

Sociaal Economische Raad  
Social Economic Council

# The need for community based crime prevention programs

The Social and Economic Costs of Petty and Violent Crime  
in Sint Maarten and how to reduce them

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## Information

The Social Economic Council Sint Maarten (“Sociaal Economische Raad”, referred to below as “SER”) is an independent advisory body to the government of Sint Maarten. The SER advises upon request by one or more Ministers (solicited) or on its own initiative (unsolicited) on all important social economic issues.

The SER was established by law (“Landsverordening Sociaal-Economische Raad GT no.19”) in 2010.

The SER consists of representatives of employees’ and employers’ organizations as well as independent experts. The objective of the SER is to achieve a broad concept of wealth in Sint Maarten by offering quality advice and reaching consensus on social economic issues.

For more information, please visit our website [www.sersxm.org](http://www.sersxm.org)

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# 1. Scope of Advice

The Social Economic Council (SER) chooses to advise on the social and economic costs of crime because if these costs are not addressed they will be significantly more severe in the future. This policy topic was deemed eligible for unsolicited advice by the Social Economic Council because the social and economic costs of crime undermine the quality of life and put a strain on the costs of doing business and the investment climate. The opinions and policy recommendations in this advice are held unanimously by all board members.

An unsolicited advice has an inherent goal. This goal is to draw attention to a certain policy area or (draft) law. This unsolicited advice requests the attention of government and urges for a well-balanced and thought through crime prevention policy regarding the social and economic costs of violent and petty crime in Sint Maarten. This is an unsolicited advice for the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs, the Minister of Healthcare, Social Development and Labor and the Minister of Justice.

The social and economic costs of crime can be addressed from different angles. The SER has chosen to argue that a policy towards crime prevention is needed next to existing law enforcement policies in light of the development of the crime level and worries among the population. Even the most efficient and successful law enforcement policies have restraints. Sint Maarten needs an extra push to shift the balance towards a less violent and more socially robust society. The advice sets out how this policy could be implemented in order to reduce the costs of crime. This policy should aim to enhance the quality of life and reduce the costs of doing business and negative influences on the investment climate by decreasing the social and economic costs of petty and violent crime in Sint Maarten.

## 1.1 Limitations of the advice

Although the consequences of crime are at the center of this advice, law enforcement policies will not be addressed. From the point of view of law enforcement it is already researched extensively what needs to be done to protect the community. The 'Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten' prioritized four categories of petty and violent crimes with 'high priority' for law enforcement agencies. The new criminal code is another step to protect the community better. The police department is already implementing a community police program and has increased its strength considerably since 10-10-10.

If you take a further look into the social fabric which produces crimes, crime prevention programs are another way to change the behavior law enforcement aims to change as well. This advice focuses on the prevention of crime stemming from the social fabric of Sint Maarten

This advice will limit itself to petty and violent crimes. These crimes are considered to have a particularly negative effect on the quality of life, the costs of doing business and the investment climate as will be argued in the following chapters. Parts of these crimes are youth crimes (all crimes committed by perpetrators between the ages 9-17) and together with domestic violence form a large part of the concern for the wellbeing of the community in Sint Maarten. This advice proposal does not entail other crimes like organized crime (drug and arms trade, human trafficking) and various forms of fraud because, although these crimes have also serious consequences, these crimes are more difficult to target by crime prevention programs. Organized crime and fraud are more directly influenced by law enforcement efforts.

## **1.2 Outline of the advice**

The second chapter offers a description of the development of violent and petty crimes in Sint Maarten by combining a number of crime surveys and reports published between 1981 and 2011. The added value of this description is to combine the separate reports and surveys to see the development of different crimes over a longer period than would be possible for each separate survey or report. This chapter determines what the extent of the problem at hand is.

The third and fourth chapters describe the social and economic consequences of crimes using data of Sint Maarten and data of other countries as an example when there is a lack of local data in a specific area. The data from other countries is supported by some interviews with stakeholders in Sint Maarten. This chapter connects the social and economic costs of crime with the determined crime level. What is the impact on society?

The fifth chapter is about crime prevention programs. There are a variety of crime prevention programs available. Which evidence-based prevention programs are most effective? What are their outcomes in other environments? Which prevention program could be adapted to local circumstances and be effective in Sint Maarten.

The sixth chapter is about the lessons learned in Sint Maarten. Crime prevention programs aim to change part of the social world that produces crime. Sint Maarten has known earlier initiatives and programs which to a certain degree aimed to do the same.



What are some recent experiences with this type of programs in Sint Maarten? What are the lessons learned from the past?

The seventh chapter draws a conclusion from the earlier chapters and comes towards a policy recommendation.



## 2. The crime level in Sint Maarten

There seems to be a growing concern about crime among the citizens of Sint Maarten. In March and April 2011 this concern peaked when a series of homicides were committed on the island. Other times this concern is expressed differently. Parents worry about deviant behavior or victimization of their sons and daughters. Schools develop programs for ‘drug-free-zones’. Small businesses close earlier or keep a baseball bat under the counter. Medium and large businesses worry if (more) crime will deter tourists and hire (more) security personnel. There is a good deal of ‘talk about crime’ in the daily conversations of people. Especially when these crimes are committed by youth the community not only worries for its own safety but also for what will become of their younger members.

The concern for crime is supported by three different sources dealing with the recording of crimes in Sint Maarten. In 2008 a victimization survey<sup>1</sup> on petty crimes was conducted in Sint Maarten and compared with a similar survey in 1992 and 1981. The report ‘Plan Veiligheid Sint Maarten’<sup>2</sup> (2007) contains some numbers regarding the number of crimes committed in 2006 and the years before. The third source is the ‘Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten’<sup>3</sup> (2011) which contains police statistics and more detailed data on different crimes with the 2008 victimization survey. Because this chapter deals with the development of the crime level it inevitably contains to a large extent statistics.

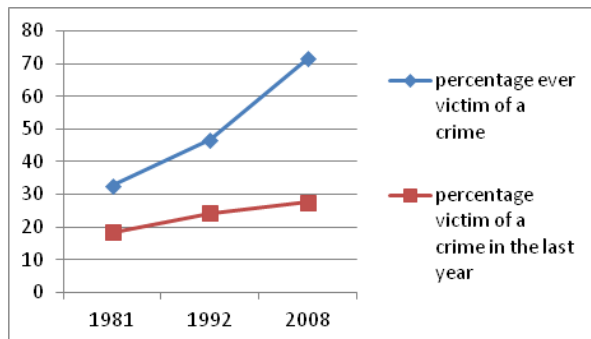
### 2.1 Victimization surveys

The victimization surveys of 1981, 1992 and 2008 paint a picture of rising crime on Sint Maarten. The percentage of people who have ever been a victim of one or more crimes jumped from 32.7% (1981) to 46.7% (1992) to 71.6% (2008). The percentage of people who have been a victim of any crime in the last year increased from 18.3% (1981) to 24.3% (1992) to 27.5% (2008). However, this steep rise is partially connected to the recording of new types of crime. If the results are corrected

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- 1 This victimization survey was conducted in 1985, 1995 and 2008 on Bonaire, Curacao and Sint Maarten and published by the CBS of the former Antilles.
  - 2 Plan Veiligheid Sint Maarten is an extensive inventory and analyses of safety and security issues in Sint Maarten, written on request of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands Antilles.
  - 3 Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten is a report about the development of petty and organized crime in Sint Maarten between 2008-2010 written on request of the Public Prosecutor of Sint Maarten.

for registration of new crimes the number of people who have ever been victim to a crime is 68.5%.

Graphics - The victimization surveys of 1981, 1992 and 2008



Some categories of crime are closely connected to the opportunities the development of the island brings. For example car vandalism and theft from a car have been increasing. Also people who have ever been the victim of ‘hit and run’ increased from 2.9% (1981) to 7.2% (2008). According to the victimization survey these increases correlate with the rising numbers of cars in Sint Maarten. But also the category robbery & theft rose from 8.7% (1981) to 14% (2008) and vandalism doubled from 1.9% (1981) to 4% (2008). Burglary increased from 12.5% (1981) to 16.6% (2008)<sup>4</sup>. All in all, the increase in victimization between 1981 and 2008 is substantial.

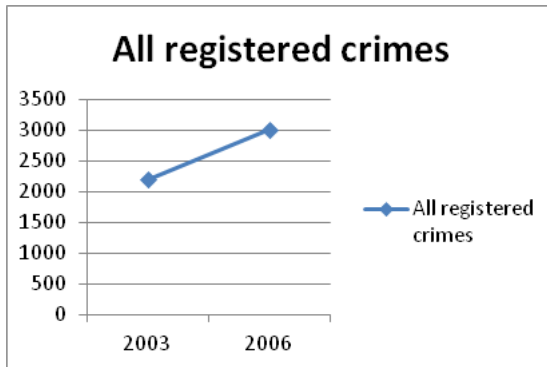
## 2.2 Plan Veiligheid Sint Maarten

The report ‘Plan Veiligheid Sint Maarten’ (2007) contains, next to a number of recommendations for law enforcement, police statistics regarding the number of crimes committed up to 2006. The report concludes based on the aggregated registered crime with the police that crime has been rising with 27% between 2003 (2193 registered crimes) and 2006 (3008 registered crimes)<sup>5</sup>.

4 CBS 2009, p. 14, 29

5 Plan veiligheid Sint Maarten, p. 23, 24

Graphics - All registered crimes 2003-2006



The report also states based on interviews and other indicators that especially ‘street crimes’ are a growing problem. Furthermore, the report argues the dark number; the difference between registered and committed crimes; must be considered high. The propensity to report crime was measured by the victimization survey and found to be respectively 41% (1992) and 31% (2008). This means that in 2008 less than one out of three victims of any crime reported the crime to the police. However, the propensity to report crime differs greatly between types of crimes. For example 90% of all car theft has been reported but burglary was only reported by 63% of the victims<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.3 Report Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse

The third source is the ‘Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten (2011). This report describes the frequency of different criminal behavior on Sint Maarten and describes the most important aspects per crime. All the statistics below were taken from the Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten (2011) and combined with data from the Victimization Survey (2009).

### 2.3.1 Registered crime and projected committed crimes

The number of household burglaries climbed from 394 (2004) to 667 (2010)<sup>6</sup>. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report burglaries was 63%. Therefore the projected number of committed burglaries is 913 in 2010. The number of burglaries of businesses are 322 (2009) and 199 (2010). If all business burglaries would have been reported the total number of burglaries could be as high as 1,112 in 2010. The average value for stolen goods is \$1,464 and the average value of damaged materials is \$697 which together brings the total of cost per burglary to \$2,161. In chapter three all the costs will be added to calculate the direct costs of crime

6 Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse 2011, p. 129-132, 135-140, 141-142, 143-144, 145-147

Based on crime registered with the police the researchers conclude that the number of robberies (theft with violence) are consequently 150 (2000), 230 (2006), 250 (2007-2010) and 296 (2011)<sup>6</sup>. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report a robbery is 38%. The projected number of robberies for 2011 is therefore 479. According to the victimization survey (2008) the average value of lost goods per robbery is \$3,379.

Theft of personal property (including pickpocketing and theft from the household) has decreased since 2005 and has been stable at around 450 registered crimes a year<sup>6</sup>. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report theft is 38 percent. The projected number of thefts is 756 for 2010. According to the victimization survey (2008) the average value of stolen goods is \$787.

Theft from a vehicle has been somewhat stable around 500 between 2008 and 2010<sup>6</sup>. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report theft from a vehicle is 44%. The projection for the number of committed thefts from vehicle is therefore 1136. The average value of stolen or damaged goods is \$967.

The numbers of car theft are 350 (2007), 190 (2008) and 253 (2010)<sup>6</sup>. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report car theft is 90%. Therefore the number of committed car thefts is projected at 278. According to the victimization survey (2008) the average value to replace (or repair a retrieved) stolen vehicle is \$2497.

The number of homicides and manslaughter has been rising between 2007 and 2010. These numbers are: 4 (2007), 10 (2008), 9 (2009), 12 (2010). This translates into a homicide rate of 31 persons per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010<sup>7</sup>.

According to the Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse violent crimes are considered to be assault, assault with weapon, battery resulting in grave bodily harm and public violence. Assault increased from 120 (2004) to 170 (2010). Assault with weapon declined from around 100 (2004) to 80 (2010). Public violence decreased from 20 (2004) to around 10 (2010). Battery resulting in grave bodily harm increased slightly from just a few (2004) to 16 (2010)<sup>7</sup>. The total number of violent crimes in 2010 is 276. According to the victimization survey (2008) the propensity to report these crimes is 36%. This would translate into 766 violent crimes.

The interviews conducted for the Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse indicate for different reasons violent crimes are to a large extent excluded from the registered crime<sup>7</sup>. This is confirmed by the victimization survey which found a propensity to report violent

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7 Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse 2011, p. 160-164, 164-167, 199

crimes to be 36%. The interviews also point to more and more serious violent crimes committed by younger perpetrators. Especially disturbing is the ease with which these crimes are committed. Young perpetrators don't seem to realize the seriousness of their behavior according to the interviewees.

Domestic violence is almost entirely missing from police statistics until 2010<sup>7</sup>. Some information can be derived from institutions dealing with the consequences of domestic violence. Safe Haven for example registered 26 battered women in 2010. Together these three sources confirm a aggregated higher crime level for violent and petty crimes on Sint Maarten in each timeframe compared to the years before although some crimes categories declined the last few years. There are also objective reasons for worries among the people of Sint Maarten.

The 'Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse Sint Maarten' also prioritizes crimes according to the impact they have on the society of Sint Maarten. The report concludes that seven out of twenty-two categories of criminal behavior are labeled with 'high priority' for law enforcement agencies. Four among those seven categories are violent and petty crimes: robbery, violent crimes (homicide, manslaughter, assault, and domestic violence), youth crimes (all crimes committed by perpetrators between the ages 9-17) and the abuse (and trade) of cocaine and marihuana<sup>8</sup>.

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8 Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse 2011, p. 276-279





## 3. The direct social and economic costs of crime

The social and economic costs of crimes are traditionally divided into four categories: direct monetary costs, direct social costs, economic multiplier effects, and social multiplier effects. Direct monetary costs are the value of goods and services for treating or preventing crimes and the direct economic damage from property crimes for victims. Direct social costs are those which cause pain and suffering among victims and perpetrators and the anxiety and behavior related to the fear of crime. The economic multiplier effect influences the macro-economy, labor market and has inter-generational productivity effects. The social multiplier effects deal with the impact on inter-personal relationships and the quality of life in general<sup>1</sup>.

### 3.1 Direct monetary costs of crime

The direct monetary costs of crime are considered to be the value of all goods and services used to prevent crime and offer treatment to victims or perpetrators and the direct economic damage from property crimes for the victim. These costs for example include the cost of the police department and the justice and prison system as well as resources spent on private security measures. For Sint Maarten these costs can only be partially determined.

The direct costs of crime for government can be approximately derived from the national accounts. The preliminary 2011 budget for the police department, the prison and the public prosecutor's office together are almost 48 million ANG<sup>2</sup>. Certainly not all these costs are related to petty and violent crime. Moreover, a 10 % decrease in the aggregated crime level would also not constitute a 10% reduction in spending. On the other hand these are not the only government departments dealing with the consequences of petty and violent crime.

The direct economic costs from property crimes for victims can be calculated using the police statistics and the different propensities to report crime in Chapter 1. The annual economic costs of property crimes in Sint Maarten are around \$6,568,337. See Appendix A for a calculation.

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1 Worldbank 2007, p.41, 42

2 Preliminary budget 2011

The resources spent on private security measures are not known in Sint Maarten. Several studies in the Caribbean give an indication for these direct costs.

### **3.2 Direct costs of crime to business in the Caribbean region**

There are a number of ways to calculate the costs of crime for businesses. Below are some examples of findings of countries in the Caribbean region. These findings are projected onto Sint Maarten due to a lack of data in Sint Maarten.

More than half the managers interviewed in Jamaica (2003) reported a significant increase in cost of security. However the total amounts spent on security measures varied considerably between firms. Large firms reported to spend 0.7% of their revenue on security. Small firms reported to spend 17% and medium-sized firms 7.6% of their revenue. Overall 2% of the revenue of all businesses in the sample was spent on security measures<sup>3</sup>. Although Jamaica has a substantial higher homicide rate (53/100,000) than Sint Maarten (31/100,000) the results do give an indication in order to fill the gap due to a lack of data in Sint Maarten. These costs are estimated conservatively between 1 and 1.5% for Sint Maarten.

In the Dominican Republic 63% of the managers saw crime as a major obstacle to investment and 57% indicated their access to financing had declined as a result of crime according to the same World Bank report. Almost 50% of the managers reported lower worker productivity due to crime. But only 10% of these businesses were actually fallen victim to crime<sup>11</sup>. This points out that the perception of insecurity influences the cost of doing business and slows business down.

According to the victimization survey (2008) the perception of insecurity is substantial in Sint Maarten. 44% of all the respondents determine they would be likely to fall victim to a crime in the next 12 months. If the findings in the Dominican Republic are combined with the level of insecurity on Sint Maarten it is likely crime also slows business down in Sint Maarten.

A study in Trinidad and Tobago (2003) calculated the cost of crime, excluding the judicial system, as 1.6% of the GDP. These cost include the value of lost productivity years of (ex)criminals (reduced earnings), funeral costs and business security costs. In 2003 Trinidad has a homicide rate of 36/100.000 where Sint Maarten has a homicide rate of 31/100,000 in 2010<sup>11</sup>. Note the costs for the criminal justice system and health care are not included. If the costs of crime in Sint Maarten are calculated in the same

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3 Worldbank 2007, p.47-50, 52

manner these costs would be, for 2008 with a GDP of 1.422 billion ANG in 2008, total to an amount of 22 million ANG.

Another accounting study in the same World Bank report calculates the costs of crime differently. In Jamaica the costs of crime are considered to be 3.7% of the GDP. These costs include the health costs for private citizens and the public health system, the loss of productivity (death and injury) and the public expenditure on security<sup>11</sup>.

- These regional research findings are only indications that the direct monetary cost of crime matters but partly remains to be determined for Sint Maarten. What conclusions can be drawn regarding the direct monetary cost for Sint Maarten?
- Annual Government spending on crime in 2011 is roughly 48 million ANG Annual (2010) calculated costs for property crime is around 10,762,500 ANG (without business) which constitutes 0.46% of the 2008 GDP
- Private security prevention measures business likely between 1 and 1.5 % of business revenues
- Projected 1.6% of GDP from Trinidad & Tobago (excluding government spending) would constitute 22 Million ANG in Sint Maarten

These numbers indicate that the direct monetary cost of crime are at a minimum around 1,5 % of the GDP (excluding government spending). This translates into 21.330.000 ANG annually. These are the 'variable' cost of crime meaning that a decline or increase in crime will influence these costs.

### 3.3 Direct social cost of crime

Although the economic side of crime is important for most people the social implications for crime are more important. Direct social costs of violent and petty crime include higher mortality and morbidity (suffering and incapacity) rates due to crime. These costs clearly influence the quality of life in Sint Maarten although for a limited number of people.

In 2010 the number of victims of violent crimes derived from police statistics is 779. The number of victims of property crimes derived from police statistics is 3,835<sup>4</sup>.

4 The projected numbers of victims of violent and property crime taken from the criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse corrected with the propensity to report crime. See Appendix A for calculation.

Total number of victims for violent and petty crimes is therefore 4614. See Appendix A. Note these are not the numbers for all crime committed in Sint Maarten. According to the victimization survey the number of victims each year is 27.5% (2008). This translates into 10,704 victims of crime in 2008.

### **3.4 Direct social and economic cost of crime**

The quality of life in Sint Maarten is strongly influenced by crime. There are around 4614 victims of violent and petty crime each year. The victimization survey estimates the total number of all crimes at 10,704 for 2008. These numbers give reason for 58 percent of the population to suffer from (strong) anxiety feelings related to crime<sup>5</sup>. Businesses spend most likely between 1% and 1.5% of their revenues on crime prevention. Small and medium sized businesses spend disproportionately more, respectively around 17% and 7.6% of their revenue. The annual costs of petty and violent crime are calculated around 10,762,500 ANG (without business) which constitutes 0.46% of the 2008 GDP. These are annual 'variable' costs. If crime goes down these costs also go down. Moreover, the annual costs of crime for Sint Maarten are estimated to be around 1,5 % of the GDP (excluding government spending). This translates into 21,330,000 ANG annually. This means if crime goes down by 10% Sint Maarten would gain at least 1,076,250 ANG (calculation) and most likely 2,133,000 ANG (estimate) annually.

The next chapter will focus on the long term economic and social consequences of violent and petty crime. These long term consequences appear to be more severe than direct social and economic costs of crime.

## 4. The social and economic multiplier effects of crime

Although the direct costs of crime most likely slow the economy down and significantly increase the cost of doing business for smaller and medium sized companies and decrease the quality of life, the effects of the indirect costs are considered to have a particularly negative effect on the economy and the well-being of the community. These indirect costs are divided into economic and social multiplier effects.

### 4.1 The economic multiplier effect

The economic multiplier effects are considered to be<sup>1</sup>:

- Decreased labor market participation
- Reduced productivity on the job
- Lower earnings
- Increased absenteeism
- Intergenerational productivity impact (grade repetition and lower educational attainment)
- Decreased investment and savings
- Capital flight
- Decreased tourism
- Decreased government revenue

In Sint Maarten none of these effects have yet been linked to crime because research on this topic is missing for Sint Maarten. Research in other countries has determined what the aggregated results of these effects can mean elsewhere in the Caribbean. One way to assess the economic multiplier effect is to estimate the impact of crime on overall economic growth using cross country data. This comparison reflects the average relationship between crime and economic growth.

In the comparison below crimes are measured solely by the homicide rate. This rate is the least subject to variation in definitions between countries. The per capita GDP is regressed (statistical term) onto the homicide rates of different countries controlling for income inequality, the costs of investments and average male and female education. In this study Costa Rica, one of the least violent countries near the Caribbean, is compared with Jamaica, Haiti, Guyana, and the Dominican Republic between 1996

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1 Morrison, Buvinic and Shifter 2003, p. 15

and 2000. Costa Rica had an average homicide rate of 8.1/100,000. The average homicide rate for the other countries is respectively 33.8, 33.9, 16.1 and 16.5. Sint Maarten has a homicide rate of 31/100,000 (2010). In terms of homicide rate Sint Maarten society in 2010 is comparable to the societies of Jamaica and Haiti between 1996-2000<sup>2</sup>.

What would be the projected gain of economic growth for these Caribbean countries if they would bring down the homicide rate to the level of Costa Rica? The two most violent countries, Jamaica and Haiti, could potentially boost economic growth by 5.4% annually. Between 1996 and 2000 these countries had a comparable homicide rate (33-34/100.000) as Sint Maarten (31/100.000) in 2010. Guyana and the Dominica republic would also benefit substantially with an extra economic growth of 1.7 and 1.8% respectively<sup>3</sup>. Because the projective results are cumulative the results over a longer term could be substantial.

These results cannot be translated directly to Sint Maarten but do make probable that a decrease in homicide rate, reflecting a general crime level, will have a positive effect on economic growth. A lower crime level in Sint Maarten expressed with a homicide rate of 8.1/100,000 most likely would contribute to a GDP growth between 1.8% and 5.4% annually.

## **4.2 The social multiplier effects**

The social multiplier effects are intergenerational transmission of violence, erosion of social capital, and reduced quality of life<sup>16</sup>. Unlike the economic multiplier effects the social multiplier are described but not determined in this advice. None of these effects have yet been linked to crime in Sint Maarten through research due to a lack of data in Sint Maarten. Research findings in other countries give an indication what the social multiplier effects entail elsewhere.

Intergenerational transmission of violence has strong links with domestic violence. Young family members may witness or become victim of family violence. Since violence is mostly a learned behavior children confronted with violence simply learn this is as normal or at least acceptable behavior to get what you want, and will repeat it. An enormous amount of research shows a significant correlation between children exposed regularly to violence and increased delinquent behavior and the use of domestic violence when these children have become adults<sup>4</sup>. Although in Sint Maarten

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2 Worldbank 2007, p. 58-59

3 Worldbank 2007, p. 58-59, 41

4 Morrison, Buvinic and Shifter 2003

domestic violence is almost not registered it is considered by professionals in the reports mentioned in the previous chapter to be a relevant factor<sup>5</sup>. In other Caribbean countries research indicated the prevalence of relational violence is high. For Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago this prevalence is between 40% and 54% of all relationships<sup>6</sup>.

Social capital means to a large extent the quantity and quality of social relations within a community. The central aspect of social capital is trust. Through trust a social network of reciprocity and social relations that can be drawn upon by community members is established<sup>7</sup>. Another word for social capital is social cohesion. The relationship between violent crime and social capital has been established thoroughly by research, although not specifically for Sint Maarten. Research indicates clearly higher crime rates correspond with lower levels of social capital within the communities in the United States. This also indicates that if crime prevention programs succeed to strengthen social capital crime will decrease consequently. Not only does social capital establish norms through interaction between community members (social-control) it is also believed to inhibit criminal behavior within individuals (self control).

Social capital exists in relationship with others but the quality of life, or well-being, is here considered to be (non-economic) well-being of individuals. Next to direct victimization the community at large is also affected. According to the victimization survey (2008) the 65% of the respondents talk regularly about crime in Sint Maarten. 30% of the respondents think it is (very) likely they will be a victim of crime in the next year. Just over half the respondents think the chance that they will become a victim has increased compared to before and about one third of the respondents very often think about the possibility to become a victim. Even at home about one third of the respondents is afraid to be home alone and 37% thinks their own neighborhood is not safe. This impression leads 28% of the respondents to avoid certain streets or locations in their neighborhood after dark. As a result of these views 58% of the respondents suffer from (very) strong anxiety feelings caused by crime. Crime and the fear of crime clearly affect the well-being of respondents of the victimization survey in the first chapter.

Although the social multiplier effects have only partly been quantified and projected onto Sint Maarten the research finding in other countries indicates these effects exist elsewhere and should be taken seriously. Most registered crime takes place in public

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5 Criminaliteitsbeeldanalyse 2011

6 Le Franc and others 2008, p. 414

7 Galea, Karpati and Kennedy 2002, p. 1374

space and crime by itself is a social endeavor. Therefore crime can be decreased by strengthening the same social world which produces crime. This points towards crime prevention programs which aim to change aspects of the social world to reduce the economic and social costs of crime.



## 5. Crime prevention programs

Crime prevention is simply any policy which will cause a lower number of crimes to occur in the future than would have occurred without that policy. Therefore crime prevention is measured by consequence and not intention of the policy. Crime prevention should not only have an impact on the number of crimes but should also be cost-effective. Since crime prevention programs do not take place in a vacuum, the context where crime (prevention) takes place should always be taken in account. Traditionally there are seven 'institutional settings' where crime prevention can take place. If crime reduction actually takes place depends also on the local features of each of these settings and how they relate to each other. This chapter focuses on three institutional settings. These are family, school, and community. Other institutional settings are labor market, places, police agencies, and courts & correctional facilities.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will be limited to evidence based crime prevention programs. Evidence based means the outcomes of these programs have been researched, and evidence has been brought forward that a decreased crime level can be attributed to these prevention programs. Most of these programs have been implemented in the United States and in Europe. The authors of the book 'Evidence based crime prevention' (2002) have scrutinized 675 crime prevention programs. They found 29 programs clearly effective in decreasing crime or related problem behavior. Generally speaking programs that are active in more than one 'institutional setting' were found to be more effective. One crime prevention program, 'Communities that Care' (CTC) is such a program and is for several reasons especially relevant for Sint Maarten.

Since the 1990-ties CTC has been developed in the United States and has been constantly tested and improved. CTC is a coalition based community prevention program that uses a public health approach to prevent youth problem behavior. This entails delinquency and violence but also drinking, tobacco use, school dropout and substance abuse. CTC is primarily targeted to the children of any age in the community. CTC can be adapted to local circumstances because the program knows a palette of diagnostic tools coupled with intervention measures for the three 'institutional settings': family, school, and neighborhood. One can choose which intervention needs to be implemented after the diagnosis has been performed. An extensive description of CTC is placed on the website <http://www.sdr.org/ctcresource/>. Because all the needed diagnostic and intervention tools are made available for the public and comes with a comprehensive implementation guide CTC is ready available and relatively easy to implement<sup>9</sup>.

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8 Sherman, Farrington, Welsh, MacKenzie 2002.

9 <http://www.sdr.org/ctcresource/>

CTC is based on the idea that so called protective and risk factors for a large part determine whether criminal and deviant behavior will occur. Risk factors facilitate unwanted behavior and protective factors guard against deviant behavior. These factors are identified in domains like community, family, school and peers. Examples of risk factors are low neighborhood attachment, community disorganization, norms favorable to drug use and firearms. Examples of protective factors on neighborhood level are community rewards for prosocial involvement and opportunities for prosocial involvement. More examples can be found on the above mentioned website. Research conducted between 2006 and 2010 on all five islands of the former Netherlands Antilles indicates crime prevention programs which target risk and protective factors, will most likely also be effective in Sint Maarten<sup>10</sup>. This cannot be argued by crime prevention programs that do not target these factors. The results of crime prevention programs in one society cannot be simply projected onto another if the same prevention program is implemented. This research describes extensively risk and protective factors in Sint Maarten and conclude risk factors correlate positively and protective factors correlate negatively with criminal and deviant behavior. Moreover, the results also clearly indicate a high level of violence and delinquency among the youth that cannot be lowered by individual care. This is a very important observation. The idea that individual care of problem behavior will affect the general crime level is unrealistic. The authors state that “targeted social policy, and prevention, of youth problems should be considered seriously”<sup>10</sup>.

This means if a crime prevention program targets risk and protective factors on a group or neighborhood level, and can be adapted to local circumstances, and is active in more than one ‘institutional setting’, it is the best option to decrease crime in Sint Maarten. ‘Communities that care’ (CTC) has all these characteristics and should therefore be considered to be implemented in Sint Maarten.

However, the most important factor of CTC is community mobilization. The CTC is designed to increase communication, collaboration, and ownership among community members and service providers. CTC involves neighborhood community boards appointed by key community leaders. The key community leaders form a board that supports and guides the boards on neighborhood level. In order for CTC to be effective it must delve deep in the community of Sint Maarten and be broadly supported. In other words, CTC needs to ‘fit’ in existing social structure and be supported by service providers of different ministries. One other consideration should be made. If the existing social structure is too weak in communities associated with high poverty levels, implementation of CTC has proven to be more difficult.

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10 Jonkman, Cuijpers and Twisk 2010, p. 39

## 5.1 Results ‘Communities That Care’ prevention program

The following results were measured after CTC was implemented in 24 communities in seven different states in the United States and compared with control communities. In CTC communities students between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade were 41% less likely to initiate delinquent behavior. Lower levels of cigarettes (8%), Marijuana (4%) use was also found<sup>11</sup>.

The likelihood of 10<sup>th</sup> graders to start delinquent behavior was 21% less than in control communities. The likelihood of 10<sup>th</sup> graders to start drinking alcohol in CTC communities was 38% percent lower and the likelihood to start smoking 50% lower than in control communities. The odds 10<sup>th</sup> graders have been smoking in the last months were 21% lower. In the past year 17% less 10<sup>th</sup> graders have been involved in any delinquent behavior and 25% less children have been involved with violence compared to control communities<sup>12</sup>. Note these comparisons are between CTC and control community (where no CTC program was active). CTC does not predict to decrease a similar percentage in these behaviors in the general crime level. These results were obtained in communities where CTC was implemented for a minimum of four years. CTC is a prevention program that only works if it is supported by the community and properly financed by authorities for four, and preferably more years depending on the results. The results also suggest that the improvement in behavior lasts.

The CTC program entails considerable time investments of all project partners. Therefore the project cannot depend, next to government workers, on volunteers. Members of community councils and other participants should be paid to secure a sustainable and effective program. Government workers should be allocated sufficient time for their activities. Crime prevention costs money and takes time. The aspect of community mobilization and ownership of CTC on neighborhood level is vital. Therefore the success or failure of earlier and existing neighborhood programs in Sint Maarten must be considered. The next chapter is about the lessons learned from other social policies in Sint Maarten.

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11 2009. Hawkins e.a..2009, p. 794-796

12 Hawkins e.a. 2012, p. 145-146



## 6. Neighborhood programs in Sint Maarten

This chapter will address two current projects that will be implemented shortly or are being implemented at the moment in Sint Maarten. These programs are the Integrated Neighborhood Development Program (INDP) and Community Policing program. The INDP aims to raise the quality of life by establishing community help desks (CHD) in three neighborhoods (St. Peters, Dutch Quarter and Cole Bay) to address the needs of people in the neighborhoods. The information gathered by the CHD's also aims to ensure improvement of policy and decision making. The choice for INDP indicates that the access to services is decentralized and connected with the needs from the different neighborhoods. CTC has the same decentralized structure. What is needed to prevent crime can differ per neighborhood. This indicates the CTC program can use the same existing social structure as the INDP and does not need to be 'build up from the ground'.

Although data was collected in ten neighborhoods for selection purposes the INDP includes only three CHD's. The main reason to establish CHD in these three selected communities was that the strength of these three community councils. Earlier social policies on neighborhood level also brought forward that if not all social groups are represented in the community council, the policy will be blocked by groups not represented in the council and therefore would fail to be successful. Cutting corners in social policies works counterproductive.

The INDP also aims to activate unemployed youths in different neighborhoods. Young men and women currently 'hanging around' on the street will be given the opportunity to gain work experience to maintain buildings in their neighborhood. This work experience will be structured as micro enterprises financed by the INDP and managed by the different neighborhood councils and INDP project leaders. This aspect of the INDP could be a welcome addition next to the CTC program because CTC does not target potential delinquents directly but stays at a group level (school, neighborhood or training for family in parenting styles for example).

The police department is implementing the community policing project. Police officers are being trained to take responsibility for the security in a neighborhood. One of the goals is to get to know the population of the neighborhood and to respond or prevent crime using that knowledge. Community policing aims to deploy law enforcement resources depending on the needs of the community and tries to respond to crime in consultation with the neighborhood to enhance safety. CTC aims to do the same and both policies could be very helpful to each other.

The success of 'Communities That Care' elsewhere is closely connected with a specific project organization. CTC should therefore be implemented next to these existing projects with a separate budget, goals and project organization. CTC can only function successfully if it is an independent project with clear goals but cooperation with the INDP and the community policing project would benefit all parties involved. The current INDP and community policing project know a similar structure, borrow from the same principles, and have to a certain extent the same goals as CTC program. This presents an opportunity for crime prevention and should be embraced by working together with these projects.

For example, community police officers and members of the community councils would be an added value to the neighborhood community boards of the CTC. CTC needs community board members who know the community well. The facilities of the community help desk could also serve the CTC project. A social worker working in the Community Help Desk could also be provided with course materials of the CTC program and become an instructor on family parenting style but these activities would fall under the supervision of the neighborhood community board.

The board of key community leaders as supervisory board must be established to implement CTC. Other community councils can be strengthened by the goals CTC entails and form community boards supervised by the key community leaders. A crime prevention program can also activate community members to take responsibility for their neighborhood.

## 7. Advice and recommendations

The Social Economic Council (SER) has described the level of violent and petty crimes and the social and economic costs these crimes produce using local data and, where local data is missing, using data from other countries. According to the SER the development of crime and the associated costs form reasons to act next to existing law enforcement efforts. This report has elaborated on the general workings of crime prevention programs elsewhere and one evidence-based crime prevention program in particular; ‘Communities That Care’. Two current existing neighborhood programs have been described which have promising links in goals and method with ‘Communities That Care’ (CTC).

Therefore, the SER unanimously advises the government of Sint Maarten:

- To implement a comprehensive crime prevention policy for Sint Maarten, with a trial in de communities with a Community Help Desk (St. Peters, Cole Bay and Dutch Quarter).
- To implement ‘Communities That Care’ as a crime prevention program with an independent project organization, budget and goals as recommended by ‘Communities That Care’.
- To seek cooperation between Community Policing and Integrated Neighborhood Development Program.
- To seek cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Affairs, the Ministry of Healthcare, Social Development and Labor and the Ministry of Justice for a crime prevention program.
- To make sufficient funds available from these Ministries to implement the full program for a period of at least four years and during the program to reimburse members of community boards to secure their lasting time investment and cooperation.

### 7.1 Recommendations

The SER further recommends to:

- Seek additional funding for ‘Communities That Care’ with the European Development Fund new grant cycle 2014-2020 due to the long-lasting time of the project.
- Continue the housing project for orphans and youth placed under supervision of the court of guardianship. The most vulnerable should be protected and guided not to enter into crime.
- To fill data gaps and to provide statistics needed for the areas mentioned in this advice.





## 8. Sources

### **CBS Antilles 2009**

*Veel voorkomende criminaliteit op Bonaire, Curaçao en Sint Maarten. Resultaten van de slachtofferenquête 2008*, Centraal Bureau van Statistiek Nederlandse Antillen, Fort Amsterdam (Curaçao), 2009.

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### **Hawkins, Oesterle, Brown, Monahan, Abbott, Arthur and Catalano 2012**

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### **Jonkman, Cuijpers and Twisk 2010**

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**Sherman, Farrington, Welsh, MacKenzie 2002**

*Evidence based crime prevention.* London and New York, 2007.

**Worldbank 2007**

*Crime, violence, and development: trends, costs, and policy options for the Caribbean.* Worldbank, 2007.

## **8.1 Stakeholder Interviews**

The following interviews with stakeholders were conducted for this advice:


- Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports affairs. Head of Youth Department
- Ministry of Health Care, Social Development and Labor. Head of Social Development
- Ministry of Justice. Head of Judicial Affairs
- For a Change (INDP consultant)



# Appendix

## Appendix A - Direct economic costs of property crime and direct social costs of violent crime

| Direct economic costs of property crime |                    |            |                   |                       |                                    |
|---|--------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| type crime                              | registered crime   | % reported | calculated number | av. cost per crime \$ | total cost per type                |
| burglary household                      | 667                | 63         | 913               | 2161                  | \$1,972,993                        |
| burglary business                       | 199                | 63         | 273               | 2161                  | \$589,153                          |
| robberies                               | 296                | 38         | 479               | 3379                  | \$1,618,541                        |
| theft personal property                 | 450                | 38         | 756               | 787                   | \$594,972                          |
| theft from vehicle                      | 500                | 44         | 1136              | 967                   | \$1,098,512                        |
| car theft                               | 253                | 90         | 278               | 2497                  | \$694,166                          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>2365</b>        |            | <b>3835</b>       |                       | <b>\$6,568,337</b>                 |
|   |                    |            |                   |                       | \$5,979,184 (ex business burglary) |
| Direct social costs of violent crime    |                    |            |                   |                       |                                    |
| type crime                              | registered victims | % reported | calculated number |                       |                                    |
| homicides                               | 12                 | 100        | 12                |                       |                                    |
| assault                                 | 170                | 36         | 472               |                       |                                    |
| assault with weapon                     | 80                 | 36         | 222               |                       |                                    |
| public violence                         | 10                 | 36         | 28                |                       |                                    |
| grave bodily harm                       | 16                 | 36         | 44                |                       |                                    |
| domestic violence                       |                    |            |                   |                       |                                    |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>288</b>         |            | <b>779</b>        |                       |                                    |



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The SER was established by law (“Landsverordening Sociaal-Economische Raad GT no.19”) in 2010.

The SER consists of representatives of employees’ and employers’ organizations as well as independent experts. The objective of the SER is to achieve a broad concept of wealth in Sint Maarten by offering quality advice and reaching consensus on social economic issues.

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