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EVIDENCE-BASED CRIME PREVENTION: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND COMPARATIVE GOOD PRACTICES

Abstract: This article examines the international normative framework and comparative good practices underpinning evidence-based crime prevention. Over the past two decades, crime prevention has evolved from a predominantly reactive, enforcement-centred activity into a multidimensional field of public governance that integrates strategic analysis, criminal intelligence, human rights safeguards, and cross-sectoral cooperation. The study first reconstructs the common normative basis developed by the United Nations, INTERPOL, Europol, CEPOL, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the OECD, highlighting their shared emphasis on prevention, interagency coordination, accountability, and the responsible use of emerging technologies. It then analyses five national models — Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Canada — selected to illustrate differing degrees of institutional maturity within both unitary and federal systems. The comparative analysis reveals a marked convergence around several core attributes: clear legislative mandates, shared responsibility between central and local authorities, systematic use of data and evaluation, and meaningful community participation. The article concludes that the effectiveness and sustainability of crime prevention depend less on the form of government than on the coherence of institutions, the quality of available data, and the capacity of public authorities to generate, interpret, and apply knowledge throughout the policy cycle. The findings offer a comparative benchmark relevant to reforming national prevention frameworks.

Keywords: evidence-based crime prevention; international normative framework; comparative models; intelligence-led policing; multi-agency cooperation; restorative justice; digital governance; human rights safeguards.

PREVENIREA CRIMINALITĂȚII FUNDAMENTATĂ PE DOVEZI: STANDARDE INTERNAȚIONALE ȘI BUNE PRACTICI COMPARATIVE

Abstract: Acest articol examinează cadrul normativ internațional și experiențele comparative relevante care susțin dezvoltarea prevenirii criminalității bazate pe dovezi. În ultimele două decenii, prevenirea criminalității a trecut de la un model predominant reactiv, axat pe intervenția autorităților de aplicare a legii, la un domeniu complex al guvernancei publice, bazat pe integrarea analizei stra-

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tegice, a informațiilor operative privind criminalitatea, a garanțiilor de respectare a drepturilor omului și a cooperării între diferite sectoare. Prima parte a studiului analizează și reconstituie cadrul normativ comun instituit prin documentele Organizației Națiunilor Unite, INTERPOL, Europol, CEPOL, OSCE, Consiliul Europei și OCDE, evidențiind elementele comune privind prevenirea criminalității, coordonarea interinstituțională, responsabilizarea actorilor implicați și utilizarea etică și responsabilă a tehnologiilor emergente. În continuare, studiul analizează cinci modele naționale — Suedia, Țările de Jos, Regatul Unit, Estonia și Canada — alese pentru a evidenția grade diferite de maturitate instituțională în cadrul unor sisteme atât unitare, cât și federale. Analiza comparativă evidențiază un grad pronunțat de convergență în ceea ce privește câteva elemente esențiale: existența unor mandate legislative clare, distribuirea responsabilității între nivelul central și cel local al administrației, utilizarea sistematică a datelor și a mecanismelor de evaluare, precum și implicarea reală a comunității. Articolul concluzionează că eficacitatea și sustenabilitatea prevenirii criminalității depind mai puțin de structura guvernamentală în sine și mai mult de coerența instituțională, de calitatea datelor și de capacitatea autorităților publice de a colecta, interpreta și utiliza cunoașterea în toate fazele ciclului de politici publice. Concluziile studiului furnizează un etalon comparativ util pentru revizuirea și modernizarea mecanismelor naționale de prevenire.

Cuvinte cheie: prevenirea criminalității bazată pe dovezi; cadrul normativ internațional; modele comparative; poliție bazată pe informații; cooperare multiinstituțională; justiție restaurativă; guvernare digitală; garanții ale drepturilor omului.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary crime prevention policy has undergone a profound reconceptualization. Once treated primarily as an operational function of the police, it is now increasingly understood as a strategic domain of public governance that connects criminal justice with public health, education, urban planning, and social development. This transformation has been driven by two parallel processes: the consolidation of a shared international normative framework promoting prevention, cooperation, and accountability; and the accumulation of empirical evidence demonstrating that structured, data-informed interventions can reduce both the incidence and the harmful effects of crime.

Despite the growing volume of international guidance, national responses remain uneven, reflecting differences in legal tradition, administrative capacity, and political commitment. Understanding how successful jurisdictions translate international principles into functioning institutional arrangements is therefore essential for any state seeking to modernize its own prevention architecture. The present study addresses this need by pursuing two objectives: first, to systematize the international normative framework for evidence-based crime prevention; and second, to identify, through comparative analysis of five representative national models, the recurrent structural features associated with effective and sustainable prevention. By combining a normative and a comparative perspective, the article aims to distil transferable principles rather than to prescribe a single institutional template.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS APPLIED

The study is grounded in a qualitative, doctrinal, and comparative methodology. The comparative legal method constitutes the principal analytical instrument, enabling the systematic juxtaposition of five national crime-prevention systems (Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Canada) against a common set of criteria: legislative basis, division of competences between central and local authorities, use of data and strategic analysis, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and community participation.

The documentary analysis method was applied to a broad corpus of primary and

secondary materials, including international instruments (United Nations resolutions and declarations, UNODC, UNDP, UNICRI, INTERPOL, Europol, CEPOL, OSCE, Council of Europe, and OECD frameworks), national legislation and strategic plans, institutional reports, and programme evaluations.

The systemic method was used to situate individual instruments and practices within the wider architecture of crime-prevention governance, while the logical and synthetic methods supported the abstraction of convergent principles from otherwise heterogeneous national experiences. The selection of jurisdictions followed the criterion of maximum variation, encompassing both unitary and federal systems at different stages of institutional development, so as to test the robustness of the identified regularities across diverse governance contexts.

LIST OFF ABBREVIATIONS

CDPC – European Committee on Crime Problems
CEPOL – European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States
MST – Multisystemic Therapy
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTATS

1.1. International Normative Framework for Evidence-Based Crime Prevention

Over the past two decades, international approaches to crime prevention have undergone a fundamental transformation from predominantly reactive, enforcement-based models toward comprehensive strategies that combine security, good governance, human rights, and sustainable development. Contemporary frameworks recognize that effective crime prevention requires not only reducing criminal incidents but also addressing the structural and situational conditions that facilitate crime and violence. This integrated approach is now firmly embedded in the normative and policy frameworks developed by the United Nations, INTERPOL, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and other international organizations, providing a common conceptual basis for modern evidence-based crime prevention policies.

At the global level, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime (ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13)¹ remain the principal reference point. They define prevention as a set of strategies and measures aimed at reducing the risk of crimes occurring and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society. The Guidelines call for multisectoral coordination, integration of prevention into social and economic policy, participation of communities and civil society, and the systematic use of research and evaluation. They also distinguish between social, situational, community, and developmental prevention, encouraging governments to adopt comprehensive frameworks that address causes as well as symptoms of criminality. These principles have become central to contemporary crime prevention policy, informing the design of national strategies and institutional frameworks in countries across different regions and legal traditions.

The United Nations' broader vision was reaffirmed in the Doha Declaration on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice into the Wider United Nations Agenda to

¹ UN ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13 – UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime: https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/resolution_2002-13.pdf

Address Social and Economic Challenges and to Promote the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, and Public Participation (2015)², which placed prevention at the heart of sustainable development. Through its Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration (2015–2025), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has supported Member States in strengthening inclusive institutions, combating corruption, and fostering a culture of lawfulness through education, civic engagement, and capacity-building. This programmatic approach underscores the close relationship between crime prevention, good governance, institutional integrity, rehabilitation, and public participation, reinforcing the understanding that effective prevention requires coordinated action across multiple sectors and levels of government.

UNDP's Blueprint for Transformative Change through the Rule of Law and Human Rights (2022–2025) established a governance-centred vision for the rule of law and crime prevention that continues to inform the organization's work³. This vision is operationalized through the Global Programme for Strengthening the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Justice and Security for Sustainable Peace and Development, aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2026–2029.⁴ Together, these frameworks position crime prevention as an integral component of democratic governance, sustainable development, and human security. They emphasize whole-of-society engagement, evidence-informed policymaking, institutional innovation, and the promotion of human rights, gender equality, and inclusive access to justice. They further recognize that effective crime prevention extends beyond law enforcement, requiring coordinated action to strengthen institutions, enhance transparency and accountability, foster social cohesion, and build public trust.

Recent deliberations of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in this field, further reinforce the evolution of crime prevention towards integrated and evidence-based approaches. At its thirty-fourth session in 2025⁵, the Commission emphasized the need to strengthen responses to emerging and evolving forms of crime through enhanced international cooperation, innovation, institutional resilience, and capacity-building. The discussions highlighted the growing importance of addressing technological change, environmental crime, illicit markets, and other transnational threats within comprehensive crime prevention and criminal justice strategies.

The rapid digital transformation of policing and criminal justice has created new opportunities for improving crime prevention and public safety while also introducing significant ethical, legal, and governance challenges. In response, the United Nations system has developed a growing body of guidance on the responsible use of emerging technologies in the justice and security sectors. UNODC's publication *Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement: Understanding Risks and Opportunities* (2024)⁶ and UNICRI's *Princi-*

² UNODC, Doha Declaration (2015) and Global Programme overview: https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/Declaration/V1504151_English.pdf

³ UNDP, Blueprint for Transformative Change through the Rule of Law and Human Rights 2022–2025: <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Blueprint%20for%20Transformative%20Change%20through%20the%20Rule%20of%20Law%20and%20Human%20Rights%202022-2025%20lv.pdf>

⁴ UNDP Strategic Plan, 2026–2029: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4085636?ln=en&utm=&v=pdf>

⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2025). Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its thirty-fourth session (19–23 May 2025) <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/about-us/ecosoc-subsiadiary-bodies/functional-commissions/CCPCJ/documentsaction-during-2025-session?>

⁶ UNODC resource – Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/human-trafficking/glo-act6/Countries/responsible-ai-innovation-in-law-enforcement_-understanding-risks-and-opportunities.html

ples for Responsible AI Innovation (2024)⁷ provide practical guidance on the transparent, accountable, and human rights-based use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement. These principles, together with UNODC's Statement on the Role and Impact of Artificial Intelligence on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters (2024)⁸, emphasize the importance of human oversight, transparency, accountability, data protection, cybersecurity, and international cooperation in the management of digital evidence and cross-border criminal investigations. Collectively, these frameworks establish important international benchmarks for ensuring that technological innovation strengthens public safety while remaining consistent with the rule of law, fundamental rights, and ethical principles.

Beyond the United Nations system, international and regional law enforcement organizations have also contributed to the advancement of evidence-based approaches to crime prevention by promoting intelligence-led policing, data sharing, and analytical decision-making. As the world's largest international police organization, INTERPOL facilitates the collection, analysis, and exchange of criminal intelligence through its global information systems, enabling member countries to identify emerging crime trends, assess transnational threats, and coordinate preventive responses. Its Global Policing Goals⁹, aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁰, encourage law enforcement agencies to strengthen analytical capabilities, improve the use of intelligence and data in operational planning, and enhance international cooperation in addressing organized crime, cybercrime, corruption, terrorism, and other evolving security threats.

INTERPOL's Strategic Framework 2026–2030 further reinforces the importance of data-driven policing by identifying innovation, digital transformation, interoperability, and advanced analytics as key enablers of effective crime prevention.¹¹ Through initiatives led by the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation, the organization supports the responsible use of artificial intelligence, digital forensics, and emerging technologies to improve situational awareness, risk assessment, and operational decision-making. Collectively, these initiatives illustrate the growing role of reliable data, intelligence, and technological innovation in supporting evidence-based crime prevention and enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement.

Within the European Union, Europol has played a leading role in operationalizing evidence-based crime prevention through strategic criminal intelligence and threat assessment. Unlike traditional reactive approaches to policing, Europol's analytical model integrates intelligence from Member States, operational data, and strategic research to identify emerging crime trends, assess risks, and support the prioritization of preventive and enforcement measures. Central to this approach is the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA)¹², published every four years, which provides a comprehen-

⁷ UNICRI & INTERPOL, Principles for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement (2024): https://unicri.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/02_Principles_Resp_AI_Innovation_Feb24.pdf

⁸ Statement of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group on International Cooperation under the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/constructive-dialogues/IC_TA_2024/Statements/Maycode.pdf

⁹ INTERPOL Global Policing Goals: <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Strategic-Framework/Global-Policing-Goals?utm>

¹⁰ INTERPOL–UN collaboration page: <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Our-partners/International-organization-partners/INTERPOL-and-the-United-Nations/Priorities-for-INTERPOL-United-Nations-collaboration>

¹¹ INTERPOL, Resolution No. 11: INTERPOL Strategic Framework 2026–2030, GA-2025-93-RES-11, adopted by the 93rd INTERPOL General Assembly, Marrakech, Morocco, 27 November 2025.

¹² Europol. EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025: The Changing DNA of Serious and Organised Crime. The Hague: Europol, 2025.

sive analysis of the most significant criminal threats affecting the European Union. By systematically assessing criminal markets, drivers of crime, vulnerabilities, and emerging trends, SOCTA informs the European Union's policy priorities, resource allocation, and operational planning under the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT)¹³. It represents one of the most advanced examples internationally of how strategic intelligence can be translated into evidence-based crime prevention and policymaking.

Europol further strengthens this analytical framework through a range of strategic assessments, including the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT)¹⁴, the Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA), and other thematic intelligence products addressing cybercrime, financial and economic crime, migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings, environmental crime, and other emerging threats. Together, these assessments provide policymakers and law enforcement authorities with a shared evidence base for identifying priorities, allocating resources, evaluating risks, and designing coordinated preventive responses. The Europol model illustrates the growing importance of strategic analysis, intelligence-led decision-making, and interagency information sharing as essential components of contemporary evidence-based crime prevention.

The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training has played an increasingly important role in advancing evidence-based policing by strengthening the analytical and professional capacities of law enforcement practitioners across Europe. Through its competency-based training framework, research activities, and knowledge-sharing platforms, CEPOL promotes the integration of scientific evidence, criminal intelligence, and evaluation into policing practice.¹⁵ Particular emphasis is placed on intelligence-led policing, crime analysis, problem-oriented policing, leadership, and the use of research to support operational and strategic decision-making. By fostering collaboration between law enforcement agencies, academia, and research institutions, CEPOL contributes to narrowing the gap between research and practice and to institutionalizing a culture of continuous learning and evidence-informed decision-making within police organizations.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has increasingly promoted evidence-informed approaches to crime prevention through its work on democratic policing, intelligence-led policing, and community security. While continuing to emphasize the principles of democratic governance, accountability, and respect for human rights, the OSCE has expanded its focus to include strategic analysis, organizational innovation, and the responsible use of emerging technologies in policing. The recent policy paper *Making Law Enforcement Fit for the Future: Strategic Priorities for Policing in the Digital Age* (2026)¹⁶ highlights the importance of data-driven decision-making, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and institutional adaptation in enabling police services to respond effectively to evolving security threats while maintaining public trust and adherence to human rights standards.

Complementing this strategic perspective, the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) jointly developed the second edition of *Good Practices*

¹³ Council of the European Union. Council Conclusions Setting the EU's Priorities for the Fight against Serious and Organised Crime for EMPACT 2026–2029. 2025.

¹⁴ Europol. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2025. The Hague: Europol, 2025.

¹⁵ EPOL. Making Europe a Safer Place through Law Enforcement Training and Learning. Available at: <https://www.cepol.europa.eu/>

¹⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Making Law Enforcement Fit for the Future: Strategic Priorities for Policing in the Digital Age* (Vienna: OSCE, 2026) <https://resources.osce.org/transnational-threats-department/665677?utm>

in Building Police–Public Partnerships (2022),¹⁷ which presents community-oriented policing as a proactive, evidence-informed approach to crime prevention. The guide emphasizes systematic problem analysis, intelligence-led policing, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and continuous assessment of policing strategies to address the root causes of crime and improve public safety. By integrating analytical methods with community engagement and institutional accountability, these publications demonstrate the OSCE's evolving contribution to contemporary evidence-based crime prevention and reinforce the importance of combining empirical evidence, professional expertise, and public participation in the design and implementation of effective prevention policies.

The Council of Europe has made an important contribution to the development of evidence-informed crime prevention by promoting legal standards, democratic governance, and the protection of fundamental rights as essential components of effective criminal justice policy. Through the work of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC), the organization develops recommendations and policy guidance that assist member States in responding to emerging forms of crime while ensuring that preventive measures remain consistent with the principles of legality, proportionality, and human rights. Recent recommendations on combating hate crime and on the ethical and organizational aspects of the use of artificial intelligence and related digital technologies by prison and probation services illustrate the Council of Europe's growing focus on addressing new security challenges through evidence-based policymaking, institutional innovation, and responsible technological development.¹⁸

Complementing its normative work, the Council of Europe increasingly promotes the systematic use of research, evaluation, and comparative analysis to support the development of effective criminal justice policies. Through its intergovernmental cooperation¹⁹, monitoring mechanisms, and technical assistance, the organization facilitates the exchange of good practices and encourages member States to design prevention strategies that are proportionate, evidence-informed, and fully consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights. In doing so, the Council of Europe reinforces the understanding that effective crime prevention requires not only robust empirical evidence and strategic analysis but also strong legal safeguards, institutional accountability, and public confidence in justice institutions.

Other non-European regional organizations also emphasize cooperation and prevention. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation promotes joint action on transnational and cybercrime and coordinates the Programme of Cooperation on International Information Security.²⁰ The Commonwealth of Independent States has adopted a Concept for Cooperation of Member States in Combating Crime (2019, updated 2023), highlighting the preventive dimension of criminal policy²¹.

The OECD's Recommendation on Public Policy Evaluation (2022), together with

¹⁷ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Good Practices in Building Police–Public Partnerships, 2nd ed. (Vienna: OSCE, 2022) <https://www.osce.org/spmu/32547?utm>

¹⁸ Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 on Combating Hate Crime and Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)5 regarding the Ethical and Organisational Aspects of the Use of Artificial Intelligence and Related Digital Technologies by Prison and Probation Services, adopted under the authority of the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)

¹⁹ Council of Europe, European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC): Mandate, Activities and Recommendations.

²⁰ SCO – Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security: <https://eng.sectsc.org/files/207508/207508>

²¹ CIS – programme references (terrorism/extremism cooperation): <https://eccis.org/en/news/30907>

the OECD Principles of Public Governance, further reinforces these developments by promoting transparency, accountability, evidence-informed decision-making, and a results-oriented culture across the public sector. When applied to crime prevention and public safety, these principles encourage governments to integrate prevention into strategic planning and resource allocation, strengthen cross-sectoral coordination, and systematically monitor and evaluate policies based on measurable outcomes and societal impact rather than activities or outputs alone. By emphasizing rigorous evaluation, continuous learning, and the effective use of evidence throughout the policy cycle, the OECD framework provides an important governance foundation for the institutionalization of evidence-based crime prevention.

Collectively, these international frameworks reflect a significant evolution in the understanding of crime prevention—from predominantly reactive law enforcement toward integrated, evidence-based approaches that combine strategic governance, empirical research, criminal intelligence, technological innovation, and community engagement. While their institutional mandates differ, organizations such as the United Nations, INTERPOL, Europol, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the OECD share a common emphasis on systematic analysis of crime patterns, rigorous evaluation of interventions, interagency cooperation, and informed decision-making grounded in reliable evidence. This convergence has established a coherent international framework for evidence-based crime prevention, recognizing that effective prevention depends not only on policing capacity but also on strong institutions, accountable governance, respect for human rights, and continuous organizational learning.

1.2 Comparative Models of Evidence-Based Crime Prevention

Across the past two decades, crime prevention policy has evolved from an operational concern of police agencies into a strategic domain of public governance. Countries that have made prevention a core state function (Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Estonia and Canada) illustrate different stages of institutional maturity but share several common attributes: legislative clarity, shared responsibility between central and local authorities, research-based decision-making, and investment in analytical and digital capacities. Together they demonstrate that sustainable prevention depends less on the form of government than on the coherence of its institutions, the quality of its data, and the participation of its citizens.

Sweden's model is deeply rooted in the Nordic tradition of decentralized governance and social partnership. The Act 2023:196 on Municipal Crime Prevention transformed prevention from a voluntary activity into a statutory duty. Each municipality must establish a local crime-prevention council chaired by the mayor and local police chief. These councils prepare four-year plans that align with the national safety strategy coordinated by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå).²² Brå's mandate extends far beyond statistical reporting: it serves as a national knowledge hub that trains local coordinators, issues methodological hand-books, and evaluates project impact using both quantitative and qualitative indicators.²³ Data from police, courts, and social services are integrated through the Nationell Trygghetsundersökning (National Safety Survey), which

²² Government Offices of Sweden. Barriers to crime – a crime prevention strategy. Available at: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2023196-om-kommuners-ansvar-for_sfs-2023-196/?utm

²³ Brå – Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention. Crime prevention in Sweden – Current status and development needs 2024. Available at: https://bra.se/download/18.3007d3171926b2914f0453/1728402237450/2024_Crime-prevention-in-Sweden-2024.pdf. bra.se+1

captures citizens' perceptions of safety and trust in institutions. The results are publicly available, encouraging democratic accountability.²⁴

Sweden's investment in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) has also been institutionalized: municipalities must conduct safety impact assessments for major infrastructure projects, while national urban-development grants include criteria for social cohesion and crime deterrence. Pilot projects in Malmö, Gothenburg, and Uppsala, such as the redesign of public parks and transport nodes, have reduced anti-social behaviour and improved community trust.²⁵ Universities routinely evaluate these initiatives, feeding results back into Brå's open-data platform, which has become a cornerstone of Sweden's evidence-based prevention culture.²⁶

Sweden also maintains one of Europe's most institutionalised Victim - Offender Dialogue (VOD) systems. Under the Act on Mediation in Penal Matters (Lag 2002:445) and subsequent amendments to the Social Services Act, all municipalities are legally required to offer mediation to offenders under 21²⁷. Mediation services are operated by local social services but follow national methodological standards issued by Brå, ensuring consistent screening, preparation, and follow-up. Prosecutors and police routinely refer juvenile cases to mediation, and successful participation may be considered when applying diversionary measures.²⁸ Evaluations from Brå and the University of Gothenburg show that VOD contributes to increased victim satisfaction, reduced fear of crime, and improved accountability among young offenders, making it a core component of Sweden's restorative-justice landscape.

Another proven practice is Sweden's long-standing Multi-Agency Youth Crime Prevention Model, which institutionalises structured cooperation between schools, social services, and police for early identification of at-risk youth. Municipalities operate cross-professional teams that share information within strict legal safeguards and apply standardised risk-assessment tools to offer tailored interventions.²⁹ Studies from Stockholm and Västra Götaland counties indicate that these teams significantly reduce escalation into serious youth offending and strengthen continuity between preventive social work and policing. Combined with the expanding use of evidence-based family interventions (such as FFT and MST), these practices illustrate Sweden's commitment to prevention approaches grounded in early intervention, restorative justice, and inter-agency coordination.³⁰

²⁴ OECD. Public governance, integrity and unlawful influence in Sweden. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-integrity-review-of-sweden_648d3988-en/full-report/public-governance-integrity-and-unlawful-influence-in-sweden_845502c1.html. OECD

²⁵ Strategy documents and evaluation literature note the move to institutionalised CPTED, municipal safety-impact assessments and urban development criteria. See e.g. E. Mårtensson, Partnerships and Crime Prevention, DIVA portal, 2024. Diva Portal

²⁶ Brå's publications emphasise the role of open data, evaluation, research-institution collaboration. See the same "Crime prevention in Sweden" report above

²⁷ Government of Sweden. Lag (2002:445) om medling med anledning av brott [Act on Mediation in Penal Matters]. Stockholm, 2002. Available at: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2002445-om-medling-med-anledning-av-brott_sfs-2002-445

²⁸ Government of Sweden. Socialtjänstlag (2001:453), Chapter 5, Section 1 amendments introducing municipal duties for crime-preventive mediation for persons under 21. Stockholm, 2008 (with later amendments). Available at: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/socialtjanstlag-2001453_sfs-2001-453

²⁹ Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen). MST (Multisystemisk terapi). Stockholm, [n.d.]. Available at: <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/kunskapsstod-och-regler/omraden/evidensbase-rad-praktik/metodguiden/mst-multisystemisk-terapi/>

³⁰ Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå). "Children and Youth in Criminal Networks" (Report 2023:13). Stockholm, 2025. Available at: <https://www.bra.se/english/publications/archive/2025-01-21-children-and-youth-in-criminal-networks>

In **the Netherlands**, prevention has matured into a networked ecosystem linking research, governance, and citizen participation. The country's long tradition of consensus politics (the "polder model") underpins collaboration between central government and municipalities.³¹ Under the Netherlands' system of integral safety policy (integraal veiligheidsbeleid), municipalities adopt four-year Integrated Safety Plans (Integraal Veiligheidsplan,) that link crime prevention with broader social-welfare and spatial-planning strategies. These plans are prepared using the VNG's Kernbeleid Veiligheid methodology and provide the basis for local coordination with justice and care partners. The VNG's Kernbeleid Veiligheid methodology refers to a standardised policy and planning framework developed by the Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (Association of Dutch Municipalities) to support municipalities in designing, implementing, and monitoring integrated local safety and crime-prevention policies. Kernbeleid Veiligheid ("Core Safety Policy") provides municipalities with a structured, cyclical approach to local safety governance. It guides local authorities through successive stages of (i) diagnosing local safety problems using data and stakeholder input, (ii) setting priorities based on risk and impact, (iii) selecting evidence-based interventions, (iv) coordinating implementation across partners (police, prosecution, social services, housing, education, NGOs), and (v) monitoring and evaluating results.

The methodology emphasises problem-oriented and evidence-based decision-making, rather than ad hoc or incident-driven responses. A core feature of the methodology is its strong focus on multi-agency coordination and local ownership. Municipalities are encouraged to work closely with police, the Public Prosecution Service, probation services, youth care, mental-health providers, and community organisations through permanent coordination platforms. The framework also explicitly links crime prevention to broader social policy domains, such as youth work, family support, urban design, and social inclusion. In comparative crime-prevention analysis, reference to the Kernbeleid Veiligheid methodology signals a mature model of guided decentralisation, in which the central government sets expectations and standards, while municipalities retain flexibility to tailor interventions to local conditions. It is widely cited as a good practice for translating national safety priorities into coherent, measurable, and locally embedded prevention strategies.³²

Coordination around high-risk individuals and families is organised through regional Safety Houses (Zorg- en Veiligheidshuizen), permanent multi-agency forums that bring together municipalities, police, the Public Prosecution Service, probation services, youth care, mental-health providers and other partners to develop joint case plans for repeat offenders and families with complex problems.³³

The Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR) and the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Ministry of Justice and Security maintain the national database of "proven-effective" interventions, rating programmes on scientific validity.³⁴ These include youth-mentoring initiatives such as the Top600 Am-

³¹ "How Holland managed to cut crime", keynote presentation (10 May 2022) by Jaap de Waard. Available at: <https://www.albertacrimeprevention.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ACCPA2022ConferenceKeynoteSpeech-Jaap-de-Waard.pdf>

³² VNG, Kernbeleid Veiligheid 2021 (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, 2019), available at https://vng.nl/sites/default/files/2021-03/kernbeleid-veiligheid-2021_def.pdf

³³ JCJ Boutellier & M. van Steden. "The 'Anchoring' of Local Security Networks: The Veiligheidshuis (Security House) in the Netherlands." In *Cities of Tomorrow: The Design, Organisation and Functioning of Urban Safety Governance*, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Available at: <https://research.vu.nl/files/3003561/Proof%20Chapter%20Boutellier%20en%20Van%20Steden9780521116442c18%20p461-482.pdf>

³⁴ Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). "About us" page. Available at: <https://nscr.nl/en/>

sterdam scheme, which reduced repeat offending among chronic young offenders by 45 per cent through coordinated case-management, and the Safe Streets behavioural-nudging project, which used environmental cues to cut property crime in Rotterdam.

The Ministry ensures that national funding is tied to evaluation results, while a Data Science Hub for Public Safety develops predictive tools under strict privacy oversight. Citizens contribute through the Neighbourhood Watch 2.0 digital platform and local WhatsApp groups moderated by police liaison officers. This combination of science, civic engagement, and strong data-governance has made Dutch prevention both legitimate and resilient.³⁵

Restorative justice has also become an established component of the Dutch prevention landscape. Victim-offender mediation is delivered nationally through Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling, an NGO formally mandated and funded by the Ministry of Justice and Security. Mediation can be initiated at any stage of the criminal process - before prosecution, during trial, or even years after sentencing - and is available for both youth and adults. Evaluations by Dutch criminological institutes show consistently high victim satisfaction and reduced reoffending among participating offenders.³⁶ This restorative infrastructure complements the Netherlands' multi-agency model by offering a victim-centred mechanism for accountability and reintegration.

The country also maintains a strong tradition of evidence-based behavioural programmes. The Dutch Probation Service delivers structured cognitive-behavioural interventions that are evaluated through the national of "proven-effective" interventions maintained by WODC and NSCR.³⁷ Municipalities combine these programmes with family-centred interventions, including Dutch adaptations of Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy, which are widely used for high-risk youth and catalogued by the Dutch Youth Institute. For chronic offenders, cities such as Amsterdam have implemented intensive case-management models, including the Top600 approach, which significantly reduced repeat offending among the highest-risk youth groups.³⁸ Dutch municipalities also experiment with behavioural-nudging and environmental-design approaches to reduce everyday crime. Rotterdam's Safe Streets pilots used environmental cues, lighting, and behavioural interventions to lower property crime in targeted areas.

Innovation is supported by the Data Science Hub for Public Safety, which develops predictive and analytical tools under strong ethical and privacy oversight from WODC.³⁹ At the community level, citizens participate actively through Neighbourhood Watch 2.0 initiatives, including moderated WhatsApp safety groups and digital neighbourhood platforms managed in partnership with municipal safety coordinators and local police.⁴⁰ To-

³⁵ Housing Europe. *Fostering Social Cohesion and Safety in Vulnerable Areas: Tested Practices Brief* (2024). Available at: https://www.housingeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Fostering-Social-Cohesion-and-Safety-in-Vulnerable-Areas_tested-practices-brief_web.pdf

³⁶ Perspectief Herstelbemiddeling. *Jaarverslag Herstelbemiddeling* (Annual Reports, various years); Jonas-van Dijk et al., *Victim-Offender Mediation and Reduced Reoffending: Evidence from the Netherlands*, NSCR, 2020. Available at: <https://www.perspectiefherstelbemiddeling.nl>

³⁷ WODC / NSCR. *Databank Effectieve Interventies* (Justitie en Veiligheid). The Hague, various years. Available at: <https://www.nji.nl/interventies/databank-effectieve-justitiele-interventies>

³⁸ Ferwerda, H. & De Jong, D. *Evaluatie Top600 - Integrale aanpak van criminele veelplegers in Amsterdam*. Bureau Beke, Arnhem, 2019. Available at: <https://www.beke.nl>

³⁹ Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. *Data Science Hub - Innovatie in Veiligheid en Criminaliteitspreventie*. The Hague, 2022. Available at: https://securitydelta.nl/media/com_hsd/report/506/document/220038-Techagenda-JenV-DEF-DT.pdf

⁴⁰ Gemeente Tilburg. "Veiligheid - Buurtpreventie." Accessed at: <https://www.tilburg.nl/gemeente/stad-en-dorpen/veiligheid/>

gether, these practices demonstrate how the Netherlands has institutionalised a comprehensive, evidence-driven prevention ecosystem grounded in collaboration, transparency, and community engagement.

The United Kingdom has constructed one of the world's most comprehensive multi-agency prevention architectures, blending public-health logic with digital intelligence. The Serious Violence Strategy (2018) formalised the "violence as a disease" paradigm, requiring health, education and criminal-justice agencies to share data and coordinate interventions.⁴¹ By 2024, more than twenty Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) were operating across England and Wales, funded by the Home Office; each VRU manages joint budgets, performs local needs assessments, and designs targeted programmes, from school-based mentorship to gang-exit initiatives, evaluated against standardised indicators.

A defining characteristic of the United Kingdom's approach is the institutionalization of Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) as a core professional principle. Led by the College of Policing, EBP encourages police leaders and practitioners to integrate the best available scientific research with professional expertise, operational data, and community perspectives when designing, implementing, and evaluating policing strategies. Through its What Works Centre for Crime Reduction and the Crime Reduction Toolkit, the College systematically reviews the effectiveness of crime prevention interventions and translates research findings into practical guidance for practitioners. This approach has strengthened the use of systematic reviews, quasi-experimental studies, and randomized controlled trials in informing policing policy and operational decision-making. This evidence base has been further strengthened through partnerships between police services and academic institutions, including the Cambridge Centre for Evidence-Based Policing, which have pioneered the application of randomized controlled trials and other rigorous evaluation methods to policing practice.⁴²

National analytical capacity is reinforced through the National Data Analytics Solution (NDAS), which integrates police records, call-for-service data and open-source information to forecast high-risk situations. Ethical oversight is ensured through Data Protection Impact Assessments and an independent advisory board that includes community representatives.⁴³ The College of Policing and the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction codify evidence standards and disseminate best practices via the Crime Reduction Toolkit.⁴⁴ Local Community Safety Partnerships complement these efforts by linking policing to housing, youth and employment services. The UK also measures social harm through the Crime Harm Index (or related severity metrics), enabling resource allocation based on seriousness rather than frequency.⁴⁵ This multi-layered system, combining local innovation, national analytics and ethical governance, shows how data can empower rather than replace human judgment.

Evidence-based policing in the United Kingdom is further reinforced through the widespread adoption of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP), which emphasizes addressing

⁴¹ Home Office. Serious Violence Strategy (9 April 2018). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

⁴² Lum, Cynthia, et al. "The Role of Randomized Experiments in Developing the Evidence for Evidence-Based Policing." In *The Future of Evidence-Based Policing*. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

⁴³ National Data Analytics Solution (NDAS) – project overview and privacy notice. Available at: <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/advice/modern-slavery/national-data-analytics-solution-ndas-privacy-notice>

⁴⁴ College of Policing – Evidence-based Policing/Evidence centre. Available at: <https://www.college.police.uk/research/evidence-based-policing-EBP>

⁴⁵ Office for National Statistics (ONS). The impact of crime on victims and society: March 2022. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/theimpactofcrimeonvictimsandsociety/march2022>

the underlying causes of recurring crime problems rather than responding to individual incidents in isolation. Guided by the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment), police agencies work with local authorities, health services, schools, and community organizations to identify patterns of crime, analyse contributing risk factors, implement tailored interventions, and systematically evaluate outcomes. This structured problem-solving methodology has become an important mechanism for translating crime analysis and research evidence into practical prevention strategies at the local level.

Empathy-building interventions have become an important component of UK prevention practice, particularly for young people involved in interpersonal and knife-related violence. Empathy Training Modules (ETM) are delivered through Youth Offending Teams, probation services and Violence Reduction Units as part of structured rehabilitation plans. These modules use victim-impact stories, facilitated dialogue exercises and emotional-literacy training to help participants understand the consequences of harm, reduce retaliatory behaviour and strengthen pro-social decision-making. Evaluations by UK youth-justice practitioners indicate that ETM is most effective when combined with cognitive-behavioural programmes such as the Thinking Skills Programme and Resolve, as well as trauma-informed support.⁴⁶ Together, these interventions contribute to measurable reductions in aggression and improvements in conflict-management skills among high-risk youth.

The UK also maintains a strong restorative-practice ecosystem that complements ETM. Restorative conferences and victim-offender mediation, used extensively in youth justice and increasingly in school-based prevention, offer structured opportunities for accountability, emotional repair and reintegration. Violence Reduction Units in London, Glasgow and the West Midlands pair restorative work with whole-family support models, including targeted outreach to siblings of at-risk youth, parental-mentoring schemes and intensive wrap-around assistance for families experiencing cycles of violence or exploitation.⁴⁷ These approaches, reinforced by ethical frameworks governing the use of predictive analytics and data sharing, demonstrate how the UK integrates behavioural insight, emotional learning and family-based prevention into a wider system that balances digital intelligence with human judgment.

Estonia exemplifies how digital governance can transform crime prevention into a coherent, data-driven public function. Building on two decades of e-government investment, the Security Development Plan 2020–2030 positions prevention as a shared responsibility across security, education, and health systems. The Plan operationalizes the General Principles of Criminal Policy 2030⁴⁸, setting measurable objectives for reducing youth delinquency, domestic violence, and cyber-related offences, and explicitly linking prevention to national-security and resilience goals.

A core governance mechanism underpinning this system is the Offence Prevention Council, a high-level government committee chaired by the Minister of Justice. The Council coordinates national criminal-policy priorities, sets prevention objectives, con-

⁴⁶ Trivedi-Bateman, N., & Crook, E. "Empathy training could cut crime figures – study." Anglia Ruskin University Press Office, 18 August 2021. Available at: <https://www.aru.ac.uk/news/empathy-training-could-cut-crime-figures---study>

⁴⁷ Wallis, P., Aldington, C., & Liebmann, M. *What Have I Done? A Victim Empathy Programme for Young People*. London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2010. Available at: <https://researchportal.northumbria.ac.uk/en/publications/what-have-i-done-a-victim-empathy-programme-for-young-people>

⁴⁸ General Principles of Criminal Policy Until 2030 (Kriminaalpoliitika üldpõhimõtted aastani 2030), adopted by the Riigikogu on 10 November 2020. Published in Riigi Teataja, RT I, 13.11.2020, 6. Available at: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/313112020006>

sults municipalities, and ensures cross-sectoral alignment between punishment policy and prevention goals. It includes ministers and representatives from relevant agencies and may establish permanent or ad hoc working groups with external experts. The Ministry of Justice provides its secretariat.⁴⁹

Interministerial coordination is further reinforced through the Violence Prevention Agreement, a formal compact signed by the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Education, and Social Affairs, together with the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities.⁵⁰ This mechanism institutionalizes the “whole-of-government, whole-of-society” approach by mandating shared indicators, data exchange, and joint reporting. Each signatory ministry commits to prevention measures in its respective field - from child-protection protocols and digital-literacy campaigns to offender reintegration and gender-based-violence prevention.

Estonia’s digital backbone - the X-Road data-exchange platform - enables the secure, real-time flow of information between the Police and Border Guard Board, schools, and social-welfare agencies.⁵¹ Within this architecture, early-warning algorithms flag households or individuals displaying overlapping risk factors such as truancy, family conflict, or prior police contact. These triggers activate multidisciplinary intervention teams, coordinated at the municipal level, which focus on early support rather than punitive action. Municipalities receive earmarked co-financing from the state budget to implement “Safety Plans” that translate national priorities into locally designed projects.

Monitoring and evaluation are embedded in the governance cycle. The Ministry of the Interior publishes an Annual Crime Prevention Report, assessing progress toward plan targets and presenting data on community safety, recidivism, and victimization.⁵² Results are displayed on a public digital dashboard, reinforcing transparency and citizen accountability. A distinctive feature of the Estonian model is its investment in professional learning. The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences provides regular training for police officers, social workers, and municipal officials, ensuring a shared prevention vocabulary and standardized risk-assessment methods.⁵³ The country’s experience illustrates that interoperability, modest funding, and disciplined digital management can yield national coherence and measurable results, even in small administrations.

Estonia has also demonstrated success with evidence-based, community-level prevention practices. One notable example is the nationwide adoption of the KIVA anti-bullying programme, widely implemented in Estonian schools and evaluated as reducing bullying victimisation and improving school climate. Municipalities also implement “youth work centres” and mobile youth-worker outreach models, programmes credited with reducing repeat offending among at-risk adolescents by building pro-social skills and strengthening links with local services.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Law Enforcement Act – §20 “Offence Prevention Council”. Riigi Teataja, RT I, 13.03.2014, 4 (consolidated text). English-language consolidated version: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/522082014007/consolide>

⁵⁰ Violence Prevention Agreement 2021–2025. Inter-ministerial framework co-signed with the Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities. Available at: <https://www.justdigi.ee/en/crime-and-prevention-crime/violence-prevention-agreement>.

⁵¹ X-Road Data Exchange Platform. Technical overview and governance structure available at: <https://x-road.global/>

⁵² Annual Crime Prevention Report 2023. Tallinn: Siseministeerium, 2023. Summary portal: <https://www.siseministeerium.ee/et/statistika-ja-uuringud>.

⁵³ Training for Integrated Crime Prevention. Programme description available at: <https://www.sisekaitse.ee/en>.

⁵⁴ European Crime Prevention Network. Crime Prevention in Estonia. Brussels, 2022. Available at: https://eucpn.org/sites/default/files/document/files/EE_Crime%20Prevention%20in%20Estonia.pdf

Another strong performer is Estonia's domestic-violence prevention system, which combines a risk-assessment tool used by the Police and Border Guard Board with multi-agency case conferences at local level. The introduction of structured risk screening (in line with EU and Council of Europe standards) has improved victim identification and increased the number of individuals receiving coordinated assistance. Evaluations report quicker referral times and higher uptake of counselling and protection services.⁵⁵

A further strong practice is the publicly accessible registry of social programmes maintained by the Kriminaalpoliitika osakond (Criminal Policy Department) of the Ministry of Justice of Estonia. This online catalogue lists dozens of prevention-oriented interventions, ranging from youth delinquency programmes, truancy reduction efforts and family-therapy models to reintegration services for people leaving prison. Each programme entry includes key attributes such as thematic focus, regional scope, evidence-level classification (e.g., "evidence-based", "knowledge-based", or "untested"), and implementing body.⁵⁶ By cataloguing and categorising available initiatives, Estonia creates a national map of delivery capacity, enables gap-analysis, promotes transparency of effort, and facilitates replication of successful models across municipalities and regions.

Canada's experience illustrates a federal model that balances decentralization with evidence discipline. Since 1994, the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) has provided the overarching framework for coordinating prevention across provinces and territories. Administered by Public Safety Canada, the NCPS funds local projects that address risk factors such as poverty, substance abuse, and early school leaving. Funded initiatives must include logic models, performance indicators, and evaluation plans reviewed by federal institutions to ensure accountability and comparability.⁵⁷

The system was reinforced in 2022 by the Building Safer Communities Fund which provides conditional federal transfers to municipalities and Indigenous communities that develop evidence-based Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plans. These plans must demonstrate stakeholder consultation, risk assessment, and measurable outcomes aligned with national prevention objectives.⁵⁸ Ontario's Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019, one of the most advanced provincial frameworks, makes CSWB planning mandatory for all municipalities, linking prevention to broader social policy and transparency requirements.⁵⁹ At the national level, data integration and intelligence support are provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police through the Canadian Police Information Centre, the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System, and the National Cybercrime Coordination Centre - a suite of systems ensuring real-time information sharing between law enforcement agencies under strict privacy standards.⁶⁰

Statistics Canada complements this infrastructure by maintaining the Crime Sever-

⁵⁵ "Regional Report on existing Domestic Violence Response ... Estonia - Final" (TACTICS Project). Available at: https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/wwp/What_we_do/projects/tactics/D2.1/Tactics_2.1_-_Estonia_-_Final.pdf

⁵⁶ Estonia. Sotsiaalprogrammid [Social programmes registry]. Criminal Policy Department, Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/teemalehed/sotsiaalprogrammid>

⁵⁷ Public Safety Canada. National Crime Prevention Strategy – Overview and program guidance. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/strtg-en.aspx>.

⁵⁸ Public Safety Canada. Building Safer Communities Fund – Federal program supporting municipal and Indigenous prevention initiatives. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/fndng-prgrms/bldng-sfr-cmmnts-fnd/trms-cndtns-en.aspx?utm>

⁵⁹ Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General. Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 and Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/19c01>

⁶⁰ Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Canadian Police Information Centre; Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS); National Cybercrime Coordination Centre. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en>

ity Index and publishing annual regional breakdowns that feed into local dashboards and CSWB planning.⁶¹

Every federally funded prevention project undergoes evaluation, and results are made publicly available through the Crime Prevention Inventory of Canada, fostering transparency, continuous learning, and citizen trust.⁶² Canada's model demonstrates how a large federal system can maintain national coherence and scientific rigor while empowering municipalities to innovate.

One of the most successful models is Saskatchewan's "Hub and COR" approach, a multidisciplinary intervention system that brings together police, schools, health, and social services for rapid case conferencing. When individuals or families exhibit acute risk – such as suicidal behaviour, substance abuse, gang involvement, or family violence – Hub teams mobilize coordinated supports within 24–48 hours.⁶³ A longitudinal review found notable reductions in police calls for service, fewer hospital presentations for crisis events, and improved service connection for high-risk youth. The model has since been replicated in more than 80 communities across Canada and studied internationally as a promising practice in collaborative risk reduction.

Another high-impact initiative is the SNAP (Stop Now And Plan) program, introduced in multiple provinces with federal NCPS funding.⁶⁴ Targeting children aged 6–11 displaying early behavioural problems, SNAP combines cognitive-behavioural skills training, parent coaching, and school supports. Independent evaluations have shown statistically significant reductions in aggression, police contact, and school suspensions, as well as long-term benefits such as lower justice-system involvement in adolescence. Its strong evidence base has made SNAP one of Canada's most widely cited examples of prevention programming that successfully scales across jurisdictions without losing fidelity.⁶⁵

A further example is the Indigenous-led Crime Prevention through Social Development initiatives, particularly in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and northern Manitoba. These include culturally grounded land-based programs, community healing circles, youth leadership camps, and reintegration supports for returning offenders. Evaluations funded through Public Safety Canada show improvements in community cohesion, reductions in youth reoffending, and strengthened relationships between Elders, families, and service providers.⁶⁶ Importantly, these initiatives operate through Indigenous governance structures, demonstrating how culturally specific approaches can deliver measurable safety outcomes when properly resourced and supported by federal-territorial partnerships.

⁶¹ Statistics Canada. Police-reported crime in Canada, 2024. Catalogue no. 11-627-M, July 22 2025. Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250722/dq250722a-eng.htm>

⁶² Public Safety Canada. Crime Prevention Inventory of Canada <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/nvntr/index-en.aspx>

⁶³ Public Safety Canada. Community Mobilization Prince Albert (CMPA) – Hub Model <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/nvntr/dtls-en.aspx?i=10015&utm>

⁶⁴ Child Development Institute. SNAP® Research & Evaluation. <https://snap.childdevelop.ca/the-science-behind-snap/?utm>

⁶⁵ Public Safety Canada. Final Results – Stop Now and Plan <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2015-r017/2015-r017-en.pdf?utm>

⁶⁶ Public Safety Canada. Crime Prevention in Indigenous Communities: An Examination of Culturally-Relevant Programs and Culturally-Competent Evaluation Approaches (2023-R009). Ottawa: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2023-r009/index-en.aspx>

4. CONCLUSION

The international experience demonstrates that crime prevention has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. Once viewed primarily as a function of law enforcement, it is now increasingly understood as a multidimensional public policy domain that integrates governance, criminal justice, public health, education, urban planning, and social development. International organizations have established a common normative framework that emphasizes prevention, interagency cooperation, human rights, and accountability, while national governments have translated these principles into institutional arrangements adapted to their legal, administrative, and social contexts.

Despite differences in governance structures and legal traditions, the comparative analysis reveals a remarkable convergence around several core principles. Successful crime prevention systems are characterized by clear legislative mandates, shared responsibility across government institutions, strong coordination between national and local authorities, systematic use of data and strategic analysis, rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and meaningful engagement of communities, civil society, and academic institutions. Increasingly, countries are also integrating digital technologies, predictive analytics, and artificial intelligence into prevention efforts, while simultaneously strengthening ethical safeguards, transparency, and protection of fundamental rights.

The experiences of Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Canada further demonstrate that effective crime prevention depends not on isolated programmes or technological solutions, but on coherent institutional ecosystems capable of generating, interpreting, and applying knowledge throughout the policy cycle. Research, criminal intelligence, programme evaluation, and professional expertise are increasingly used not only to understand crime patterns but also to guide strategic planning, allocate resources, select interventions, and assess their impact. This institutionalization of continuous learning and adaptation has become a defining characteristic of mature crime prevention systems.

Taken together, these international frameworks and comparative practices illustrate a broader shift from reactive responses to proactive, knowledge-informed governance. They suggest that the effectiveness and sustainability of crime prevention increasingly depend on the capacity of public institutions to integrate empirical evidence, strategic intelligence, technological innovation, and cross-sectoral collaboration into coherent policy and operational frameworks. Rather than prescribing a single institutional model, the international experience demonstrates that diverse governance arrangements can achieve positive outcomes when they are supported by robust analytical capacity, effective coordination mechanisms, transparent decision-making, and a sustained commitment to evaluation and organizational learning.

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