

An integral methodology to develop
an information-led and community-oriented policy
to tackle domestic burglary
(A methodology to tackle burglary)

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The fourth advisory board meeting took place on 4 September 2014, from 10h00 to 13h00.

1. Introduction

Leen Cortebeeck presides the meeting. After the welcome speech, the report of the previous meeting, held on 28 April 2014, was approved integrally.

The advisory board was informed that the project has received the official approval to continue. Instead of 12 months, the project will now last 15 months. The end date is now fixed on 31 December 2014. This prolongation offers us more time and space to deliver a qualitative end product that offers added value for national as well as European partners.

2. Cost-benefit analysis of the current policy regarding domestic burglaries

As discussed before, the cost-benefit analysis will not be a scientific investigation, but will be explicitly used as a policy analysis instrument.

To keep the advisory board informed of the status, the new elements of the cost-benefit analysis are discussed, and a short overview of the various chapters is given. The advisory board has received the complete document in the month of August. .

- On the suggestion of the DJB (Directorate of combat of crimes against property), some structural changes were made to the international dimension of the police part. The order of the services has been modified and a part 'international signalling' is added.
- Given the reforms, the judicial part (a.o. DSB (Department criminal policy)) will have to be reworked.
- A part on the private-public cooperation has been added to the private partners.
- The general chapter (explaining the phenomenon of domestic burglary, etc.) still needs to be implemented still.

3. Analysis of the policy and of the methodology

One of the project's deliverables is that an analysis needs to be made of each methodology. These analyses are elaborated by the project group. First, the methodology will be discussed,

as well as the various steps that were taken. A content-oriented analysis will also be done, coupled with the necessary critical reflections.

For the methodology for the cost-benefit analysis, the following three elements are discussed:

1) Justification of the choice to go for a pragmatic approach instead of a scientific KBA.

2) The advantages of a KBA

The most important advantage is the fact that there now is a clear overview of the various partners. The question 'who does what?' has been answered. This way, the policy can also be evaluated more easily.

3) The disadvantages of a KBA

A big obstacle in the cost-benefit analysis was the collection of numerical data. It often took a long time before we received the numerical data of the various institutions and services. It was also striking that often there were no numerical data. This is because not enough impact evaluations are being done, and this has been the major obstacle for writing the cost-benefit analysis. Without impact studies, it is very difficult to list the benefits of a project. The benefits that are now listed in the cost-benefit analysis often are the supposed benefits, but these have not been proven.

Writing such a cost-benefit analysis is very time-consuming, among other reasons due to the complicated state structure of Belgium.

During the discussion on the policy, strategic objectives were used that were drafted at the first States General that took place in Woningem in 2013, being:

1. Continue to focus on strengthening the cooperation is necessary; all partners should broaden their basis. Cooperation is crucial to gain knowledge and expertise, and this way the various target audiences can be reached, and a common support platform can be created.
2. Striving for innovation in education and communication, and this way achieve a target audience-directed and neighbourhood-directed approach. Furthermore, efforts to reach opportunity groups should be continued. This can be achieved by providing outreach and adapted communication.
3. Following and supporting technical solutions and evolutions. The existing techno-preventive measures of homes need to be further improved. This can be achieved by development construction standards, which could be imposed regulatory, or which could be promoted towards the stakeholders.
4. Stimulating the implementation of surroundings-oriented measures. In the redesign of public space, more attention should be paid to those aspects that have a direct impact on security and the feeling of security, such as lighting and planting.
5. Working in an evidence-based way. A goal-oriented policy, on the one hand, requires a clear view of the problem, and on the other hand, an impact measurement. Based on existing national and international studies, the existing expertise with regard to efficient and effective measures related to domestic burglaries should be bundled, and all concerned partners should be informed as much as possible.

In three of the five strategic objectives, the policy has made good steps. Especially cooperation and information exchange are already very well developed. However, more action is needed with the techno-preventive and surroundings-oriented measures. Here, it is often difficult to motivate the various regional partners.

Overall, we can say that the policy has made many good steps, but the need for impact evaluation is high. Without the impact evaluations, it is very difficult to determine which projects and actions function, and which are a waste of time.

Rodney Bos informs that the police of The Hague has drafted a 'Best of three Worlds' project that evaluates various projects. These impact evaluations could also be used for some Belgian projects. Here, it mainly concerns best practices with regard to civic participation.

From VVSG comes the question if the Salduz legislation has an influence on the policy, especially in relation with catching in the act of travelling offender groups. Especially the problems with interpreters can lead to capacity problems with the police. However, it is responded that the focus shifts from questioning to traces investigation. When burglaries are caught in the act, a confession is not that important anymore. In Antwerp, a project trains DPAs to be forensics. This way, they can invest more in traces investigation, and at the same time provide directed advice. A complete advice can still follow later on. In The Netherlands, there is currently an impact evaluation to check how good traces investigation actually is. Research shows that only about 100 cases are made, while 7000 traces were investigated. Therefore, it is important to do directed traces investigations. In the town of Dendermonde, there has been a training for intervention teams on this subject. The attendees were taught which things they had to pay attention to, to be able to decide if traces investigation is necessary or not.

Assuralia adds a couple of things about insurances, and adds some important observations. For example, it happens that people who get an insurance become less attentive, because 'they are insured anyway'. There seems to quite a lot of fraud too in the declaration of stolen goods. More objects are declared than were actually stolen. In addition, it needs to be kept in mind that insurance companies are competitors of each other. It is hard to find a balance between the premiums and paying the damages. The premium for burglary is very limited compared to the one for fire. This makes that the discounts on the premiums for installing security systems are minimal. To reduce the premium structurally, a clear and unilateral prevention from the government is needed. When it becomes clear that this works, the insurance companies will adapt their premiums to it, but this cannot happen the other way around. It must be possible to prove in a simple way that a house has been secured. This is possible, e.g. via a quality label secure housing (in The Netherlands, this already exists). The question is raised from the advisory board if the insurance companies cannot ask for a list of possessions. It seems that this is not possible because the costs would be too high, which would lead to higher premiums. This needs to be controlled, and the lists need to be updated.

4. Analysis of the focus groups

Next to the analysis of the KBA, the analysis of the focus groups also is an important part of our guide. Our focus groups took place on 28 March and on 21 May 2014. In the first session, 26 people participated. In the second session, there were 27 participants. Representatives of the federal police local police, prevention, and the private sector were present. The European dimension was also present: Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Denmark, Lithuania, Ireland and Croatia.

One of the first things that we look into in our analysis is the discussion of the methodology of the focus groups.

It concerns a form of qualitative research. With our discussion groups, we wanted to collect opinions / visions of the respondents, and identify the underlying causes.

We can also point out several advantages to this methodology: flexibility, relatively cheap, simple data collection, little preparation by the participants needed, enrichment of visions and opinions for the participants, etc.

There are also several disadvantages we can identify: the moderator is a determining factor in the end results, some opinions might not be addressed, from a practical point of view, the time can be an obstacle, and objective parameters are missing (for the intensity and the strength of visions and opinions).

We also updated the advisory board on the focus groups, since some participants of the advisory board also participated in the discussion groups.

As a positive point, it was mentioned that the moderators took good care that the various participants were proportionately addressed. Certain negative points were also noted. The use of English as working language made that it was not always easy to express oneself. Especially when specific technical terms were used or discussed. It was also remarked that problems sometimes arose over the interpretation of certain loose thoughts. This made that some things were incorrectly represented in the report.

The analysis of the focus groups also contains a roadmap. This included the following parts: drafting of the purpose statement, identification of participants, selection of a moderator, development of questions/premises, development of the script, discussion of results, etc.

In the discussion on the results of the theme victimization with domestic burglaries, it was remarked that Rachid Kerkab had done an interesting study on repeated victimisation.

5. Analysis of the World Café

Another activity that was organised within the context of this European project is a World Café. This took place on 19 June 2014.

In total, 68 participants were registered for the World Café. There were also 11 moderators and 7 premises. There were many positive reactions from the participants, and many ideas were brought forward. The atmosphere was very enjoyable.

In the analysis of the World Café, the methodology is first discussed as well. It is a qualitative investigation with a central issue that is set to collect visions and opinions of a large group of people. Afterwards, attention was paid to advantages and disadvantages. From this, it can be concluded that it is a very good methodology. This positive experience will be taken along for the future.

In the World Café roadmap, it is explained that the World Café has been deliberately oriented on terrain people, because during the project, many experts already receive attention, and we should not forget about the terrain. The various themes that were addressed are civic participation, private partners, social media, standardization, new technologies, BINs, and the international dimension.

From the advisory board, the question came whether they could also receive the report of the World Café. This will be delivered together with the report of the advisory board. They also will receive the analysis of the World Café.

It was also announced that a website is being developed within the project, which will bundle all information about it.

6. Analysis of the terrain visits

Next to the previously discussed deliverables, an important part of the project consists of about 20 terrain visits to Belgian projects related to domestic burglary.

Twenty-one terrain visits were done. Of these, eleven are finished, and the ten others are in their last phase, being approval by the concerned project leaders.

Except for two provinces (Walloon Brabant and Luxembourg), all Belgian provinces are represented in the list of terrain visits. Thirteen Flemish, one Brussels, and seven Walloon terrain visits were done.

Sixteen projects are of preventive nature; ten are police, and four projects have at least a judicial part. This sum exceeds twenty-one, and this is obviously because some projects have several parts and/or objectives. Furthermore, once the analysis is completely finished, the same subdivision will be made according to the initiator or the project responsible.

In the content analysis, specific attention will be paid to the question which actors play a decisive role in the projects. We can think of domestic burglary prevention consultants, BINs, community police officers, community guards, etc.

It will also be verified what the contribution of the private partners is in the totality of the screened projects. We note that private partners are often involved when it concerns technical matters. This can range from the provision of ANPR cameras to the development of smartphone apps.

Special attention is paid to the transferability of each project, and this will be done in the global analysis. Which, how much, and to which extent do the projects foresee a self-evaluation? We would like to measure the approachability of the projects. Approachability (low threshold) can concern budget as well as organizational requirements. This will be in turn weighted on the estimated effect (therefore, the importance of evaluation) and transferability; this transferability is mostly important when European partners wish to set up a similar project within their own setting.

In addition, the projects' cost/budget is looked at. Attention is paid to the relationship between the possible extra needed budget necessary to execute a project, and the 'running' budget that has been budgeted outside the project. We also try to make a scale, to define the size and the ranking of the various projects. It is not always obvious to give a budget estimation, but we do think, in combination with FTE's, that we can give an indication to the end-user.

Within the projects that are of a preventive nature, we will look into the relationship between the projects that are based on construction, organisational, and/or electronic measures.

Furthermore, we also wish to get a view of the most important partners in the projects. With this, we mean, for example, the health care sector, public transport companies, press, police schools, local authorities, etc.

Finally, we will also look at which media channels are used in the projects, to get a view on the relationship between classical media and new media.

The methodological analysis of these terrain visits does not always happen according to that of the World Café and the focus groups. The interaction clearly plays a minor role here. In essence, the methodology consists of three phases: selection of the project list, the visit itself, and the analysis or report afterwards. Within this project, we added a number of steps, the most important ones being: a checklist and an approval of the report. The checklist was sent prior to the visit, and was received back completed. It serves in the preparation of the visit, as well as a base for further refinement of the list of chosen projects (some projects were eliminated in this phase). The approval of the report by the project responsible is essential to guarantee the correct information.

Note: the term 'terrain visits' is not correct in some cases. Indeed, some projects are not location-specific, but for example, person-specific. It would therefore be better to talk of project visits or 'good practices.'

7. Next steps

Like for the other activities, there will also be done an analysis of the advisory boards. Here, the composition of the advisory board, the possibilities of the members to adjust the project, how the project group deals with the given input, will all be addressed.

The advisory board is requested to deliver its reflections on this via email. The DSB remarks that the contribution of the Justice department to this project is small, because it was not specific enough.

To conclude this project, an action plan will also be drafted, to collect the various action points. Suggestions for action points from the advisory board are very much welcome.

As mentioned before, a website will also be made that will bundle all information on this European project. This way, all the information is available to all national and European partners.

To close the project, on 24 November 2014, a conference will be organised in Brussels to present the results. An official invitation will be sent to all partners in the coming weeks.

8. Various

To finish, the last reflections coming from the advisory board are registered:

- Ivo Schoeters informs that he would like to see the quality label secure housing in the list of points of attention, definitely related to new homes. CPTED is also important; this is already applied in other countries. Rodney Bos remarks here that the control of this quality label is not always easy. Guido Bennaerts also thinks it is strange that the legislation around safety is very severe but there is not much around security.
- Guido Bennaerts adds to this that organizational measures should not be forgotten. By changing the behaviour of citizens, many burglaries could be avoided. Rodney Bos informs that during the month of November, a campaign for the citizens' behaviour will start in The Netherlands.

- Dirk Geurts expresses his interest in the results from the analysis of the terrain visits. He also says that he had hoped that the Justice department would have expressed itself more, to see what could be done to improve the cooperation.
- Rodney Bos also informs that an investigation will be undertaken where it will be investigated why the number of burglaries is decreasing. What is exactly happening here? This project will not be an endpoint either. The results will be taken along in an EMPACT project and in an ISEC project.
- Bernard Desmet mentions that the complete chain should not be forgotten, i.e., on the one hand, work on the base of the problem, how to reduce the number of travelling offender groups? On the other hand, the problem of accepting stolen goods should not be forgotten, and the repressive aspect remains important as well. The offenders have to be tackled effectively.
- Marc Garin informs he hopes that the recommendations will be tackled in a structural way. The message should be passed on well; otherwise, nothing will be done with it.

From the project group, we wish to thank all members of the advisory board for the constructive cooperation and input over the last months. This strengthened the project a lot.



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