

Center for Problem-oriented Policing
1360 Regent Street
PMB 323 Madison
WI 53715 USA

Bron :
Beh. Ambt. : Marjan Masseling
Locatie : Markt 1
Doorkiesnr. : 076-599 57 27
Bijl. :

Zundert, 28 June 2006
Datum verzending:

Onderwerp : Prevention Project Youth

Dear Sir / Madam,

With this letter u will receive a project report concerning a project about drug use amongst youth, which has been conducted by the police in Zundert, Novadic-Kentron (Centre for addiction) and a youthworker. The project has been done at Mencia-Sandrode, a secondary in the township of Zundert. The initiative was taken by a student of the Dutch police academy whom, during her study, is working at the police in Zundert. Together with the community, the secondary, Novadic-Kentron and a youthworker, she has developed two prevention days. The goal was to make, both parents and youth, more aware about drug use among youth. The cooperation, which was given by the school, was superb. Because of this the project more than achieved its goal. In two days time students from the second grade, in the age of thirteen and fourteen years old, expressed their vision, in many different ways, concerning drug use. These visions where presented on the second evening. Given the large number of parents that where present on that evening, it was a huge success.

The project is surely suited for repetition. At this moment a study is being undertaken to see if the project can be implemented at other schools.

Even the layout of the project has been used, within the school, to start and support other projects. The way in which the community and other partners worked together has left a positive feeling with all partners and thus will be continued.

The way, in which, was worked to achieve results has left a positive impression on me. During the meeting, where the parents were also present, I made particular praise to our police student.

Not only was this project a good performance, but initiative was taken which lead to it's, rightfully, good response.

With kind regards,
The Mayor of Zundert

I.J.P Keijzer.

A Summary of the Problem and the project "Facts or Myths?!"

First of all, let me introduce myself. I am Ine van der Welle, 25, and a fourth year student at the Police Academy of the Netherlands, where I hope to graduate as a Level 4, or All-round, Police Officer in July 2006.

In the third year of the programme, I decided to give more attention to the neighbourhood I work in, an area in Rijsbergen in the municipality of Zundert, paying special attention to problems in this neighbourhood. I did this together with the beat officer already assigned to the area. We tackled small problems in the area, such as stray soccer balls and noise pollution. I assisted in this task by contacting our partners in public assistance.

The results of the survey, the statistics produced by the data-processing systems of the police, the Annual Report of the Zundert Police, and information from the local police monitor, all gave me a picture of the most pressing problems in the area. The top 5 problems are:

- The presence of drunks on the street
- Domestic burglary
- Car burglary
- Disturbances caused by youths hanging around
- Disturbances caused by drug users

I looked at the drafts for the Annual Report of the Zundert Police Force for 2006, to get an idea about which problems had to be dealt with for that year.

For the problem of drunks, drug users, and youths hanging around, more working hours had been planned. These hours were to be used for both preventive and repressive actions on the part of the police.

Together with the officer assigned to the area, I decided to tackle the problem of disturbances caused by the presence of drunks, drug users, and youths.

By summarizing the problem in my area of responsibility, I arrived at the following description of the problem itself:

In Rijsbergen and in the municipality of Zundert, under which Rijsbergen falls, the local inhabitants experience problems with the youth; youth from and including the ages of 12 to 24, who hang around in the streets. The problems include noise, damage to property, and rowdiness.

Furthermore, the youth also cause problems with their use of alcohol and drugs. They do this to cultivate a certain image, to satisfy their need to belong, to give way to peer pressure, to experiment and to satisfy their curiosity, and to alleviate their boredom.

The parents of these young people accept the use of alcohol. However, drug use is more often than not totally unacceptable and even denied.

I tackled the problems in my area with the help of the SARA problem-solving method. SARA stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. I will describe the problem in my area, based on the SARA model.

The S of the SARA model stands for Scanning. Using Scanning, I was able to determine what the problem was well as the residents who were experiencing difficulty with the problem:

The disturbances caused by young people, ages of 15 and 25, in Rijsbergen consist of excessive noise, littering, rowdiness and mischief making, and alcohol and drug use in the streets. Excessive noise is the playing of loud music. Littering consists of leaving behind empty drugs bags, empty bottles and cans, cigarette butts, and graffiti.

Rowdiness includes playing with the elevator (lift) in apartment blocks, throwing empty bottles, motocross riding with scooters, and chasing away children from the local playground.

The use of alcohol and drugs is evident from the garbage left behind by these young people, which has been examined by officers on patrol.

The problem only seems to be getting worse. Why do these young people persist in hanging around in the streets? I will examine this aspect of the problem using the A of the SARA model, the Analysis.

The youth meet each other at the appointed places; they talk, have fun, and listen to music. Before they go to town they already start drinking.

Disturbances are sometimes caused by the use of alcohol and drugs. In the Analysis I examine this problem by National and Regional statistics on Alcohol and Drugs use among the Youth in the Netherlands/Zundert.

The R from the SARA model is for Response.

The first step in my project consisted of approaching what we call network partners (a few have been mentioned in the preceding pages) approached the following partners:

- The local government in Zundert
- Novadic-Kentron, an agency which provides information about the use of alcohol
- The youth social worker in Zundert
- Mencia-Sandrode, a secondary school

In our first meeting we set up our goals. We wanted:

- To teach the youth the advantages, if any, and disadvantages of drugs before they even came into contact with drugs
- To teach the youth how to cope with peer pressure
- To use the project to contribute to breaking the existing taboo between parents and children about talking about drugs
- To use the project as a means to improve the relationship between the police and the youth
- To use the project to improve the image of Zundert

We wanted to realize our goals by:

- Keeping the project short and manageable
- Motivating the students to do something themselves about the information which they were going to get
- Motivating the students and the teachers to work for common goals
- Allowing the students to make a presentation about what they had learned to other students, parents, and other interested parties

After deciding on our goals, we agreed on a date for the project. It was to take place on Wednesday, 25 January, and Thursday, 26 January 2006, during the day, with the presentation taking place at 7:00 p.m. on the evening of Thursday, 27 January.

The project was for the target group of second-year students, aged 13 to 14 years, the group that did not yet regularly hang out in the streets or "go to town" regularly.

Prior to the project, the ninety students involved had the opportunity to choose a work form. These forms were a play, a film, a discussion, a game, a newspaper, a PowerPoint presentation, a photo-newspaper and a poster. Based on the work forms, nine groups, each with ten children, were formed. Each group was coached by two teachers.

On the morning of the first day, each group attended a workshop by Novadic-Kentron. There were three different workshops. Each workshop was also attended by a beat officer, or neighbourhood officer.

In the afternoon, the students were given time to start preparing for the various presentations about what they had learned from Novadic-Kentron. For these presentations they were to use the work form they had chosen.

In the morning of the second day, the students were given the opportunity to ask the network partners all kinds of questions. The network partners were scattered throughout the school building with their own booths and information leaflets. The students were also able to ask the partners to lend a hand during their presentations, for example, by playing a role in a play or film.

In the afternoon, the students were given time to finish preparing their presentations and to practice for the evening.

The presentations began at 7 p.m. The students showed other students, their parents, representatives from the local government and the police, and other interested parties what they had learned in the two days of the project.

The second "A" in the SARA model stands for Assessment. With the assessment you can find out whether or not I and my network partners were able to achieve our goals, and the manner in which we measured, or assessed, our own performance.

- With proper guidance, the students were able to go through a learning process which led to the final product, which was getting to know more about alcohol and drug use.
- What was discussed and processed within the two days of the project was visible to the parents, other students, and participating partners.
- The cooperation between the various partners went smoothly, especially because the project also touched on the individual interests of the participants. Everyone was motivated to cooperate with the rest.
- The school was exposed to the outside world in two ways:
- The students left the school, for example to go to the film studio in Breda, or to the local police station.
- The outside world entered the school in the form of the police, the youth social worker, and the local government.
- The problem tackled during the project was a very real and relevant problem, namely, the use of alcohol and drugs.

Continuation

This crime-prevention project will most probably be held at Mencia Sandrode every year. The project will also be included in the Curriculum Vitae of the school. In other words, the school will be known as an institution where a project such as this is allowed and even supposed to run.

The project will also be introduced by Mencia de Mendoza School in Breda, The Municipality of Roosendaal and a school in Rotterdam.

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Introduction

First of all, let me introduce myself. I am Ine van der Welle, 25, and a fourth year student at the Police Academy of the Netherlands, where I hope to graduate as a Level 4, or All-round, Police Officer. In the course of this education programme, twenty-two subjects have to be taken. One of these subjects is "Gemeenschappelijke Veiligheidszorg", shortened to "GVZ"; in English, General Safety. This subject runs through the entire 4-year programme, and its exams have to be taken at the end of the fourth year.

In the third year of the programme, I decided to give more attention to the neighbourhood I work in, an area in Rijsbergen in the municipality of Zundert, paying special attention to small problems in this neighbourhood. I did this together with the beat officer already assigned to the area. We tackled small problems in the area, such as stray soccer balls and noise pollution. I assisted in this task by contacting our partners in public assistance.

While fulfilling my tasks, I was able to gather more information for my neighbourhood survey. I completed this survey by setting up a survey of my own, a Community Safety Survey, and asking the residents of my area to fill it in. The survey revealed the problems which the residents of my area were experiencing. It also enabled the residents to express their own feelings of insecurity with regards to the neighbourhood.

The results of the survey, the statistics produced by the data-processing systems of the police, the Annual Report of the Zundert Police, and information from the local police monitor, all gave me a picture of the most pressing problems in the area. The top 5 problems are:

- The presence of drunks on the street
- Domestic burglary
- Car burglary
- Disturbances caused by youths hanging around
- Disturbances caused by drug users

In September 2005, I sat down together with the beat officer to discuss which top-5 problem I could help solve. The top 5 problems can be divided into two main groups – disturbances and burglaries.

We looked at the drafts for the Annual Report of the Zundert Police Force for 2006, to get an idea about which problems had to be dealt with for that year. As it turned out, the burglary problem was on the agenda. Plans had already been drawn to distribute leaflets or flyers focussing on preventive measures, and these plans had the backing of the Regional (Middle and West Brabant) Police. That meant that in 2006 more measures would be taken to combat burglaries.

For the problem of drunks, drug users, and youths hanging around, more working hours had been planned. These hours were to be used for both preventive and repressive actions on the part of the police.

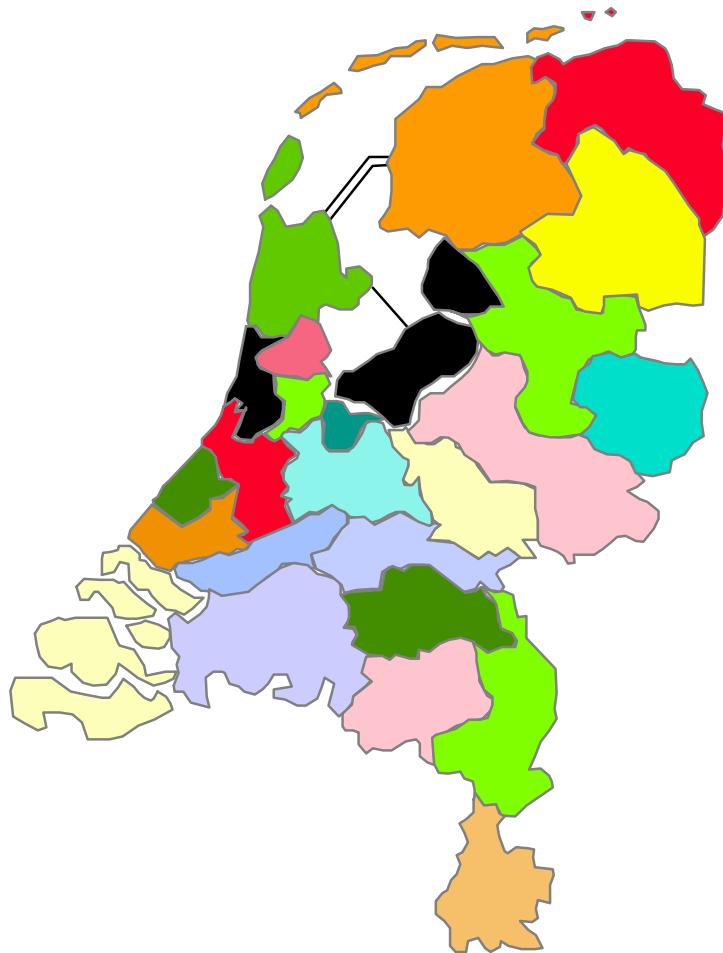
Together with the officer assigned to the area, I decided to tackle the problem of disturbances caused by the presence of drunks, drug users, and youths.

This report is about how I approached the problem. However, first, let me provide more information about the Dutch police and the region where I work.

The Dutch Police

The Netherlands is divided into 25 police regions and one “Korps van de Landelijke Politie Diensten”, or, roughly translated, a National Force for Police Services. The map below will show how the police regions have been divided. In The Netherlands, around 40,000 police officers are actively in the service. That comes out to about one police officer for 378 inhabitants.

The task of the Dutch police is to provide an appropriate and effective contribution to a free, inhabitable and democratic society, subject to an elected authority and operating within the limits of their duties and the law.

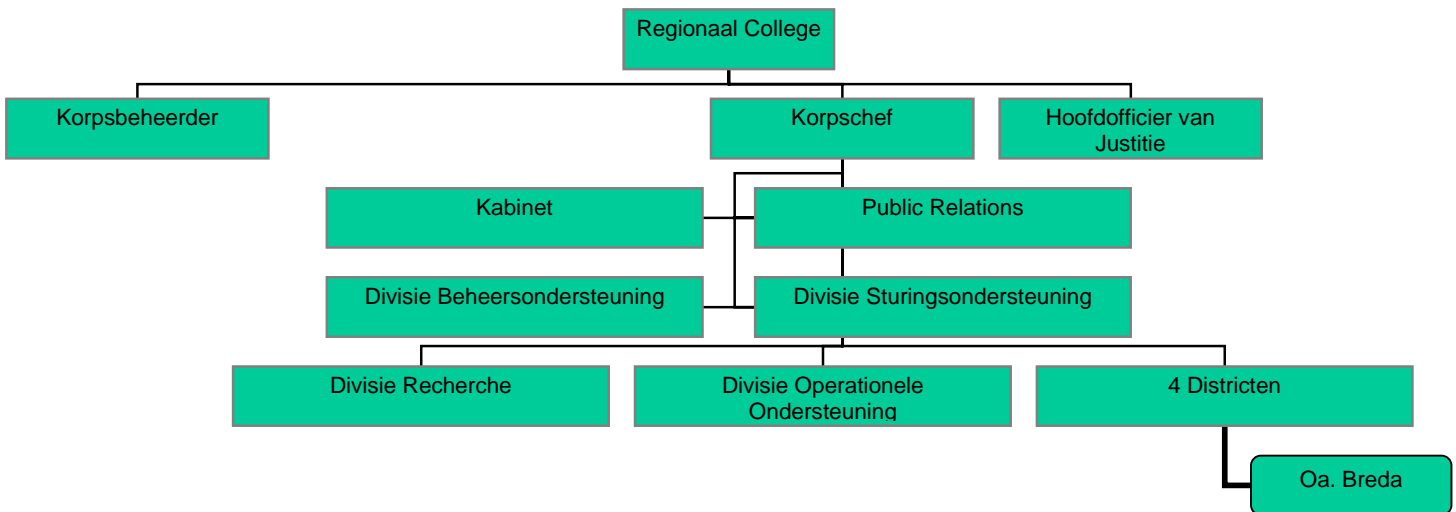


Middle and West Brabant Police Force

One of the police forces in The Netherlands is the Middle and West Brabant Police Force.



The organization of the Middle and West Brabant Police Force can be described as follows:



The area of the Middle and West Brabant Police Force extends for 130 kilometers along the Belgian border. The force is made up of 26 municipalities and 37 police stations, 190 patrol cars, 35 motorcycles, 17 mobile unit vehicles, and 2 mobile command centers.

The annual budget of the force is about 113 million euros.

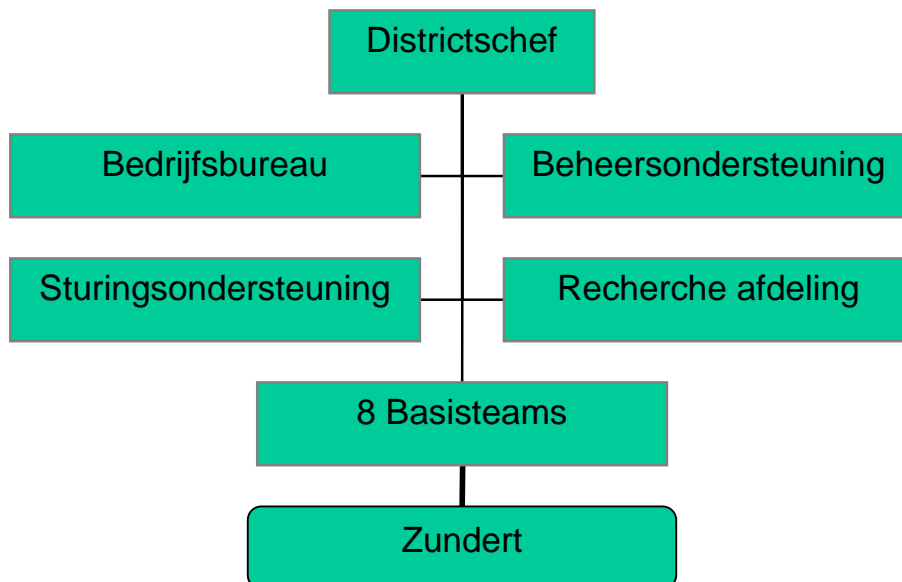
District Breda

The Middle and West Brabant police force also comprises 4 districts. These are Oosterhout, Tilburg, Bergen op Zoom and Breda.

District Breda:



The organization of the district Breda can be illustrated as follows:

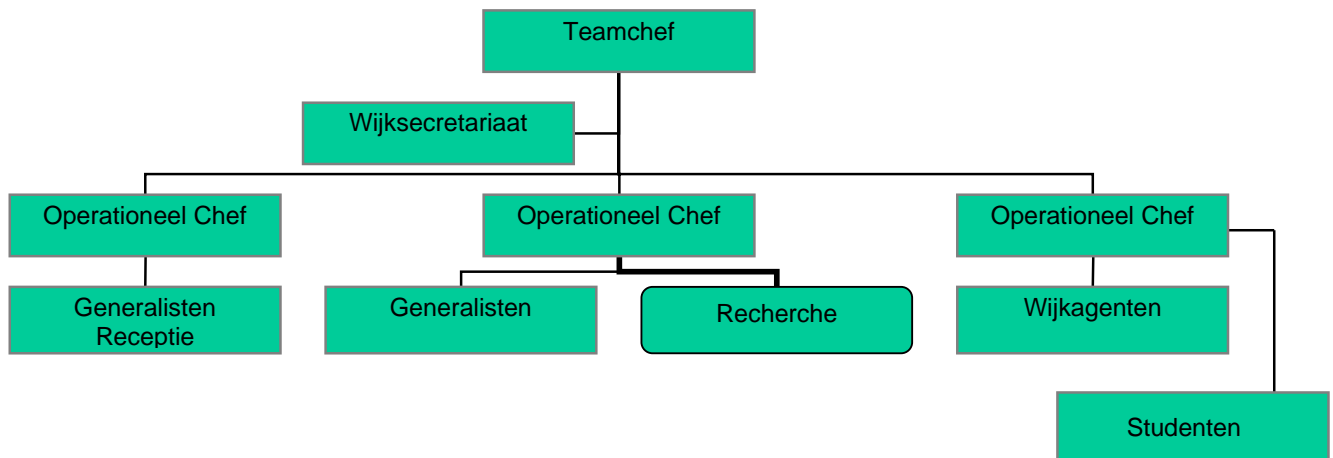


As you can see in the organizational chart of the police force district of Breda, it is made up of 8 basic teams. One of these basic teams is the Zundert Police Force.

The characteristics of the basic team are:

- No specialization, general duties
- General patrol duties
- Short-term investigation work
- Crime prevention
- Traffic regulation
- Environmental regulation
- Special law enforcement
- Availability of mobile units
- General services

The organization of the Zundert team is shown in the following chart:



As you can see in the chart, students are also included in the Zundert Police Team. I am one of three students assigned to work with this team.

In the next chapters I will tell you more about the project that I took up, together with network partners.

Researching the Problems in my Area

I tackled the problems in my area with the help of the SARA problem-solving method. SARA stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. I will describe the problem in my area, based on the SARA model.

The information I used for Scanning and Analysis came from the results of the Shortlist of Group Crime¹, the data-processing system of the police, information from the beat officer in Rijsbergen, information from an interview I had with a youth social worker in the municipality of Zundert, information from my own Community Safety Survey and which I gathered from work I did in my own area of responsibility, and information from the QuickScan²

Scanning

The S of the SARA model stands for Scanning. Using Scanning, I was able to determine what the problem was well as the residents who were experiencing difficulty with the problem.

It appears that the disturbances and trouble caused by young people in Rijsbergen (municipality of Zundert) have been widely recognized as a current problem. Statistics from the data-processing system as well as personal responses from the residents of Rijsbergen as revealed in the Community Safety Survey confirm this fact.

Using the "7 W's", the problem can be described as follows:

- What:** The disturbances caused by young people in Rijsbergen consist of excessive noise, littering, rowdiness and mischief-making, and alcohol and drug use in the streets. Excessive noise is the playing of loud music. Littering consists of leaving behind empty drugs bags, empty bottles and cans, cigarette butts, and graffiti.
Rowdiness includes playing with the elevator (lift) in apartment blocks, throwing empty bottles, motocross riding with scooters, and chasing away children from the local playground.
The use of alcohol and drugs is evident from the garbage left behind by these young people, which has been examined by officers on patrol.
- Who:** A group of about fifty young people between the ages of 15 and 25 cause these disturbances. This large group is comprised of various sub-groups, with most of its members coming from the area of Rijsbergen itself.
- Where:** In various groups, these young people can be found at the following locations: the DSE property area, the Youth Meeting Point in the Gommersstraat, the Brandweerkazerne or Fire Brigade property area in the Sint Bavostraat, the Clausstraat, the Van Oosterhoutstraat and the Leijakkerplein.
- When:** The disturbances usually take place in the evening and night.

¹ "The Shortlist of Group Crime" is an instrument which the neighbourhood officer, or beat officer, uses in order to get a clear picture of problematical youth groups. The Shortlist method consists of a questionnaire which is filled in for every young person. Based on the answers to the questions, the youth were divided into three types – youth who cause annoyances, youth who cause trouble, and youth who commit crimes.

² The municipality of Zundert gave Novadic-Kentron the assignment to draw up a schematic chart of drug-related problems concerning young people aged 12 to 21 using QuickScan. This is a research instrument which uses various methods of data-gathering. QuickScan gives a relatively quick picture of real-life situations concerning alcohol and drug use, as well as smoking habits, within the control group.

Why: The young people have clearly indicated that they engage in the above-mentioned activities out of boredom. The lack of social control also gives them the opportunity to behave the way they do.

How: They hang around at the specified locations with their scooters and cars.
Their verbal and physical attitudes and behaviour are what cause feelings of insecurity and lack of safety among the local residents.

Who first brought the problem to light?

The local residents indicated the existence of the problem by reporting incidents of disturbance to the local police and local government. The survey held among them also clearly reflected their feelings of insecurity.

What are the indications of these feelings of insecurity and lack of safety?

These feelings are particularly acute when residents realize that they are afraid of passing by a group of these young people, and when they are afraid of speaking up to these young people about their behaviour for fear that this will only lead to more (or worse) incidents of disturbance.

The problem only seems to be getting worse. Why do these young people persist in hanging around in the streets? We will examine this aspect of the problem using the A of the SARA model, the Analysis.

Analysis

How can one describe the youth who hang around in my area of responsibility?

The group consists of both male and female members, and is predominantly male. The size of the various subgroups is variable – from about 15 to about 30, and sometimes even 40, people. The average age varies as well. There are groups consisting of 12 to 15-year-olds, another with 16 and 17-year-olds, and some with 17 to 24-year-old people. Some with ages 20 to 23 sometimes hang around together for a time, and then break up again for a time. Most of the youth involved are of Dutch descent.

What do they do when they are at a favourite haunt?

The youth meet each other at the appointed places; they talk, have fun, and listen to music. Before they go to town they already start drinking. QuickScan surveys indicate that a fairly sizeable number of the key figures³ interviewed by Novadic-Kentron have indicated that various products are consumed at these “hang-around” spots. Many smoke, and even blow. Blowing is considered by many to be the same as ordinary smoking. Empty weed sacks are often found at these places. Aside from this, many of the youth take pills regularly, and some even occasionally use other kinds of drugs, such as mushrooms and even cocaine.

Many of the key figures talk about annoyances and disturbances, including mess left behind, vandalism, noise caused by scooters, and the threatening feeling that a group can cause others to feel.

Some of the key figures look at the problem relatively and say that the situation is “not that bad” or that it is “bearable”. It is possible to have a serious talk about the disturbances with the youth concerned. They say they are interested in considering the feelings of others. In Rijsbergen, the Youth Meeting Point in the area I work in is a spot which has been set up to accommodate the youth, a place where they can hang around without disturbing the locals.

All the young people interviewed by Novadic-Kentron know where the “hang-around” spots are. About half of them come to such a spot once in a while. Those who most frequent these spots have said that most of those who go there blow, and that, in fact, a lot of blowing goes on at these places. At all of these places, alcohol is consumed once in a while; not much, and usually in the weekends. Not everyone is present at the same time, and the composition of the various groups varies continually. One person indicated that most of those who hang around there go there two or three times a week, another said that it was actually three or four times a week. XTC and speed are also occasionally used. Most believe that drug-dealing does not occur on a large scale. Sometimes, someone will take some drugs along, which he then sells to friends.

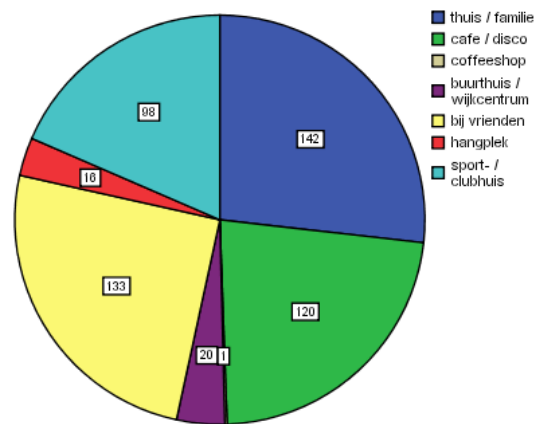
Reason for the disturbances or annoyances caused by the youth:

One reason the youth give for “hanging around” or coming together at appointed places is that there is nothing else to do in the village. Let us examine the situation to determine if this is the case in Zundert.

³ A key figure is a person who is able to provide specific and relevant information about the control group, the problem, or the situation being studied. Key figures may be chosen from the group of intermediates, or “middlemen”, such as members of the police force, people working in cafés, youth social workers, as well as from the youth population itself. A schedule is drawn up before the interviews. The interviews are then held strictly according to this schedule to insure that all the necessary questions are presented. Respondents are allowed to answer these questions in their own words. A total of 41 interviews were conducted.

Young people can spend their free time in various ways, and in various places. Using the QuickScan, many were asked if there was a particular place they could go to in their free time. Respondents gave many answers. Three places were often mentioned – at home, with friends, and at the local café or disco.

The pie diagram below shows the various places where the youth usually spend their free time, and how many of them go to these places.



The diagram does not indicate how often the youth go to the places indicated. The amount of time a young person spends at a particular place varies with the place itself. 87% spend 5 to 7 days a week at home or with family. 42% spend one or two evenings a week with friends, 30% three to four days, and 13% once in two weeks. 29% go to the local café once or twice a week, and 18% once in two weeks.

Aside from going to these places, there is enough for the youth to do in Zundert. Many are members of clubs such as the local football, scouting, horse-riding and tennis clubs. There is a cultural centre with an acting club for young people from the ages of 12 to 18. Many play a musical instrument and/or follow pop music workshops. There are annual events such as Carnival, the strawberry festivals, and the famous Flower Parade, where young people are also involved.

In the QuickScan used by Novadic-Kentron in Zundert, many of the youth interviewed said that there is enough to do in Zundert. A number indicated that there is not enough to do, but could not pinpoint what was needed to fill their needs. Others responded that they were enough activities to choose from, but that they would have liked to have something specific, like a cinema, in the area.

From the data given above, we can conclude that, for the young people in Zundert, there is enough to do to fill their time.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Disturbances are sometimes caused by the use of alcohol and drugs. Let us examine this problem.

National Statistics on Alcohol and Drug Use among the Youth

What is known in The Netherlands about the number of young people who smoke and consume alcohol and/or drugs? To answer this question, I used the statistics from both national and regional studies.

The first research project I studied was the measurement survey held in 2004⁴. This is a national survey carried out by the Trimbos Institute⁵ which deals with the question of whether or not school-going children aged 10 to 18 smoke, take alcohol and/or drugs, or gamble. These children are asked whether or not they have ever done these things, and whether or not they recently engaged in these activities. By 'recently', the researchers mean four weeks before the survey is conducted.

The survey was introduced in 2003. More than ten thousand pupils from groups 7 and 8 (the last years) in Primary (Elementary) School, as well as all years of higher Secondary (High) School, filled in a questionnaire at school about smoking, drinking, drug-taking and gambling. Due to the relevance of this information, I have included it in this report.

Statistics on the Use of Alcohol

85% of all Secondary School children have tried the use of alcohol, with the number of girls just about equalling the number of boys. 58% had drunk alcohol 4 weeks prior to the survey. Below the age of 12 more boys tried alcohol use. By the other age categories, the difference between the number of boys and the number of girls is insignificant.

Most school-going children start drinking between the ages of 11 and 14. The percentages between those who have tried taking alcohol and those who had drunk alcohol recently increase with the age categories. Boy and girls drink varying amounts – number of glasses – of alcohol at any given time. 64.9% of the girls drink one to four glasses as against 56.8% of the boys. 26% of the boys and 28.6% of the girls drink five to ten glasses at any one time. 16.8% of the boys drink more than 10 glasses at any given moment, compared to 6.5% of the girls. 34% of the students in the higher levels of Secondary School drank alcohol a month before the survey, 51% of these three to ten times, 16% more than 10 times. The most popular drink among the boys is beer; among the girls, it's the Breezer, a mixed drink with Bacardi. Breezers are also popular among the boys. Self-concocted mixed drinks and liquors are also popular, especially among the girls.

Statistics on the Use of Drugs

19% of all Secondary School students have tried smoking cannabis (20% of all the boys and 17% of all the girls) This percentage increases with the age category. A marked increase in the use of cannabis under 14-year-olds has been noted. By the time they are 18, about 50% of all boys and 33% of the girls will have tried it out. 9% of these children tried using cannabis a month before the survey (10% boys and 7% girls). Recent use also increased with the age category. It appears that boys, more often than girls, continue to use cannabis after having tried it.

⁴ The basic data from the "measurement survey" are described in the book *Jeugd en Riskant Gedrag*, Trimbos Institute, 2004.

⁵ The Trimbos Institute is a national organization where research is done on, among others, human behaviour and how the use of alcohol and drugs affects this behaviour.

The use of hard drugs and mushrooms is a lot less compared to the use of cannabis. 3.1% of all Secondary School children have tried using mushrooms, 2.9% XTC, 2.2% amphetamines, 2.2% cocaine, and 1.1% heroine. These statistics have to be used with care because the number of users is very small. For each of these percentages, there were more male than female users. Looking at recent use (one month before the survey), then we get 0.8% for mushrooms, 1.2% for XTC, 0.8% for amphetamines, 0.8% for cocaine, and 0.5% for heroine. These percentages, too, have to be interpreted with care, due to the very low numbers involved.

The above-mentioned statistics apply to young people between and including the ages of 10 and 18. In the QuickScan, children from 12 to 21 were studied. To make a reliable comparison between the QuickScan figures and the national survey, it is important to look at studies which focus on young people aged 18 and older. The National Drug Monitor conducted such a study.

The National Drug Monitor was established in 1999. This monitor collects and integrates statistics on the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs by people from the age of 12 in The Netherlands. The Annual Report of 2003 records the following results on the use of alcohol and drugs.

In 2001, 92% of the Dutch from the age of 12 had ever drunk alcohol, and 75% had drunk it within the month of the survey (recording actual use). The share of (almost) daily consumption of alcohol among actual users was 20%. It appears that there are more heavy drinkers among young males between and including the ages of 18 and 24. It also appears that, despite current legal restrictions, young people under the age of 16 are able to avail themselves of alcoholic drinks, especially in cafés but also at liquor stores.

According to NIPO statistics, in 2002, 31% of the Dutch population from the age of 15 smoked. The difference in the number of male smokers compared to female smokers is diminishing. In the age category of 15 to 19 years, 27% of the males smoked and 28% of the females. It has been noted that women smoke less per day than men, and that women tend to prefer filtered lights to tobacco leaf, which has to be rolled.

From 1997 to 2001, the use of cannabis increased slightly. In 2001, 17% of the Dutch aged 12 and older had tried using cannabis. 3% even tried in a month before the survey, reflecting actual use. The increase in the numbers who had "ever tried" and those who had become regular users was sharpest in the age category of people from 20 to 24 years old. Under young people from the ages of 12 to 15 years, the number of those who "ever tried" decreased somewhat. Also, cannabis is smoked by more males than females.

In 2001, 2.2% of people from the age of 12 had ever tried taking XTC, of which 5% recently. 2.6% had tried amphetamines, of which 0.2% recently. These figures appear to be on the low side because problem-users, or real addicts, were underrepresented in the study. Not all usage is reported. XTC and amphetamines are taken most often by people between and including the ages of 20 and 24. Furthermore, the increase in the actual usage of XTC and amphetamines is greater under females than males. In 2001, the differences between the number of males and number of females was insignificant.

It appears that regular usage of XTC and amphetamines is larger in cities and other large urbanized areas than in other parts of the country.

2.9% of the population from the age of 12 onwards have tried taking cocaine, of which 0.4% recently. Again, these statistics do not reflect actual usage, since heavy addicts were not included in the survey. The use of cocaine appears to be among people from and including the ages of 20 and 24.

Let us look at the regional figures.

Regional Statistics on Alcohol and Drug Use among the Youth

In 2003, a survey was conducted among the youth in connection with, among others, the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in the age category of 12 to 17 years. In Zundert, 606 youngsters received the survey. 56.9% of those who got it filled it in and returned it.

62% had drunk alcohol a month before the survey. Breezers, beer and shooters appear to be the most popular drinks. Most of those who had taken the survey admitted that they had had alcohol one to four times recently, and most of them had done this in the weekend. On any given day in the weekend, up to 20 glasses of alcohol may be consumed by one person. Most of them stated that they drank between one and ten glasses per evening. The parents of 42% of the youngsters approve (or do not disapprove) of their child taking alcohol. The parents of 16% do not say anything about it.

In the four weeks before the survey was conducted, 4% of the youth in Zundert had smoked hash or weed, 1% had taken XTC, and 0.4% amphetamines.

Alcohol and Drug Use among the Youth in Zundert

Now that we have looked at the national and regional statistics, let us turn to the use of alcohol and drugs among young people in Zundert. We will do this using the data from the QuickScan.

According to many key figures, the age when young people start to drink is going down in comparison to five or 10 years ago. It is common knowledge that children from the age of 12 onwards are allowed to drink along with their parents during the Flower Parade. At this age, 2 to 3 glasses of alcoholic drinks are consumed at special occasions; girls take a Breezer, boys usually prefer a beer. From the moment that these youngsters begin to "go out" at about the age of 15, the use of alcohol increases. Many key figures think of 6 to 8 to even 10 glasses per any given moment from the ages of 15 to 17, and of 10 to 20 glasses per given moment from the age of 18. Opinions vary when it comes to "drinking before going out", from very little to quite a lot, either at someone's home or in the street. According to many of the youth, alcohol is largely available, and that hardly anyone is asked for his or her age in cafés or restaurants.

In general, the use of alcohol among the young is accepted by their parents. A child may get drunk; however, he may not get stoned.

Many key figures suspect that many of the youth take drugs. They especially mention soft drugs (hash and weed), XTC, speed, and GHB⁶. Mushrooms and cocaine are seldom mentioned. In comparison to alcohol, though, drug use is totally unacceptable. Because of this, the use of drugs more often takes place in secret. Even the key figures do not have any "hard evidence" of drug use. All key figures working in cafés and/or restaurants say that the use of drugs in their respective establishments will definitely not be tolerated. Blowing, too, will not be tolerated. As soon as they sense that someone is blowing, this customer will be asked to leave. Many of these eating places have established good contacts with the police, who have agreed to come as quickly as possible if the situation threatens to get out of hand (for example, if a customer refuses to cooperate and has to be forcibly removed). An incident is mentioned when a boy fell ill due to the use of GHB, among other substances. A number of traffic accidents are also mentioned which involved the use of alcohol and drugs, with fatal consequences. Nevertheless, according to the key figures, there is a "zwijgcultuur", or agreement of silence, when it comes to drug use among the young.

Other key figures admit that the use of soft drugs is more visible now in comparison with five or ten years ago. The youth do blow at "hang out" spots and empty weed sacks are found at these spots. It has been noted that students in the higher years of Secondary School pass on weed to students in the lower years. The key figures do not mention anything about the frequency and the amount of blowing that takes place. One key figure estimates that about 10% of the youth blow regularly. As they grow older, a number develop an addiction problem. Others do not develop the habit and allow it to die naturally.

A number of key figures among the police say that hennep/weed plantations are often dismantled in the area. There is a large undeveloped area where empty stalls are leased out to third parties who sometimes use them for weed production. There is a suspicion that the people in the said area know about it and are, to some extent, involved with it, in varying degrees.

There is even less knowledge among the key figures with regards to the use of hard drugs. Very little is known. What is known is what the youth think about (the use of) hard drugs. Many consider XTC and speed as ordinary drugs, for example, and not as hard drugs, while cocaine is considered a hard drug. A few key figures know that within the "hang around" groups, many take pills as well as blow. Many take XTC and speed more when they "go out"

⁶ GHB= Gamma Hydroxy Butyraat

and a lot less at the “hang out” spots. Some experimentation has been done with mushrooms (called “paddo’s” in The Netherlands), but some were shocked with the effects of its use and stopped using them immediately.

Most of the youth interviewed were of the opinion that blowing starts at the ages of 15 to 16, while a few key figures say that it actually starts earlier, at the ages of 12 to 13. The percentage of youth who take drugs is usually estimated to be at 5 to 10%, although a number of young people say that this is too low – 20 to 25% is more like it. The drugs they mention include hash and weed, GHB, XTC, speed, cocaine and mushrooms. All of these are taken at varying degrees by the youth. The combination of various drugs with alcohol is also mentioned by many. The combination of XTC or speed with alcohol and the combination GHB-alcohol were mentioned a few times.

The youth come into contact with hard drugs through so-called house dealers, friends, and casual contacts when they go to town. It is fairly easy to get drugs. Hash and weed can be picked up by someone eighteen years of age or older at coffee shops ⁷ and later sold to others. All those interviewed said that more males than females use drugs, and that males use drugs in larger quantities compared to females. A few remarked that drug use has increased in comparison to five years ago. School policies pertaining to the use of drugs are familiar to most of the youth. Three say that blowing is actually just a way to “fill the evening”. In other words, blowing is a free time activity in itself. This is the reason, or one of the reasons, that some of the youth spend from 10 or 20 to 60, and sometimes, 80 euros a week on drugs.

⁷ In the Netherlands, coffee shops are shops where hash and weed are sold.

Reasons for the Use of Alcohol and Drugs among the Youth

The key figures were asked for the reasons why young people take alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Most of them mention the acceptance of taking alcohol. It has become normal to drink alcohol. Many mention the fact that from the beginning, Zundert has always been a hardworking community. People in the agrarian sector are used to rolling up their sleeves to get the job done, and believe in enjoying themselves intensely afterwards. This includes the consumption of alcohol, which is seen as a way of enjoying life together as members of the community, as a reward for working hard, as a general way to relax after a hard day's work. Parents accustomed to viewing alcohol this way do not object to similar use of alcohol among their children. Many key figures mention the upbringing of the youth as a possible factor when it comes to alcohol use.

While the use of alcohol may be accepted by parents, drug use is often unacceptable even to the youth themselves, and very often denied by them. According to interviews, this has to do with a lack of real knowledge about drugs.

Other reasons why the youth smoke and take alcohol and drugs include the need to develop a "cool" image, the need to belong, peer pressure, the need to experiment or find out, curiosity and even boredom. One key figure responded that he could not imagine how boredom could be a good reason to smoke, drink or take drugs. There are enough ways to fill one's time in Zundert, he said. It is the ready availability of alcohol and drugs which has influence on the behaviour and choices of the youth.

Another reason given by another key figure is the current economic prosperity in the area. People are familiar with hard work, but there has never been so much wealth and economic progress as now. Even the youth has money to spend, and they spend it when they go out. Besides, the use of alcohol or drugs by the youth does not necessarily mean that they are irresponsible with regards to other things, or that they do not take anything else seriously.

The youth were also asked for their reasons for taking alcohol or drugs. Many mentioned the reasons given by the key figures – developing a "cool" image, curiosity, the need to forget problems, the need to belong or to do what "the rest" are doing, and for enjoyment together with friends. More than half mentioned peer pressure, and the influence of friends. Most also mentioned the influence of their parents, especially those who give a bad example by smoking a lot themselves, and drinking a lot, and also by not putting any limits on the drinking habits of their children. A number said that parents can actually set a good example by talking to their children and setting limits when it comes to taking alcohol and drugs.

Youth Groups in the Neighbourhood

As an all-round police officer, I wanted to know:

- What the characteristics are of the youth group (size and composition)
- What the behaviour of the group is in connection with public order and crime patterns
- What kind of youth group it is (annoying, troublesome, or criminal)

To get some some answers to these questions, the Middle and West Brabant Police Force introduced the Shortlist of Group Crime, an instrument which makes it easier for the beat officer to get a picture of a problematic youth group in his area. The idea behind it is that problematic youth groups differ from each other as to size and composition, but also when it comes to the seriousness of the punishable offences committed.

On the basis of a good inventory, additional data-gathering and data analysis, it is possible to decide on a specific approach to solving the problem wherein the police and other institutions can play a role.

The shortlist method consists of a questionnaire which every member of the youth group has to fill in. Based on their answers, the youth can then be divided into the three types already mentioned – those who simply annoy, those who cause trouble, and those who commit (serious) crimes. A brief description of each group:

Those who annoy: This group hangs around in the area, sometimes makes a lot of noise, and ignores the surrounding area. Sometimes things get out of hand and there are small quarrels, but these are quickly smoothed over, and, often, the small fights are more a result of coincidence than that they are planned. This group is also responsible for small damage to property. In general, it is a group which is still sensitive to or is aware of the presence of authority, and can be reprimanded for its behaviour.

Those who cause trouble: This group makes its presence felt. They can provoke (negative) reactions from others, loudly scold or intimidate others, and regularly cause damage to property. They are a lot more incorrigible than those who simply annoy. Even the lighter crimes for which they are responsible are committed with more awareness and intent, and they are more conscious in their efforts to escape capture or arrest.

Those who commit (serious) crimes: This group, or, at least, part of it, is made up of youth who are well on their way to a life of (heavy) crime. All have police records, or rap sheets. One characteristic of this group is that they more often commit crimes for financial gain; they actually earn money from the crimes they commit, which are often of a more serious nature. They usually do not hesitate to use force or violence to achieve their goals.

The beat officer in Rijsbergen has also applied the shortlist method in his area of responsibility. The results he got indicated that the groups in Rijsbergen fall under the first category – those who annoy.

The police team to which I belong have decided to responded to the problems caused by the youth and their use of alcohol and drugs. The goal is to significantly reduce the problems by means of preventive and repressive measures in order to give the inhabitants of Rijsbergen a larger sense of security and well-being.

While various colleagues of mine in the Zundert Police Force focused on reprimanding the youth and using repressive measures against those causing annoyances such as those mentioned above, I decided to concentrate on the use of preventive measures against the same group.

Preventive measures are applied by the police to demonstrate to the target group or to make the target group aware of the fact that they are being closely watched.

One kind of preventive measure used in Zundert is running a crime-prevention project in the primary schools. In this project, various subjects are dealt with, such as traffic, environment pollution, fireworks, discrimination, violence, theft, damage to property, and the work of the police. All the information is supplied by the police. Furthermore, Novadic-Kentron cooperates with the local police by disseminating information about smoking and soft drugs, and the Municipal Health Service ("GGD" in The Netherlands) discuss food and diet. Another partner of the police, Bureau Halt, which deals with how to stop young criminals from continuing into a life of crime, explains what it is exactly that they do and their methods of operation.

The crime-prevention project in the primary schools is not continued in the secondary schools event though there are more topics which are not dealt with at the primary school level; topics such as hard drugs, peer pressure, aggression and violence, the influence of drugs on how you drive, making the right choices, First Aid for Drug Users, and so on.

A Summary of the Problem

By summarizing the problem in my area of responsibility, I arrived at the following description of the problem itself:

In Rijsbergen and in the municipality of Zundert, under which Rijsbergen falls, the local inhabitants experience problems with the youth; youth from and including the ages of 12 to 24, who hang around in the streets. The problems include noise, damage to property, and rowdiness.

Furthermore, the youth also cause problems with their use of alcohol and drugs. They do this to cultivate a certain image, to satisfy their need to belong, to give way to peer pressure, to experiment and to satisfy their curiosity, and to alleviate their boredom.

The parents of these young people accept the use of alcohol. However, drug use is more often than not totally unacceptable and even denied.

While children attending Primary School are able to obtain information about soft drugs the dissemination of this kind of information does not continue for those attending Secondary School, even though not all the necessary information is given in the primary schools.

Initial Preparations for the Project

The R from the SARA model is for Response.

The first step in my project consisted of approaching what we call network partners (a few have been mentioned in the preceding pages) approached the following partners:

- The local government in Zundert
- Novadic-Kentron
- The youth social worker in Zundert
- Mencia-Sandrode, a secondary school

Let me explain who these partners are:

The local government in Zundert

As previously mentioned, the Municipality of Zundert gave Novadic-Kentron the task of charting the drug-related problems of young people under 12 and up to and including the age of 21, using the QuickScan.

After the results of the QuickScan came out, the local government held a council meeting in December 2004 about the above-mentioned problems. The council members who were present then decided on the following:

- Attacking the drug problem is a priority.
- Disseminating information to parents is important; parents have to know where to go when (drug-related) problems come up.
- Dialogue / communication between the young and their parents has to be developed.
- The youth have to be allowed to have a say in matters pertaining to them.
- A youth care network for those above 12 years of age has to be started.

When I approached the local government in September 2005, they had been able to do something only about the last point. There is now a 12-year-old-plus problem committee where the police also plays an active role (where the police is a partner).

I wanted to incorporate the rest of the yet-to-be accomplished goals in a prevention project for secondary schools. The local government waxed enthusiastic about this idea and promptly decided to work with me as a partner in this project.

Novadic-Kentron

Novadic-Kentron is an agency which provides information about the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. One area of their work is the study of alcohol and drug use under the youth. Such a study was conducted in the Municipality of Zundert. The results of that study made a deep impression on Novadic-Kentron. On certain points, Zundert scored higher than the national and regional figures when it came to alcohol and drug use, a disturbing fact. Novadic-Kentron was of the opinion that something had to be done to curb the use of alcohol and drugs in this area. When I approached them and asked if they would like to be a network partner in my prevention project, the answer was a resounding "Yes!".

The youth social worker in the Municipality of Zundert

The youth social work in this area introduces youth projects and activities. She focuses especially on the groups of youth who hang around in the streets and show high or low-risk behaviour.

The Municipality of Zundert still does not have any kind of youth centre, so the social worker's work is in the streets. She tries to reach out to the youth in the streets and motivate them to

participate in activities which appeal to them. There are, for example, "girls' evenings", rap evenings, pop workshops, indoor soccer, and other activities under the guidance of the youth social worker.

The youth can also contact the youth social worker by email. She has a website, www.jongerenwerkzundert.nl, where she describes her work. It is a site made for the youth and for other interested parties. The youth can see pictures made during the various activities, and can read about what the social worker's work can mean for them. Through her email address, they can ask questions or express interest in joining one of the activities listed in the site.

The youth social worker is part of Vertizontaal, an organization for socio-cultural work and community building in Breda. One of the five clusters of this organization is teen and youth work. The youth social worker's activities fall under this cluster. Their goal is to stimulate and increase the chances of development and social participation of adolescents and the youth, to offer positive alternatives to how they spend their free time and to prevent problems and potential incidents of disturbance or trouble.

When I approached her with my ideas for a prevention project, she immediately proved to be a very good network partner. She told me that she wanted to participate in the project because she saw the necessity in it. Too often, she would see young people taking alcohol and drugs out of ignorance.

Mencia Sandrode, Secondary School

Last but not least, I approached the secondary school in the Municipality of Zundert. This is the Mencia Sandrode School.

I asked the dean if he wanted to be a network partner for my project, and if I would be allowed to run the project at the school. The dean was more than willing to participate. He revealed that he was one of the key figures interviewed for the QuickScan survey, and that it was through the survey that he was able to express his worries about the use of alcohol and drugs under the students. At school he observed the increase of alcohol and drug use, and also that the age was dropping when children began to use these substances. He had further observed that students from the higher years were offering drugs to those in the lower years.

In one of the meetings we had as network partners, we discussed the age group of the youth we wanted to target for our information campaign. We decided to plan the project for sophomore (second-year) students. These are students aged 13 to 14. We chose this age group because this group do not yet really hang out in groups in the street. They were to get information about alcohol and drugs before they come into contact with these substances in the streets, in the "hang-out" groups.

The Goals of the Project

In our first meeting we set up our goals. We wanted:

- To teach the youth the advantages, if any, and disadvantages of drugs before they even came into contact with drugs
- To teach the youth how to cope with peer pressure
- To use the project to contribute to breaking the existing taboo between parents and children about talking about drugs
- To use the project as a means to improve the relationship between the police and the youth
- To use the project to improve the image of Zundert

We wanted to realize our goals by:

- Keeping the project short and manageable
- Motivating the students to do something themselves about the information which they were going to get
- Motivating the students and the teachers to work for common goals
- Allowing the students to make a presentation about what they had learned to other students, parents, and other interested parties

After deciding on our goals, we agreed on a date for the project. It was to take place on Wednesday, 25 January, and Thursday, 26 January 2006, during the day, with the presentation taking place at 7:00 p.m. on the evening of Thursday, 27 January.

The project was for the target group of second-year students, aged 13 to 14 years, the group that did not yet regularly hang out in the streets or "go to town" regularly.

Running the Project

The project was carried out as follows:

“Preventing Crime – Facts or Myths!?!”

Prior to the dates agreed upon, the project on preventing crime was announced using flyers. You will find the text of the flyers in Appendix 1. The parents were invited by letter for the presentation evening, the text of which can be read in Appendix 2.

The first day, Wednesday, 25 January 2006

The day began at 9 a.m. An alderman opened the project. The day ended at 3 p.m.

Prior to the project, the ninety students involved had the opportunity to choose a work form. These forms were a play, a film, a discussion, a game, a newspaper, a PowerPoint presentation, a photo-newspaper and a poster. Based on the work forms, nine groups, each with ten children, were formed. Each group was coached by two teachers.

On the morning of the first day, each group attended a workshop by Novadic-Kentron. There were three different workshops. Each workshop was also attended by a beat officer, or neighbourhood officer.

The workshops:

Workshop 1 → What do you know?

First, information was provided about various types of alcohol and drugs. This was followed by a short quiz. The questions were not only answered, but were also discussed with the students. The quiz also had the element of a game, with a possible winner at the end.

Workshop 2 → How about you?

Using drama as a tool, students were taught to form and voice their opinions about alcohol and drugs. The aim was a kind of Lower House type of debate or discussion. (In the United States, this is called a debate in the House of Representatives.)

Workshop 3 → With Alcohol, You Belong!

This workshop focused on the role of peer pressure and the influence some students are able to exercise on others. The aim was to give the students insight on how much influence their peers have on the choices they make. Alcohol and the use of alcohol formed a central theme.

Many students come into contact with alcohol at this age, as well as with “going out” or “going to town”. During the workshop, they were tested on their knowledge about alcohol because many fables, or untruths, usually circulate about this subject. The facts were clearly separated from the fables.

Afterwards, examples of peer pressure in connection with the use of alcohol were presented. The students were asked to place themselves in the roles of the characters, after which the students were asked to play a scene concerning peer pressure which was familiar to them.

Aside from this workshop, the students received further instruction concerning the work form which they had chosen. An example was the short lesson in connection with making a newspaper. The students had to study a newspaper – what can be found in it, how is the news presented, and so on.

After the lunch, it was time for feedback with all network partners. The points which came out were to be discussed during the final evaluation on 21 February.

In the afternoon, the students were given time to start preparing for the various presentations about what they had learned from Novadic-Kentron. For these presentations they were to use the work form they had chosen.

The second day, Thursday, 26 January 2006

Like the previous day, this day began at 9 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m.

In the morning, the students were given the opportunity to ask the network partners all kinds of questions. The network partners were scattered throughout the school building with their own booths and information leaflets. The students were also able to ask the partners to lend a hand during their presentations, for example, by playing a role in a play or film.

After lunch, another feedback session with the network partners took place. Again, all the information was to be discussed on 21 February.

In the afternoon, the students were given time to finish preparing their presentations and to practice for the evening.

The presentations began at 7 p.m. The students showed other students, their parents, representatives from the local government and the police, and other interested parties what they had learned in the two days of the project.

Nadine Timmermans from Mencia-Sandrode and I opened the evening, after which Silvie Lambrechts explained the work of Novadic-Kentron to the audience. The presentations followed, to the enjoyment of all. Kees van Meel, the dean of school Mencia Sandrode, functioned as Master of Ceremonies, and the Burgomaster closed the evening by presenting the school with a gift.

The entire project took place at the Vincent van Gogh⁸ Cultural Centrum at Zundert, and the evening ended at 9 p.m.

⁸ Vincent van Gogh is a famous painter who is born in Zundert in 1853.

Evaluation of the Project and the Results

Assessment

The second "A" in the SARA model stands for Assessment. With the assessment you can find out whether or not I and my network partners were able to achieve our goals, and the manner in which we measured, or assessed, our own performance.

The final evaluation was held on 21 February 2006. All network partners were present during this meeting. Based on the minutes of this meeting, I will evaluate the project.

The Preparation

In case of absence by a network partner, I would keep the absentee informed of what took place during a meeting by sending him or her a report. During the evaluation, I inquired as to how they found this. A few approved of this strategy. Jacinthe, the youth worker, though, was not satisfied with this manner of working because if you had been absent you could not fully join with the decision-making process.

The Work Forms

Due to the fact that the students in each group had to follow one of the three given workshops, there was sufficient variation in the activities.

The Presentation

The acoustics in the Vincent van Gogh Centre were not optimal.

The presentation evening drew a satisfyingly sizeable audience, and was especially attended by the parents. The hall was full, with about 280 guests.

Everyone agreed that the presence of the Burgomaster made a tremendous difference. Wearing the traditional Burgomaster's Chain and in a formal suit, it was heartwarming to see him.

The Evaluation Card

During the preparations for the project, I had received from Novadic-Kentron through my email an example of an evaluation card for the youth. I had asked them if I could use this card as an example or basis for my own card, and they agreed. With a drawing from a colleague and some creativity on my part, I changed the card into a "scheurkaart", or, literally, "tear-up" card. You will find it in Appendix 3.

At the end of the second day of the project, I distributed copies of this card to the students. They tore off the words or descriptions which they found to apply to the entire project and returned the cards. The students enjoyed this form of evaluation. I am thinking of using it for future projects.

Only one single group of students, 8 out of the 97, found the project boring. This was the group which chose the discussion work form. Next year we will think about another, more creative work form to replace discussions.

Only two of the 97 students did not contribute anything substantial to the project. This could be observed from the beginning, and the two were given a reprimand by the school.

Publications and Announcements

Kees van Meel from Mencia Sandrode and I took up the responsibility for the various publications about the project. Kees approached the local media. I went to the newspaper BN-De Stem ("The Voice") in Breda to arrange for an article to be written. BN-De Stem published articles two days in a row. Copies of these can be read in Appendix 4. An article appeared in the Zundertse Bode and on cable television, and Kees, Xandra (from Novadic-Kentron) and I gave an interview on ROS Television. Kees also wrote an informative article in the school newspaper, which can be read in Appendix 5.

One of our goals had been to bring Zundert positively into the limelight. That goal was definitely achieved. The article which appeared in BN-De Stem contributed largely to this end. The journalist who had written the article had already previously written other positive articles about Zundert. We decided to keep her in mind for future projects.

Conclusion – our other goals were achieved as well!

Other consequences of the project

- With proper guidance, the students were able to go through a learning process which led to the final product, which was getting to know more about alcohol and drug use.
- What was discussed and processed within the two days of the project was visible to the parents, other students, and participating partners.
- The cooperation between the various partners went smoothly, especially because the project also touched on the individual interests of the participators. Everyone was motivated to cooperate with the rest.
- The school was exposed to the outside world in two ways:
 1. The students left the school, for example to go to the film studio in Breda, or to the local police station.
 2. The outside world entered the school in the form of the police, the youth social worker, and the local government.
- The problem tackled during the project was a very real and relevant problem, namely, the use of alcohol and drugs.

Continuation

This crime-prevention project will most probably be held at Mencia Sandrode every year. The project will also be included in the Curriculum Vitae of the school. In other words, the school will be known as an institution where a project such as this is allowed and even supposed to run.

The project will also be introduced by Kees van Meel to the Mencia de Mendoza School in Breda. Two teachers from that school participated in Zundert while the project was going on.

The Municipality of Roosendaal, not far from Zundert, have asked Novadic-Kentron to run a similar alcohol and drug survey in Roosendaal. Novadic-Kentron plans to present this project to that municipality as well.

A Checklist of Conditions for the Subject of General Safety

1. The Position of the Police in Society

The role of the police in society is a lot broader than simply fighting crime. The police also aim to contribute more to the development of society in general.

In determining the goals of the police force, one does not only look at crime statistics but also takes the subjective aspect into account – people's feelings of insecurity, and the fear of becoming the victim of a crime. These factors can present a different picture than what the statistics tell us. The fear of crime is already a problem in itself, and is influenced by other factors which do not necessarily have anything to do with any disturbance of the peace or with being the victim of any recent crime. The media, for example, plays an ever growing role in how people view their environment and neighbourhood.

What do citizens expect from the police:

- A. At moments when citizens seek to make contact with the police –
When citizens ask the police for help in connection with a complaint or to file a report, they expect quality service and assistance, especially when it comes to the level of professionalism in dealing with the problem and in providing information about the procedures which have to be followed (how the problem will be dealt with, the progress of the investigation, and so on). Other important aspects are the availability of the police, communication, and the speed at which they arrive at the scene of the incident.
- B. At all times, for all cases, and if the police have to make the move –
People expect the police to be present in the neighbourhood, and to be approachable. They are further expected to develop and maintain the necessary contacts and to play an active role with regards to (mainly) local problems. It is practically known that the proximity of the police has a positive effect on those who fear the lack of safety in the community and on the willingness of civilians to help themselves in troublesome situations.
- C. In the area of general policies and directives –
It is expected that the police solve problems in an efficient (time-saving and cost-saving) and direct manner, giving priority to local or neighbourhood problems which people experience directly in the area where they live.
In general, the needs and expectations of the inhabitants of any given area can be summed up in "the need to live safely" or "the need to maintain quality in one's way of life". This comes down to the need to live as civilized human beings under a rule of law and order, as opposed, for example, to living a life of lawlessness and disorder.
Emergency assistance is part of this efficiency; the ability to be "on call" if anything happens, and to be "on standby" the rest of the time. People expect the police to "be there" when they need them.⁹

The police is limited and dependent on others. Without my network partners, I would not have been able to carry out my preventive crime project. The police is only one link in a chain of network partners.

2. The Chain-link Approach

Stubborn safety problems have to be dealt with using a coordinated policy of prevention, repression, and aftercare. Such an approach is also sometimes called a "chain-link"

⁹ Source: Community Police Belgium

approach – not only repression but also care, not just care but also social recovery, not social recovery alone but also prevention.

This approach will work only if various government agencies work together – educational institutions, welfare institutions, general assistance agencies, employment agencies, the police, the judicial system (the courts), rehabilitation agencies, special youth care, and so on.

This is not only all about the police approaching the government, but also about the government recognizing the role and functions of the police.¹⁰

Partnership is based on the conviction that safety and liveability can only exist through the cooperative work of all the possible links which can play a role in the chain. The government is the driving force behind this policy of safety, while ordinary citizens also play an important, and even central, role.

The links in my project:

The municipality – the secondary school – Novadic-Kentron – the police – the youth social worker

3. The Ability to Innovate

To tackle the problem in my area of responsibility, my network partners and I used creative forms of working which the students enthusiastically responded to. What was different was the fact that the students had to do something actively in response to what they had just learned. They had to process all the information they got into presentations which they showed to their parents, co-students, and other people.

The project took place in two days. This was new for Mencia Sandrode. Projects carried out in that school used to take ten weeks, for example. Very often, the students made the assignments connected to the project only in the last few weeks because they had to meet the deadline. It meant that, very often, they had already all but forgotten what they had learned in order to complete the assignments.

Whether or not this project will reduce the disturbances and trouble caused by youth hanging around in the streets only time will tell. In any case, the students indicated after those two days that they had learned new things connected to the use of alcohol and drugs.

4. Effective Relationship with the Ordinary Citizen

It is the choice of the Dutch police to perform their duties closer to the ordinary citizen. This is the way he has decided to realize or give form to the government's basic responsibility of providing general safety. Effectivity has priority over efficiency when it comes to the Dutch police.

In a residential area, the police is "your best friend", the "area supervisor", the "arbiter in public areas", who knows and is known, and who uses relatively very little formal authority. The ability to vary one's ways of approaching problems (in a friendly way, if possible, in a firm way, if necessary) has more value in the ordinary policeman's position than in any other functions within the police force.¹¹

While I was busy with my monitor and analysis, I realized that I was only busying myself with collecting (objective) statistics, even though all that time what I really wanted to do was to make the ordinary people feel safer. Studying statistics will not accomplish that. By

¹⁰ Community Police Belgium

¹¹ Source: Visienota 2005: "Politie in Ontwikkeling"

organizing my survey I became more aware of the (subjective) feelings of the residents in my area, after which I knew better how to take away or reduce these feelings.

In the letter I wrote introducing the survey, I included the following: "With your opinions, we, the police, will be better equipped to draw up our list of priorities in accordance to your wishes and needs." I put that in on purpose. I did not want the citizens to think that all the points they mentioned in the survey would be addressed instantly and solved overnight. That way, the police do not create false expectations which are difficult to meet.

By publishing the announcement about the project in the newspaper, we wanted to show the people who had filled in the survey that we, the police, do something with the points of attention they had indicated.

The two-day crime-prevention project has contributed to the relationship between the police and the ordinary citizen. The beat officer and I feel that we have come to know the youth in the area better, and notice that it appears easier for them now to approach us.

5. Expanding and Cutting Down the Network

Working together with external partners is interesting because by means of mutual cooperation we are able to maximize the respective strengths and existing capacities of all partners involved in an undertaking. For example, by cooperating with other partners, the police, as well as the other partners, do not have to invest time, money or effort in areas where other organizations have already begun developing.

Every network partner has a signalling and advisory function. When the partners together are able to combine these functions, mutual cooperation is at its best.

My network consisted of working with internal and external partners.

My external partners are the municipality, the Mencia Sandrode Secondary School, Novadic-Kentron, and the youth social worker from Vertizontaal.

My partner working at

- the Municipality of Zundert was Janine Krekelberg.
- Mencia Sandrode Secondary School was the dean, Kees van Meel.
- Novadic-Kentron were two employees, Silvie Lambrechts and Monique Luijkx.
- Stichting Vertizontaal (Vertizontaal Foundation) was the youth social worker in Zundert, Jacinthe Rhioui.

My internal partners are: my practicum coach, the beat officer in my area of responsibility, the beat officer in the area where the Mencia Sandrode is located, my Operations Head, and my Team Head.

As mentioned earlier in my report, my network partners and I came together several times to set up the crime prevention project. After a number of meetings, I noted that not all the network partners would (be able to) come. By writing reports of the meetings, I was able to update them about what was accomplished during the meetings. It can be time-consuming and expensive to have all network partners attend all the meetings. If the role and the contribution of a network partner is clear, this person does not have to attend all succeeding meetings. Everyone was comfortable with this set-up. The project gained its strength from the fact that all the partners believed in it and contributed enthusiastically to bring about its success.

I had invested a lot of time in the project, but these hours had already been incorporated in the annual plan of the Zundert Police Force. Next year, not as much time needs to be invested in the project; only the efforts of the beat officers involved will be necessary. This

way, the project retains a lasting quality and can be handed over from person to person. All the details are on paper, and my presence will no longer be necessary. I took care of this because I know that I will no longer be working in Zundert next year.

6. Direct Problem-solving Approach

I used the problem-solving method called the SARA model. By following the systematic steps of this method I found out what the underlying reasons were in connection with the youth who were causing trouble, namely the use of alcohol and drugs. By using the SARA model to go deeper into the problem, I also found out what still needed to be done in terms of crime prevention, which was disseminating information on alcohol and drug use at the secondary school level.

By applying the problem-solving method to the current situation, the two-day crime prevention project became a success, and one which will be repeated on a yearly basis.

7. The Social Working Area of the Police

The police stand in the middle of society. Society has its expectations of the police, which centre around law enforcement, investigation, and assistance during emergencies. The tasks of signalling and giving advice are a result of these expectations.

In order to contribute to safety in the society, it is important for the Dutch police to make clear what they stand for. Many institutions and agencies play an important role when it comes to integrity and the safety of citizens. However, it is the police whom everyone always calls.

With this project, the police came to the school, not to inspect or to arrest, but as a source of information. By showing this side of police work, we were able to contribute to making it easier for the youth to approach the police.

Moreover, this project was applied at the right scale – the most effective number of students within the right age group within the right time frame.

8. An Assignment with a Political Mandate

In 2004, the Municipality of Zundert gave Novaidc-Kentron the assignment to make a QuickScan of the youth in Zundert in connection with the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs. When the results came out in September 2004, a council meeting was held. The council members came to the conclusion that education could play an important role in the process of making the drug problem discussable. They also concluded that parents had to recognize the problem as such – that there were many things they had to know about drugs, and the risks involved in drug-taking.

The council members agreed on a number of action points, all of which have been mentioned earlier in this report.

When I approached the local government in September 2005 only one of the five goals had so far been realized. This was the motivation for me to set up a project which would cover the other four goals of the municipality as agreed upon during their council meeting.

Had the local government decided not to recognize the alcohol and drug problem in the area, things would have gone differently. Without support from the local government, many institutions refuse to cooperate with any kind of project.

Setting up and running a project means spending money. The costs of this project included leasing the hall in the Vincent van Gogh Centre in Zundert. This year, the school decided to carry the expense.

By involving the local government, they have been made aware of the costs. The local government called the dean of the school. Together they discussed how the costs are to be divided the next time the project is scheduled to run. The costs of the project will be included in the annual budget of the municipality from now on.

9. Police Academy classes in combination with General Safety

The police organization as a whole is conscious of the need to learn more about general safety. Beat or neighbourhood officers are appointed to function full-time in their respective areas of responsibility. In the team where I work, Team Zundert, beat officers are not asked to assist in emergency assistance shifts; they also do not have to write out as many tickets as other "ordinary" officers. The beat officers need to know and be known in their areas of responsibility well, and it is for this reason that they are freed from other duties.

I was busy with the crime-prevention project for more than four months. What I noticed was that it was the beat officers who showed the most interest in what I was doing and in what I intended to do.

It is my opinion that the principles of General Safety have to be made more familiar to colleagues working in emergency assistance shifts.

Epilogue

Before I began my studies as an all-round police officer, I had finished an educational programme called Social Pedagogic Work and Activity Guidance. The work forms I learned during those years, and the experiences I had gained in the field certainly helped me in my approach to the problem I chose. The moment I had decided to undertake the project, it did not take me long to come up with a structural plan by which to set up the entire plan together with network partners.

I consciously began on time with the preparations for approaching the various partners. Had I not been able to find any of them to work with, I would then have had the time to think up another strategy or approach, or to choose an entirely different problem to solve.

Preparations for the project took a total of four and a half months. My network partners and I put in 200% effort for this project. Thanks to the enthusiasm, willingness and effort, the project became a success.

With the project, we were able to reach out to the youth without having to lift a reprimanding finger. The network partners and the municipality were able to meet on common ground and found a good way to work together. Partly due to this project, the relationship between the police and the school was given a boost.

The project was such a success that it will be held in Zundert every year, and most probably in Breda and nearby Roosendaal as well. That gives me a satisfying feeling.

The subject of Public Safety has become my favourite and my specialty. I enjoyed working on this project and on this final report.

My next mission is to incorporate the principles of Public Safety into the emergency assistance services or shifts. As an all-round police officer, I think and feel that it is my duty to do so.

In appreciation of your time,

Best regards,

Ine van der Welle