

German Forum for Crime Prevention (DFK)

rationale behind, structure, functions, aims, projects and activities

The matter of crime prevention

Crime directly affects all of us.

Crime *prevention* is not a task merely to be dealt with by politics or the police.

The social dimension of crime prevention requires all state and non-state actors, the economy, the media as well as the individual citizens to engage in combined efforts in the context of this subject.

In order to curb crime by prevention, it is imperative for *all* social forces such as families, childcare institutions, schools, administrative bodies, employers etc. to recognise and utilise the preventive measures they are able to undertake. The aim is to minimise the development of deviance and criminality from their outset, to reduce the damages caused by crime and to strengthen the citizens' sense of security.

Founding and structure

The task of co-ordinating and fostering co-operation between *all* the relevant institutions in the field of crime prevention cannot be accomplished only by the police. In July 2001 the German Federal Government and the German States (*Länder*) called the Foundation *German Forum for Crime Prevention*, abbreviated with *DFK*, into life to act as a national body for crime prevention in Germany by promoting the various approaches that can be undertaken in order to reduce crime.

Besides the Federal Government, the German States (*Länder*) and the associations of communes, further more than twenty private institutions, companies and associations have joined the foundation and participate in the numerous workshops. The Federal Minister of Interior, Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble holds the presidency of the **Board of Trustees**, where all the foundation's associated bodies are represented. However the foundation's work is mostly determined by the decisions taken by the **Executive Committee**. The foundation's office works with six persons and a budget of about 100.000 EUR.

The Forum's understanding of "prevention"

The foundation's work focuses on three elements of preventive work, namely *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary* prevention. *Primary prevention* aims at reducing delinquency by providing our children with the prospects of a good up-bringing and education in a safe and tolerant environment. *Secondary prevention* is based on measures in order to retrain from criminal activity and furthermore comprises the application of technical measures in order to minimise the opportunities for criminal activity. *Tertiary prevention* aims at integrating former delinquents into society and supporting them in leading a law-abiding life.

The belief that successful prevention, aimed at reducing crime to a sustainable extend, cannot only rely on one element but must always be a combination of all three of these elements characterises the foundation's work. However primary prevention is the only preventive element which focuses on anticipating the origins of deviant and criminal behaviour rather than on preventing their consequences. This circumstance causes the German Forum of Crime Prevention to pay some extra attention to the subject of primary prevention.

Defined tasks of German Forum for Crime Prevention

- *Networking and Co-operation:*
bringing together state and non-state actors in the field of crime prevention, as well as supporting the most suitable prevention actors according to the individual aims and needs of a specific project.
- *Bundling:*
supporting and strengthening the different activities and their mutual use and thus increasing their total effects as well as further developing different prevention approaches by bringing together the various experts and institutions in the field.
- *Management and Transfer of Knowledge:*
initiating further practical work in the field of crime prevention and propagating “best”-practice examples as well as relevant scientific findings on a national and international level.
- *Public Relations:*
Sensitising the public for the foundation’s aims and objectives and thus working towards more public commitment and participation in the field of crime prevention.

Initiatives with Priority

The programmes, projects and events undertaken by the DFK so far, reflect the foundation’s broad, collective and societal understanding of the issue of prevention and the DFK’s claim for sustainability.

The *prevention of violence* has gained a special status among the foundation’s projects. This is certainly due to the fact that the DFK was entrusted by former chancellor Gerhard Schröder and the Minister Presidents of the German States (*Länder*) to conduct the realisation of a national programme called “Proscription of violence and enhancement of the pedagogical competencies in families and schools”, which aims at a public ostracism of violence and a strengthening of social aptitudes in families and schools.

The research project “*Primary Prevention of violence towards group members*” (*Hate Crimes*) focuses on finding preventive measures in the context of violence against people who are labelled and discriminated because of their belonging to a specific racial, religious or social group. The project has resulted in a number of recommendations, which emphasise the need for an intensification of the work of various actors in the field of primary prevention.

In the context of *secondary prevention*, i.e. technical prevention the DFK and its numerous working groups have developed a range of innovative ideas and proposals how to effectively reduce the opportunities for criminal activity (f.e. prevention of burglaries, internet-crime, airport-security).

In these domains the benefit of the “Public Private Partnership” strategy has become especially apparent. Prevention experts from the political level work and co-operate with the foundation’s donors of the relevant industries towards common solutions.

Additionally a working group called “City Network against Crime and Violence“ focuses on the possibilities for cities and towns to achieve greater security in their communities and hence directly involves the communal level into the foundation’s work.

The DFK sets great priority on the scientific consolidation of its work by consulting scientific advise and expert opinions. The extern evaluation of DFK projects and activities is favoured and realised according to the foundation’s financial resources.

The co-operation of the DFK with the prevention councils of the German states and the Police’s Programme for Crime Prevention (ProPK) with its national service centre is very advantageous for the subject of prevention in Germany. The co-operation will be further developed to achieve a closer co-ordination in principal issues.

Expert circles as well as the general public increasingly recognise the DFK as *the* national forum for issues on crime prevention.

Aspects such as

- the DFK’s role as a co-operating partner of the German Congress of Crime Prevention “Deutscher Präventionstag”
- the publication of its own journal “forum kriminalpräventoin”
- the co-ordination of the nation-wide prevention data-bank “PrävIS”
- the foundation’s web presence www.kriminalpraevention.de
- the DFK’ s active engagement in the national and international exchange of information and experience via the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS).

account for or this status.

The expectations of a continuous, qualified and reliable co-operation with the DFK are generally increasing according to foundation’s established status. In order to meet these expectations, as well as fulfilling its mission of acting as a strong national forum in the field of crime prevention the DFK works strongly on a strengthening of its personal and financial resources.

Contact

If you wish to obtain further information please do not hesitate to contact us or visit us on www.kriminalpraevention.de

Office and postal address:

Stiftung Deutsches Forum für Kriminalprävention

Gotlindestraße 91, Hs.41, c/o Bundesverwaltungsamt

D-10365 Berlin

PHONE: 0049 (0) 30 55133706 (Wolfgang Kahl)

EMAIL: dfk@kriminalpraevention.de