



# KEEPING YOUTH AWAY FROM CRIME SEARCHING FOR THE BEST EUROPEAN PRACTICES

National Report

Sweden



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Sweden. National Report.

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## **Introduction**

The English concept ‘juvenile delinquency’ has no direct equivalent in the Swedish legal system. Instead, in Sweden we usually speak of juvenile criminality, a concept which differs from juvenile delinquency in that it does not include so-called status offences i.e. acts committed by juveniles which constitute a crime but are legal if they are committed by adults”. Janson<sup>1</sup> observes “It takes some ingenuity to identify a status offence in the Swedish justice system. Several activities are prohibited for minors and underage persons, but have no legal sanctions against the young perpetrators, so this acts are not offenses”. He gives the examples that a minor sneaking to watch an adult movie or having sexual intercourse may concern social authorities but no legal sanctions can be made. Youth aged 15 or older are tried in the adult criminal justice system, although youthfulness is an important mitigating factor in sentencing<sup>2</sup>.

Juvenile delinquency is law breaking by young people and as a social problem it takes different meanings both to an individual and to the society. Thus, different countries have different approaches as regards prevention, treatment, public attitude, legislative control and administrative practices. The legal distinction between adult crime and juvenile delinquency stems from the belief that juveniles are immature and in need of nurturance and protection. According to Swedish law, no legal sanctions can be imposed for acts committed by persons under age 15. Between 15 and 17, a young person may not, except under special circumstances, be sentenced to prison but must be referred to the institutional care facilities of the social welfare authorities.

Farrington et al<sup>3</sup> identifies seven situational settings under which juvenile prevention programs can be implemented, these are; families, schools, communities, labour markets, places, police agencies and courts and corrections. Delinquency often starts at home and is manifested by disobedience, absence from home, loitering, immoral conduct yet parents are responsible for the quality of life at home, it therefore follows that the problem could be attributable to parental failure. The problem is later manifested by truancy in school, taking

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<sup>1</sup> Janson Carl Gunnar (2004:419), Youth Justice in Sweden in Tonry and Door’s Youth Crime and Youth Justice, Comparative and Cross National Perspectives, University of Chicago, Chicago

<sup>2</sup> Feld, Barry (1994), “Juvenile Justice Swedish Style: A Rose By Another Name?” in the Justice Quarterly, Vol. 11 No. 4, Pp 625 – 649

<sup>3</sup> Farrington David et. al.(ed.) (2002), “Evidence-Based Crime Prevention”, Routledge, London

drugs, bullying and associating with peers of questionable conduct. It follows that schools provide a good arena to address the problem of delinquency. Crime prevention takes different forms aimed at reducing criminality. However, some approaches may achieve little if any positive change within the target group. It is thus generally accepted that crime prevention is defined not by its intentions but by its consequences, (Farrington et. al.). Different measures may be aimed at reforming or deterring the offender or protecting individuals or the community. Hughes<sup>4</sup> argues “All correctional ideologies can be legitimized by the rhetoric of prevention, ranging from ideologies of incapacitation, deterrence and retribution to those of restitution, reparation and rehabilitation right through those of diversion, decriminalization and finally abolition. According to Kühlnhorn and Svensson<sup>5</sup> “Crime prevention measures are technical, informative and educational methods aimed at preventing criminal acts and effected in a way that allows an evaluation of the extent to which the aim is achieved”. Crime prevention programs are initiated depending on how criminality is perceived. By studying the criminal prevention approaches, it is possible to know what is perceived to be the risk factors since most programs seek to address these risk factors.

Approximately five out of ten youths admit to having stolen something, purchased something stolen or done something else related to theft in the past year. Quite often, this involves shoplifting, whilst car theft and other more serious thefts are uncommon. Crimes are unevenly distributed and a small selection of youths is responsible for a significant part of the total amount of crimes committed amongst youths. Those who commit a lot of crimes quite often have problems in school and at home. They often associate with other youths who commit crimes and they have a permissive attitude regarding crime. This information comes from Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention’s (Brå) large school survey<sup>6</sup>, which describes the presence of criminality and other problem behaviour amongst young men and women in year nine.

Young men are more likely to commit serious theft and violent crimes than young women. Shoplifting, trying drugs and having drunk alcohol to the point of intoxication are examples of behaviour that are more evenly distributed between the sexes. The survey also points out the vulnerability of youths to anxiety from crime. Young men are slightly more exposed to

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<sup>4</sup> Hughes Gordon (1998), “Understanding Crime Prevention: social control, risk and late modernity” Open University Press, Buckingham

<sup>5</sup> Kühlnhorn, E. (2002): Sluten ungdomsvård. Rättsliga reaktioner på de ungas brott före och efter införandet 1999. [Institutional Care of Youths. Juridical reaction on youth crime before and after introduction 1999] Stockholm, Statens institutionsstyrelse.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bra.se/bra/publikationer/arkiv/publikationer/2013-02-26-brott-bland-ungdomar-i-arskurs-nio.html>

violence than young women are. Twenty-seven percent have experienced less severe violence and eight percent have been subjected to serious violence, compared with twenty-one and five percent respectively for young women. Slightly more young women than young men state that they have been threatened so as to feel afraid.

In the latter half of the 1990s, the proportion of youths who stated that they had committed theft and vandalism lessened, whilst those levels have been more stable in the 2000s. The trend has also been stable during the latter period of time regarding the proportion of youths who committed acts of violence.

## **I. Developing a prevention at early stages, overview of the systems**

### **A. Youth Justice System**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Children, which Sweden has signed and ratified, states that all decisions about children should be based on an assessment of what is best for the child. This is the ground principle in the Swedish justice system for young offenders. The whole system since 1900 is also based on the common understanding that the youth do not have the knowledge and experience of the societal norms, meaning that they are more exposed than adults to commit offences. In most cases youth concerned by offences live under vulnerable conditions and have themselves been victims of offences.

In Sweden the responsibility for handling young people is shared by the social authorities and the judicial system and regulated by the Young Offenders (special conditions) Act from 1964(1964:167)<sup>7</sup> that was amended in July 1st 2010. The law aims at protecting the juveniles from interfering with criminals and to undertake the hard conditions in a prison and promoting those to a descent future life free from criminality. The Swedish model is a treatment-oriented one. The city where the youth has his address is responsible for this person and should provide her/him with support and help.

#### **1. Division of roles and responsibilities between the social services and the police**

In Sweden, individuals under the age of 15 are not criminally responsible and can therefore not be convicted of criminal offences. Social services, rather than the police, handle youth under the age of 15. According to the Swedish system, the Social Services always have to be

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.notisum.se/rnp/sls/lag/19640167.htm>

informed when a child (meaning a person under the age of 15) is suspected of a criminal offence. Social services are responsible and have to be involved in any action taken towards that child. But under certain circumstances the Police can investigate offences even if the suspect is not 15 years of age, according to the so-called Section 31 Investigation. This is regulated in Section 31 of the Swedish Young Offenders (Special Provisions) Act (1964:167). Please note that there are no juvenile courts in Sweden, meaning that a young offender will, if tried and found guilty, be sentenced by an adult court.

The Social Services do not sentence young people for their offences but decide on appropriate and suitable measures that will take into account the person's social situation, including of course a possible history of prior criminality. The Swedish legislation places the entire responsibility for responding to crimes committed by individuals under the age of 15 on the social services, as this is seen in Sweden as a welfare problem issue. The Swedish legislation aims to helping the young offender out of the social situation that is led him/her to commit crimes<sup>8</sup>.

## **2. The role of the social services**

A major change in the role of the social services was introduced by one of the amendments done to the Young Offenders Act from 1964 (1964:167) that states that from now on the social services are responsible for requesting that the police initiate a section 31 investigation if this is to form the basis of a decision on whether social services measures are required (more information on section 31 can be found in the text below, under the role of the police)

The Social Services Act (SoL) that regulates the responsibility of the social services and the work of the social workers. The Act does not include any coercive measures. The Social Services Act's measures aim to remove the causes of an individual's criminality and imply cooperation between the individual himself, his parents and the social services. The Social Services Act states that social services are to build on the foundation of democracy and solidarity. They are to promote people's financial and social security, equality of living conditions and active participation in the life of the community<sup>9</sup>.

Regarding individuals with minor criminal histories, these measures are usually limited to one or a series of talks with the young offender and his parents. If it becomes apparent through these talks that there are serious problems in the home (economic problems, internal conflicts, etc.), an attempt will be made to resolve these problems. The family is then given certain

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/14/87/01/e6d5b9d9.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.government.se/sb/d/15473/a/182986>

opportunities to receive economic support, therapy, a contact person and other forms of support. In certain cases the family may get a social worker who can meet with them at home over a longer period in order to help the family members resolve various problems (e.g. the family's economic planning, their leisure time problems, and conflicts in relations). Other types of measures can be taken in order to prevent the youth to further engage in criminal activities. Those measures are presented under the section of the report which defines sentences.

### **3. The role of the police:**

According to Swedish law the police shall prevent, discover and investigate crimes. In other words an important mission for the police is to prevent young people from committing crimes and developing a criminal lifestyle. When a young person is suspected of committing a crime, the police are obliged to investigate what happened with particular promptness. A national initiative was implemented aiming to improve the police's crime preventive and investigative work with a special focus on young people. The initiative has brought important lessons and forms a good basis for the police's future work within this field. The Swedish National Police Board has developed a training program for investigators of juvenile delinquency<sup>10</sup> including that the police authorities have:

- surveyed the processing of juvenile cases to find out why the deadlines
- are not adhered to;
- established measures to reduce the investigation time;
- identified environments and situations where young people may
- commit crimes; and
- established measures to prevent crime.

The Young Offenders Act from 1964 (1964:167) is regulating the actions of the police regarding juvenile offenders. Regarding investigations and according to some studies from the National Council for Crime Prevention<sup>11</sup>, the police investigations did not always work as well as expected by the legislators. This is one of the reasons why some amendments were made to the Young Offenders Act in July 2010.

As mentioned earlier, the social services are now responsible for requesting a Section 31 investigation from the police. But in accordance to the 2010 amendments, the Police shall always conduct a Section 31 investigation for particularly serious offences, where the young

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<sup>10</sup>[https://www.polisen.se/Global/www%20och%20Intrapolis/Informationsmaterial/01%20Polisen%20nationellt/Engelskt%20informationsmaterial/Polisen\\_en\\_presentation\\_110506.pdf](https://www.polisen.se/Global/www%20och%20Intrapolis/Informationsmaterial/01%20Polisen%20nationellt/Engelskt%20informationsmaterial/Polisen_en_presentation_110506.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> National Council for Crime Prevention 2007:16

offender risks a custodial sentence of at least one year: this is the so-called the presumption rule!

The amendments to the Young Offenders Act from 1964 (1964:167) give the police more room to initiate an investigation and carry out effective crime prevention work as well as improve the chances for the person that was injured to gain personal and financial redress. The police is also given the possibility to conduct drug tests on children (persons under the age of 15) and the legislation requires a three-month time limit for police investigations.

Most investigations of juvenile crimes are relatively simple since the crimes committed by young people are usually not of a particularly serious nature. By law, the police are required to show great regard and care in their interrogations of juveniles. Parents and/or representatives of the social authorities should be in most cases present during an interrogation<sup>12</sup>.

What means a Section 31 investigation? According to the Young Offenders Act, article 31, section 1 investigations can be conducted for children under 15 that committed offences, in order for the social services to gather useful information in order to decide on appropriate measures to support and help the youth. Such investigations can also be conducted for youth over 15 years of age in order to find out if a juvenile was involved in a offence, to search for goods that disappeared during the offence or can be subject to forfeiture; or for any other reason conducted by the general or individual interest. If the child is under 12 years of age a section 31 investigation can also be conducted, but only under extraordinary circumstances.

In different parts of Sweden the juvenile crime investigation issue has been resolved organisationally in variety of ways. In some areas, special units have been established which specialise in crimes committed by juveniles, or in some instances even certain types of juvenile crime, such as mugging, for example. In other areas, the less serious offences committed by juveniles are investigated by local community police officers whilst investigations into more serious offences are transferred to the central criminal investigation departments at the police district level. Irrespective of the way in which the police organise investigations of juvenile crime internally, this work always takes place in collaboration with the local social services<sup>13</sup>.

#### **4. The role of the courts**

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<sup>12</sup> J. Sarnecki and F. Estrada, *Juvenile Crime in Sweden, A trend report on criminal policy, the development of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system*, Stockholm University, Stockholm.

<sup>13</sup> J. Sarnecki and F. Estrada, *Juvenile Crime in Sweden, A trend report on criminal policy, the development of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system*, Stockholm University, Stockholm

As previously mentioned there are no juvenile courts in Sweden. This means that in case of serious crimes and offences, the young offender will be tried and if found guilty, sentenced by an adult court. But following the welfare system principles used in Sweden, special policy have been put in place for young offenders: for example have been introduced waivers against prosecution, restrictions on prison sentences and handing over offenders to the social services.

In Sweden youth under the age of 21 are extremely rarely sentenced to jail but are mostly given fines and discharge from prosecution. For those who committed serious crimes, the juvenile offenders under the age of 18 will most probably be sentenced to institutional youth care than prison. According to some data from 2009: 31 800 persons aged 15-20 were suspected for crime; 29 700 decisions to prosecute for persons ages 15-20 were issued (there is an over representation of youth in the statistics of suspects, that shows that a person is more likely to commit offence in their childhood); 38 per cent of the youths were sentenced for shoplifting or theft and only 1 person younger than 18 was sentenced to prison. Most of the young offenders were sentenced to institutional youth care<sup>14</sup>.

- **The prosecution:**

In Sweden there is a real cooperation between the different authorities and social services are in close contact with the prosecutors. They shall also express their opinion about the youth, this will be taken into account by the prosecutor when deciding on whether prosecute the youth or not.

- Waivers:

The Swedish criminal justice system and the Young Offenders Act from 1964(1964:167) provide specialized prosecutors for juveniles. Youth between the age of 15 and 18 are normally not prosecuted and the legislation gives a very wide possibility for the prosecutors to waive the case (see articles 16 and 17). If the prosecutor has waived the case, the prosecutor will have a meeting with the juvenile perpetrator and his or her parents. The social authorities should always be informed if the juvenile has not reached the age of eighteen. A representative from the social authorities should be present at the hearings during the preliminary investigation of this juvenile if possible and if it does not damage the investigation. The investigations realised by the prosecutor should always be executed as fast as possible and the law prescribes specific time limits. A legislative change in 1994 (SFS

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<sup>14</sup> BRÅ, juvenile delinquency, december 2012

1994:1760)<sup>15</sup> introduced a situation whereby waivers of prosecution may in principal no longer be used for youths who have previously been registered in connection with offences.

The legislation details precisely the specific ways of prosecuting juveniles that allow the prosecution to choose between different alternatives: the court may sentence the juvenile to a special sentence as treatment or issue an order for summary penalty in cases that should normally be tried at court.

The juveniles are very seldom detained as a specific rule states that the juveniles should not be deprived of their freedom. In order to prevent the youth from destroying the investigation or commit other crimes, there are very often handed over to the social agencies. The public prosecutors dealing with juveniles are in contact with the social agencies working in the field of juvenile delinquency. This contact is crucial as the youth is seldom placed in detention. This is necessary as the juvenile, as said above, very seldom is in detention but is taken care of by the social authorities.

Prosecutors in Sweden conduct investigations involving youth offenders and this should be realised in a limited amount of time: a decision within six weeks from the day when the suspicion was communicated to the juvenile (section 4) should be taken. The prosecutor may, concerning juveniles between 15 and 18 of age, ask for a remark from the social authorities before he or she prosecutes the juvenile. There are special provisions about the quite extensive information that should be covered in the remark (Sections 10 and 11). Consequently, during the investigation, the prosecutors are involved in the contacts with the social authorities and take notes from their remarks.

In Sweden the prosecutors are dealing only with criminal cases. So there is no interference from prosecutors dealing with juvenile issues such as education, living issues etc unless these issues include criminal acts. The same goes for placement of the youth in the name of their self protection or placement of children pending expulsion or any other case. Measures taken in those areas are executed by the social authorities and can also be executed by the Police.

According to current legislation, the police are to have a prosecutor assigned to an investigation if the offense is not of a "straightforward nature" and where there is a suspected offender aged fifteen or older involved. In certain cases the prosecutor is the head of the formal investigation. The prosecutor is also responsible for deciding whether the suspect should be arrested and whether an application should be made to a court for a detention order. However neither arrests nor detention orders are utilized very often in relation to offenses committed by juveniles. For an individual aged fifteen to seventeen to be detained during an

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<sup>15</sup> SFS 1994: 1760: *Lag (1994:1760) om ändring i lagen (1964:167) med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare.*

ongoing investigation, the law requires “exceptional cause”. Prosecution waivers are issued only in extremely rare cases in relation to violent crimes or vandalism<sup>16</sup>. One of the prosecutor’s important tasks is that of deciding which measures should be taken regarding the suspect once the police investigation is finished<sup>17</sup>:

- Should the preliminary investigation be discontinued?
- Should the prosecutor issue a prosecution waiver?
- Should he issue a summary sanction order?
- Should he prosecute the suspect in court?

**- Prosecution:**

Another option available to a prosecutor is to determine the sanction for a crime himself. The conditions for the prosecutor to be able to issue a summary sanction order are similar to those for a prosecution waiver: the crime must be relatively minor and the suspect must have confessed. In addition, the suspect must have accepted the size of the sanction. Summary sanction orders may be issued only in the form of day-fines, where the number of days is determined by the seriousness of the crime while the size of each day-fine is determined by the guilty party’s economic circumstances. Approximately 33% of all the entries into the police register involve summary sanction orders. Among the youngest youths (i.e. those aged fifteen to seventeen), the proportion is somewhat higher at 37 per cent.

Finally, as was mentioned above, the prosecutor may decide to prosecute. Of the fifteen to seventeen year olds who were convicted of offenses in 2001, 61 per cent received these convictions in the form of a prosecutor’s decision whilst a public court, having been indicted by the prosecutor, convicted 39 per cent. The corresponding proportions for eighteen to twenty year olds were 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively. Thus the majority of the younger youths and approximately half of the older ones are convicted by means of a prosecutor’s decision. By contrast, fifteen years ago a significantly larger proportion (83 per cent) of fifteen to seventeen year olds were convicted by means of a prosecutor’s decision, as were 61 per cent of the older group. Thus a considerably larger proportion and number of youths are today indicted for their crimes in a public court, whilst at the same time, the proportion and number of young people being convicted by means of a prosecutor’s decision has fallen substantially.

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<sup>16</sup> J. Sarnecki and F. Estrada, *Juvenile Crime in Sweden, A trend report on criminal policy, the development of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system*, Stockholm University, Stockholm

<sup>17</sup> idem

- **Sentences:**

The Swedish Penal Code Chapter 30, section 5 states that if a crime has been committed by a person who has not attained the age of eighteen, the court may impose imprisonment only if there are extraordinary reasons for so doing. It follows from the provisions of article 31, Section 1a, stating that “the court shall, in the first place, sentence to closed juvenile care if a person who has attained the age of eighteen but not twenty-one has committed a crime, the court may impose imprisonment only if, in view of the penal value of the crime or other special reasons, this course of action is justified”.

According to article 32, section 1 of the Care of Young Persons Special Provisions Act that deals with committal to special care for persons who are under the age of twenty one and can be sentenced to treatment or other measure. These are the same institutions where youths are placed in compulsory care by the social services and focus on treatment of young people and have a staff to ‘inmate’ ratio approximately three times that of prisons (approximately three staff members per youth in care)<sup>18</sup>.

Placement of the juvenile offender outside of the family home should always be first recommended by the social services. In this case the young person is usually placed in a family home or a so-called home for residence and care (HVB). HVB placements are also used relatively often in relation to compulsory (LVU) placements. (In 33 % of compulsory care orders, the young person is placed in a HVB home). The most common form of placement used in connection with compulsory care orders is placement in a youth care facility. Unlike the other institutions, these facilities have the right to use compulsion to keep the youth in place, and they often have secure units. In addition to placements in accordance with LVU, and in rare cases SoL, youths sentenced to secure youth care are also placed in these institutions. Thus both youths placed in care in accordance with LVU and those sentenced to secure youth care are given compulsory care at these institutions. The difference is that youths in the LVU group are placed in these institutions by the social services (once the care order has been confirmed by the county administrative court) and are discharged in accordance with a decision reached by the social services which must however be re-examined every six months, and which may in this context be appealed in the county administrative court, whilst those sentenced to secure youth care are placed in these institutions by means of a court sentence and stay throughout the term of this sentence. It is common that young people who have been placed in youth care facilities by the social

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<sup>18</sup> Brå et al (2002): *Sluten ungdomsvård – en uppföljning*. [Institutional care of youths – follow-up] Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention, National Board of Health and, National Board for Institutional Care.

services or by the courts are there for the same reason – i.e. involvement in crime. The social services may however also take a decision to issue care orders and place youths in institutions (although not usually youth care facilities of this kind) as a result of other problems experienced by the young person, such as the parents inability to look after the young person, for example, and different forms of behaviour which are self-destructive but not criminalized<sup>19</sup>.

Article 32, section 2 of the Care of Young Persons Special Provisions Act says that a person who is under twenty-one may be sentenced to youth service if the juvenile consents and the sentence is appropriate to his or her person and the circumstances in the specific case. A person who is older than eighteen may be sentenced to youth service only if there are reasonable grounds for it.

The other sanctions, which a court can use in sentencing minors, are:

Suspended sentences (approx. 1% of convicted persons aged 15 to 17 and 13 % of those aged 18 to 20, were given this sanction in 2001) and,

Probation (without prison) (approx. 1 % of convicted persons aged 15 to 17 and 11 % of those aged 18 to 20, were sanctioned in this way in 2001).

Certain of the sanctions presented above may be combined with each other or with other forms of sanction. Thus probation may for example be combined with contractual care or community service. Combinations of this type are rare, however, for young persons under the age of eighteen. On the other hand, surrender into the care of the social services may be combined with the sanction youth service, which comprises community service specifically adapted to younger people. For approximately twenty per cent of the fifteen to seventeen year olds sentenced to care within the social services, the sanction is combined with youth service in this way. In rare instances, youth service is also applied in combination with probation for young people over the age of eighteen. Fines too may also be awarded in combination with other sanctions. Finally, young people are in rare cases sentenced to psychiatric care. This sanction is however extremely rarely used in relation to the youngest age group.

In cases of extensive antisocial behaviour that constitutes a threat to a young person's ongoing development, a law containing coercive measures known as the Act with Special Provisions on the Care of Young People (LVU) may be utilised. Another law containing coercive measures, which can be used by the social services, is the Act on the Care of Drug Abusers in

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<sup>19</sup>J. Sarnecki and F. Estrada, *Juvenile Crime in Sweden, A trend report on criminal policy, the development of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system*, Stockholm University, Stockholm

Certain Cases (LVM). The rules governing when an individual may be forcibly taken into custody for the purposes of social services care are very restrictive. According to the Social Services Act (1982) the local social welfare boards have the right to decide about taking a child or young person into custody for social care. Law in every Swedish municipality has established these boards, which are made up of local politicians and reflect the political party breakdown at the local government level. In the larger municipalities, additional local boards have been set up. A county administrative court must approve all decisions on custody for social services care made by these boards. These courts have an organisation, which is completely separate from that of the criminal courts. Decisions arrived at in the county administrative courts may be appealed to higher courts<sup>20</sup>.

### **5. The role of other actors:**

In Sweden, just as in other countries, there is a strong correlation between behaviour in school and criminality as well as other forms of deviant behaviour, both in the teenage years and in adulthood<sup>21</sup>. Swedish teachers recognize very well the symptoms related to a heightened risk for persistent criminality, alcohol and drug abuse, etc., even if not all teachers are conscious of how important these observations might be.

Schools usually have their own organisation for dealing with student problems. Many schools have a school psychologist, a social worker (school curator) and medical personnel (doctor, nurse) attached to them. These personnel, along with those heading the administration of the school and certain teachers, constitute a student care team, which, among other things, has the task of deciding how to react when students show symptoms of deviant behaviour. Most schools also have teachers who are specially trained to take care of students with school problems, behavioural difficulties, etc. Initially schools try to resolve problems that arise by means of talking with the student and his parents. Another possibility open to schools is that of taking students out of normal classes and placing them in special education groups, where they may receive more support and be subject to more control. In certain difficult cases the students can be placed in special separate schools run by local school boards. The goal, however, is to separate students with adjustment problems as little as possible from other students and to make sure that they are kept in their ordinary classes to as great an extent as possible. In addition, according to current law, schools within the compulsory school system cannot completely exclude students from the educational system. Instead, students with serious problems among the older age groups are given the option of taking a part-time class schedule and working the rest of the time (without pay) at some workplace nearby. In such

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<sup>20</sup>J. Sarnecki and F. Estrada, *Juvenile Crime in Sweden, A trend report on criminal policy, the development of juvenile delinquency and the juvenile justice system*, Stockholm University, Stockholm

<sup>21</sup> Sarnecki, J (1986): *Delinquent Networks*. Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention Report.

cases, the school is responsible for providing the student with suitable guidance.

In general, the school staff will initially try to resolve a student's behavioural problems themselves. The social services are usually not contacted until the measures put in place by school staff have been seen not to produce the desired results. Even though school personnel see their students' behavioural problems at an early stage, schools make relatively few reports to the social services. In Sweden, the level of cooperation between the social services and schools varies from municipality to municipality.

The social services and the schools are also supposed to cooperate with the mental health care authorities responsible for children and juveniles, which have an independent status in Sweden. Parents, especially parents of younger students with behaviour problems, are often given a recommendation to make contact with this institution which offers various forms of individual, family and group therapy. However, contacts with the mental health care authorities are in principle voluntary and in most places they do not accept clients who are not clearly motivated regarding treatment. Sometimes the social services also use psychiatric experts to analyze young people with more serious behavioural disturbances. Certain young people with substantial criminality in their backgrounds can also be taken in for observation and in rare cases even for treatment in the county's psychiatric clinics for children and juveniles.

In the context of the debate on juvenile delinquency, the issue of leisure time is usually ascribed major importance. Sometimes juvenile criminality is simply defined as a leisure time phenomenon. A significant portion of the leisure time activities available to young people in Sweden are either financed or directly organized by public sector agencies. The financing of leisure activities for young people is provided through payments to an extensive number of organisations. It is estimated that at least half of the young people in Sweden are members of one or more organisations, most often sporting associations. In many places, especially in some of the country's smaller cities, the degree of association membership is significantly higher. However, associational activity seems to a large extent to be characteristic for young people from socially well-functioning families and, accordingly, for young people among whom the risk of developing serious antisocial behaviour is relatively low. The number of organisations that successfully recruit young people in the risk zone for criminality, and that may serve as an effective alternative to their antisocial network is relatively small<sup>22</sup>.

As was mentioned earlier, the economic problems affecting Sweden at the beginning of the

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<sup>22</sup> Sarnecki, J (1983): *Fritid och brottslighet* [Leisure and criminality], Stockholm: National Council for Crime Prevention

1990s resulted in certain cutbacks within the public sector. The local authorities, which are responsible for schools, the social services and the leisure sector, have been forced to make savings and have done so primarily in areas of activity that are less well regulated in law than the social services. Amongst other things, substantial savings have been made in the area of leisure provision for young people and student care within schools. During the second half of the 1990s, as the economy has improved, more resources have once again been devoted to these sectors, but one has to work on the assumption that preventive efforts, not least within schools, are less comprehensive than they were previously. At the same time as the resources available to schools for social measures have been reduced, schools have turned to an increasing extent to the police for support in connection with criminality among pupils<sup>23</sup>. Several local authorities have made policy decisions that all crime in schools is to be reported to the police.

### **B. Youth care system from the scope of juvenile crime prevention**

In the case of young persons with little or no previous criminal record or other social problems, the reaction of the social services is often limited to one or more interviews with the juvenile and his/her parents. If on the strength of the interviews and any other investigate measures takes it is decided that no further action is necessary, the matter is left as that. An assessment (without available statistics) indicated that the majority of cases are wound up in this way. If the problems of the juvenile or family are felt to demand on action from the social services, the social welfare committee makes an order to this effect. A coercive order has to be confirmed by the county administrative court.

Sweden's municipalities have a number of obligations according to the Local Government Act. One of these is the provision of social services. This consists of care for the elderly, support and service for people with functional disabilities, and care of families and individuals. The task involves the provision in various forms of support, protection and help to the most vulnerable groups in society. It is consequently the municipality, which, through the social services, has the main responsibility for the care of those with addiction problems. There are also a large number of special laws, which regulate in more detail the activities in the municipalities. The Social Services Act regulates social services. The work of the social services is monitored in various ways. The county administrative boards are responsible for supervising municipal social services while the National Board of Health and Welfare is responsible for supervising social services at national level. The National Board of Health and Welfare also issues directives and provides general advice in the area of social services.

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<sup>23</sup> Estrada, F. (2001). "Juvenile Violence as a Social Problem. Trends, media attention and societal response", *British Journal of Criminology*

The municipality has the main responsibility for ensuring that people with addiction problems receive the support and help they need, in order to overcome their addiction. This responsibility includes providing information on the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs and seeking out people who might be considered in need of help. Stockholm's municipality is divided into 14 neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood has a neighbourhood administration, which has responsibility for most of the municipal service within its geographical area. There are, for example, social welfare secretaries to whom the residents of the neighbourhood can turn for support and help in difficult situations, e.g. temporary financial support or care and treatment of their addiction. Each administration has a council with political responsibility.

It is the municipal council that allocates funds and decides on the overall objectives and guidelines for the whole city's operation including that for which the neighbourhood council administrations are responsible. The neighbourhood administrations in turn dispose of their allotted funds according to local needs. The Social Services Administration, which is a central administration in Stockholm's municipality, is responsible for services across the city that supplements and strengthens the measures carried out by the neighbourhood council administrations within the area of social services, sell social services, especially to the city's 14 neighbourhood councils. The administration also draws up guidelines for all the social services in Stockholm's municipality. The city also has a special "Outreach Department for Adults" for people with addiction problems, mental illness, homelessness and other socially vulnerable people living in the city of Stockholm.

### **C. Education system (10-18 years old) from the scope of Juvenile crime prevention**

Schools are an important arena for crime prevention and all programs that aim at giving youths self-control have been identified as among those that work. Moreover is school compulsory in Sweden and should therefore be a safe place for children to be.

#### **1. Level of attainment and what is available to all children**

Sweden spends USD 11 400 per student from primary to tertiary education, more than the OECD average of USD 9 249. Enrolment rates for early childhood and primary education are relatively high in Sweden. Some 90 % of three-year-olds attend school (compared with the OECD average of 69 %), and 94 % of four-year-olds do (the OECD average is 81 %). Since 2005, the enrolment rate among three-years old increased by 6 percentage points, compared to an average of 2 percentage points among all OECD countries. Early enrolment can be seen as a sign of equity insofar as PISA data show that students who have attended pre-primary school outperform students who have not, even after students' socio-economic background are

taken into account. Relatively few young people in Sweden are neither in education nor employed (NEET). In fact, Sweden has one of the lowest percentage 10 % of NEETs among all OECD countries. Only 5.4% of 15-19 years old in Sweden are in this group. Meanwhile, 87 % of 24-65 year olds have attained at least an upper secondary education, compared with 74 % across OECD countries. This difference is widest among the oldest age cohort. While some 91 % of 24-35 year olds have attained at least an upper secondary education (the OECD average is 82 %), 77 % of 55-64 years old in Sweden have attained this level of education, which is 15 percentage points more than the OECD average<sup>24</sup>.

Schools have great potential as a locus for crime prevention. They provide regular access to students throughout the developmental years, and perhaps the only consistent access to large numbers of the most crime-prone young children in the early school years; they are staffed with individuals paid to help youth develop as healthy, happy, productive citizens; and the community usually supports schools' efforts to socialize youth. Many of the precursors of delinquent behaviour are school-related and therefore likely to be amenable to change through school-based intervention.

Schools are a central and relevant actor for prevention work and work with decreasing delinquency and harassment taking place in schools. They also contribute to reducing future delinquency among pupils/students. Youth spend most of the awake time at schools, this means that schools have and the possibility to influence the protective and risks factors that will be meaningful if the youth will turn criminal. According to Swedish legislation, “skollagen”<sup>25</sup> (2010:800), schools in Sweden have a prevention mission.

According to the Swedish law on discrimination (2008:567)<sup>26</sup> and law on schools, schools in Sweden must prevent discrimination and humiliation. Most of the work will be about values and can definitely be considered as juvenile crime prevention as it aims to decrease criminality and increase safety.

Moreover there also plenty of projects and different actions run daily in Swedish schools, in cooperation with different actors and that aims at:

- Preventing violence among students
- Reducing use of drugs and alcohol among students
- Supporting students so that they dare to report or witness an offense/crime

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/sweden/EAG2012%20-%20Country%20note%20-%20Sweden5.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <http://rkrattsd.b.gov.se/SFSdoc/10/100800.PDF>

<sup>26</sup> <http://rkrattsd.b.gov.se/SFSdoc/08/080567.PDF>

This is very important as a study from BRÅ<sup>27</sup> shows that 2 students out of 9 in 9th grade, under 2012, have been victims of light violence. About 45% of those offenses happened within their school or just outside the school. And more than 10% of the students have been bullied during the same period and about 10% confessed they bullied other students. Another report from BRÅ<sup>28</sup> shows that students that have been bullied represent twice the amount of victim compared to the one that have not been victims of bullying. They also have higher risk to be victim of violence or be rubbed.

Anti-bullying programs are definitely an asset in juvenile crime prevention actions in schools. They aim at reducing the amount of kids being bullied and kids that were buller. In order to be successful BRÅ<sup>29</sup> listed key factors to be included in the programmes aiming at reducing the amount of bullers:

- Involvement of the parents and parental training
- More surveillance in schoolyards
- Disciplinary measures
- Conferences and seminars at schools on the topic
- Information to parents
- Rules of conduct in each class
- Leadership in the classrooms
- Training videos

For programmes aiming at reducing the amount of students been bullied, the programmes should focus on:

- Training videos
- Disciplinary measures
- Introducing the concept of solidarity and peer-to-peer communication
- Parental training
- Working groups with experts
- Increased surveillance on schoolyards

Bullying is really something that should be fought as soon as possible as it can have serious consequences for the kids. We know that youth that have been bullied have higher risk to develop depression and those who bullied risk to be engaged in a criminal lifestyle.

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<sup>27</sup> Se referens nr.6

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bra.se/bra/publikationer/arkiv/publikationer/2009-03-25-grovre-vald-i-skolan.html>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bra.se/bra/forebygga-brott/forebyggande-arbete-i-skolan.html>

## 2. Special schools

Children with learning disabilities can attend the compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities as an alternative to the compulsory school. The compulsory school for learning disabilities consists of nine years of schooling. And within the school there is a special orientation called the training school. This is intended for pupils who have a lack of knowledge in all or parts of compulsory schooling for pupils with learning disabilities in some subjects.

Special school is for children and young people with learning disabilities who cannot attend normal compulsory and upper secondary school. In academic year 2008/09 the number of students in special schools amounted to approximately 22 600. Of these some 13 300 study at one of 714 special compulsory schools and 9 300 in one of the 271 special upper secondary schools. Of all pupils in the compulsory school system, the share of pupils in the special compulsory school has nearly doubled from 0.8 percentage points at the start of the 1990s to 1.4 percentage points in academic year 2007/08. Every seventh pupil in the special compulsory school was integrated, i.e. attended compulsory school in the academic year 2008/09. An ever larger share of the special school pupils have been integrated into compulsory school since the end of the 1990s. The teacher-pupil ratio is 27 teachers per 100 pupils.

Special school is also for pupils with seriously impaired vision, hearing or language disabilities. The majority of pupils are educated using the special teaching assistance in the normal compulsory school. The number of pupils has steadily decreased since 2000 and in the academic year 2008/09 amounted to 516. Out of 516 pupils in special school 233 were girls. The majority, 94 percent, were deaf or hearing impaired. The number of teachers in service in academic year 2008/09 amounted to 259, of which 202 were women. The share of teachers with special needs training from their university education was 36 per cent and has decreased by 12 percentage points over the last eight years<sup>30</sup>.

The compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities is to provide pupils with developmental disabilities an education that is adapted to the capabilities of every student. The education is, among other benefits, to provide knowledge and values, to contribute to personal development and social togetherness, and to give a good foundation for active participation in society. The compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities includes education in specific subjects or within subject areas, or a combination of these. The education can also include subjects in accordance with the curriculum of the compulsory

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.scb.se/statistik/\\_publikationer/UF0527\\_2009A01\\_BR\\_UF08BR0901.pdf](http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/UF0527_2009A01_BR_UF08BR0901.pdf)

school.

Within the compulsory school for pupils with disabilities, there is a special orientation called the training school. The training school is intended for pupils who cannot benefit from all or part of the education in specific subjects. Instead of the separate subjects, the training school has five subject areas:

- Aesthetic activities
- Communication
- Motor skills
- Everyday activities
- Perception of reality

The same rules apply for assessment and for grades as in the compulsory school. The Sami school has six years of schooling and grades are given only in year 6, after which pupils go on to the compulsory school. Grades A, B, C, D and E are passing grades. Grade F indicates that the pupil did not achieve a pass. The symbol (-) is used if the pupil's knowledge cannot be assessed, as the pupil has been absent.

The compulsory school is part of a goal steered system with a high degree of local responsibility. The Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) and Government decide on the framework in laws and ordinances. The municipality or the organisers of the independent school (owner) and head teacher have primary responsibility for daily operations.

### **3. School dropouts**

Youths who are absent from school tend for example to commit more offences than others and it is difficult to know whether the results would have been different if pupils absent on the day of the survey had in fact participated. The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and other Drugs (CAN) has followed up the external non-response in national alcohol and drug use surveys on two occasions – in 1979 and 1993. Their findings showed that the youths included among the non-response reported a higher average level of drug consumption than those included in the study sample, but that the survey findings would not have been affected to any major extent by their inclusion.

Figures released by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities in Regions<sup>31</sup>, show that 31 percent of students are unable to complete Swedish secondary education programmes, known as gymnasieskola or gymnasiet, within the expected three years. In Sweden, students can

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.thelocal.se/20120612/41386>

choose to enrol in variety of secondary school programmes with different educational content, some of which emphasize studies to prepare students for university, while others are more vocational in nature.

Even after four years, about a quarter of students have yet to receive their high school diplomas. In the worst performing municipality, only 43 students completed secondary school on time, while the best-performing municipality saw 88 percent of its students finish high school on time. However, many Swedish high school drop outs do go on to complete their secondary education studies in adult education programmes, resulting in 90 percent of 24-year-olds in Sweden have attained a high school degree. According to the study, which is based on figures from students who started high school between 2005 and 2007, about three to five percent more boys than girls fail to complete high school in Sweden. Every student who leaves high school without a degree is seen as a tragic failure for the individual and a blow for the school. The organization recommends five strategies to bring down Sweden's high school dropout rate. Among the five "success factors" outlined by the group are ensuring that school staff engage with students in a positive manner and that the schools present clear goals and emphasize results. In addition, schools interested seeing more of their students graduate on time should see to it that students choose programmes that suit their skills and interests, that they are involved in shaping the work of the school, and that schools make accommodations based on students' individual needs.

The reasons for why people abandon their studies vary. In order to successfully implement the measures, there needs to be a common view on the part of school staff as well as cooperation between schools, home, the business community, civil society, and social services. With goal oriented, hard, and persistent work, municipalities and schools can prevent students from dropping out of high school.

#### **D. Short presentation of health system**

In Sweden the responsibility for providing health care is decentralised to the county councils and, in some cases, the municipalities. A county council is a political body whose representatives are elected by the public every four years on the same day as the national general election. According to the Swedish health and medical care policy, every county council must provide residents with good-quality health services and medical care and work toward promoting good health in the entire population. Sweden is divided into 20 county councils. One municipality, the island of Gotland, carries the same responsibilities as the county councils for health care. Around 90 per cent of the Swedish county councils' work involves health care but they are also involved in other areas, such as culture and infrastructure.

## **1. Early screening of mental health and intellectual disabilities**

In Sweden there is a long tradition of screening for speech and language disabilities in pre-school children. Ever since the early 1970's language examination has been a part of a nationwide and comprehensive general health screening for four-year-olds.

Behaviour disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity are seen as early and hardcore risk factors when it comes to later in life develop a criminal lifestyle. These disorders occur early in a child's life and many children exhibit both disorders simultaneously, which further complicates the child's growth. Other severe and early disruption in the child's development may be cognitive difficulties, learning difficulties and emotional disorders. The more these problems will increase during the child's development, the more increases the risk of future criminal lifestyle. As said earlier there is a tradition in Sweden of early screening of mental health and intellectual disabilities. Professionals and parents are very much involved in the process and closely in order to get the best possible support for helping the child diagnosed with mental health and intellectual disabilities.

General health mechanisms and support for vulnerable families and children

The responsibility for providing health and medical care lies mostly at regional level with the county councils. The county councils are responsible for tasks that may be difficult for municipalities to handle and which require coordination across a larger region and often-large resources. The county councils are obliged to offer the inhabitants of the county health and medical care and to work preventively towards a better level of health among the population as a whole.

At regional level Sweden is divided into 21 counties. Each county has a county council whose decision makers are elected directly by the county's population every four years.

Health and medical care is the most important area of responsibility for the county councils. It represents around 90 per cent of the operation. Other important county council areas include public dental care and responsibility for public transport. The county council is also responsible for improving public health and carrying out preventive work focusing in particular obesity, smoking and alcohol/drug abuse.

The operation of the county councils is financed through state subsidies, county council taxes and charges and is regulated through, among other things, the Local Government Act. Municipal self-government means that county councils and regions can adapt their operation to local conditions. The operation is financed to a large extent by tax. The common finance guarantees that all Sweden's inhabitants receive the same access to high-quality care. Each

county council and region has the right to decide for itself the level of tax and how to allocate its resources.

As an example, the Stockholm County Council collaborates with the municipalities in the county of Stockholm over the care and treatment of people who have an abuse or dependency problem and who need long-term care. The municipality has the main responsibility for the care of those with addiction problems and is responsible for supporting them in daily living and with accommodation. The county council is responsible for medical treatment. Throughout the county there are special outpatient clinics where people with addiction problems may come initially for help. A municipality and the county council jointly run some of these clinics. The out-patient clinics have various practitioners working there, e.g. specialist doctors, nurses trained in psychiatry, psychologists, alcohol/drug therapists, care staff and welfare officers. The clinics offer help with advice, assessment and treatment, long-term support in remaining sober or drug-free, training in preventing a relapse. For acute measures there are special acute clinics that are open 24 hours a day. Sweden's entire population has equal access to health care services. The Swedish health care system is government-funded and heavily decentralised. Compared with other countries at a similar development level, the system performs well, with good medical success in relation to investments and despite cost restrictions.

## **II. Juvenile prevention strategies**

### **A. Broad principles of the Youth Justice prevention and early prevention systems**

In Sweden, as elsewhere, restorative justice as a crime prevention measure has emerged and is gaining wide appreciation among those working in the area of crime prevention. It seeks to bring the victim and offender together to 'heal the wounds' that resulted from the criminal act. According to Steven Lab<sup>32</sup>, the shift in restorative justice is to make the victim a key actor in addressing the criminal act, "An underlying assumption that the offender can benefit or be 'repaired' by participating in the restorative process". An example of the restorative justice approach is victim offender mediation.

In the developed countries, a partnership approach is one of the recent developments to crime prevention. "Crime prevention and community safety lie beyond the competence of any one single agency. Crime by its nature is multi faceted, both in its causes and effects. And yet the

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<sup>32</sup> Lab Steven (2004), "Crime Prevention; Approaches, Practices and Evaluation", Anderson

social response to crime is segmented and compartmentalized ... a partnership approach allows the coordination of expertise and the pouring of information as resources".<sup>33</sup>

Imprisoning young offenders does not receive support for most of the professionals in Sweden neither do corporal punishment at home or in school. Contrary to the popular adage that sparing the rod spoils the child, this form of deterrence is seen as counterproductive to the extent that it promotes violence. Durrant<sup>34</sup> has reviewed the views of various authors on corporal punishment which includes arguments that it is harmful to children and predicts higher levels of aggression, that it should be there as a disciplinary tool and its abolishment is an infringement on parental rights, it violates a child's right to physical integrity and that the interests of the child should prevail whenever the interest of the parents and those of the child conflict. Sweden was the first country to abolish corporal punishment; the Swedish law states "Children are entitled to care, security and a good upbringing. Children are to be treated with respect for their person, and individuality, and may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment (Chapter 6, Section 1, Föraldrabalken<sup>35</sup>). In the report examining trends in youth crime since the abolishment of corporal punishment, Durrant concludes, "Swedish youth have not become unruly, under socialized or self-destructive following the passing of the 1979 corporal punishment ban.

Arguing against corporal punishment, Hirschi<sup>36</sup> notes that "control theory predicts that change in certainty, severity or alacrity of such punishment will have little effect on crime rates... criminal justice penalties are typically too far removed in time for individuals low on self control to incorporate them into decision-making, however harsh such penalties might be"

The role of young offender's institution in rehabilitation has not been without question marks, the extent to which these institutions succeed in reforming and reducing recidivism has been doubted. Professionals emphasis on early intervention to the extent that some belief that we may not need these institutions if there are early and effective measures to prevent criminality at an early age. But there might be limitation for success in reforming offenders, one problem with those institutions is that they work with all the children even if they have different

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<sup>33</sup> Crawford Adam (1998), "Crime Prevention and Community Safety; Politics", policies and practices, Longman, Harlow

<sup>34</sup> Durrant Joan (2000), "Trends in Youth Crime and Well-Being since the Abolition of Corporal Punishment in Sweden, Youth Society 31; 437

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Foraldrabalk-1949381\\_sfs-1949-381/](http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Foraldrabalk-1949381_sfs-1949-381/)

<sup>36</sup> Hirschi Travis (2002), "Causes of Delinquency" Transaction, New Brunswick

problems but are kept together and influence each other, a bad mixture. This refers to social contagion where ideas, beliefs and behaviour relevant to crime are transmitted in a social environment.

### **B. Is juvenile prevention a priority?**

Juvenile prevention is definitely a priority in Sweden and focus is given to drug prevention and bullying.

Drug use is one of the means of predicting or identifying potential problems in society. Targeting those involved in drugs may serve to alleviate the problem of crime<sup>37</sup>. Whereas there is a strong correlation between drugs and crime, the extent to which drugs cause crime and vice versa is unclear since the relationship is complex. Since drug use causes criminality to some extent, then drug prevention and treatment programs could serve to curb crime. Sweden has been hailed for its restrictive drug policy, which aims at a drug free society. The levels of drug use in Sweden (0.44% of the population aged 15-64) are slightly below the EU average, (UNODC 200738). Mackenzie (2000:46739) reviewed what is promising in crime prevention and noted that drug courts combining both rehabilitation and criminal justice control were a promising strategy.

Lab notes that prevention programs that aim to keep individuals from initially using drugs usually target juveniles since it is during adolescence that most people experiment with drugs, such strategies involves giving information about drugs, building self esteem, handling peer pressure and learning to make choices.

The need for early and swift measures when a person commits crime was also identified as crime prevention strategy. The belief underlying this view is the sometimes some offenders commit crimes but no one responds. They walk away with it; this could have been their first shoplifting but builds up to a life of criminality. It then becomes a difficult task to try to entangle the youngster from the intricate web of criminality. The need to look beyond the person, a consideration for their social environment particularly the home situation was also proposed. In other words, in case an offence has already occurred, the response should be fast and firm. Society should look at the underlying causes, why they have started shoplifting for example and when that is found, there is need to look at the entire background, are the parents employed... You have to help the parents sometimes, providing help to parents with drug problem for example would go a long way in helping the child as well.

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<sup>37</sup> Se referens nr. 27

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/annual\\_report\\_2007/AR06\\_fullreport.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/annual_report_2007/AR06_fullreport.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> MacKenzie Doris (2000), Evidence-Based Corrections: Identifying what works. Crime Delinquency 46; 457

The first time a child commits a crime like takes a candy bar in the store, it is important that there is a reaction to it because if you get away with something in the first place, it is easier to try to get away with it a second time. It is important to intervene early even if you think it is a really small thing, it is important that the child notice that if the people think it is serious, then it is something that I shouldn't do anymore... Young offenders make a significant percent of criminals; they require special attention since they are immature, have a potentially long life ahead of them and are easier to reform than adults. From this point of departure, any efforts aimed at addressing juvenile delinquency from the onset can effectively reduce crime in society.

Early prevention is a crime reduction strategy whose time has come. Challenges remain for sure, but the evidence base is robust and growing steadily. Like a strong and sound investment, early prevention may prove more and more difficult for decision makers to exclude.

If the measures against crime taken within the judicial system are to be effective, it is necessary to cooperate with actors outside the judicial system. The reverse is also true. Measures against crime taken by those outside the judicial system's agencies must be given support by the Swedish Police Service and other actors within the judicial system.

It is important that those who are most familiar with a community's problems conduct crime prevention efforts at local level. Crime reduction efforts require cooperation and involvement at all levels. Crime prevention efforts must therefore be adapted to the situation in the community. There are currently some 300 local crime prevention councils in Sweden's municipalities and districts. Various actors such as the police service, schools, social services and the business sector cooperate to prevent crime and increase security. In addition, many values-based organisations at local level actively contribute in crime prevention efforts.

Local crime prevention efforts must be based on the knowledge of what works in practice if they are to create the potential for achieving good results. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention has been tasked with ensuring that crime prevention actors at local level have access to knowledge so as to be able to prevent crime and insecurity, based on local conditions. To help the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention support these efforts effectively, the Riksdag has been allocating special funds for this purpose for several years.

### **C. Juvenile Crime Prevention strategy budget**

It is unfortunately not possible to give any Juvenile Crime Prevention strategy budget for Sweden. The authorities contacted in this matter pointed out that prevention work is a very wide concept and depends very much on what is included in it. One could combine the annual

budget for the police and probation services together with the budget for schools and social services. One could also argue that budget for the Swedish regions should also been included.

### **III. Promising practises in early juvenile crime prevention**

Crucial to the success of any national early prevention strategy is the ability of a council to support the implementation and delivery of evidence-based programs at the local level. National crime prevention councils in other countries that have been successful in Sweden have emphasized the three main mechanisms:

- Collaboration with other government departments
- Development of local problem-solving partnerships
- Involvement of citizens

#### Good examples of juvenile crime prevention work in Sweden

There are plenty of projects and actions being conducted in Sweden in order to keep youth away from crime. It is extremely difficult to choose a couple of those as they all contribute to the solution; they are all a part of the puzzle. But I have chosen to describe the following as they have been evaluated, are based on studies and for most of them are national projects covering big parts of Sweden. Regarding the SSPF information platform, its uniqueness and success convinced me to include it in the report.

#### - Social Action Groups

Gang criminality is a raising problem in Sweden and all actors are now involved in helping youth with some kind of exit programs. But the police alone cannot handle crime problem, there are factors underlying crime and disorder in the community that cannot be handled solely through arrest, prosecution and incarceration. Across Europe, North America and Australasia crime prevention has become intimately bound up with the proliferation of a partnership approach where various relevant agencies, organizations and the public are summoned into being active co-producers of crime prevention and public safety, Crawford (1998). Sweden is no exception and has not been left behind in this regard, a very good example of this partnership approach in Social Action Groups or SIG (Sociala insatsgrupperna). It is an initiative from the government from 2012 that brings together the police, social services, the schools, the unemployment agency, the local business actors and the civil society. The initiative gives the groups the mission to cooperate in order to propose the criminal youth individual support that fits just his/her situation. The social services have the head responsibility for the work of the group, in the city where the youth lives. The goal of this initiative is to fight recruitment to criminality and gangs and to help youth who already

started a career but want to leave it. Those social groups are really about quick and concrete actions and the success is really based on the cooperation between different authorities.

- **Information platform - SSPF**

A useful complement to the social action groups is the forum for information exchange SSPF between schools (inclusive extracurricular activities), social services and the police. This forum was launched in Gothenburg. The exchange of information about kids in a risk-zone has always been considered as relevant. But this forum goes deeper and allows the functioning of a settled structure with continuous information on youth that drop from schools, commit offenses, have an addiction or live in dysfunctional relations or homes. All neighbourhoods in the city of Gothenburg have access to this system. But this system is also based on the authorisation given by the parents to the three instances to brake the usual secrecy and to share information about their kid.

- **Young KRIS projects**

This organisation started as a project with grants from the Swedish Inheritance Fund. It has developed fast and successfully and is since 2010 is an independent organisation. The uniqueness of Young KRIS is that this organisation was created by youths and for youths, a truly peers-to-peers organisation. The organisation that is present in 14 cities around Sweden offers the youth a meeting place, a new social network free from drugs/alcohol and criminality (zero tolerance) and offers support for youth that want to change their lives or to get a new start. The organisation programs are based on tools that can be adapted to any individual's situation. They do not give the youth "ready-to-go" solutions but offer them tools to find what they want to achieve and how to be helped on the way.

The organisation offers its members early prevention actions that aim to offer youth very early actions in cooperation with the authorities. Young KRIS offers the youth a contact person 1 and if it is necessary the contact person will be affected to this youth and follow him/her under 3 months. The social services are paying for this service. When a youth commit an offence is of utmost importance to act as quickly as possible to "stop the process" and discourage the youth to continue on that path. This method is very successful but requires high collaboration with the police, the social services, the prosecutor, the probation services, etc. A working group where all the actors are represented is available in all cities where the early intervention project is run.

The early intervention is available to youth between 13 and 25 that:

- o Are released after trial or from custody
- o Are suspected of drug offenses and released from custody after drug testing
- o Are suspected of other offenses and released after interrogation

- **Mentors in Violence Prevention – MVP**

This is also a project financed by the Swedish Inheritance found and the owner of the project is the organisation called men for gender equality (män för jämställdhet – MFJ). The long-term objective is to reduce gender-based violence, including sexual, homophobic and dating violence. The mid-term objective is to break the culture of passiveness and silence around violence and replace it by social norms of caring, responsibility and leadership. The short-term objective is to increase the readiness for and the frequency of bystander interventions among youth and adults working with youth. The universal and primary violence prevention program Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is implemented by staff and youth within the institution/organization itself. Guidance, training and support are provided by Freedom from Violence, a branch of Men for Gender Equality Sweden.

The core of the program consists of 7 sessions with groups of youth, providing training in

- o The identification of different forms and degrees of gender-based violence and
- o Skills in bystander intervention.

The bystander approach has been found to be exceptionally useful in primary prevention due its capacity to reduce defensiveness– everyone is addressed as a potential change agent. The groups sessions are supplemented by policy development, campaigns, staff training etc.

The program involves professionals from school staffs, coaches, after-school program staff and experts from Freedom from Violence. The effect of MVP has been studied and documented in several published articles in the United States. The results have in part been reproduced in the Swedish context.

#### **IV. Evaluation mechanisms for early juvenile crime prevention program**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet - Brå) - an agency under the Ministry of Justice - is a centre for research and development within the judicial system. Brå primarily works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work. The

Council also produces Sweden's official crime statistics, evaluates reforms, conducts research to develop new knowledge and provides support to local crime prevention work. The results of Brå's work are a basis for decision makers within the judicial system, the Parliament and the Government. Brå often works in collaboration with other organisations and public sector agencies. Brå has been in existence since 1974.

Regarding independent projects run by the civil society it is quite usual that the organisation that grants the projects is responsible for ordering external evaluations of those. As an example the Swedish Inheritance Fund just ordered an external revision of the projects financed for the last 15 years and the report will be presented by Thomas Ölund in Stockholm on June 9th 2014.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

Human beings are not genetically predisposed to criminality; they pick up the vice through the process of socialization. However, being a male means you are more likely to offend (or be seen to offend) as compared to females.

### **Recommendation nr .1: Need of harmonisation of legislations**

In Sweden, there is an urgent need to harmonize legislation touching on confidentiality because this law limit information sharing between schools and social services for example and inhibits rehabilitation efforts. This is particularly true of information held of past juvenile offenders by social services departments and which cannot be easily transferred to schools. This law inhibits the cooperation between agencies working with offenders, which the justice system seeks to promote (see the promising project in Gothenburg SSPF).

### **Recommendation nr. 2: More cooperation needed where all partners are on the same level**

The partnership approach to community safety is a must for the success even if it can seem that the police dominate the partnership and are likely to dictate the direction that such efforts take. There is more that can be done to the partnership especially finding more corporate partners who are willing to sponsor youths at risk in vocational and recreational activities. All actors of the society have some kind of expertise and put it together it could reach wonderful results. The problem there is that some agencies feel that they own the truth and are not ready to share experience with others. It is really a shame that some authorities refuses to see cooperation with for example the civil society as a key for success. And if the cooperation is taking place, it is often hard to convince them that the expertise brought by the civil sector has a price and that they should pay for the services.

### **Recommendation nr.3: Targeted actions**

In order to reach long-term effects it is of utmost importance that actions for keeping youth away from crime are specially defined and target a special group or place. It can be to identify the "hot spots" i schools or in a city and to build the action plan from there. It is also important to understand that one actor on his own cannot solve the problem; there is an urgent need for cooperation.

### **Recommendation nr.4: More work necessary in the field of integration**

So, let us assume you are a boy born in a developing country facing disruptions due to violence, you witnesses horrifying acts of violence, you could be a child soldier, this means no chance to get education or to learn how to relate with others.

Your family manages to seek asylum in Sweden and they secure an apartment in one of the segregated neighbourhoods in Gothenburg city. You receive no psychological intervention as a way of trying to resolve the past traumatic experiences and to try to make you adaptable to the Swedish society that has at its core equality, democracy and freedom. Your parents cannot seek gainful employment because they cannot speak Swedish and are not job ready, they will live on social welfare. The money is essentially to buy life necessities, so you cannot get your parent to buy the latest iPod, mobile phone, and fur winter jacket. Thanks to the mass media and especially advertising, you will experience a lot of stress to acquire material stuff in the new society. You cannot join a club to play your favorite sport because that costs money too. Your parents will be confused, affected by the loosening of the extended family networks, culturally rejected and you will experience a moral vacuum by abandoning your religion, you will not be sure whether to adapt to the culture of your parent or that of the new society.

You will easily join school, learn the language fast and about the new culture to the extent that your parent may lose control especially when you start translating for them and they don't know how most things work. Due to the segregation and lack of recreational activities, you together with youths from the neighbourhood hang around together in groups; you come to learn of the criminal gangs, the bikers and so on. To you, criminality is a short cut in life, you know your parents don't have jobs and you are likely to end in a similar status.

You join a criminal gang and start targeting upper and middle class Swedish youths in the neighbouring areas and robbing them of the material valuables that you need so badly to belong, the latest mobile phones and music gadgets. Since the Government withdrew field assistants citing the need for financial cut down, you are less likely to meet a social worker that will guide you or offer alternatives.

Just like in other segregated areas, the police patrols are more frequent in this neighbourhood and soon the long arm of the law will catch up with you. A trial is held and the verdict is delivered, you will be sent to Fagared, a youth offender's institution in the outskirts of the city. You will spend some years in the institution but maybe released earlier if you are of good behaviour. Contrary to the conditions that you are familiar with in offender institutions back home, you might find yourself in a single room, with a stereo and a common room where you can watch TV and use a play station. Until recently, you could enjoy sauna, you can play with other youths, will be taught by a teacher and have an option to do music or study computer. You will enjoy good meals, three times a day and on top of that, earns some monthly income for making your room tidy.

You mix with other juvenile offenders who have committed all sorts of crime, from violent crimes to drug abuse, 70% of those in the institution will most likely have a foreign

background like you, you will feel like being in a family and in this way criminality is learnt, when you leave the institution, you might carry a few more criminal lessons. Since the rate of recidivism is as high as 70%, you may as well start looking forward to going back there again, you might by now be abusing drugs. There will be no follow up, the assumption is that you have reformed. You will find your way to school, thanks to the law that forbids information sharing even within Government agencies, the new school will never know you have a criminal record. Even in high school, you might never get real contact and be integrated with the Swedish people because you will most likely be attending a school where the majority of students are immigrants. You will continue influencing other students who are mainly from a similar ethnic background. Your parents may not be active around you; they may not even attend PTA meetings because they cannot understand Swedish. When the school finally discovers of you behaviour, you might be chased away from school for good. You will be labelled a deviant, a juvenile out to spoil others and a criminal. You will be remanded in police custody and even subjected to court appearance. Society will already have imposed a label on him, you will feel that your identity is already spoilt and will even want to associate with the new label. Other youths may look upon you as being famous and try to emulate him. You may serve several prison sentences but the punishment will not be a deterrence neither will it be severe enough according to your judgment and comparing what you are familiar with, opportunities to commit an offence will seem to crop up in your path. You will adapt a criminal way of life and since there is no death sentence in Sweden while the life sentence usually means ten years, you can always look forward to going back to the community.

It is evident that being from a foreign ethnic background is a risk factor to crime in Sweden, not because of biogenetic makeup but due to social strain and disorganization that newly arrived immigrant youths experience. In that case the best prevention programs will be those that work against family disruptions and for integration.

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