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# Evaluation of local and flexible detention projects

## Summary

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# Summary

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## Background and aim of the study

Purposes of sanction enforcement are retribution, prevention of recidivism and deterrence. By means of these aspects, sanction enforcement is supposed to contribute to a just and safe society. The current policy regarding sanction enforcement is under pressure due to various developments. The first development is the decreasing trend in crime and its consequences for cell capacity. Partly due to the rise in alternative settlements, including suspended sentences with supervision, this results in (further) concentration of detention locations and an increase in the distance to the local domain. This hinders the chances of successful reintegration, and the prevention of recidivism. Another development is the increasing attention paid to person- and context-oriented working with detainees, resulting in an increased search for interventions outside the criminal justice system. This requires a more thorough, multidisciplinary cross-domain approach to sanction enforcement than before. Both trends require a different direction with regard to sanction enforcement.

Against this background, the [Direction and Opportunities of Sanction Enforcement programme](#) (*programma 'Koers en kansen voor de sanctie-uitvoering'*) was launched in 2015. As part of this programme various projects have been developed and carried out, five of which were selected to develop local and flexible detention and test it in practice. The five projects are characterised by the following aspects:

- a small-scale facility (*kleinschalige voorziening, KV*);
- collaboration across domains among various local partners;
- activities that focus on limiting detention damage, the continuation of work, education, and/or care, and strengthening the (positive) social network of short-term detainees;
- activities that aim to support reintegration and resocialisation and reduce the risk of recidivism.

In this study, these five projects are evaluated, and their further development is supported. In addition, this study should lay the foundation for future evaluations.

## Research design and methods used

This study consists of two parts:

- A. Formulating the intervention logic in the [plan evaluations](#) of the projects and drawing up [indicators](#) in preparation of future evaluation.
- B. Evaluating the [realisation, successful parts, and barriers](#) in the execution of the projects and points for improvement.

To formulate the intervention logic of the KVs a document study was conducted in which the project documentation of the KVs was studied. In addition, interviews were held with the programme coordinators of the Direction and Opportunities programme and the project leaders of the KVs about the goals, activities, active elements, and contextual factors of the projects. Based on the document study and the interviews, the intervention logic of each of the projects was formulated. By means of a literature study it was examined whether there is indirect empirical evidence or a theoretical foundation for the 'innovative elements' of the projects. Together, the intervention logic and the results of the literature study form the plan evaluation. Subsequently, indicators for a future process and effect evaluation were deduced from the intervention logic.

The second part of the study was intended as a process evaluation; however, this was only carried out to a limited extent, partly because the KVs generally started later (or did not take off at all). This is partly due to the corona measures, as many parts of the KVs could not be carried out, and partly due to a lower inflow into the KVs. Therefore, in part B of the study, the current realisation of the KVs has been evaluated. In this evaluation, successful aspects of the projects, barriers in execution, and points for improvement have been clarified, based on interviews with project leaders and collaborative partners of the KVs. To validate and supplement the interim findings, a group conversation was organised with all project leaders of the KVs.

## Findings plan evaluations

Research questions:

1. Which (intermediate) goals are pursued by the projects?
2. How are the projects supposed to work?
  - a. How are the goals intended to be achieved? What (supposed) active elements can be distinguished?
  - b. What contextual characteristics of the projects can be distinguished?
  - c. To what extent and how do the (intermediate) goals, active elements and contextual characteristics of the projects form an elaboration of the three lines of change in the white paper: safe nearby, life course central and craftsmanship first?
  - d. Which (intermediate) goals, active elements and contextual characteristics of the projects are innovative and why?
  - e. To what extent is there, nationally, or internationally, empirical, or theoretical support for the effectiveness of innovative elements in the projects?
  - f. Are there active elements of (local and flexible) detention to be found in the literature, that are not present in the projects and should possibly be included in them for better goal achievement?
3. How can the projects be evaluated in the future?
  - a. How can the (intermediate) goals and the effectiveness of the elements be measured on behalf of future effect evaluation?
  - b. Is this information already recorded?
  - c. If not, what information could or should (still) be recorded to measure the results of the projects?

All projects aim for the same **ultimate goal**: the prevention of recidivism. KV Amsterdam added a second ultimate goal 'retribution'. These ultimate goals translate into different **main objectives**, such as successful reintegration, continuity of daily activities and/or care programmes, redress for society and victims and prevention of detention damage. The main objectives of each KV have been elaborated into **working objectives**: specific objectives to work on during residence in the KV. At the level of the working objectives there is more variation among the KVs. Examples of these working objectives are stability and continuity of work, education and care, sustainable assistance relations, support from the social network and motivation for an offence-free future. The **activities** KV's carry out, or intend to carry out, are oriented towards these working objectives. Examples of activities are setting up an individual plan, guidance to employment, redress mediation, involving the social network in support and offering various trainings.

In the plan evaluations of the KVs, the **active elements** deployed have been identified. These active elements relate to strengthening the protective factors against recidivism. Committing to activities to strengthen the protective factors contributes to re-socialisation. Subsequently, re-socialisation decreases the risk of recidivism. Table S.1 shows the active elements the activities of the KVs are mainly aimed at.

**Table S.1 Active elements per KV**

	Almelo	Amsterdam	Krimpen	Middelburg	Rotterdam
Education/employment	X	X	X	X	X
Financial situation	X			X	X
Housing situation	X	X		X	
Attitude/behaviour	X	X	X		X
Social network	X	X	X		X
Leisure activities	X				
Mental well-being/care	X	X	X	X	X
Substance use/addiction	X				

The **contextual characteristics** of the KVs vary with regard to target group, intake process, and collaborative partners.

- The target groups of the KVs are provisional detainees, people who report themselves (*zelfmelders*)<sup>1</sup>, and detainees in the final stage of detention. All KVs focus on detainees from the region (regional connection) who are motivated to work toward an offence-free future. In addition, the KVs use inclusion and exclusion criteria about, e.g., the remainder of the sentence, (addiction) problems, gender, and type of offence.
- The intake process depends on the target group. For example, provisional detainees are spotted by the Safety House (*Veiligheidshuis*), after which the judge should order placement in the KV. *Zelfmelders* need to be selected in cooperation with the placement service of the Individual Cases Division (*DIZ*) of the Custodial Institutions Agency (*Dienst Justitiële Instellingen, DJI*). At KVs where the influx originates from detention, detainees (selected by *DJI*) are invited to apply for placement in the KV.
- Various collaborative partners are involved in the intake process and execution of the KVs. The composition and the number of chain partners vary per KV from one single party, such as Prison Fellowship The Netherlands (*Gevangenzorg Nederland, GNd*) to a large network of police, Public Prosecution, resettlement organisations, Safety House, municipalities and care and assistance organisations.

The projects should fit in with the three **lines of change** of the Direction and Opportunities programme: safe nearby, life course central and craftsmanship first. In all projects **safe nearby** translates into aligning with the municipal approach, and collaboration with the municipality (e.g., aftercare coordinators) or (other) local partners. In addition, KVs use the regional connection as a criterium for placement in the KV; this also encourages the local connection. The alignment with **life course central** is mainly apparent in redress-oriented working and the life course approach in the KVs. In all KVs a plan is formulated with each detainee individually, in which attention is paid to redress (or continuity) with regard to a number of life areas. This plan does not only concern the detainee himself, but also his social environment, the victim and society. **Craftsmanship first** translates into providing customised assistance and in selecting suitable personnel that has experience with the target group. In addition, employees are trained in skills that correspond with supervising the target group and applying the intended methods, such as redress-oriented working and motivational treatment.

The set-up and activities of each KV contain **innovative elements**. In table S.2, these innovative elements are shown per KV. These elements specifically characterise the KVs, and they are not applied in a similar context in existing, regular detention facilities. Moreover, these elements are innovative in the sense that they have not been empirically studied yet.

**Table S.2 Innovative elements per KV**

	Almelo	Amsterdam	Krimpen	Middelburg	Rotterdam
Small scale	X	X	X	X	X
Limited security level	X	X	X	X	X
Regional connection (detention close to place of residence)	X	X	X	X	X
Involving social network	X	X	X		X
Extramural work and job preservation	X	X	X	X	X
Involving chain/network partners	X	X	X	X	X
Presence theory		X	X		X
Social climate			X	X	X
Relational theory/relational security		X			
Redress-oriented working	X	X	X		
Integral care and safety plan	X	X	X		
Empowerment method	X				

**Empirical and/or theoretical support** could be found for the effectiveness of the following elements: small scale, limited security level, extramural work and job preservation, social climate, redress-oriented

<sup>1</sup> A *zelfmelder* is a person who has been convicted of a custodial sentence and is called to report himself to a prison.

working, and the empowerment method. These elements directly or indirectly contribute to reduced recidivism. With regard to the other innovative elements, no indications have been found in the literature that they counteract recidivism. However, based on the literature, a few innovative elements do seem to indirectly influence a reduction of recidivism. A connection with the region, for instance, contributes to this, due to the possibilities to maintain contact with family and friends and the continuation of care programmes. Using the method of relational security also seems to contribute to recidivism reduction, due to the positive influence it has on the social climate in detention. Because the elements concerned are relatively new, as yet, not much literature is available on part of the innovative elements. No active elements of local and flexible detention have been found in the literature that could be included in the projects for better goal achievement.

On behalf of the **future evaluation** of the projects topics have been chosen on which information should be collected. These topics concern the influx and target group reached, the activities (output), the development and process in the KV, (intended) cooperation, the working objectives (short-term outcome) and the ultimate goals and main objectives (long-term outcome). The intended information can be collected at **various levels**. With regard to achieving the objectives, it is interesting to collect data at individual case level. Information about the development of the KV can be collected at the aggregate level (per KV). The necessary information is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, and **different methods** can be used to collect data, e.g., a questionnaire, interviews or consulting the registration system of the KV. Therefore, part of the information will have to be collected by means of independent, new research. The extent to which the information on behalf of a process and effect evaluation is already being recorded is not known, partly due to the fact that the research design was changed in between: in the process evaluation that would have been conducted originally a registration study was anticipated that would offer insight into existing registrations.

## Findings evaluation of the realisation and points for improvement

Research questions:

4. To what extent have the projects been realised?
5. Which barriers occurred in the realisation of the projects, with attention to:
  - a. the foundations of the project plan;
  - b. suitability of the target group for flexible, local detention;
  - c. the influx of detainees;
  - d. chain collaboration.
6. What choices have been made and what measures have been taken to remove barriers? What were the results?
7. To what extent did the chain partners involved experience parts of the projects as successful? Which parts are concerned here? Why are these parts successful?
8. Within the framework of the Direction and Opportunities programme the projects are periodically brought together for mutual learning purposes. To what extent do these coordinating project meetings provide added value to the execution practice?
9. What points for improvement do the projects provide with regard to the set-up and execution of provisions and measures aimed at successful reintegration with reduced recidivism?

### *Realisation of the projects*

During the evaluation of the realisation and the points for improvement of the KVs, the five KVs found themselves in different phases. KV Amsterdam was not realised and KV Rotterdam Hoogvliet was closed down after a year, due to a lack of influx. KV Almelo and KV Middelburg both started in the autumn of 2020 and KV Krimpen aan den IJssel was further developed into a closed facility. In most of the KVs that have started or had been open until recently, the size of the influx is not (yet) in accordance with the expectations. At the time of this evaluation a total of 26 detainees resided in the KVs.

In the execution of the KVs collaboration was sought with various chain partners. Depending on the target group and the intake process collaboration was sought with safety partners such as Public

Prosecution, judiciary, police, resettlement organisations, and the Safety House, in combination with other parties such as municipalities, care and assistance organisations, Exodus and the Prison Fellowship The Netherlands (*GNd*). On the whole, collaboration turns out to function well with regard to the execution practice.

#### *Successful parts and active elements*

Which parts of the KVs are successful varies, due to the variety in set-up of the KVs. Five parts appear to make a positive contribution in several KVs. These parts are related to the functioning of the active elements of the KVs.

##### **A. Timely intensive chain collaboration**

Chain collaboration is not among the objectives of the KVs; however, it appears to be a necessary condition for a proper organisation and performance the KVs. By involving the chain partners from the beginning of the development process, their expertise can be used and support for the objectives can be created.

##### **B. Connection between ‘in’ and ‘outside’ detention – active element: social network**

A KV forms the link between detention and society outside the walls of the penitentiary (*PI*). With regard to detainees with a sentence remainder that flow from detention to the KVs this gradual reintegration is valuable. By involving the social network, the transition to society is supported.

##### **C. Job preservation or counselling towards work during detention – active element: work**

The possibility to preserve existing work relations while in detention and to build up new sustainable work relations appears to work well in practice. Due to the fact that work generates income, (preservation of) the job indirectly contributes to the financial situation (preventing debts) and the housing situation (retaining homes).

##### **D. Assisting detainees in taking control over their own lives – active element: attitude/behaviour**

After a period in the controlled environment of the penitentiary, the KVs offer assistance to encourage self-reliance and motivation for an offence-free future. In three KVs, the guidance offered is directed towards the behaviour and social skills of the detainees.

##### **E. Customisation of activities**

According to the project leaders, the success of the parts described above is connected to the possibilities for customisation in the execution of the KV. In collaboration with the chain partners, the KVs offer assistance where necessary by means of an integral approach.

#### *Barriers and measures*

In line with the successful parts of the execution, the barriers also varied among the KVs, due to their variety in set-up. Five barriers occur in several KVs:

##### **A. Insufficient foundations of the nature and size of the target group in the project plan**

Insufficient attention was paid to the characteristics and size of the target group, and to underpinning the estimates in the phase of setting up the project plan, and as it turns out, the target groups of two KVs are smaller than expected. This is harmful for the performance of the KVs.

##### **B. Difficult connection with work processes of judicial partners**

In order to realise influx, the KVs need to be geared to the regular work processes of judicial partners such as the Custodial Institutions Agency (*DJI*) and its Individual Cases Division (*DIZ*), and the Central Judicial Collection Agency (*Centraal Justitiele Incassobureau, CJIB*). Finding the right contact with these organisations proved difficult for almost all KVs and coordination with these parties often only took place after the KVs had started.

### C. Shortages in the deployment of capacity and financial resources of chain partners

Due to financial and staff shortages, it appears that chain partners are unable to carry out (stated) tasks and responsibilities at most KVs. In practice, there is often friction when chain partners need to carry out tasks that are not covered by regular financial resources. The KVs try to solve this by looking for alternative ways to have these tasks carried out, for example by carrying them out themselves.

### D. Difficult realisation of (physical) facilities

KVs require adaptations to the regular facilities of detention centres: for example, departments provided with kitchen units, restructuring the prison yard, or placing a new gate. In practice, these adaptations appear to pass off slowly and require perseverance of project leaders.

### E. Lack of embedding KVs in broader view on the prison system

According to the project leaders, the KVs are vulnerable, because the pilots of the Direction and Opportunities programme do not appear to be embedded in a broader view on the prison system. This means the execution of the KVs is prone to changes in insights about the detention domain, and support of judicial partners depends on individual persons. Therefore, the KVs invest in connecting to developments.

### *Meetings Direction and Opportunities*

In general, the periodical meetings of the Direction and Opportunities programme have been inspiring to the project leaders because of the exchange of experiences. By sharing both barriers and positive experiences, the project leaders felt strengthened with regard to the (sometimes difficult) development of the projects. Because the set-up of the KVs is not mutually comparable, in practice it turned out to be difficult to learn from each other's experiences: what worked for one KV usually did not match the set-up of another KV. In addition, the establishment of the KVs did not proceed at the same pace.

### *Points for improvement on behalf of successful performance*

The successful parts and barriers with regard to set-up and execution of the KVs can be translated into six points for improvement.

#### 1. Starting from a problem analysis of the target group (barrier A)

An extensive investigation of the problems KVs should provide an answer to benefits the set-up and performance of a KV. When the KV focusses on cross-domain problems, the problem analysis demands collaboration with chain partners in order to tackle the joint problem. A preliminary interdisciplinary study of the nature and size of the target group should be part of this.

#### 2. Timely connection with judicial partners (barrier B)

By involving judicial partners such as DJI, DIZ and CJIB, when preparing the project plan, the KVs' intake process can be geared to their regular work processes. This may prevent barriers in the intake process from occurring. The KVs would like to receive support in order to find the right contact at the judicial parties, also at the administrative level.

#### 3. Involving collaborative partners (success factors A and B)

It appears that the execution of the KVs, in which cross-domain problems are tackled, benefits from a successful collaboration with chain partners. Successful collaboration can be stimulated by the timely involvement of all chain partners that have an executive role, and by the organisation of periodical meetings in order to get acquainted with each other's possibilities and impossibilities, to formulate a division of responsibilities, and to jointly monitor the developments of the KV and to adjust them if necessary.

#### 4. Sufficient deployment of personnel and financial resources at all partners (barrier C)

To be able to successfully carry out the KVs, all collaborative partners need to have sufficient financial resources and capacity. Therefore, as part of the preparation of the project, it is necessary to clarify the extent to which financial resources and staff capacity are available at the collaborative partners, and

what activities can be carried out based on this. Formal agreements on the division of responsibilities can partially prevent barriers.

#### 5. Facilities in order (barrier D)

The execution of KVs require adaptations to regular detention units. Because adapting detention facilities is a time-consuming process, a timely start is beneficial to the KVs' performance.

#### 6. Personal counselling on behalf of reintegration (success factors C, D and E)

With regard to the set-up and performance of facilities aimed at reintegration with reduced recidivism, the supervision of detainees needs to be customised. Providing assistance to detainees to encourage their self-reliance and offering the possibility to work during detention can contribute to their reintegration.



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