

# Safety Begins with Prevention

Continuing building a safer society



Ministry of Justice

Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

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## Introduction

This government wants to build a society where people feel safe and confident, where they know they are bound together. How the government intends to achieve this is set forth in Pillar V of the policy programme entitled *Working Together, Living Together*, in which the Safety Begins with Prevention project plays an important role. This project builds further on the safety programme entitled *Towards a Safe Society* (2002-2006). Thanks to this programme, crime and antisocial behaviour have been considerably reduced in the Netherlands in recent years. With this new project, Safety Begins with Prevention, the government is working to achieve a further substantial reduction.

## Objective

In November 2007 the government informed the Dutch Lower House about the scope of the project, its plans and objectives.<sup>1</sup> The overall aim, which was formulated in 2002, is still equally ambitious: in 2011, crime must be reduced by 25 per cent compared to the reference year of 2002.

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary document 28684, no. 119. Available (in Dutch) on our website: [www.veiligheidbeginbijvoorkomen.nl](http://www.veiligheidbeginbijvoorkomen.nl)

## **Six themes**

The name Safety Begins with Prevention says it all. Emphasis in the project is on the prevention of crime and antisocial behaviour. Tackling crime effectively means more than arresting and punishing offenders. The approach to this project is grouped around the following six themes:

- aggression and violence
- theft
- economic and financial crimes
- antisocial behaviour and local area decline
- individualised strategy for youth at risk and for repeat offenders
- serious forms of crime

## **Integral approach**

To effectively reduce crime, an approach that works only with criminal law is not adequate. In practice, an integral approach, with a well-considered mix of preventive, criminal law and administrative measures, often leads to the best results. Such a broad approach works with a large number of organisations: not only the police, the public prosecution service and local government, but also organisations such as the Youth Care Department, housing corporations, the Child Care and Protection Board, Halt Bureau, Victim Support Netherlands, the probation service, youth custodial institutions and support and welfare organisations.

The broad, integral approach of Safety Begins with Prevention is clearly apparent from the involvement of several ministries in the project. The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Families, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Integration all contribute to the development of policy and legislation to prevent and combat crime and antisocial behaviour.

## **The project management**

Coordinating and gearing the activities of all parties involved is the responsibility of the project management. The project management supports the two ministers who are primarily responsible for the successful implementation of the project: the Minister of Justice (project minister) and the Minister of the Interior. The project management is directly responsible to two official contracting authorities, the Director-General for the Administration of Justice and Law Enforcement of the Ministry of Justice and the Director-General for Public Safety and Security of the Ministry of the Interior.



'I think that a good example of the added value of Safety Begins with Prevention is that the Administrative Agreement between the national government and municipalities now states a clear definition for the distance criterion from schools for shops selling soft drugs. If we had tried to do this as a policy department, on our own, it would probably have taken much longer and required a great deal more effort. Our project has short lines to the official and political top in both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior. This makes it much easier to bring these two ministries into harmony. And to push for a decision when one is needed. The result is a success like this. Thanks to its broad outlook, the project is able to discern all kinds of relationships and links that an individual policy official doesn't always observe. I have the impression that policy departments are more likely to accept this interdisciplinary approach, precisely because they see how much added value it can yield.'

*Jean-Luc Luijs, policy official for Law Enforcement & Combating Crime*

### **Making connections, both national and local**

An important job of the project management is to bring people together. With its open-minded, decompartmentalised attitude, the project management gets the various partners (from one or several ministries) who are working on a theme around the table. It encourages them to communicate and to work together smoothly, and this in turn is beneficial to the integral approach. The project director as well as the eight account managers are the vectors of this important role of connection and coordination. They hail from various departments at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior, and they have great experience in a wide range of disciplines..



'My role in the project Safety Begins with Prevention chiefly relates to the Action Plan to Stop Antisocial Behaviour and Local Area Decline. The role of a facilitator suits me to a T. The project management helps us keep an eye on the progress made toward proposed measures; they fill the database and they take over a lot of work from you. Because the project has been positioned in a fairly "neutral" way, the project management can easily serve as a liaison between the various ministries involved in public safety and security policy. Not only between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior, but other ministries too. Another strong point, I think, is that the project management is very keen to share with others the information it receives thanks to all its contacts. This benefits all parties involved.'

*Janine Schreck, coordinating senior policy official for Integral Public Safety and Security Policy, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations*

The project management also maintains contacts at a local level. The account managers regularly hold consultations with the G4 (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht) and a number of municipalities in the G27 (such as Eindhoven and Tilburg) about local safety policy. The account managers act as one-stop help desks, and report back to the central level what they discuss with municipalities. Their feedback not only covers stumbling blocks, wants and needs; it also includes promising local initiatives, creative solutions and best practices that can be used more broadly or perhaps even on a national scale.

'The discussion with the G4 on antisocial behaviour and crime in areas such as Slotervaart and Kanaleneiland really opened my eyes to how useful the project really is. Such talks usually lead to a lot of paper pushing, because so many ministries and policy directorates are involved. This is when the coordinating role of the project shows its added value. The action points for dealing with these issues have now been incorporated in the action plan for Antisocial Behaviour and Area Decline – one of the six themes covered by the project. Another benefit is that the project management has a good overview of the various policy programmes. Because the lines are short, the project can often cut straight through and simplify matters. This is also true of coordination and reporting back to the Dutch Lower House. The whole atmosphere of the project is one of coming to grips, getting down to work – a pragmatic approach. I like that.'

*Dick Brons, senior policy advisor, Directorate of Judicial Youth Policy*



## Monitoring and accounting

Another important task of the project management is monitoring progress of the project as a whole. The project management keeps a close watch on steps taken toward the development of measures and other ‘products’ announced in the context of the project and the corresponding legislative processes. They also closely monitor developments in crime and antisocial behaviour.

The project management is responsible for drawing up the progress report. This report is used by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior when they inform the Lower House every autumn about progress.

‘Linking up initiatives, sharing knowledge, I think these are good examples of the added value of the project. As for my portfolio: at the initiative of this project, we now have the Judicial Network on Violence. We meet with some regularity – all policy officials whose work has to do with the theme of violence. It is extremely useful: take domestic violence and honour-related violence, for example; they have a lot in common. From our own contacts and meetings, all of us pick up things that may be interesting or important for others in the network. Or international developments in dealing with violence. In our hectic day-to-day work, sharing this knowledge with a broader group can just slip your mind. Thanks to the network, this is now much better coordinated. As is our work with organisations in the field. We discovered that all of us approached them, all of us were doing “something” with the theme of violence: local authorities, schools. We were able to improve coordination on this front thanks to this project, and we all benefit from that.’

*Ingrid Horst-Vermaas, national project leader, Stopping Domestic Violence*

## Who is responsible for what in the project management?

| <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Position</b>   | <b>Portfolio</b>  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Ewald Riks</b>           | <b>Project Director</b>                                   | <b>In charge of</b>   |
| <b>Léon Poffé</b>           | <b>Programme Manager<br/>Honour-Related Violent Crime</b> | <b>In charge of<br/>Elaboration</b>   |
| <b>Liesbeth Olijhoek</b>    | <b>Management Assistant</b>                               | <b>Secretarial<br/>Project sup</b>  |
| <b>Evalina Vanterpool</b>   | <b>Secretary</b>  | <b>Secretarial</b>  |
| <b>Dana van Beek</b>        | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Financial a<br/>Managem<br/>Security h<br/>Integrated<br/>Contact fo<br/>Eindhoven</b>                                 |
| <b>Andy Clijnk</b>          | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Aggression<br/>Netherland<br/>Security h<br/>Contact fo</b>  |
| <b>Ron Heijkant</b>         | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Monitoring<br/>Reducing r<br/>Contact fo</b>   |
| <b>Chantal Kouwenberg</b>   | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Drugs/Sho<br/>Antisocial<br/>Pilot Proje<br/>Prostitution<br/>Elaboration<br/>Contact fo</b>                           |
| <b>Mike Schreuders</b>      | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>School dro<br/>Query appl<br/>Document<br/>Monitoring<br/>Research s<br/>Prevention<br/>Safety at s<br/>Contact fo</b> |
| <b>Maiko Teuben</b>         | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Internal pr<br/>Cycle theft<br/>Financial/e<br/>Organised<br/>Contact fo</b>   |
| <b>Yvonne van Veldhoven</b> | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Managem<br/>Individuali<br/>Security h<br/>Centres fo<br/>Contact fo</b>   |
| <b>Atie de Vrij</b>         | <b>Account Manager</b>                                    | <b>Financial a<br/>Youth crim<br/>Aggression<br/>Secretary t<br/>Contactper</b>   |
| <b>Wilma de Jager</b>       | <b>Secretary to Pillar Five Consultations (PVO)</b>       | <b>Secretary t<br/>Secretary t<br/>Deputy sec</b>   |
| <b>Martin Lamboo</b>        | <b>Communications Officer</b>                             | <b>Communic<br/>including v</b>   |

|  | <b>Telephone nr.</b>  |
|--|-----------------------|
| of project management  | <b>070 – 370 6173</b> |
| of Project Office for Honour-Related Violent Crime<br>n of Administrative Agreement  | <b>070 – 370 1762</b> |
| support to director<br>upport  | <b>070-370 7579</b>   |
| support to project management  | <b>070 – 370 7113</b> |
| and economic crime<br>ent consultancy<br>ouses (primary)<br>area management<br>r: Utrecht<br>(Woensel area)                                      | <b>070 – 370 7557</b> |
| n and violence<br>s Centre for Crime Prevention and Community Safety<br>ouses (secondary)<br>r: Utrecht  | <b>070 – 370 7790</b> |
| g (2nd liaison)<br>epeated offence (aftercare etc.)<br>r: Rotterdam  | <b>070 – 370 9003</b> |
| ops selling soft drugs<br>behaviour and local area decline<br>ct in Almere with Antilleans<br>n<br>n of Administrative Agreement<br>r: Rotterdam | <b>070 – 370 4457</b> |
| ppouts<br>lication for Research and s<br>ation Centre/Statistics Netherland<br>J<br>chedule<br>n of cybercrime<br>chool<br>r: Utrecht            | <b>070 – 370 6836</b> |
| rocesses (progress reports)<br>t<br>economic fraud<br>crime<br>r: Amsterdam  | <b>070 – 370 6351</b> |
| ent consultancy<br>sed approach (youth/civil-administrative)<br>ouses (secondary; relationship with<br>r Youth and Families)<br>r: Den Haag      | <b>070 – 370 4809</b> |
| and economic crime<br>e<br>n and violence<br>to Interministerial Commission on Safety<br>rsoon voor: Den Haag                                    | <b>070 – 370 6187</b> |
| to Pillar Five Consultations<br>to Directors Meetings Safety Begins with Prevention<br>cretary to Interministerial Commission on Safety          | <b>070 – 370 6573</b> |
| ication Project Safety Begins with Prevention<br>website management  | <b>070 – 370 6217</b> |

**Ewald Riks, project director Safety Begins with Prevention:**

## **‘We succeed when we allow others to succeed’**

**He started out as project director on 1 May 2007. In the meantime Ewald Riks has everyone in the Safety Begins with Prevention project on the same page, his project management is well organised and the project has achieved its first successes. ‘It is encouraging to see that our priorities are broadly supported by the police, the public prosecution service and the local authorities.’**



***For years, crime has increased or remained stable at a relatively high level in the Netherlands. But ever since the approach took on the form of a safety programme or project, we have seen a substantial decline. How do you explain the success of this approach?***

‘Essentially, we have become better at tackling problems from many sides at once. This means we don’t develop measures in one field or for one case that might create more problems somewhere else. And it reminds us to make sure that measures complement, or even strengthen, each other. And it is also a matter of smart and optimal enlistment of a relatively limited capacity.’

***What is the role of the project management in this?***

‘Broadly speaking, what we do is coordinate, channel and encourage. I like to think that the strength of our project management basically lies in bringing together the right people. Breaking down the barriers, bringing people out of their own little

worlds: here in The Hague we have the remarkable tradition that many policy officials hardly ever talk with colleagues from other departments or other ministries who are working on a related matter. This is now greatly simplified. Our account managers come in contact with other directorates and ministries in the course of a day's work. Apparently we are not perceived as a "threat". This is partly to do with our position as project management, but also with our open attitude and transparent manner of operating. Our angle of approach is always: How can we, together, arrive at a solution to this problem?'

***How does the project management carry out its work?***

'We review the content of memoranda and plans with a critical eye, we see things from several sides and offer constructive ideas from a decompartmentalised point of view. We have a broad outlook as well as a broad network. As a result, we know the right people or directorates to approach for every topic that comes up in the project. And we are very result-oriented. Every time we hear a proposal, we ask ourselves if it will genuinely contribute to the realisation of our objectives. Mind you, we don't take over the work of policy officials. And we wouldn't want to. But our work does contribute to the formulation of high-quality policy that concretely helps reduce crime. I sometimes put it like this: we succeed when we allow others to succeed.'





***Can you be more specific?***

'I think a successful example is the charters that the Minister for Housing, Communities and Integration will conclude on behalf of the government with the 40 neighbourhoods that have been singled out for special attention. Partly thanks to our contribution to the negotiations on the charters, they now include safety as a genuine issue! It is very rewarding to see that the charters contain explicit links to the overall aims of our project. And improved safety means a huge step towards the objective of Minister Vogelaar to make these neighbourhoods vital living environments. A win-win situation!

***Even so, it seems to me that the project management is in a bit of an awkward position. You are assessed on the basis of concrete results, but you are not in a position to make things happen...***

'We will just have to use our power of persuasion... But there is something more: to my mind, the big strength of this coalition agreement is not only that the government's aims in the area of safety have been translated into a concrete Policy Programme and into the Safety Begins with Prevention project. The most important topics have also been translated into the national priorities for police and public prosecution service for the coming years.

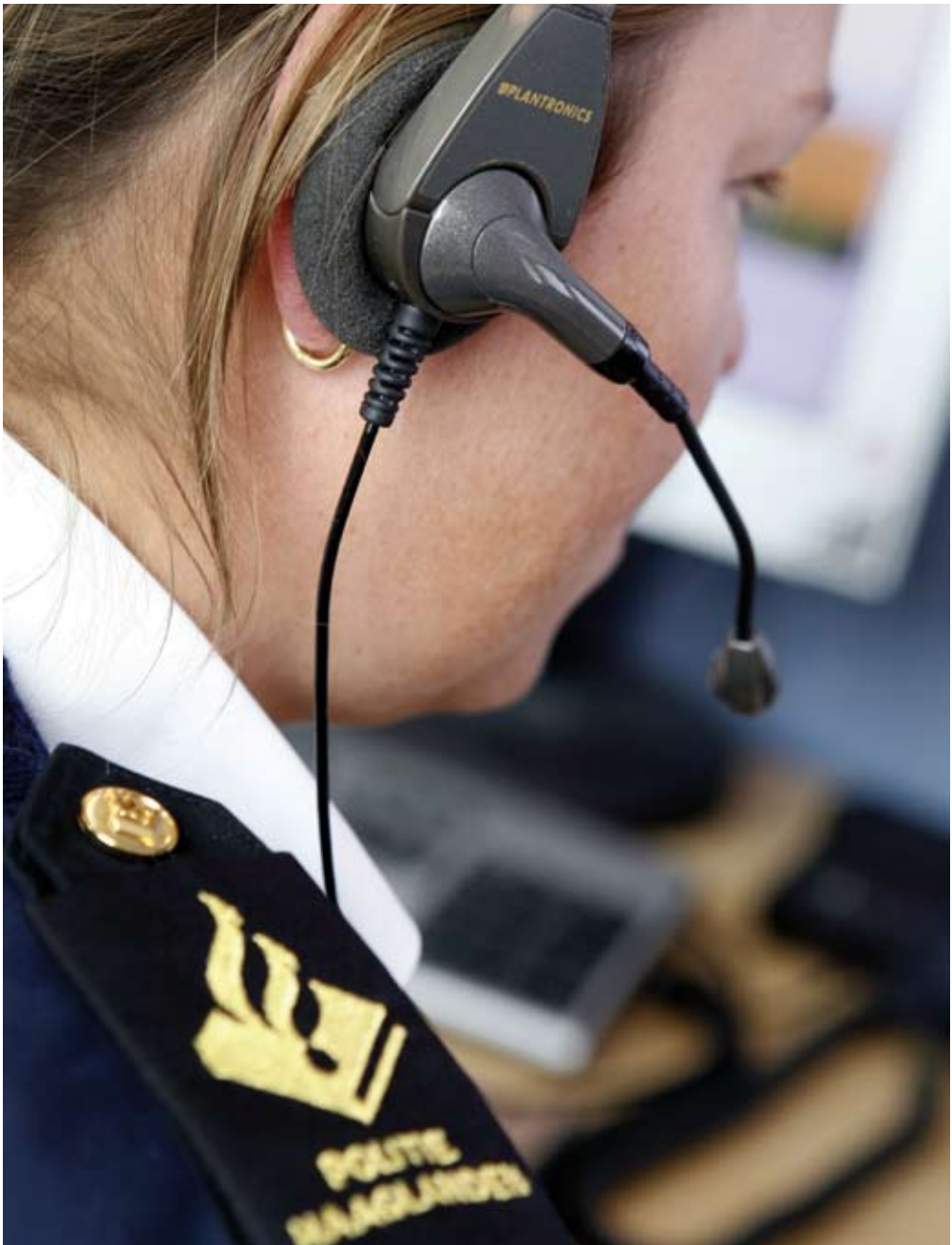
And they have been given a fairly prominent place in the Administrative Agreement between the national government and the local authorities. We as a project organisation played a role in getting our most important partners for implementation

on the same page. It is encouraging that our priorities are broadly supported by the police, the public prosecution service and local authorities. And that they are finding ways of putting them into practice.'

***The overall objective – a 25 per cent reduction in crime – has been termed ‘very ambitious’ from the outset. But the first Safety Programme showed that a substantial reduction in crime is possible. Will this programme succeed?***

'The figures in the latest Safety Monitor show that we are on the right track. Even so, we all of us still have a lot of work to do to achieve this objective. The spectacular results of the previous Safety Programme were mainly in the field of financial and economic crime. Basically, our multiple offenders approach allowed us to rack up successes in that field fairly quickly.

But we are very much aware that most of this “low-hanging fruit” has since been picked. What we have left is basically forms of crime that are more difficult to deal with, such as violent offences. Then you are talking about changes in mentality and behaviour in people, a complex field with many contributing factors. This will take a highly intensive approach and a lot of staying power. With our individualised approach, involving very many partners in implementing interventions, we are now on the right track. But we have to be realistic. If we manage to reach a real turning point in this difficult area, that would be a fantastic success.'



### **Website**

**To find out more about the Safety Begins with Prevention project, visit our website: [www.veiligheidbegintbijvoorkomen.nl](http://www.veiligheidbegintbijvoorkomen.nl) (in Dutch)**

## **Production**

Ministerie van Justitie

Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties

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