To frame the Swedish case, this chapter briefly reviews some of the current international literature in criminology on crime prevention activities aimed at youth in rural settings. The role of community in dealing with the problem in rural municipalities through crime prevention initiatives is given special attention. The chapter closes with examples from the Swedish rural context and concluding remarks.

Crime prevention and youth in the rural context: an international perspective

Violence and addiction to alcohol or drugs are often common concerns in crime prevention worldwide. Rural areas do not appear to provide strong deterrence to these problems for young people (Johnson et al., 2008). Although different strategies are implemented to tackle crime, violence, and addiction, the role of community is identified as fundamental to the prevention of crime and substance abuse among youngsters. Some actors, such as schools (e.g., Shears, Edwards, & Stanley, 2006) and local collaborations (e.g., Albert et al., 2011), have a direct effect on preventing substance abuse, disorder, and crime. The role of community is argued to also have an indirect effect, through culture and norms that may discourage or encourage addiction and crime. International examples of crime prevention (CP) initiatives based on community engagement, though not extensive, are briefly discussed in the next few paragraphs.

In the United States, Hawkins (1999) suggested a system that empowers communities to organize themselves to engage in outcome-focused prevention planning. This model for prevention planning uses the tools of prevention science and is called Communities That Care (CTC). The method includes school surveys that reliably measure risk, protection, delinquency, and drug use outcomes across states and ethnic groups applied to a number of study areas in the United States. In Europe, CTC has been tested in England, Wales, Scotland, and the Netherlands. A more recent example in the United States was reported by Albert et al. (2011), who assess community-based programs against overdose among youth in western North Carolina, where unintentional-poisoning mortality rates had drastically increased since 2009. The overdose prevention program
involved five components that rely heavily on community involvement through monitoring and surveillance data, prevention of overdoses, and face-to-face meetings.

Community norms against substance abuse play an important protective role against drug use (Collins, Harris, Knowlton, Shamblen, & Thompson, 2011). While little research has looked at the indirect impact of community, Beyers, Toumbourou, Catalano, Arthur, and Hawkins (2004) find that in the United States community norms favorable to substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana affect use among young people. Changes in the community culture are crucial to obtain good results in prevention. Another example in this direction is reviewed by Payne, Berg, and Sun (2005). The authors discuss the results of a youth violence prevention plan using a rural and growing community in the United States. They discuss the advantages of adopting an “empowered approach” to develop youth violence prevention, together with policy makers, practitioners, and citizens. Details of the approach are presented along with issues that arose during the research and planning process.

Johnson et al. (2008) suggest that community prevention efforts should focus on reaching rural areas and segmenting program content based on youngsters’ needs, which might differ from group to group. The authors found, for instance, that white teenagers from that particular region of the United States would benefit from an emphasis on preventing tobacco and alcohol use, whilst non-white teenagers would benefit from an emphasis on preventing violence and victimization. In the United Kingdom, youth crime and anti-social behavior are common problems associated with crime prevention in rural areas, also linked to alcohol and drug addiction (e.g., Forsyth & Barnard, 1999).

Internationally, CP initiatives have been criticized because they implement interventions that may negatively impact young people (White, 1998). Interventions are often not intentionally directed at young people alone, but young people still feel most affected by them as they tend to “hang around” together in groups in public places, especially teenagers. White (1998, p. 131) points out that some CP strategies run the risk of over-controlling young people rather than addressing the structural causes of youthful offending or antisocial behavior.

Keeping these issues in mind, the next section reports on experiences with crime prevention devoted to young people in selected rural areas in Sweden. Email surveys, an analysis of a crime prevention database, media excerpts, and face-to-face interviews were used to capture examples of current CP initiatives.

**Addressing youth problems in rural Sweden**

Youth-related problems are the main CP concern, transformed into different types of intervention, from early offending careers, to violence and alcohol and drug addiction. CP projects funded by the Swedish National Crime Prevention Council (BRÅ) between 2004 and 2010 were evaluated by the types of municipalities that receive funding, the types of projects, and whether any assessment of these projects was done by the group.
CP projects funded by BRÅ focused mostly on youth-related issues ($N=37$). Within those projects that deal with youth problems, 48 percent deal with victimization (violence), about 43 percent are related to offending, antisocial behavior with drug and alcohol abuse, and about 10 percent are devoted to early offending prevention focused on young children (Figure 13.1). Note that the funding is directed to CP interventions in both large and small towns.

To investigate further how CP groups in these projects work on a daily basis with youth-related problems, a short email survey was sent to all CP groups in rural municipalities. The email survey helped to select eight municipalities which were further investigated for case studies using face-to-face interviews, as discussed in the next section. Members of CP groups were asked to discuss the most relevant short- and long-term actions they would take to solve the problem below.

*A small group of young people are causing various disturbances in various public places. (They were found drinking alcohol outside their school and they have been engaged in acts of vandalism on public property, fights with other youngsters and minor thefts.) Residents in the area are very upset by the young people’s lack of respect for others. Although they have a foreign background, they were born and grew up in the municipality. Residents have now come to see you as a representative of the local crime prevention council (or equivalent) asking for help to solve the problem. What does your local crime prevention council do to address the problem and ensure that it does not happen again?*

Getting youngsters “busy” is declared to be a common long-term action to prevent youth problems. Youth problems are composed of a variety of issues, alcohol and drug addiction, truancy, acts of public disorder, thefts. However, it is surprising how unvaryingly CP members declare addressing the hypothetical
youth problem in their community. Most CP councils declared that they would rely on cooperation between police, school, social services, and youth recreation centers. There are some specific features in the way they interpret the scenario. Some of these CP groups would call for involvement of young people themselves and their families to solve these problems. Others suggest more social control in the form of security guards, police, and safety walkers.

We usually put in extra security, in the form of guards. This is to get a clear picture of the problem . . . we talk with staff, municipal police, it is an agreement between the police and the local crime prevention group. The group discusses how to deal with the problem and arrives at a common decision about what to do, and based on it we act. In this case, contact with the families is essential. We try to break the pattern. In the long run, we inform teachers and recreation staff, talk to the safety walkers and allow security guards especially to check out the area.

(CP representative, southern Sweden)

Existing collaboration between schools, police, social services and youth center would be important, although we should have that at a much earlier stage. In this case it seems to have gone too far! The municipality has a combined entity for social services and health in schools for children up to 19 years old. This unit should work hard with these young people and their families.

(CP representative, northern Sweden)

Many representatives could relate the scenario to the everyday reality they face in their municipality. For those who already deal with such youth-related problems, collaboration between local actors is considered essential.

This scenario is our reality today in one of the villages we have here in the municipality. It is a complex problem, and the residents of the village feel that the police never come to them. We called a meeting with residents in the area so they could talk about their frustration. Schools, social services, police and recreation will collaborate on urgent individual cases. Then we had a meeting with the young people and listened to them.

(CP representative, northern Sweden)

We have had a similar problem here. The individual actors in the network have the foundation of their expertise and resources in working to resolve the issue. . . . Efforts have solved the problem and are expected to ensure that problems of this kind do not arise again.

(CP representative, southern Sweden)

Surprisingly, the CP representatives do not address the potentially special needs of young people with parents who are foreign born (the scenario specifically highlights this group). Some CP representatives were upset by the formulation of
Youth-related challenges

the hypothetical scenario, calling it offensive and particularly “picking on young people with a foreign background.” However, even this group of representatives could not conceive the idea that youngsters with a foreign background may have at that particular stage of their lives special needs of schooling, socialization, and community participation. It was initially expected that CP groups would engage these youngsters more often in order to identify their needs and arrange appropriate actions. For example, limitations to the Swedish language might be a problem to be tackled by the school if the youngsters had a foreign background, as it was the case in the hypothetical scenario. The homogeneity in the answers from the CP representatives is certainly associated with the “infrastructure” in place and service routines rooted in Sweden’s welfare system at municipal level. They tend to answer in a similar way because they tend to follow BRÅ guidelines as well as a number of CP models that tend to be used nationwide as examples of “good practices.” Examples of these models are the Kronoberg model and EFFEKT, both discussed in the next section of the chapter.

**Interviews with CP representatives**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in 2010 (in Swedish) with representatives of local CP councils in eight municipalities (49 interviews in total, about six individuals per study area). They were policy officers, school representatives, members of women’s shelters, county council members, social services, other NGO members, and citizens. Findings indicate that CP groups approach youth problems in rural areas in two ways.

The first way that CP groups deal youth problems in rural areas is by focusing on young people who are already causing concern (e.g., because of truancy or fighting) and may be labeled locally as “troublemakers,” perhaps similar to the group described in the hypothetical scenario in the previous subsection. Targeted action is therefore directed at this group only, often involving school, parents, and, in more serious cases, the police and social services. Among those with confirmed problems of addiction, there is a specific drug abuse program with frequent checks, in at least two municipalities. Collaborative work between police, school, families, and social services is declared essential for this group.

The second way is to implement preventive actions directed at all youngsters in the municipality. In this case, the goal of these actions is to keep young people entertained, away from the “boredom of the countryside,” involved in structured or semi-structured activities, under the supervision of adults. Events conducted in these meeting places may not be associated with crime prevention per se, but most believe that “keeping youth busy” is a good way to prevent crime. These events can be festivals and, on a daily basis, youth recreation centers, common in rural municipalities.

Youth activities at recreation centers are still considered the most popular type of action adopted by CP groups to prevent youth problems (Figure 13.2). These centers play an important social role, because they may constitute the only “parent-free” zone devoted to leisure in the community. No doubt that these
recreation centers indisputably play an important role in the social life of the community, however, the role of these youth recreation centers for CP has been long disputed. For instance, Mahoney and Stattin (2000) show in a Swedish case study that youth participation in low-structure leisure activities, such as the ones that take place in youth recreation centers, was associated with high levels of aggressive behavior, alcohol/drug use, delinquency, and crime. Internationally, Bursik (1999) concludes that better knowledge is needed about “communities’ supervisory and socialization capabilities” of which these recreation centers are part. There is no agreement among those interviewed. One CP representative argues in favor of this approach, whilst another highlights the challenges of organizing youth recreational activities within this framework. In the Swedish study areas, interviewees believe that CP activities play an important role for the health and quality of life of local youth:

The first time we had [the festival] we thought it should be drug free … and it did not work so well. We ended up with drunk people and/or drugs anyway.

(Church representative, the north, high crime, new economy, quoted in Ceccato and Dolmén, 2013, p. 105)

We have to reach out to young people, for children and young people who really need us and believe in what we say…. It’s definitely a challenge!

(Politician in the Police Board, the north, high crime, old economy)

In terms of organization, CP groups in northern Sweden diverge from those in southern groups. It is unclear at this stage how much these differences affect the crime preventive work directed at young people.

Three important differences can be identified. First, whilst all southern CP groups indicate having a formal structure, no northern municipality has a group working under the name “local crime prevention council.” Moreover, northern municipalities have a looser organization (for details see Ceccato and Dolmén, 2011). Second, CP groups in the north also declare lower levels of cooperation
within and outside the group. Also, CP activities driven in northern municipalities tend to be often motivated as a general health and social service and less as crime preventive actions than they do in the southern CP groups.

One of the barriers mentioned by the interviewees was the Swedish legislation on data secrecy and handling. Information-sharing between local authorities supports the family and the school, so they can prevent children from embarking on a possible criminal career. Most of the CP representatives believe that although necessary, data secrecy is a major hindrance to CP work. Ceccato and Dolmén (2011) confirm that there are complaints that social services fail to get permission to share information between authorities which impede them to help youngsters at risk.

CP groups deal with youth problems by implementing similar types of projects, yet, some of them are organized differently. There are no apparent differences between municipalities with relatively higher crime rates from those with less crime. There are, of course, exceptions. Ceccato and Dolmén (2011) exemplify that chronic addiction problems common in some northern municipalities demand a constant constellation of experts in CP groups that are found more sporadically in the southern municipalities. More CP groups in the south declare that they deal with conflict between youth groups which is ethnically motivated more than in the northern case studies. Most of these projects directed at youth do not involve any formal assessment. Any follow up, if it happens, is limited to simple assessment procedures or reports describing the activities. In Sweden, CP initiatives in rural municipalities may never be assessed to the same extent as those in urban areas because of limited funding and skills of the CP members. One difficulty in following up is that in certain cases, CP groups haven’t stated the initial goals for the local actions in the first place.

I: The plan that you use, have you set any specific goals with the work?
R: We have no goals of our own. We have a drug and alcohol policy action. It is not completely implemented. So I use more crime prevention goals where I work, so it’s very diffuse…
I: No milestones either?
R: No measurable milestones, no plan for follow-up more than the follow-up and the reports that I write here every year.

(Safety coordinator, the north, high crime, new economy)

Seasonal problems (violence during the tourist season, for example) impose specific demands on CP work, requiring more concentrated action during particular events or seasons. This was expected particularly for the so-called “new economy” municipalities, those that are more service-oriented and regularly receive an inflow of tourists at particular times of the year. One of the interviewees in the south describes the challenges with seasonal problems related to youth in the summer, whilst in the north it seems to be considered in the framework of daily CP activities.

We try to do some stuff with this summer mess…. It’s about serving alcohol, information on the prohibition of alcohol consumption in the city.
There must be a functioning sobering unit. It’s about police patrolling operations, supervision of taverns, etc.

(Safety coordinator, the south, high crime, new economy)

I cannot say that we are targeting a winter season here, but it’s probably more about looking at our own youth, what goes on around schools.

(Alcohol manager and safety coordinator, the north, high crime, new economy)

Efforts are made to improve personal skills and improve the knowledge base among those involved in CP but also for parents and other adults working directly with children and youth. About one-third of the interviewed representatives spend time improving their skills, especially to deal with “new” challenges, such as drugs and alcohol sold over the internet.

We are partly adopting the EFFEKT Model (Örebro Prevention Program), and my colleague was the one who trained us, so we can support our own community with the skills. But we’re not there yet. Another is to have a structured training program for drugs of abuse and a clear program of action when they suspect abuse of any kind.

(Alcohol coordinator, the north, high crime, new economy)

We need to take a long perspective of 20 years in CP, for children and their families…. We gather skills and knowledge and have a common strategy – counties, municipalities and NGOs … to minimize the risk factors.

(Youth coordinator, the north, high crime, old economy)

Drugs. From alcohol to harder things…. We get depressed because it is easy to find websites where you can order drugs on the internet. Things happen fast. When [the government] does not have time to classify them as drugs, there are new ones to buy online.

(Alcohol coordinator, the north, high crime, new economy)

It is therefore not a surprise that the southern high-crime, new-economy municipality shows a high degree of collaborative work in CP with other municipalities, regions, and organizations also universities; an exception when compared to the other studied municipalities. The same applies for the northern high-crime municipality in preparation for the winter season (Ceccato & Dolmén, 2011). Table 13.1 summarizes the main characteristics of CP groups’ activities in the eight municipalities.

Experiences from CP work with young people

The Kronoberg model on Gotland

To curb violence in public spaces, the police in the region of Växjö, in southern Sweden, developed the “Kronoberg model.” Although applied in most of the
### Table 13.1 Youth-related problems and CP activities: case studies in northern and southern rural municipalities in Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case studies – north</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Local CP</th>
<th>Internal cooperation</th>
<th>External cooperation</th>
<th>Good examples</th>
<th>Situational CP</th>
<th>Evidence-based CP</th>
<th>CP challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High crime New Åre</td>
<td>Youth violence, alcohol, drugs (including illegal alcohol), graffiti, theft (winter)</td>
<td>No (but SamBU)</td>
<td>Police, social services, child and youth services, leisure activities, school, church</td>
<td>Municipal, regional</td>
<td>“Rondellen projekt,” Busstrafiken, Fryshusen cooperation, Aunt Anna’s Café, STAD projekt</td>
<td>Police walks, cooperation with pubs</td>
<td>Limited, police data, reports at national level</td>
<td>Economic resources, better cooperation, better skills and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low crime New Storuman</td>
<td>Alcohol, drugs, criminal damage, youth violence, seasonal problems (winter), temporary labor force (summer, berry pickers), domestic violence</td>
<td>No (FRIDA and LINNEA group)</td>
<td>School, police, health care, psychiatric care, social services, children’s and mothers’ care, church, women’s shelter organization</td>
<td>Municipal, regional</td>
<td>“FRIDA,” LINNEA, LINUS, Stad project (limited alcohol purchase), “sick cottage,” “Storuman’s safety model,” Salut project</td>
<td>Parent support, invited lectures in schools, CCTV mostly in private places</td>
<td>Limited, used in specific projects, including maps, drug use survey</td>
<td>Better contact with youngsters, liberal attitude toward alcohol use, limited economic resources, better engagement of representatives of each group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Dorotea</td>
<td>Theft, criminal damage, alcohol, violence between youngsters in school (including ethnic minorities), drugs, domestic violence</td>
<td>No (Samrådsgrupp)</td>
<td>Police, social services, leisure activities, school, child care, health care, church, student association</td>
<td>Limited municipal and regional</td>
<td>“Safety walks,” Ungdomsstjärnst, specific actions against drugs, “TRIO projekt”</td>
<td>Parent support, CCTV, invited lectures in schools</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Economic resources, secrecy law, better cooperation including regional council, improve skills of CP actors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*continued*
Table 13.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case studies – south</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Local CP</th>
<th>Internal cooperation</th>
<th>External cooperation</th>
<th>Good examples</th>
<th>Situational CP</th>
<th>Evidence-based CP</th>
<th>CP challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High crime</td>
<td>Gotland</td>
<td>Youth isolation, violence, alcohol, drugs, vandalism, seasonal problems (spring/summer)</td>
<td>Yes, SafeGotland</td>
<td>School, police, leisure activities, social services, health department, churches, witness support association, Red Cross, Save the Children Sweden</td>
<td>Municipal, regional, national (e.g., university) and international</td>
<td>“Wonderful youth,” “Theme weeks” by recreation groups, “Every other water,” safety walks</td>
<td>CCTV in schools, safety walks, invited lecturers, children’s home</td>
<td>Limited, reports, crime statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Markaryd</td>
<td>Social disturbance, ethnic conflicts (anti-Semitic groups) burglary, drugs and alcohol, street racing, vandalism, seasonal problems (Markaryd market, summer)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, police, leisure activities, social services, witness support association</td>
<td>Municipal, regional, national</td>
<td>“Moped project,” neighborhood watch</td>
<td>Safety walks, police, CCTV, neighborhood watch schemes, “Moped project”</td>
<td>Police data, safety survey, CAN survey</td>
<td>Better cooperation, regional council, and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low crime</td>
<td>Soderköping</td>
<td>Vandalism, car theft, youth violence, public disorder (chicken races)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>School, police, social services, child and youth services, municipality, tenants’ association headed by a safety coordinator</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>“Dare to be,” leisure associations, patrol reports, CCTV, schools, vandalism</td>
<td>Private guards, CCTV, police, safety walks</td>
<td>Limited, police data reports, safety surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Gnösjö</td>
<td>Vandalism, alcohol, drugs, youth violence, theft</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Police, emergency services, social services, churches, industry, pensioners’ association, Järnbäraren</td>
<td>Limited, municipal and regional</td>
<td>“Youth at risk zone,” “Coolt-projekt,” “Tjejmässan,” safety walks</td>
<td>CCTV in schools, safety walks, security guards</td>
<td>Police data reports</td>
<td>Short-term projects, attract youngsters, Internet crime, practical actions toward high perceived lack of safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kronoberg model aims to prevent young people from drinking alcohol in public places and ultimately helps to reduce youth violence in these settings. The method involves the police intervening systematically with young people in town who are drunk or carrying alcohol and pouring out the alcohol onsite. Meanwhile the police call the parents, for instance, to take their children home. If the parents are not around, the next step is to contact social services. This also applies to those under-age young people who find themselves with other young people carrying alcohol. The model also involves long-term measures such as having meetings with parents about young people and alcohol. The police also focus on those who illegally sell alcohol to or procure alcohol for young people. This is important, given that organized crime is responsible for a significant proportion of smuggled liquor. The second component is the police’s investigative measures against those supplying alcohol to young people, that is, against alcohol peddlers. This is done by defining a special chain of responsibility, which is established in the procedure for investigating alcohol offenses, to make sure that the investigative work is staffed by police who also take part in the field operations followed by a report. These procedures are followed for every suspected alcohol offense. The alcohol that is forfeited is documented and followed up. An investigation is carried out to take legal action against people committing alcohol peddling offenses and other alcohol offenses that occur. While this may seem an obvious enforcement of the law, the Kronoberg model offers a structure for working more systematically and demands resources devoted to actually investigating such crimes.

The Kronoberg model has been implemented in five of the eight areas of study, fully or partially. Gotland was one of the municipalities evaluated by Brottsförebyggande rådet (2009). Table 13.2 shows the number of reports (and percentage change) on alcohol forfeitures, alcohol-related offenses, and assault among young people in each district during the months of the project in 2008, and the corresponding months in the years 2006–2007. According to the Kronoberg model, resources should be set aside especially to carry out initiatives in the field and perform investigations into alcohol offenses. Through this, information is concentrated to a group of police officers. However, in Gotland no special investigation organization was created, and the investigations were distributed and handled as before. As expected, the police have been more active in detecting alcohol-related offenses (illegal sale or possession of alcoholic drinks), and forfeitures and their efforts are reflected in changes in statistics before and after the application of the model, including the reduction in violence involving young people.

Although not all municipalities studied showed a reduction in assault, the experience shows that when young people were prevented from drinking in a public setting, fewer young people needed treatment for alcohol poisoning. Police working with the Kronoberg model are more active in places where young people consume alcohol and, therefore, come into contact with and open more
Table 13.2 Before and after the Kronoberg model in 2008: Gotland and Karlstad

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol forfeitures</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>–59%</td>
<td>127 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol-related offenses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>385%</td>
<td>49 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault among young people</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>–29%</td>
<td>34 (29%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Brottsförebyggande rådet (2009, pp. 11–15).
Youth-related challenges

reports concerning a greater percentage of the cases of assault that occur. This would, in turn, mean the statistics on offenses reported capture a greater number of the actual crimes of violence than before. Overall, according to BRÅ (2009, p. 16), the experiences from the police districts that have worked in accordance with the model show that

[the fact that young people are prevented from drinking in a public environment has also led to fewer young people needing treatment for alcohol poisoning. The statistical results strongly suggest that this may, in turn, contribute towards reduced crimes of violence in a public environment.]

In 2012, the Swedish parliament suggested to the government that the Kronoberg model be implemented nationwide (Sveriges Riksdagen, 2012).

**Youth in Gnösjö: social control and local collaborative initiatives**

Gnösjö is a municipality in southern Sweden that has relatively low crime rates but, as with many other rural municipalities, has youth-related problems. Gnösjö is an interesting case because it and its neighboring municipalities are characterized by successful small businesses often associated with the existence of strong ties in informal networks (Karlsson & Larsson, 1993), including a large number of free churches, athletic movements, and a relatively large share of population composed of migrants (Brulin, 1998; Johannisson & Wigren, 2006). Traditional gender contracts are also part of the “package” that characterize Gnösjö culture (Forsberg, 1998; Pettersson, 2002). Gnösjö is somehow geographically secluded, which seems to have a protective effect against crime, at least combined with its relatively healthy economy and strong levels of social control that characterize the local culture.

Social control here means that they [young people] avoid wrongdoing when a neighbor or someone nearby sees what they are doing. They cannot be anonymous. Also, people go to church, and it is probably critical not to steal if you belong to church. We have low unemployment, so we do not have much social exclusion, alcohol or drugs. Sure they exist, but less than in other places.

(CP representative, Gnösjö)

The Gnösjö spirit (Gnosjöandan, as it is called in Swedish) is a feature of the local culture, dominated by a few actors, which is well illustrated by the answers from another interviewee who works directly with youth-related problems (in this case, religious institutions).

Youth is probably our biggest concern. People see that there is a need for them; otherwise we would probably not need three recreation centers in a small place like this… Young people have to have somewhere to go …
they are visible outdoors, in the parks, youth clubs. There are a lot of churches. Two recreation centers are completely non-profit and supported by voluntaries. … We are passionate about everything that has to do with young people.

(Fieldworker, Gnösjö)

The fieldworker’s comments illustrate a number of formal and informal collaborative efforts that characterize CP actions toward youth in Gnösjö. Some build upon volunteer work, others rely on support from different local actors or in cooperation with external stakeholders, such as the universities. Some of these initiatives are discussed below.

In Gnösjö, fieldworkers are essential in CP work with young people. Fieldworkers are employed by the local community to work with outreach, prevention, and advisory. Fieldworkers work with youth age 13–21. Experience in both large and small communities across the country shows that adult role models on the street, especially during evenings and weekends, can contribute to safe setting for young people (e.g., BRÅ, 2010). In these frameworks, citizens work together with the staff of schools. Police and representatives of recreational associations visit the places where young people normally gather, such as recreation centers, schools, public places, and the Internet. Safety walks may also be part of their work together with other adults, which occurs on every Friday and Saturday evening and night. The goal is to walk and prevent vandalism, brawls, and booze – but above all for everyone to feel safe in the community. An interviewee found the initiative valuable but judged not free of problems. Migrant parents, for example, are often underrepresented on safety walks or at parent–teacher meetings, partially because of a lack of language skills. The interviewee also highlighted other barriers. The community is dominated by a culture that is difficult to penetrate for an outsider or even a native Swede.

We have about 800 people from Southeast Asia, about 10 per cent of the municipality’s population. Not everyone can speak Swedish. I do not think they’re people who like building “groups of interests, associations” in the same way as we Swedes do. We’ve got a lot of associations in Sweden. … It is terribly difficult to engage [the foreigners]. Then, it’s hard to get Gnosjö residents into life. We came here in the early 1970s, and it took several years before we got to know each other. They are not so easy.

(CP representative, Gnösjö)

In past years, there have been a number of projects, some evolving into other initiatives, among them the drug prevention project called “Coolt,” which organized different drug-free events and leisure activities directed at young people nearby. The project was based on the collaboration of schools, social services, and culture and leisure departments. Young people got membership cards which gave them free access to different activities, such as Café nights and a Female fair (“Tjejmässan”) about every third weekend. The card was personal and
swiped in a reader at the entrance to each event, each swipe gives a stamp. After a certain number of stamps, members would have a chance to win prizes. This initiative was organized with local recreational associations, giving young people the opportunity to try different activities. Other initiatives involve courses directed at children, young people, and adults who have difficulty controlling their impulses (e.g., re-Pulse).

To reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs by teenagers, Gnösjö has been applying together with a number of other municipalities in Sweden a prevention program that empowers parents to publicize zero tolerance to the use of alcohol and drugs (EFFEKT, formerly the Örebro Prevention Program run by Örebro University, Sweden). EFFEKT is designed to fit into an ordinary community structure, without any significant expense, by using existing personnel or actors within the community. A number of studies show encouraging results from the method: drunkenness, frequent drunkenness, and delinquency rates were lower in the intervention group than in the control group of students after the intervention (Koutakis, Håkan, & Margaret, 2008) (Figure 13.3). Authors also tested whether the intervention effects were moderated by community type (inner city, small town, housing project), but findings show that the intervention’s effects on drunkenness and delinquency were the same everywhere. A re-evaluation of the data using frequency measures shows a significant program effect on lifetime drunkenness and a marginal effect on past-month drunkenness over time (Özdemir & Stattin, 2012). For detailed information about the project, see Koutakis (2014).

According to the EFFEKT website, the program content is delivered to parents twice a year through short presentations with the goal of maintaining parents’ restrictive attitudes toward youth drinking. First, parents are provided with information on how drinking has potential short- and long-term consequences for young people. Then, parents are made to understand that they can still influence their children’s attitudes and behavior and that their expectations make a difference. Hence, parents are advised to explain that they expect their children not to use alcohol. Finally, the program provides parents with concrete tools to make their views clear, and to set rules on youth alcohol drinking (for more details, see Koutakis, 2014).

Layers of social control to tackle vandalism in Söderköping

Söderköping municipality also has an idyllic appeal, with relatively low crime rates in the county of Östergötland, the southern Stockholm area and the capital of Sweden. However, vandalism in schools and in outdoor public places has been a recurrent problem in the municipality often associated with young people. Around 20 percent of the interviewed population in the local safety survey declare being afraid of having their property damaged by vandals, which are often local youngsters living in the municipality. A number of interventions have been implemented in recent years; for example, “safety line” seems to have increased social control in public places.
Figure 13.3 Repeated-measures analysis of variance displaying self-reported (a) drunkenness and (b) delinquency by youth in the intervention (square) and control conditions (circle) (source: Koutakis et al., 2008, p. 1634).

“Safety line” is a phone number that can be used to report minor or less acute events, such as damage to property, hazardous outdoor environments, unsafe places, traffic safety problems, blocked emergency exits, and similar events. When someone calls, the call ends up at SOS Alarm, which forwards the call to the appropriate organization. If the case is deemed urgent, the emergency operator can turn it into a regular emergency call. The service has expanded to include an agreement with the social services department for people to get basic assistance, for example in case of minor accidents. In 2009, 220 calls were recorded, of which 183 resulted in some form of action. Safety line has been helpful in tackling property damage, impacting on the costs devoted to vandalism. Damage reports for 2009 show encouraging figures on overall insurance claims. A compilation of the past three years shows that claims costs for the municipality resulting from vandalism decreased, from SEK220,000 to
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SEK49,000, between 2007 and 2009. As a complement to tackle vandalism, CCTV cameras were approved by the municipality and installed to promote surveillance of properties owned by the municipality or other properties such as schools and public places (Hagström, 2009). However, not all types of interventions were well received. An interviewee recalls that checking ID cards at the entrance of the school was not a popular measure.

Right now CCTV are installed in X school, and we’re going to put them up on the municipal building and in another school. There has been quite a lot of vandalism there, too. Then we decided that guards should work in a different way. Now they go around and check whether the doors at the schools are locked. It was a lot of work from the start to lock all the doors and send all the reports to the principals, but it was worth it, as vandalism decreased…. I also forced everyone entering the school premises to show identification. That measure was not popular, but stubborn as I am, I got them to do it, and now everyone realizes that it was a good thing.

(CP representative, Söderköping)

Söderköping is an example of a rural community where security companies provide part of the services that in the past were performed by local police. “Layers of social control” are revealed by one of the interviewees when referring to crime prevention and work performed by parents and teachers. In this case, the layers of social control follow a hierarchical structure, from the police and security guards, to members of safety walks and neighborhood watch schemes as well as the overall community.

R: To be honest, I don’t think safety walks work as they should. They have not been as crime-preventive as I wanted them to be.
I: Why? How would you like to change it?
R: Say you and I hang out all the time. Then your ideas and mine are the ones applied, and perhaps they are not the best ones, especially if we don’t know young people at all…. But I can’t say that to them.
I: Why not?
R: No, because then safety walks will vanish. And that is not what I want. … I have security guards who have an eye on them, and if I would not have the guards on them, I would not even know whether or not they are there, what they are doing.

(CP representative, Söderköping)

According to the municipal safety survey, the work performed by the patrol and security guards is highly appreciated by the community in the urban core of the municipality (Lundin, 2006). Part of this work involves the work of adult citizens either through neighborhood watch schemes or safety walks and both are also regarded as important efforts to maintain town safety. The same group of respondents’ experience increased collaboration between security guards and
representatives of different municipal agencies in the community as fundamental in keeping the streets safe.

Paradoxically, most people are not happy with the work done by the police but are positive toward the tasks taken over by the security company, which patrols and walks around the city, talking to youngsters. However, inhabitants interviewed believe there is no need for security guards in their residential areas. Note that these responses refer to all types of crime (Figure 13.4).

**Dealing with social exclusion, truancy, and drinking in Arvika**

Discrimination and social exclusion can also be found in rural communities. As in any other municipality in Sweden, schools have guidelines for preventing discrimination in all its aspects. A plan for these efforts comes from national legislation against discrimination and degrading treatment. The plan indicates efforts the school can make to create a safe environment for everyone. Responsibilities

![Figure 13.4](image)

(a) Are you satisfied with the police presence in Söderköping as a whole?
(b) Do you think there is a need for a security company where you live?
Percentage of respondents (data source: Lundin, 2006, pp. 23–24).
for action are therefore shared between the principal and the staff in the school, including a statement of promotion and preventive measures to be initiated or implemented during the school year. An evaluation of these measures is expected to be included in the plan for the following year. However, it is uncertain whether these evaluations are done and how. Arvika has worked with multiple actions to prevent discrimination of any type and avoid truancy and other more serious problems (see e.g Arvika kommun 2014b). The school is seen as central in this preventive work, as are recreation centers.

We use the recreation center in a more concrete way, too. We had a group that was a bit strong about “white power” and was there…. We took the boys and created a boys’ group where value issues were discussed to ensure that they would not get onto the same path again.

(CP representative, Arvika)

A big task we have now is to work with monitoring responsibilities around the school. There are probably as many reasons for truancy; it’s a sense of alienation that one can experience.

(CP representative, Arvika)

Closely associated with the school’s work, there are the activities run by Arvika Youth Center, which are believed to be crime preventive, with activities and special initiatives on weekends. The youth center has activities for boys and girls with themed weeks. On special weekends, such as the Walpurgis Night celebrations (April 30) when many people drink to excess, and at secondary school graduations, people collaborate with safety walkers, social services, church police, and NGOs. For instance, in 2014 Arvika Youth Center, the CP group and social services held a competition among youth that rewarded those adolescents who abstained from drinking alcohol. This is a drug prevention activity called Blowing Green (Blås Grönt). The competition takes place throughout 2014 with different stages of competition. Each stage ends with the delivery of first, second, and third prizes for the winners. The youth who has played the most rounds for Blowing Green during the year will win a prize (Arvika kommun 2014a). Despite its good intentions, one of the drawbacks of this type of initiative is that it can be perceived as a coercive measure that limits youth’s right to leisure activities, which may include moderate drinking. Another problem is that those who participate are often adolescents who would not drink regardless of the initiative. Those who may be at risk already are not attracted to participate in the competition in the first place. The remaining challenge is to find ways to attract youngsters who are at risk of addiction.

Arvika is also part of the national project “Small municipalities against drugs.” The community is actively involved in a project with other municipalities in the country, in which all teachers in primary and secondary schools are trained in various methods of prevention. On a more permanent basis, Arvika also implements what is often called in Sweden “Komet Education.” The course
is directed at parents with children from three to 11 years old and teenagers 12 to 18 who want help managing conflicts successfully (Comet Groups – “Parental Komet Kids” and “Parental Comet Teens”). Parents get concrete suggestions and exercises to try at home between sessions. The meetings are based on active participation and contain many examples, discussions, and ideas for how to respond to their child. The content is geared to seeing opportunities and solutions to daily problems. In this direction, a new project, Muraren, aims to provide greater access to psychiatric services for assessments and addiction treatment. The project is tailored to young adults (18–29 years old) and is perceived by the county as promising (Brönnert & Näsström, 2014). The work is based on tight cooperation between local actors. They meet on a few occasions a year to discuss solutions and improvements on various issues, especially to reassess and develop local guidelines. Arvika has also implemented the EFFEKT program (Örebro Prevention Program), started by training personnel in their own municipality to work with parents and schools.

**Concluding remarks**

Keeping youngsters entertained during their free time is suggested as a common long-term action to prevent youth problems. Drawing on data from Ceccato and Dolmén (2011), this chapter show that most crime prevention aimed at young people revolves around recreational centers and activities. Findings indicate that the role of these recreational centers as a crime preventive measure should be better understood if the future of CP work with young people in rural areas will rely on them.

In the Swedish context, knowledge is needed about the nature and quality of these youth recreation centers and social activities, for instance, whether or not these recreational centers (and the activities they offer) fulfill the demands of youth groups in contemporary rural environments. Another issue is whether they have any influence on individuals’ predisposition to offend, particularly for those that are already at risk.

However, it is unclear how much social control driven by CP initiatives affects young people’s quality of life. In many rural communities where the need for “parent-free spaces” is limited, emphasizing the need for parents to police their offspring may not be perceived as a positive action by young people, including those who would not consider getting involved in trouble. Spaces for young people may be jeopardized by extending police powers to safety walkers and parents that suddenly feel they own the spaces being regulated and controlled. Local recreational centers may be the only locale for entertainment for young people but may also be perceived by some as spaces that exclude and/or contain their means of expression. In the long run, well intentioned CP actions may be perceived by youth as coercive, having the potential to impact young people’s decisions to move out and seek anonymity.

What works and what does not work in terms of crime prevention toward youth in rural municipalities is not always properly assessed or even reported.
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This is by no means solely a problem of rural areas. Evaluation of CP actions in rural areas follows the overall trend in CP assessment that knowledge remains patchy and incomplete (Wikström, 2007). The literature of crime prevention indicates that successful partnerships are often characterized by strong leadership and regular exchange of relevant information among members (Berry, Briggs, Erol, & van Staden, 2011). Because of limited funding and skills, evaluations of CP interventions are rarely followed up when applied to rural contexts, and if they are, the assessments do not always contain the proper information to help other practitioners to replicate projects in their own contexts.

Privatization of security has reached rural areas, and some of the work once performed by the local police force is nowadays taken over by security guards in partnership with other local actors. Although this shift is inevitable in many rural areas and does not necessarily imply a decrease in security services, further investigation is needed, particularly on the role of the private sector in CP work in rural settings. Yarwood (2011) suggests that potential problems of collaboration are how to determine responsibility for action and, when the roles of actors are not well defined, whether this may create a “nobody in charge world.”

Finally, crime prevention does not happen in a vacuum. Whatever approaches are taken by CP groups, interventions are bound to have consequences for the groups that they are aimed at, in this case, young people. White (1998, p. 135) reminds us that “how we engage in crime prevention has real consequences for real people.” Thus, perhaps a good way forward is to take the voices of young people into account before, during, and after interventions are made. Their views and expectations about the programs for which they are often the targets can shed light on the consequences and appropriateness of the interventions in their everyday lives and their rights as citizens. This is particularly important where the application of crime prevention measures has been perceived by youngsters as restrictive and unintentionally reinforced class and ethnic divides that might already exist in these communities.

Note

1 For details, watch www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u8ziN3isII&feature=youtu.be, retrieved April 20, 2015.

References


