

Summary

Beccaria Project: Quality Management in Crime Prevention

Background

The diverse aspects of quality still play a secondary role in crime prevention practice. Up to now, quality criteria for planning, implementing and evaluating crime prevention projects have hardly existed. The professional exchange on this complex of topics is at the very beginning, on the national as well as European level. In the future, however, crime prevention activities will be measured by their effectiveness, efficiency and success even more than now, due to the situation of government budgets. This will only be possible in the long term when an evidence-based orientation has been established in crime prevention.

Objectives

The central goal of the Beccaria Project is to contribute to the improvement or continuous further development of a quality orientation in crime prevention. This includes implementing quality management (planning, control, improvement etc.) on the one hand and reducing reservations about quality assurance methods that use evaluation on the other hand.

Target group

The working results of the Beccaria Project can currently be accessed in English and German by all participants in crime prevention (practitioners, scholars, decision-makers etc.) throughout Europe via the Beccaria homepage www.beccaria.de.

Measures and results

In the Beccaria Project, a variety of methods have been developed to provide participants with the basic tools for implementing more quality. These tools help to develop the necessary expertise and improve skills.

1st European Beccaria Conference from 20 – 22 January 2005 in Hanover, Germany

Promoting the international exchange of experience among European practitioners and scholars on the topic of quality in crime prevention and - in the sense of benchmarking - learning from others throughout Europe were among the defined goals of the 1st Beccaria Conference. The title of this conference was "Visions of a better quality in crime prevention". All the lectures by the renowned speakers concerned the topic of quality and evaluation. A consensus was established that crime prevention should be based on knowledge and evidence and the empirical effectiveness of projects must be verified. The lectures of the speakers and the contributions of the cooperation partners are published in Marks / Meyer / Linssen (eds.): "Quality in Crime Prevention", Hanover, 2005

Glossary (German / English)

The Internet glossary with definitions of various prevention terms contributes to a Europe-wide understanding through a uniform prevention terminology. The open-ended database and its query options can be accessed online at www.beccaria.de.

Helping people to find external help – Internet evaluation agency (German / English)

The Internet evaluation agency at www.beccaria.de is a contact agency that links science and prevention practice. Its purpose is to provide people involved in crime prevention with support and professional assistance regarding questions of planning, self-evaluation and external evaluation. The online database can be searched according to various criteria. Providers of corresponding services can use a password to create an entry and submit offers as well as a competence profile. The services of the agency can be used internationally. The entry and query pages are available in German and English.

Helping people to help themselves - Beccaria standards for quality assurance of crime prevention projects

As a yardstick for checking project scheduling and implementation, standards are an initial step towards reviewing the effectiveness of crime prevention projects and increasing quality orientation. The Beccaria standards comprise quality measures and requirements for planning, implementing and evaluating crime prevention programmes and projects. They provide developers, participants and other responsible people in crime prevention with a guideline for assuring the quality of their crime prevention activities. These standards are to ensure that crime prevention projects are planned, implemented and reviewed in accordance with the quality criteria specified in science and literature, that projects are always designed to allow evaluation, and that scientific experts, evaluators, customers and financial sponsors (in the case of project applications) have an informed basis for assessing the quality of a project. The Beccaria standards are a blueprint for a common approach to planning, implementing and evaluating crime prevention projects in Europe. A uniform approach in a European context creates the basis for a systematic exchange of knowledge and experience, allows a standardised comparison among countries, creates the prerequisites for identifying best practice projects, ensures the efficient use of resources, and could also be implemented in decision-making processes.

Publicity work through Internet presence, events and publications

The recognition factor of the project is guaranteed by its own Beccaria logo and a Beccaria website. The publicity work of the project involves specialist presentations at national and international conferences, work group sessions and various articles in specialist journals.

Measurability and effects

The decisive advantages of the developed tools are that they are accessible to all participants throughout Europe. They are available to all interested parties – even after the end of the project – in German and English in printed form as well as on the homepage. The work results can therefore be exchanged and utilised throughout Europe. The continuation of the activities as well as the future exchange and dissemination guarantees that the results will be *sustainable*. The interdisciplinary, European involvement ensures that the working results are oriented to demands and applications and have a Europe-wide dimension.

Naturally, an internal evaluation was carried out in the Beccaria Project and an external evaluation was also ordered. The results or changes in the target groups intended by the activities of the Beccaria Project (changed attitudes – more quality consciousness; changed behaviour – more quality orientation; more know-how among the attribute holders) will be revealed upon medium-term and long-term consideration. They cannot be assessed until the respective measures have been implemented for a long time. Outcome measurements (2006 / 2007) would be desirable in order to attribute changes in the target groups (outcomes) to the effects of the Beccaria Project and its activities.

The Beccaria Project has given an important impetus to evidence-based crime prevention throughout Europe.