



Complex
Interventions and
Multisectoral
Collaboration
Addressing Street
Violence, Gangs,
and Violent Youth
Radicalization


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Holistic Approach – Young People’s Inclusion in Society

- In this presentation, the prevention of violent extremism and street violence is approached **holistically**.
- In addition to well-functioning police work and legal systems, it is important **to pay attention to the key factors affecting everyday safety of children, youth and families**. The focus is on:
 - ✓ Promoting the **health** of children, youth and families
 - ✓ Encouraging **community enhancing culture** of preschools, schools and vocational schools
 - ✓ Ensuring **equal participation opportunities** to increase inclusion
 - ✓ Supporting **culturally diverse communities**
 - ✓ Improving quality of universal youth, social and health care services, and cooperation between them so that special care is possible for a young person in their own context, when needed

 **thl** ✓ stressing the responsibility to **take care of those in the weakest position in society**

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How is prevention defined?

- In the 1960s, **Gerald Caplan (1964)** developed a theory of **the three-phase prevention division regarding psychiatry and the human mind**.
- In Finland, **division has also been used in social science and criminology research** by for example **Leo Nyqvist (1993, 43–44)** when studying the **adult-dominated society's reactions to crimes of youth** and **Minna Niemi (2010)** in her study about **police work among children**.
- Recently, **the theory has also been applied in political and administrative programs** in Finland, for example in “The Program for Preventing and Combating Youth and Gang Crime for the Years 2024–2027” (Järvinen et al. 2024).
- Briefly expressed in Caplan's (1964, 20) original theory:
 - **Primary prevention** means the prevention of (mental health) problem.
 - **Secondary prevention** is the treatment of existing problems in such a way that their duration is as short as possible.
 - **Tertiary prevention** aims to prevent permanent harm or prolonged problems.



Complex interventions and multisectoral collaboration addressing street violence & gangs

- Five intervention packages will be implemented in Finland between 2024 and 2026, under the leadership of the Finnish Government and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
- These – mainly locally implemented – intervention packages will be coordinated, and their impact evaluated in a nationally coherent way.



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PRIMARY PREVENTION

Package I: Enhancing the knowledge base and practical skills of education personnel and social and health care professionals concerning the prevention of violent youth radicalization

Package II: Strengthening the community participation of children & youth, and the social cohesion of the environment in which they grow up

- **Professionals** working in schools and social & health care services are learning about preventing and facing violence.
- **Community work in local levels** will be strengthened, schools are always involved in the projects.
- For example, municipal actors, wellbeing services county, NGOs, volunteers, cultural actors and companies are **cooperating to achieve locally set targets**.
- **Existing local structures are supported**, as well as developing new innovative structures.
- Children, young people and parents living in the area are **invited to participate with their own ideas**.



SECONDARY PREVENTION

Package III: Inviting Young people and parents from troubled areas to join in preventing street violence. Developing ways to react quickly and professionally to problems at the local level

- Community and case work are focused on young people living in the **areas identified as troubled**.
- **Multi-professional teamwork in the area** are strengthened. The key workers come from youth services, NGOs, educational institutions, police and social work.
- **A young person in a vulnerable situation can have professional mentors** (“always available adults”) who support schooling and securing an everyday safety & income. **The Mentor is committed to the young person for a longer period of time.**
- Youth with substance abuse problems, but who are showing motivation for change, are **referred to actors offering targeted and tailored support.**



TERTIARY PREVENTION

Package IV: reducing the opportunities for criminal gangs to recruit young members

Package V: supporting the wellbeing and plans of young people living in residential care

- Strengthening of multi-professional cooperation in supporting the welfare of youths sentenced to prison.
- The accessibility to housing upon release for these youths is improved, along with opportunities for education, working practice places, and work.
- Key actors: 1) NGOs specialized in the topic, 2) authorities from judicial, social and health care fields, 3) companies committed to help the young people in challenging life situations.
- A young person living in residential care or serving a prison sentence can have a professional mentor (“always available adult”) who supports schooling and helps in securing everyday safety & an income. The mentor has a long term commitment to the young person.



Evaluation of financed regional projects

- THL collects research data during the projects to evaluate them. Also, projects are required to collect their own data.
- Funded projects are evaluated by means of process evaluation, follow-up surveys and registry research.
- The focus of evaluation:
 - What kind of tools, models and practices have been utilized in local level – how they have been welcomed in the regions.
 - To what extent have the effects been in line with expectations? What surprising effects have been observed?
 - How have the practices been spread and rooted in the regions?



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Package I: Improving the knowledge base and practices of professionals in the fields of education, social work and health care about the preventing violent youth radicalization (primary prevention)

Package II: Strengthening the community participation of children & youth, and the social cohesion of the growth environments (primary prevention)

Package III: Inviting young people and their parents from the areas identified as troubled to join in preventing street violence. Developing ways to react quickly and professionally to problems in the local level (secondary prevention)

Package IV: reducing the opportunities for criminal gangs to recruit young members (tertiary prevention)

Package V: supporting the well-being and future plans of young people living in residential care (tertiary prevention)



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Thank you for
listening!