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BECCARIA-STANDARDS

for ensuring quality in crime prevention projects

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Preface

Quality criteria for planning, implementing and evaluating crime-prevention projects have hardly existed up to now. The professional exchange on this complex of topics is also still at the very beginning nationally as well as throughout Europe.

Standards as a yardstick for checking project scheduling and implementation are an initial step on the way to checking the effectiveness of crime-prevention projects and to an increased quality orientation.

The present Beccaria standards have been developed in the framework of the "Beccaria Project: Quality Management in Crime Prevention"¹. This project was supported by the AGIS programme of the European Commission. The Beccaria standards are intended as a recommendation for an increased quality orientation in prevention work. They are an initial outline for discussion and should be consistently improved and developed further through the widest possible debate.

Working aids (7 steps) for the concrete implementation of the Beccaria standards can be downloaded for free at

www.beccaria.de

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Beccaria standards for ensuring quality in crime prevention projects

The Beccaria standards include measures and requirements for quality planning, execution and assessment of crime prevention programmes² 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 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

- a. they align the planning, implementation and review of crime prevention projects with the quality criteria outlined in science and literature.
- b. projects are designed in such a way that they can be evaluated.
- c. 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 Beccaria standards describe an overall programme of requirements to ensure quality. A satisfactory guarantee for the quality of a project can only be achieved by complying with the overall programme. 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 following points are to be considered and implemented along with the Beccaria standards:

² In the following, only projects are referred to, similarly, the programmes are enclosed.

1. Beccaria standard: Description of the problem

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1.1 The existing problem is recognised and precisely described in its current state. It is thus explained:

- What exactly the problem comprises, how it manifests itself, what kind of crime it covers.
- Where the problem arises in the defined area, over what time scale and to what extent.
- Who is directly or indirectly affected by the problem (description e.g. by age, gender, social characteristics, background).
- What direct and indirect effects the problem has.
- How long the problem has existed and whether it has changed (especially recently – e.g. growth, special reasons).
- Whether the solution to the problem is being worked on in a specific place. Who is working on it at present or who should work on it in the future (youth help, teachers, police, state prosecution service)? Which methods were chosen to solve the problem and with what degree of success?

1.2 Information is provided on who the initiative for the project came from as well as what prompted the project (e.g. complaints/reports from the public, approaches from the Youth Welfare Office or the suggestion of the police).

1.3 It has been well established by research that action is needed to solve the problem.



2. Beccaria standard: Analysis of the conditions leading to the emergence of the problem

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- 2.1 To explain the problem in question, appropriate theoretical as well as empirical findings are taken into consideration.
- 2.2 The variables thought to significantly influence the incidence of the problem are considered and labelled - risk factors³ as well as protective factors⁴.

*A theory should be as simple as possible – but no simpler
– Albert Einstein –*

³ Risk factors are influences that can be detrimental to performance, for example cgild neglect, youth contact with delinquent peers, deterioration of neighborhoods.

⁴ Protective factors can hinder the emergence of crime. For example, stable emotional bonds between youths and their parents, alarm systems in parked cars, clear lines of sight and lighting of public places which are considered trouble spots.

3. Beccaria standard: Determination of prevention goals, project goals, and targeted groups

3. Beccaria standard: Determination of crime prevention goals, project goals, and targeted groups⁵

In determining goals, a basic distinction must be made between crime prevention and project goals. The crime prevention goals and project goals of every project must be specified clearly and precisely.

Crime prevention goals (sometimes referred to as overall goals, global goals or general goals) are always directed towards the actual crime prevention concerns of the project. These concern the (objective) containment of crime (prevention and / or avoidance of criminal acts) or the improvement of subjective security (strengthening the feeling of safety as well as reducing the fear of crime). For example, the crime prevention goal of a project could be a 30% reduction in youth assaults in the school area of city A.

Project goals, on the contrary, are the direct objectives for which a project aims. The following project goals could exist for a project with the crime prevention goal of reducing youth assaults in schools: Improvement of the general school atmosphere, strengthening of pupils' social skills especially regarding fights, and a higher level of social control in school.

Project goals must have a theoretical connection with crime prevention goals: in achieving a project goal, it must be possible to work towards the existing crime prevention goal at the same time.

The project goals can be demonstrated using criminological theories as well as theory-based assumptions or experimental findings: (to stay with the same example) "improvement of the general school atmosphere", "strengthening of pupils' social skills especially regarding fights" as well as "a higher level of social control in school", in each case building an applicable crime prevention approach to achieve the crime prevention goal of "reducing youth assaults in schools".

3.1 The crime prevention goals are specified. They are developed from the description of the problem, precisely formulated, measurable, and describe the ideal situation.

⁵ There can be one more crime prevention goals as well as one or more project goals and target groups in a project. When describing the Beccaria standards, only the plural form is used

3. Beccaria standard: Determination of prevention goals, project goals, and targeted groups

- 3.2 The decision is made regarding any particular groups the crime prevention goals are targeting.
- 3.3 There are definitive, measurable indicators that show whether (and to what extent) the crime prevention goals will be achieved.
- 3.4 Strategies or crime prevention approaches are chosen which are judged appropriate to achieve the adopted crime prevention goals. The choice of strategies or crime prevention approaches is explicitly justified. Perceptions from literature as well as practical experiences should be taken into account. The project goals are defined in concrete terms on the basis of the chosen strategies or crime prevention approaches..
- 3.5 The target group affected by the project goals relate. Target groups are precisely specified (e.g. by age or social characteristics).
- 3.6 The time frame as well as the end date (costs over time) for achieving the desired project goals should be determined.

A man with no goal in life will get lost
– Abraham Lincoln –

4. Beccaria standard: Determining measures to achieve the objectives

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- 4.1 Appropriate measures are derived and justified to achieve the project goals.
- 4.2 The measures are considered appropriate for reaching the determined target groups of the project goals (e.g. can this be assured through the participation of the target group?).
- 4.3 The availability of important time, personal, expert, financial and physical resources for implementing the measures is realistically set out.
- 4.4 Particular indicators can be validated that show whether (and to what extent) the project goals will be achieved.
- 4.5 Particular indicators can be validated that show whether (and to what extent) the target groups can be reached.

A vision without execution is hallucination
– Jeffrey Garten –



5. Beccaria standard: Project design and implementation

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- 5.1 The project design is set out in written form. It covers all the relevant considerations and plans which are essential for the establishment, running and review of the project.
- 5.2 The likelihood of collaboration (with partner organisations) as well as synergies are clarified. The networking is target-oriented, sustainable and well invested.
- 5.3 A resource plan is prepared which sets forth which timed, personal, professional, financial and physical resources are likely to be needed to implement the measures.
- 5.4 The running time of the project is determined.
- 5.5 The project is appraised and checked by an external expert in the field and by a group (external or part of their own organisation).
- 5.6 The cost benefit of the project, how it arises from the project plan and the expected results and effects (and the targeted project goals) are checked and found to be beneficial as well as sustainable by those involved with the project and/or by some external, professional person/group. Practicable alternatives to the planned project can be appraised as an option.
- 5.7 Responsibilities for implementing the individual measures are determined. Agreements are put in writing between the participants (contractors, project planners, if necessary the target groups, and co-operation partners)
- 5.8 A project work plan is prepared with a detailed depiction of the individual work steps for those responsible and the time schedule.
- 5.9 A review of the implementation of the project (monitoring) as well as a review of the effects of the project (evaluation of impact, if it is designated) is included from the beginning of the project plan.
 - A process evaluation needs to be carried out. A plan for the review of the running of the project as well as reaching the target groups is prepared and included in the project design.
 - The case is made for whether the attainability of the project goals and crime prevention goals of the project should be appraised (advance appraisal of effects). In the event that the evaluation is

5. Beccaria standard: Project design and implementation

carried out, a plan of investigation is drawn up, and the evaluation plans are taken into account in the project design.

- The case is made for whether a self evaluation and/or an external evaluation is planned. In the case of a self evaluation, the requirement for external professional methodological advice is assessed.

5.10 The running of the project is documented from the very beginning; every step of the project is set out and justified, as are deviations from the original plan.

5.11 The structure of the project can adapt to changing conditions. Methods for improvement are determined and implemented if shortfalls appear.

*There is nothing more practical than a good theory
– Immanuel Kant –*

6. Beccaria standard: Review of implementation and the achievement of its goals (evaluation)

6. Beccaria standard: Review of the implementation of the project and the achievement of its goals (evaluation)

- 6.1 The extent to which the designated target groups are reached is determined (number, proportion). Attempts are made to account for the degree to which the target groups were or were not reached
- 6.2 What changes occurred and to what extent they occurred are determined. How far were the targeted crime prevention goals achieved (from comparison between the actual and expected situations)? How far were the targeted project goals achieved (from comparison between the actual and expected situations)?
- 6.3 Whether and to what extent the observed changes can be attributed to the implemented measures is determined and reported. What can the achievement or failure to achieve the crime prevention goals be connected to? Likewise for the project goals?
- 6.4 The occurrence of any unforeseen side effects is determined: If so, what effects and to what extent?

If you are going in the wrong direction, there is no point in stepping up the pace.

– Birgit Breuel –

7. Beccaria standard: Conclusion and documentation of the project

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- 7.1 A thorough project report is prepared at the end of a project. The main findings from the project are edited, conclusions are made, the end report is drawn up, and the project documentation as well as project results are made accessible to a professional audience.
- 7.2 The main project findings are brought together and edited:
- To what extent were the targeted goals achieved (project and crime prevention goals)?
 - What do the results imply for the project?
 - What can the achievement/failure of the project goals be attributed to?
 - What difficulties emerged in the planning and implementation stages; which positive and negative lessons can be drawn?
 - What other main findings could be deduced?
- 7.3 Conclusions are drawn from the experiences, results and findings of the project:
- Did the chosen approach prove of value? Is the approach applicable elsewhere?
 - Which suggestions for improvement, recommendations for action or possible solutions for known flaws can be concluded?
 - Are there particular problems which should be a.) The subject of future projects as well as b.) The subject of evaluation for future projects?
 - Which project partners or other organisations could especially benefit from the results?
 - Do the findings apply to an adaptation/modification of the existing project or to a further development of a possible continuation of the project?
 - How could it be guaranteed that the project can be sustained for its planned lifespan (e.g. by integration in an existing set of arrangements)?
 - Can the project be transferred to other target groups and social conditions?

7. Beccaria standard: Conclusion and documentation of the project

7.4 A project report is written which outlines:

- Project design
- The implementation of the project
- Project results
- Results of evaluation
- A plan of evaluation, if necessary analysing a range and quantity of samples as well as indicators and criteria to review the achievement of the project goals.
- Conclusions.

7.5 The project documentation is accessible to others. The results of the project are published.

- At the very least, a summary of the project documentation is put in a database (for example PräViS).

If you are in for a penny, you are not necessarily in for a pound. You can realize that it was wrong to pay the penny in the first place.

– Bertold Brecht –



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