the importance of the district agents has been fodder for discussion in the Belgian Police landscape. There is a tendency to upgrade this importance, which in turn augments the call to translate this to extra capacity (budgetary). However, this demand currently remains unanswered. We do see that in the framework of the projects that were investigated here, the position of district agent is often more than that of 'extra' personnel who can be called in when needed. The district agent, from his or her specific position, often plays an indispensable role in some projects.

Transferability

With regard to the transferability of the projects, we can state that this primarily depends on the projects' accessibility. This, in turn, depends on the extra budget needed, on the estimated personnel needed (number of FTEs) and on the effectiveness of the project. The effectiveness can only be estimated when an evaluation of some type has been made of the project.

In conclusion, we can state that each project is transferable albeit with some limitations, such as legislation, which sometimes varies from member-state to member-state (mainly in connection to private security, privacy etc.), the cost of technical devices (ANPR camera, for example) in some cases or the capacity requirements in terms of FTEs (large-scale police campaigns which require long time spans). Many projects operate on a 'current' budget, which means that no extra budget is needed to launch the project or, if there is, then it is minimal.

Sometimes the free market itself is an obstacle to the progress and transferability of a project. For example, it is not stimulative for governments to support an initiative related to SDNA, because there are already several similar players operating on the market, each with its own database, which undermines the efficiency and the clout of the system. A second reason for this is that the Belgian government is not permitted to give preference to a specific private initiative so that no unfair competition is created.

Globally speaking, it is fair to say that the extra budget required for the majority of the initiatives is minimal. Awareness-raising materials are the most commonly recurring budget entry which can be coupled to a project, and in comparison with personnel costs, it is often relatively low. Furthermore, we see that in many projects there are hardly any 'extra' personnel costs. Usually the FTEs that are already available are just more efficiently utilized. Of course, this does not mean to say that these FTEs do not have a social cost. But when a governmental budget is provided for FTEs that are mainly utilized for theft prevention, this cost is not part of an 'extra' budget.

However, when a project is formulated around a specific technology, then we immediately see sharp rises in extra costs.

(Self-)evaluation

Most of the projects included a self-evaluation of one type or another.

The following remark must be made with regard to evaluations: The strict definition of a good evaluation includes a baseline measurement and a post-evaluation. The former is missing in many of the cases.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the direct consequences of a specific project (number of homes in which technical-preventive advice was implemented etc.) may be easy to quantify, while the ultimate objective, namely a reduction in domestic burglary, is often less so. At any rate, the correlation between them cannot be ignored. In some cases, however, the reduction in the number of domestic burglaries is so great and so remarkable that a direct link must be assumed.



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