The 5Is framework: a practical tool for transfer and sharing of crime prevention and community safety knowledge

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This web page introduces the 5Is framework (Part 1); provides an illustrative guide (Part 2); and indicates how 5Is relates to other crime prevention knowledge frameworks (Part 3). A separate web page [here] provides links to key documents and examples.

Part 1 What is the 5Is framework?

5Is is a **knowledge management framework** intended to help practitioners of all backgrounds to improve their performance of crime prevention and community safety. It is primarily used for **capturing, assessing, consolidating and replicating knowledge of good practice.**

5Is has been deliberately designed to fit the understanding of crime prevention knowledge set out immediately below. It seeks to help practitioners to:

- **Clarify** the crime problem they aim to tackle
- **Select** good practice appropriate to their needs and circumstances from existing knowledge-bases
- **Replicate** the preventive action attuned to their own problem and context of operation
- **Innovate** intelligently, with the many problems and contexts where no well-documented and well-evaluated good practice examples yet exist

5Is helps practitioners to accurately follow the underlying principles and practical details of (properly-evaluated and documented) preventive action, yet to adapt it for different contexts. As such, it sees practitioners as **intelligent, professional consultants** rather than narrow technicians or novices. This of course has implications for the **selection, training, career development and organisational support** for practitioners. But investment in this **infrastructure for delivery** of preventive action is necessary if crime prevention is to succeed as a widespread and routine

activity rather than as sporadic triumphs that burn brightly for a short while, then disappear, like meteors in the night (see pp24-25 of www.community-safety. net/images/downloads/spring_06.pdf).

5Is centres on the tasks of the **crime preventive process,** namely **Intelligence, Intervention, Implementation, Involvement and Impact.** These are more fully described below.
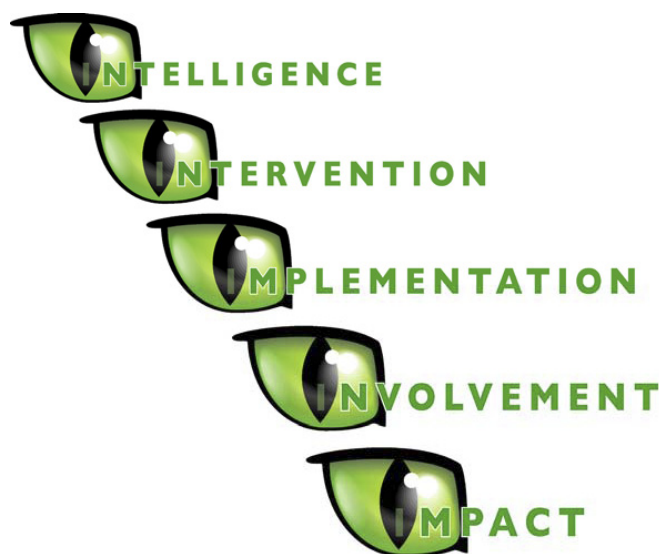
Background

The 5Is label was first introduced at the Aalborg conference of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) in 2002 (Towards a European Knowledge Base) as a means of standardising information on good practice across member states. However, the central ideas have a long history. Ekblom (1988), in the first published guide to crime pattern analysis, introduced the term **preventive process** as a generic label for the rational, 'action research' model of

crime prevention applied and developed in the UK Home Office and North America from the mid-70s and leading also to the 'SARA' process of Problem-Oriented Policing (eg Clarke and Eck 2003). As practical experience of crime prevention developed, and as UK government policy increasingly supported local, nonjustice- based crime prevention (culminating in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998), a growth in explicit training for crime prevention occurred. Various national working groups and projects arose (some described on the *CCO Classic* page) with an interest in the 'core competencies' of doing crime prevention. The CCO framework expanded in piecemeal fashion from its initial focus on causes and interventions to take in process elements. A multi-national Council of Europe project to introduce crime prevention into Ukraine (Alexandersson et al. 1999) identified the importance of transferring good practice via specifying generic crime prevention *tasks* drawn together in a process model, rather than suggesting organisational **structures**, and set out one Document: The 5Is framework update: January 2008 3 such model. Transfer of good practice knowledge in the context of crime prevention programmes was explored in depth in a paper *From the Source to the Mainstream is Uphill* (Ekblom 2002), which laid much of the conceptual groundwork for knowledge management in crime prevention. The Danish Crime Prevention Council, organisers of the first good practice conference of the newly-founded European Crime Prevention Network, invited Paul Ekblom to develop a framework for capturing and sharing that good practice. 5Is was the result. 5Is was used for EUCPN practice conferences for several years, and has featured in several other national and international contexts (see 5Is – detailed documentation web page on this

Recent developments include:
- Incorporation (2007) within the UK Home Office's 'IPAK' (Improving Performance through Applied Knowledge) project (www.crimereduction. homeoffice.gov.uk/ipak/evidencebase/ burglary000.htm) as the means of interviewing practitioners to capture their knowledge
- An increasing focus on how to apply evaluative criteria rather than merely describe the preventive action (Ekblom 2007 in press; 'Identification and application of Best Practice in Crime Prevention - some fundamental questions and some attempted answers.' European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) Best Practices Conference, Häämeenlinna, Finland 2006. www. rikoksentorjunta.fi/uploads/m9i8l0e09.ppt or www. designagainstcrime.com/web/ekblom_finland_ EUCPN %2006.ppt)
- A connection with the EU-funded Beccaria Programme for quality in crime prevention (Ekblom 2005 and www.lpr.niedersachsen.de/ Landespraeventionsrat//Module/Publikationen/ Dokumente/Quality_in_crime_prevention_F 138. pdf)
- Exploring the scope for combining with the **Iterative Process** of design, and more generally attempting to incorporate more design-like features into the preventive process (Gamman and Pascoe 2004)
- A book is being written (2007-8) on 5Is, to be published by Palgrave Macmillan
- Working with the Irish Youth Justice service to explore applications of 5Is for good practice documentation and learning

Why do we need deliberately-designed tools for transfer and sharing of crime prevention knowledge?

Crime prevention is a highly complex activity that is challenging to do successfully. Studies of the rollout of national programmes and the replication of

individual 'success story' projects have often revealed a significant level of **implementation failure .** This problem has a range of causes, including failures in project management processes. But a major issue concerns **knowledge** of crime prevention and how it is collected, transferred and applied.

Knowing 'what works' on the basis of reliable evidence from impact evaluations is vitally necessary for successful crime prevention. But to ensure delivery of good performance by practitioners, it is not enough to have this knowledge only in 'headline' terms (such as 'improved street lighting costeffectively reduces crime' – see Ekblom (2002); Pawson (2006)). More **detailed** information is needed – for example on what kind of lighting against what kind of crime. However, attempting to replicate a successful project in exact, literal detail – 'cookbook copying' – will also fail. This is because preventive action is very **context-dependent** for its success (what works in one place may not work in exactly the same form in other circumstances). It relies on practitioners intelligently following **a process** of identifying and solving a given crime problem, and **customising generic preventive principles** to activate **specific causal mechanisms of prevention** which fit the current context.

In fact, what we can know about crime prevention practice is much wider than 'what works', or 'what is cost effective'.

Knowledge of crime prevention includes:
- **Know-about crime problems**, and their costs and wider consequences for victims and society; offenders' modus operandi, legal definitions of offences, patterns and trends in criminality, risk and protective factors, and theories of causation

- **Know-what works** – what crime prevention intervention methods work, against what crime problem, in what context, with what side-effects and what costeffectiveness
- **Know-who to involve** – contacts for advice, potential Document: The 5Is framework update: January 2008 5 partners and collaborators who can be mobilised as formal or informal preventers; service providers, suppliers of funds and equipment and other specific resources; and sources of wider support
- **Know-when to act** – there is always a right time to make particular moves – the climate has to be right, other initiatives need to be coordinated with etc
- **Know-where to target and distribute resources**
- **Know-why** is about the symbolic, emotional, ethical, cultural and value-laden meanings of crime and preventive action, including fairness and justice. Failure to address these issues can cause even the most rational and evidence-based actions to be rejected. The classic example is the public outrage sometimes caused by expensive sporting activities for young offenders
- **Know-how to put into practice** – knowledge and skills of the process of doing crime prevention, and methodologies for research and analysis. Know-how plays a central role in bringing all the other kinds of knowledge together to generate successful practical action

To share knowledge of what works, and the process of intelligently replicating it in diverse contexts, needs a **common conceptual framework and language** that reflects the nature and the structure of real-life, practical crime prevention activity. This is to ensure efficient and effective articulation and communication

of the key ingredients of crime prevention projects, and how they have been implemented and evaluated. Sharing and communication are particularly important in an international context.

How can 5Is be used?

The 5Is framework's primary purposes are as:
*   A framework to **capture key know-how information** about crime prevention projects and organise its easy **retrieval** for **selection and replication** of good practice
*   A means of helping **innovation** in circumstances where no ready-made solutions exist, by **synthesising knowledge** from individual, well-evaluated good practice projects into a structured set of principles; and by describing generic 'transferable elements' of crime prevention activity which can be combined in new kinds of project

5Is can also be used as:
*   A generic **checklist and guide** for the detailed steps of the 'preventive process', to help the **practical design, appraisal, development, planning and quality-assurance** of effective crime prevention projects
*   A means of **gap-analysis** in our knowledge of what works and how to implement it (To identify gaps you need maps.)
*   A means of **learning from failure** as well as from success (which of the 5Is went wrong in this project?)
*   A more general framework for **process evaluation** of crime prevention action
*   A framework for **training** practitioners and a mental 'schema' for structuring how they think about prevention
*   A means of fostering **communication and collaboration** between practitioners from diverse

agencies and disciplines, and different countries, through clearly-defined standard terms and concepts

In all of the above applications, 5Is complements systematic reviews of the effectiveness of interventions such as those conducted through the Campbell Collaboration (www.campbellcollaboration.org/CCJG/). It provides a means of realising those findings in practice, through **directly training and informing practitioners,** by identifying the **infrastructure** necessary to support implementation and by incorporating documentation of how various stakeholders are mobilised in delivery of crime prevention and community safety. In this it meets some of the criticisms made by Pawson (2006) of classical social science systematic reviews.

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*** Comments and queries on 5Is are welcome: to Paul Ekblom at p.ekblom@csm.arts.ac.uk. If you have used 5Is, please send copies of any relevant documents (in any language), web addresses etc.

Part 2: Illustrative Guide to 5Is

Note: limited additional guidance on 5Is is at www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk learningzone/5isintro.htm

5Is is organised as a sequence of **tasks** which emphasise the bringing together of **evidence and experience** – covering the crime problem, the context, what works and how to realise it. This often involves a range of different people or organisations being mobilised or acting in partnership with 'professional' crime preventers. The 5 main tasks, and illustration of the kinds of 'good practice' knowledge which can be captured under each of them, are listed below.

5Is has three levels of detail: **Message** (the 5Is themselves, eg Involvement), **Map** (principal subheadings, such as 'Involvement: **Partnership, Mobilisation, Climate-setting**) and **Methodology** (eg 'Mobilisation:: Clarify crime prevention task to be undertaken; Locate appropriate agency or individuals to implement it; then Alert, Inform, Motivate, Empower and Direct them) (see also Mobilisation for crime prevention and community safety page on this website).

The tasks form a 'theoretical' sequence of steps; however, in practice the order may not be so linear: it may even be recursive or iterative. For example, it may be necessary to establish a multi-agency Partnership (under Involvement) before information contributing to Intelligence can be exchanged. And likewise, in order to identify appropriate partners and to negotiate the possibility of Involving them in joint action, it may be necessary to gather Intelligence about them.

INTELLIGENCE is about gathering and analyzing information on
- **Crime and disorder problems** and their **consequences** for **community safety** (a wider, 'quality of life' and 'harm reduction' concept defined at www.designagainstcrime.com/web/crimeframeworks)
- **Offenders** and their **modus operandi**
- **Causes** of the crime problem – preferably using the **Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity** framework www.designagainstcrime.com/web/crimeframeworks but it is possible to use the Crime Triangle as a simpler alternative
- With longer-term, developmental prevention, the **risk and protective factors** in young children's life circumstance which are associated with later criminality
- Intelligence for the **other four tasks**, including identifying partners and people to mobilise, demographic information to aid targeting and other Implementation activities etc

INTERVENTION is about blocking, disrupting or weakening the causes of criminal events. Interventions are described at three levels:
- Crime prevention **objectives** – which crime problems are intended to be reduced in frequency and/or severity; which indicators of community safety are intended to be improved
- Generic **principles** of intervention (by preference using the **Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity**) and
- Detailed practical **methods** of prevention customised to context

For example 'preventing shoplifting (objective) by reducing the attractiveness of target property (principle, linking cause and intervention), by affixing ink capsules to clothing on display in shops (practical method)'.

IMPLEMENTATION is about converting the intervention principles and methods into practical action on the ground. It covers:
- **Inputs** of funds and human resources
- **Process** describing practical actions taken such as **targeting** on offenders, victims, buildings, places and products, **planning, management, organisation, monitoring and quality-assurance**
- **Outputs** (actions implemented in the real world (eg numbers and quality of houses receiving security equipment, young people attending youth club…)
- Reporting of **ethical issues**

Basic implementation information to guide the selection of action
- Over what **timescale** and what **geographical scale** the action is designed to operate (eg does it deliver a short, medium or long-term impact on crime? Is it a local, regional, national or international intervention?)
- At what **ecological level** the action operates – individual, family, peer group, community, market, network, society…
- The **tradeoffs** the action has with other policy values (eg with privacy, energy consumption, bureaucracy, justice…) and how they were resolved in the context in question.
- The **scope** of the action – whether it tackles a narrow range of crime types or a broad range
- The **coverage** of the action on the ground – how much of the crime problem it can tackle (eg is it cost-effective only in high-crime areas, or all areas?)

INVOLVEMENT is about:
- **Mobilising** other agencies, companies and individuals to play their part in implementing the intervention (see Mobilisation for crime prevention and community safety on this website), or

- Acting in **partnership**
  In both cases specifying:
  - » **who** were involved
  - » what broad **roles** or specific **tasks** they undertook
  - » how they were **alerted, informed, motivated, empowered or directed** (eg respectively by publicity campaigns, financial incentives or sanctions, security advice, standards or objectives)
- how a broadly supportive **climat**e was created in the community and how any **hostility** (for example to the police) was reduced

IMPACT and wider evaluation

Basic evaluative information on:
- The nature of the **evaluation** itself (how the project was assessed, by whom; whether this was a reliable, systematic and independent evaluation; and what kind of evaluation design and statistical tests were used)
- **Impact** results focusing on the **ultimate outcome** – **how much** crime reduction was achieved and how much community safety was improved (eg through reduced fear of crime); **what** interventions worked, and if possible **how** they worked (the causal mechanisms believed to have been activated)
- **Intermediate outcomes** (eg 'change in attitude of young people to the ownership of property' – a first step on the path to the ultimate outcome of crime reduction)
- **Process** evaluation results can be described for each of the 5Is tasks – including information helpful for replication (what problems and tradeoffs were faced in each of the tasks, and how they were resolved); what worked for each of the other

tasks (eg which methods of involvement were successful)

Additional evaluative information (if available) on:

- **Cost-effectiveness;** whether **benefits significantly outweigh costs;** whether the action has any **serious undesirable side-effects** (eg increasing fear of crime)
- **Sustainability** of actions in effectiveness, financial, and Human Resource terms – how long the intervention can be maintained, how long the impact lasts
- **Responsiveness** of actions – whether they can be efficiently targeted on causes of the crime problem, and efficiently prioritised on basis of the consequences of crime, needs of victim and wider society
- **Legitimacy and acceptability** of actions to community
- **Adaptability** of actions – assessment of how far they are proofed against social/ technological change and adaptive offenders
- **Replicability**:
  - » Whether actions are **implementable** with an acceptable level of risk, given the context and the resources available (for example, if the action requires a charismatic leader of a youth club, finding such a person cannot be guaranteed)
  - » Which **contextual conditions** and **infrastructure** are helpful, or necessary, to successfully replicate this project – or particular elements of it

This introduction has set out the **basic information** to collect on crime prevention projects using the 5Is

framework. The format has been 'illustrative' rather than detailed and specific, but it can be used in this 'headline' fashion.

In most cases the **full guidance** presents more detailed Maplevel headings and under these, Methodology and categories for description. The current version (English only) is at www.designagainstcrime. com/web/5iscco.docs/EUCPN-5I%20full%20 guidelines%202002.doc but requires revision, which is planned during 2008. Full project descriptions take 5-10 pages depending on the amount, complexity and newsworthiness of the preventive action. (Shorter descriptions could cover just the 'best bits' of projects, for more experienced practitioners.) An example description of a burglary project (English only) is at Domestic burglary - Stirchley, Birmingham (5Is detailed documentation) and one on underage drinking and disorder at www.beccaria.de/Kriminalpraevention/ de/1Beccaria/pres_ek.pdf (English). A formal description of the same project (English) is at www. designagainstcrime.com/web/5iscco.docs/gpps05.doc

5Is will continue to evolve, particularly at the more detailed Map and Methodology levels, but using the **headings** as consistently as possible helps communication and retrieval. Different crime prevention projects may be organised in very different ways (some may use several methods of prevention). To build in flexibility, writers can vary the **order** of the description providing that **headings** are clear. The **content** – what information is documented – should be chosen on the basis of what is judged to be **critical for success** of the project, what is **newsworthy** (including to less-experienced practitioners), and what is needed just to **complete the picture** and make it intelligible.

Ideally, only knowledge from **reliably and independently evaluated projects** should be captured using 5Is. However, such evaluations are still too rare, and for cost reasons supply will never meet demand – so for the interim at least, 5Is can equally be used to capture **experience-based knowledge**. Even the most rigorously-evaluated and articulated project generates and uses **tacit knowledge** (Tilley 2006) – but interviewing practitioners in depth using 5Is headings can help to make some of this publicly available.

Part 3 How does 5Is relate to other crime prevention frameworks?

5Is is closely related to **SARA**, the process framework used widely in **Problem-Oriented Policing** (www. popcenter.org) and in the '55 steps' guide (Clarke and Eck 2003). Where 5Is concentrates on capture, consolidation and replication of good practice knowledge, SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) is more of a general-purpose set of action-steps that can be rapidly and easily communicated to 'beginners' in crime prevention. However, as indicated above, crime prevention is often a complex task that requires an appropriate level of sophistication in its practitioners, and in the frameworks that guide them. Consequently, 5Is differs from SARA in a number of ways:

- It has extra levels of **detail** – for example, it splits the undifferentiated 'Response' stage into the three quite distinct tasks of 'Intervention, Implementation and Involvement'. Each of these in turn can be further subdivided (for example, 'Involvement' includes 'Partnership, Mobilisation and Climate-setting'). In this way, a large amount of knowledge can be organised for capture and retrieval; and in fact, just *knowing* the structure of the 5Is headings can teach practitioners a lot about prevention.
- 5Is also more closely reflects the **structure** of crime prevention activity. For example in

describing the Intervention aspect of a preventive project it distinguishes between the various detailed practical **methods** applied and the generic **principles** underlying them.

- SARA is normally associated with the 'Crime Triangle' (Offender, Target/Victim, Place) which is used as the framework both to analyse immediate causes of crime and to describe or plan interventions. 5Is could be used with the Crime Triangle, but by preference it employs the **Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity** (Classic) which includes a wider range of immediate causes and intervention principles, and gives equal weight to those that relate to the offender and the crime situation.

Nonetheless it is possible to relate 5Is and SARA simply by treating the latter as verb, the former as noun:

- **Scanning and Analysis** for *Intelligence*
- **Response** through *Intervention, Implementation and Involvement*
- **Assessment** of *Impact*

5Is also relates to the **7 Steps to a Successful Crime Prevention Project** produced by the Beccaria programme (at www.beccaria.de). Both share a concern with quality of action and quality of its description. However, 7 Steps focuses more on generic **project planning and project management** processes, while 5Is centres more on the **specific content of the crime prevention action** being described, and the **logic or rationale** of 'problem and causes to intervention to implementation and evaluation'. Although there is some overlap, the two frameworks are complementary and the link between them could be developed further.