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POLICE TRAINING IN DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

Issues & Reports

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UNITED NATIONS INTERREGIONAL
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Police Training Activities for the Prevention and Control of Drug Abuse

Executive Summary

prepared by

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Police anti-drug misuse training should be based on the most contemporary information and methods. This project was commissioned* in order to survey the type of police drug training available in countries at different levels of development, and to achieve the following objectives:

Objectives of the study

1. an analysis of training methodologies of selected police forces in prevention and control activities;
2. the identification of the best practices and how to adapt them to other institutional systems; and
3. the preparation of a final report for reference and educational purposes.

Eight countries: Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the USA, chosen for their differing geographical, political, economic, social and, in this case, legal systems, participated in the project. A mix of consumer, transit, manufacturing and cultivation countries was considered desirable.

Methodological considerations

The UNICRI central team constructed a standard questionnaire to be completed: (a) by a criminological expert, and (b) by a police (narcotics) training expert, in each country.

Fixed format, multiple choice and open-ended questions were used, and the two questionnaires from each country were designed to form a national report when amalgamated. The questionnaire was modified after a "meeting of experts" in Rome in October 1992, to "tailor" the questionnaire whilst attempting to retain a standard format acceptable to all.

It was considered over-ambitious to cover national police structures beyond a certain level. Great Britain has, for instance, over fifty independent police forces, and this is also true of federal states where police forces operate relatively independently. In these cases, it was decided to concentrate on one large city or one federal state. In addition, some countries have more than one police force.

In some countries, it was possible to cover all the official drugs training courses relatively comprehensively, in others the number of local level courses was so great that the task would have been monumental. Thus, it was decided to cover five training courses in each country, relating to varying levels of the training hierarchy.

* The full project report was compiled in Italian for the Italian Ministry of the Interior, who provided funding for which UNICRI is most grateful. The bibliography, police training structures diagrams, and criminal justice processes charts can be consulted in the full report. The data used in the study generally refer to 1991.

The drug problem

Of the eight countries participating, only Russia and Brazil appear to have any large scale indigenous production of drugs.

Criminologists and police experts in the study generally agreed on the predominant concern in their countries. Consumption is either the main problem, or a serious one in all countries, except the Netherlands. In Germany and Italy, consumption and trafficking/transit are seen as inseparable, but the Italian police attach primary concern to transit. The Dutch, reflecting their well established policy with regard to drug users, mention only drug transit as a major concern. Russia appears to have all of the problems possible. Internal trafficking and misuse is most often the result of internal production through cultivation, extraction and refining, thus the beginning of the chain is regarded as of most serious concern. Thefts from medical establishments and forging of prescriptions are also of growing concern.

Not surprisingly, males are more likely drug users than females, although the difference varies by drug type and country. Certainly, in the USA, Canada and the Netherlands it would be worth investigating the possibility of training courses aimed specifically at women. For some drug categories, the ratio of women to men is between 3:7 and 4:6. Secondly, although age bands are recorded differently in each country, the predominant drug taking age group lies approximately between 15 - 25. Thirdly, drug related deaths show an upward trend in countries where data are available, although some rises are small, and based on very narrow definitions. Unemployment appears to be higher amongst hard drug users.

From the comments received, some of them extensive, training issues determined by drug use patterns can be suggested.

* Brazil: prevention activities amongst school and street children, particularly in relation to cocaine, but also in relation to marihuana and the use of solvents (including shoe repair glue), tranquilisers, and uniquely, anticholinergics. Women could also be targeted as non-prescription amphetamine users (ostensibly for slimming). The misuse of "legal drugs" should be high on the prevention agenda, along with trafficking on the enforcement front.

* Canada: concentration on street youth as a high risk group for prevention targeting, and on school children below the age of 15.

* Germany: female 'licit' drug abuse prevention.

* Great Britain: cannabis use appears to be relatively commonplace, but whether this is a true enforcement, prevention and/or training issue is currently the subject of some debate, even within the police service. Amphetamine use also appears to be relatively commonplace with little difference between the sexes. This might be a useful area for enforcement and prevention training. Dance drugs, some old ones (LSD) and some more recent ones (Ecstasy), are a possible target at "rave" dances, a fairly recent phenomenon involving 16 to 19-year-olds. These events tend to be so huge, that to date the police's main concern has been public order control, with the secondary aim of arresting drug suppliers. A potentially useful cross-over between public order and drugs enforcement could be reflected in police training. There is

evidence that school liaison projects are also necessary for drug prevention.

* Netherlands: specific ethnic groups occupy the lower social strata, and are over represented in problematic drug use, suggesting a combined drugs and community policing course.

* Russia: concern about polydrug use might lead to a multi-agency training course run jointly by the police and the health services.

* USA: one would expect the concentration to be on cocaine, given its hard drug status and availability.

Much of the existing drugs legislation and policy is defined by the experts in terms of changes made to earlier legislation. In the case of Brazil this was in 1976, and it is unlikely that police training will have changed in that time. Therefore, it is unlikely that courses aimed at prevention among soft drug users, or indeed, dealing with money laundering and asset seizure will be found. In Germany and Italy, the legislation changed after the period covered by the study, and it may be too early to expect police training in these two countries to reflect this. Most countries distinguish between possession and trafficking, but Germany now distinguishes trafficking in an organised context. Germany and Britain also have strong asset confiscation elements in their drug legislation, as does the USA, although it is not specifically mentioned by the experts. At the time of writing, the Netherlands experts indicated that the current asset confiscation regulations were likely to be strengthened.

Germany and the Netherlands have different drugs policies, which temper the strict letter of the law. Germany is in the process of change, evidenced by a sentencing shift. If the police adapt their enforcement and prevention training accordingly, prevention training will be directed towards softer drug use and juveniles, whereas enforcement training would be directed more towards hard drug trafficking and use by adults. Canada has amended legislation to include the sale of literature and drug "equipment", but perhaps most importantly, also on money laundering and asset seizure. It could reasonably be expected, therefore, to find training courses on both of these issues.

A recent combination of trends in the different countries' legislation systems is apparent: getting tough on traffickers; seeking to help users and juveniles to discontinue drug use rather than strictly enforcing the law; asset confiscation; money laundering investigations and controlled delivery.

The predominantly English speaking countries, Great Britain, the USA and Canada, give their police a measure of pre-court discretion that other countries do not. This stems mainly from the different design of the legal system and processes. The police in the UK, Canada and the USA carry out several of the functions, which in other countries are the domain of the judiciary. In Britain, the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service has, in the recent past, removed a function formerly provided by the police - preparing and presenting, at least at the lower court level, the prosecution case - but this perhaps serves as a measure of the extent to which the police were enmeshed in court procedure. In Italy and Brazil, the investigation of a case is

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directed by a Magistrate or Judge, whereas in Britain, Canada and the USA this is normally not possible. Obviously, training in the largely Anglophone countries should reflect greater police involvement in the prosecution process. The Netherlands' "triangular" system takes the multi-agency approach right through the criminal justice procedure, reflecting different training needs, with perhaps more emphasis on prevention and diversion. Canada in turn appears to operate a joint system with the Crown Attorney, and a high level of discretion on sentencing options is possible. Further, in Canada, cautions can be given instead of an arrest, and a similar system of informal cautioning also exists in Britain. A power of de-arrest also exists in Britain, under the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which might be a unique police power. In the Russian Federation the police are not free to decide on the balance of evidence in most cases, but for administrative offences they can decide to caution an offender, avoiding court involvement.

Diversion in Brazil is rare, whereas in the Netherlands every drug offence can potentially be diverted outside the criminal justice system. The Canadian system is geared for diversion at many different points, and in the UK new legislation means that therapeutic "sentences" are possible with the agreement of the offender. In practice, pre-court diversion is more common by using cautioning. In Germany, a de facto shift in sentencing policy and greater acceptance of drug substitution programmes in an increasing number of regions, mean that diversion is on the increase.

The most striking difference between the USA and Britain and Canada, is the under representation of cannabis arrests compared to other drugs. As cannabis is often the most widespread illicit drug, Britain and Canada's figures would reflect that. In the USA, cannabis offenders might be dealt with differently but, most likely, the greater threat from cocaine and heroin determines the direction and concentration of police efforts. The Dutch figures indicate that, for the last ten years, there has been a decreasing trend in arrests for soft drug offences.

The powers of the police in suspected drugs cases are strong in most countries, reflecting the general concern of the authorities. Recent amendments to strengthen the law in this area, and specifically concerning drugs, have met some opposition from groups concerned about the rights of the individual. In Germany the new seizure of assets proposal is being challenged on the grounds that it is unconstitutional. The powers in all of the countries are as applicable to individuals as they are to vehicles and premises, and in some cases the emphasis on documentation might be usefully applied to money laundering cases. Canada, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands have specific drug legislation covering searches and seizures, whilst the USA and apparently the Russian Federation use general powers under constitutional law. In either case, as part of a drug enforcement course, the practical application of these powers should be covered.

The most striking feature of the responses on community policing is the division between Canada, Britain, the Netherlands and the USA on the one hand, who do have a very strong contemporary history and application of community policing, and the other countries who do not. Brazil, Italy and Russia appear to have no community policing equivalent based on the principles outlined in the above four countries' descriptions. Germany currently has no such system, but the possibility of introdu-

cing some aspects of it in the future are being considered. There is a type of "citizen's policing" in Russia which might serve a similar purpose, although it is too early to say whether this might develop into a system similar to community policing.

Experts in Brazil and the Russian Federation rate police efficiency and effectiveness as low primarily because of inadequate resources hindering systematic enforcement, whereas other countries, as noted by the Canadian expert, rate the police performance against drugs as low, partly because of their predominantly enforcement based approach, although some use of more pro-active prevention type techniques produce more desirable results. It is generally accepted by the experts that enforcement alone will have little permanent effect on drug consumption patterns.

Budget and training mechanisms

Britain, the Russian Federation and the USA had increased the amount of time spent on drugs training, whereas Brazil, the Netherlands and Germany remained constant.

Canada spends 3.4% of the total available budget on police training, Germany 0.5%, Great Britain 6.4%, the Netherlands 3.5%, and the USA 1%. It is difficult to analyse the differences between countries as their fixed costs of policing are not known.

Brazil spent 15% of its training money on drugs training; Germany 5%; Great Britain 4%; the Netherlands 1.5%; and the USA 5-10%. Brazil uses a higher proportion of its budget for drugs training than the other countries. Overall, drugs training is not the biggest concentration of police training resources, either in time or money.

Canada's allocation of training funds is decided on the principle of greatest need, based on requests from provinces, the demands of high crime areas, the changing environment of crime, and the Cabinet. In Germany, allocation also depends mainly on perceived current crime priorities. In Great Britain, allocation is increasingly decided by the advisory Police Training Council Matrix. In the Netherlands, 70% of the allocation is by the Ministries of Justice and Interior in consultation with police chiefs, prosecutors general, ministers and directors of training institutes. The other 30% is allocated directly by police forces, according to their own priorities. In the Russian Federation, the experts of the General Personnel Department evaluate the needs of militia agencies depending on the current pressing issues. In the USA, fixed costs take up most of the training allocation, although drugs training will form a component in some of these. The New York State Police gives priority to in-service training, supporting the Community Narcotics Enforcement Team and Narcotics Enforcement Units concentrating on the middle and upper level of the drugs markets. Some specialist training is prioritised in multi-agency drugs training.

The type of drugs-training courses is differentiated by training levels. The first level are likely to be national training centres, second level might mean regional training centres, and third level local training centres, or even local initiatives carried out by individual police stations. Top level training concentrates in all countries on enforcement issues (in the United States and the Russian Federation, this is true for all levels of training). At the middle level, Canadian drug training is almost exclusively for enforcement, but at the lower level, almost exclusively on prevention activities. In Germany, the involvement in prevention activities increases towards the lower level of drugs training, but even here, enforcement is the major concentration. In the UK, the Metropolitan Police have a similar mix of enforcement and other schemes as Canada, although enforcement constitutes 50% of the curriculum at the lower training level, the rest being dedicated to multi-agency drug work. The Dutch identified only two levels of drug training. At the first level, 30% of training is in prevention/multi-agency work, and 10% in ethnic issues and drugs. At local level, only 15% of training is drug enforcement related.

In Canada and Germany, there are no formal attempts to prevent those with specialist drugs training from being transferred out of the area. In Great Britain, the Metropolitan Police have made no attempt to retain drug specialists by promotion, but postings to the Regional Crime Squads (middle level enforcement) have been increased to five years. In the Netherlands it depends on individual forces. Some try

not to move specialists at the same grade, others think it is important to have police officers with all round experience who are moved every four years. On promotion, possibilities for career opportunities within specialised squads are very limited. In the Russian Federation there are directives and regulations prohibiting the removal of drugs officers to non-relevant areas. On promotion, a move to a non-relevant area is possible with the commander's permission. In the New York State Police Force, drugs officers are selected from the general ranks. Their training is then specifically oriented to drug law enforcement and they are not randomly moved out of the area without a good reason. Promotion follows the same pattern.

In Germany, there is a working group of 16 Federal Police Forces and the Federal Criminal Police Office which tries to coordinate training activities between the different levels. In the UK, there is no set method of coordination. Training establishments at all levels in the UK are kept up to date by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and the Home Office. In the Netherlands, the students progress from one level to the other in a coordinated way. In Russia, there are no attempts to coordinate training initiatives between different levels. In the USA, the decentralised policing system works against coordination, but there is interchange between different levels when officers are brought together at national and regional levels.

The majority of police drug training courses relate to some aspect of drug enforcement. Some of these incorporate management for enforcement supervisors (Britain, Canada, the Russian Federation, the USA) and others intelligence or information gathering methods (Canada, Germany, Britain). The video based training in the USA is broadly based and covers all areas of drug issues, including prevention as well as general policing. Canada was the only country to provide any police drug prevention training material. The fact that Italy and the Netherlands did not supply any information on financial investigation courses, does not necessarily mean that none exist.

Discussion

Most of the courses are stand-alone training activities, with some follow up possibilities, although these are often just to keep up with legislative changes. The Dutch general course and the Russian courses were introductory activities with a sizeable drugs component, and lasted for substantial periods of time. Other courses ranged from a few hours for video updating courses, to 15 days for the Italian undercover training.

The methods and structure of the courses resemble the mechanistic and organistic styles of training. Given that the police are presented with specific tasks and functions to carry out, and the law largely defines the parameters within which they must operate, the function of training is, not surprisingly, to make their individuals operate more efficiently in this environment. There is evidence, however, of attempting to develop individuals to perform their roles more efficiently, leaving them enough leeway to alter details and structures according to their needs. In this sense, the police methods presented as a whole resemble organistic models of training, although within this milieu there is a seemingly adequate range of possibilities.

The main philosophy can be summed up as follows: training should be student cen-

tred and presented in a range of styles aimed at developing the individual and promoting the concept of self-development.

This approach is seen in stark contrast to the ideas of five or six years before 1988, when training tended to be teacher centred, with rote learning, lectures and formal examinations. Issues would go no further than direct concern for police matters, i.e. the law, arrest techniques and police support services.

It seems that the theoretical jump from mechanistic approaches to organic ones is, in reality, a large and positive one. The most interesting innovation, however, was the use of role play and role reversal techniques, although the reluctance to take part and the time consuming nature of the preparation necessary were prohibitive.

It may be that the costs involved in training police officers using fieldwork and on-the-job-training compared to in-school costs are much higher, and this is certainly an area which should be researched, using a cost benefit model to decide the optimum mix. Cost benefit analysis could also be used to evaluate the learning effectiveness of videos compared to lectures.

Canada, despite fairly extensive use of evaluation methods, might also benefit from video feedback and discussion, similar to that used in the Netherlands. This method could also be considered as alternative or complementary to the use of observation platforms in the USA.

The USA was the only country to include firearms practice *per se* as a part of many of its courses.

Outside experts were used extensively by some countries and less by others, and in countries like Brazil, "outside experts" were foreign police officers. Sending police trainees to other institutions was very rare. Only the British financial investigation course made any extensive use of this method. Again, this option would have to be evaluated in cost benefit terms.

Protecting trained officers from transfer out of the drugs field was also rare, except in the United States, where the level of training and the complexities of managing a case and taking it right through the courts, justified retention in a specialist field. In the Metropolitan Police (UK), *de facto* attempts were made to obtain some measure of stability, and thus some "value for money" from training, by ensuring that drug postings would last five years.

Canada was the only country to supply courses on training the trainers and drug prevention involvement. In these areas, other forces might want to consider some of the methods and approaches used.

Some of the Canadian courses included extra-curricular activities by the candidates, and pre-course as well as post-course assessments were included. The idea of pre-course tests is positive, both in terms of motivating students to reach a common level of knowledge in an area before commencing intensive training, but also in ensuring that only those who are motivated and show the necessary aptitude are trai-

ned, thus ensuring an efficient use of resources during training and long term benefits.

Certainly in Canada, the Netherlands and the USA, there is an explicit aim to modify courses based on evaluations during and after the course. Most evaluation, when carried out, was of the self-referential or formative kind, i.e. evaluation aimed at making the course more effective according to its internally stated aims. Whether a course was successful, however, outside the training environment, in say improving police performance and anti-drug enforcement, or losing less cases in court, is hardly evaluated at all. This type of evaluation is very costly, and is missing in many areas of study other than police training.

The Dutch Ministry of Justice carried out a survey on officers in the field who had completed their drugs training courses at various times, and the results showed that the courses had been successful in improving their investigation skills. This concept is one possible avenue of extension for course evaluation. Instead, or as well as, asking trainees to complete evaluation sheets at the end of courses, it might be better to have their feedback on how well the aims of the course are addressing their needs in reality, once they have done the "real" job for some months. This might need to be coordinated by more than just the training department, especially if it is to be tied in with other evaluative measures. For instance, if a rise or a fall in the number of seizures were to occur, or the number of drug related arrests increase rapidly, or even the number of drug related deaths fall rapidly, it would be almost impossible to know to what extent, if at all, training, or changes in training were responsible. If, however, "issues" such as these are studied as well as other factors such as changes in legislation, police and/or recording practices, changes in drug use and behaviour, changes in health care and drug treatment provisions, etc., and were compared with field officers' evaluations of how far their training has contributed to any changes in the drugs environment, then some summative evaluation might be possible. Studies such as these would have to be done by a separate evaluation unit, perhaps independent of the police. Because of the resource intensive nature of this type of evaluation, not every issue could be studied simultaneously, and a governing mechanism setting priorities, but flexible enough to adapt to changes of priority, would be necessary, along with a method of ensuring feedback into the training methods used.

There is no doubt that in this project the selection of training courses by the police experts was partial, at least in some countries. Some questionnaires were filled in by senior personnel in training establishments and this is reflected in the choice of courses. It is probably very difficult to answer questionnaires designed principally for courses, in relation to street training techniques, which themselves may not be regarded as training methods, but simply "learning the ropes". This might explain why there is a lack of data in this study from street and station level training activities, particularly for low level enforcement, which is relatively common in Canada, Britain and the USA.

The British, Canadian and, to a lesser extent, the American training methods stretched the questionnaire categories to the limit, highlighting that in multi-method training it was difficult to separate one method from another in the way required. The results of this survey point perhaps to the need, as a first step, for a comparative trai-

ning survey, which should also encompass all agencies dealing with drugs, and not simply the police (customs agencies are one obvious further road for investigation). This survey would have to cover courses from the national level, through regional and local institutions, down to individual police stations. Questionnaires would have to be adapted for their different levels, and this would involve extensive discussions with the agencies to be studied in each country, and these discussions would have to involve all levels of officers.

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, the following evaluation issues need to be considered in relation to drugs training and training in general:

- * How are the future key personnel to be identified and brought into training?
- * What skills are going to be needed by future senior management?
- * Are highly skilled and expensively trained trainers only to be employed for a limited period or should their services be retained for longer?
- * Should the training branch have its own promotional system?
- * Should training be undertaken by non-police staff?
- * What subject areas need to be covered?

This project was an attempt towards gaining knowledge about police drugs training courses internationally. Within the limits of its reach and methodology, it provided a flavour of the differences in approaches used in selected countries and a better idea of how to study and compare training of this type.

The available material represents an informative source for law enforcement managers and training specialists to compare their own experience with that of other countries.

This might lead to improvements in the national training activities and in international co-operation.