

## Summary

### **Evaluation of the pilot C&SCO-CAM**

#### **Monitoring of the implementation and goals of a program to prevent violence at high schools in the Netherlands**

#### **Background**

Prevention of school violence is of key importance in crime prevention and public safety policy. In this report, the Dutch school-violence prevention programme C&SCO-CAM is evaluated, both in terms of workability (process evaluation) and effectiveness. The programme is a combination of the existing Dutch programme Handling of Conflicts and Social Competence in Education ('Conflicthantering en Sociale Competentie in het Onderwijs; C&SCO, pronounce 'Casco') and a programme that was developed in The United States of America, named Responding in Peaceful and Positive ways (Ripp). The combined programme is called C&SCO-CAM. The Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice requested for the integration of these two programmes in line with their policy of Prevention of Violence ('Actieplan tegen geweld'). The joint programme was developed by two Dutch educational advice agencies named Sardes and APS. The Dutch Centre for Crime Prevention and Safety ('Centrum voor Criminaliteitspreventie en Veiligheid', CCV) set up a pilot study in which the new programme was tested at five schools during three school years (2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010). These schools are lower secondary professional education (LSPE) and secondary special education (SSE). The Research and Documentation Centre (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek en Documentatiecentrum, WODC) was requested by the Department of Sanctions and Prevention of the Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice to conduct a study during this pilot-phase of the implementation of the C&SCO-CAM programme.

#### **C&SCO-CAM**

As mentioned above, the programme C&SCO-CAM consists of two programs. The first, C&SCO, is a context-oriented program developed in the Netherlands. It is a context-oriented program because it focuses on the importance of contextual factors in establishing a positive school climate in which violence will be minimized. The focus lies on teachers and other school staff. They are trained to develop a certain attitude and organize their classes in such a way that social skills of students develop better. The second part of the program, is the translation and slight adaptation of the American, evidence-based program Responding in Peaceful and Positive ways (RiPP). This program aims to improve the conflict management skills of the students. It is called CAM in the Netherlands, because of referrals to the display of a 'handy cam'. For instance, short phrases such as 'pause', 'look back', and 'look forward' are used in providing students with cognitive short cuts to behavioural control.

#### **Implementation of the programme**

##### *Diagnostic interview*

The implementation of the program begins with a diagnostic interview with the teachers of the school and school management. The objective of the interview is to determine the training needs of the teachers and aspects of safety at school that need improvement. In addition to the interview, the teachers are asked to fill out a

so-called 'Climate test'. This test helps portray five aspects of the relationship among students, between students and teachers, and among teachers. These five aspects are conflict management, the use of rules on how to behave towards others, cooperation between students, the 'fighting spirit' of students and sense of responsibility of students. In addition, the Climate test reveals how teachers assess the level of safety in the school, the role of school management in the social climate at the school, the vision on learning, personal contact in the team, and contact with parents.

#### *Allocation of tasks*

There are four groups of actors in the programme. The first group consists of the trainers of the teachers, whom are also called the 'external supervisors'. The second group is formed by the teachers who are the contact persons for the trainers. They are called the 'internal supervisors'. In most schools they are the team leaders of the teachers. The third group is comprised of the teachers who teach the CAM-lessons to the pupils, called the 'student advisers'. The fourth group consists of the rest of the school staff who should also be aware of the C&SCO-CAM principles, to ensure uniformity in the schools' behavioural norms.

#### *Training elements*

The implementation of the programme into the school system consists of four components. In *team meetings* the C&SCO-CAM principles are taught and practiced. In *action learning groups* consisting of five or six teachers, teachers discuss their teaching methods using video recordings. Initially, a trainer supervises these action learning groups, but the goal is for the internal supervisor to take over the supervision, or for teachers to start doing this themselves. Third, *intervision* is used in which a teacher trained by the external supervisors coaches teachers on an individual basis. Video and in class observations can be used. Only a few teachers are selected for this intervision task. Fourth, teachers are trained in CAM in *student advisor meetings*. The teachers that also function as student advisers for students participate in these trainings. The external supervisors stay involved until the teachers can conduct these four elements of the programme themselves. Therefore, the phases of implementation and actually working with the programme cross over into one another.

#### **Research goals**

The central question in the present process evaluation is 'how is the program put into practice?'. Focus points of interests are the degree to which the implementation on different schools differs or overlaps between schools and the degree to which the program is administered according to plan. This latter aspect is referred to as the degree of programme integrity. In addition, the evaluation aims to establish which target group the intervention is suitable for, the way the goals of the program are measured and monitored, the necessary preconditions, which factors will hamper and which will foster a successful implementation of the program, and the evaluation of the program by the school personnel. The effectiveness of the program is also investigated. This entails studying the degree to which program goals are realized. Program goals are monitored on schools participating in the pilot (referred to as intervention schools) and schools which do not participate in the program (referred to as control schools). In addition, the way in which the program brings about the desired changes is studied by analysing which assumed working mechanisms the program incorporates.

## Method

### Participants

The programme was implemented at five schools. In addition, for each school, at least one control school was found, at which the intervention was not implemented and with whom (possible) changes in behavioural goals could be compared.

### Process evaluation

The main instruments that were used are interviews with trainers and teachers and a questionnaire for the teachers to evaluate the program. Topics of the semi-structured interviews mostly concern the activities of the teachers in light of the programme, the difference between the plans beforehand and the actual activities, and the experiences those involved have had with the program. Also, powerpoint presentations of trainers are studied. Finally, once a year a questionnaire was administered to the teachers in which questions feature on topics such as evaluation of the program, the trainers and the time that is necessary to invest.

### Evaluation of effectiveness

The behavioural goals of the programme are monitored by means of biannual questionnaires (one in November and one in May) each of the three years of the pilot (six times in total). Both teachers and pupils filled in questionnaires. Topics in the questionnaire were feelings of (un)safety, frequency of aggressive behaviour such as bullying, and aspects of the school climate in terms of the attitude of teachers towards pupils and the way the teachers organize the lessons.

## Results

During the three school years of the pilot of C&SCO-CAM, research was complicated by the delayed completion of the program. C&SCO comes with a manual, but the CAM-part of the program had to be translated at the time the pilot had already started. Initially, it was expected that the translation would be completed in the first school year of the pilot. However, eventually, the final draft of the translation became available only at the end of the pilot. Therefore, this report contains only *preliminary* results with a program *under development*.

### Participants in the pilot

C&SCO-CAM is developed for teachers and students of the first two years of two types of Dutch secondary education (students aged 12 to 15). One type concerns lower secondary professional education (LSPE) and the other concerns secondary special education (SSE). Four LSPE schools participated in the pilot, and one SSE school. In addition to differences in school level, schools differed in the degree of urbanisation and ethnic diversity. One LSPE school employed a distinctively different type of education called Natural learning ('Natuurlijk Leren'). In Natural learning, autonomy of students and cooperation between students is stimulated. There are two or three teachers in a class who guide the lessons, rather than exclusively teach. The other LSPE schools employ more regular forms of teaching. During the pilot, one LSPE school and one of the two locations of the SSE school dropped out. The LSPE school was replaced by a LSPE school where prior training in the context-oriented C&SCO part of the program had already taken place. The location of the SSE school was not replaced.

## **Implementation**

A number of problems occurred during the implementation phase. The main problem was the fact that the programme was still 'under construction'. This lasted throughout the pilot, although the intention was to use the first year of the pilot to finish developing the program. This caused irritation with the participants. The second problem stemmed from insufficient time for preparation prior to participating in the pilot, resulting in, among others, and insufficient support among teachers for participation. Also, the diagnostic interviews with the schools were not conducted until after the start of the pilot, resulting in unclear goal setting and hence unclear expectations of teachers.

Two additional problems stemmed from insufficient time scheduled for training and a difference between schools in amount of time scheduled for training. Three out of five schools had not worked with the C&SCO-part of the program prior to the pilot, whereas one school had had prior training in these principles. At another school, the school's style of education shares characteristics with C&SCO-principles, such as the importance of stimulating cooperation between students. At the third of these three schools, C&SCO-principles were explained to the teachers, but teachers did not work with them. The two schools that did work with the C&SCO-principles, differed in scheduled time for training. At all five intervention-schools the CAM-lessons for students required more training than was initially scheduled. One school did get additional training for teachers giving these lessons, and another had sufficient enthusiastic teachers willing to invest extra time in developing the CAM-lessons into suitable material for their population (SSE). The remaining three schools worked with what they had, if anything at all. That is, teachers who liked the material worked with it, while others chose not work with it.

Schools differed in the amount of time scheduled for training. The minimum amount of training scheduled was eight sessions (of four hours) in the first year, four sessions in the second year and two sessions in the third year of the pilot. This worked out differently for the five intervention-schools, some received more training, others less. Moreover, only one school of the five intervention-schools worked with an additional coaching plan. In this additional training, a few teachers are selected to be trained to become a coach for their colleagues. This training consists of more individual coaching than the C&SCO-program provides. In the third year of the pilot, the trainers of the schools organized a central training for all the schools in working with the CAM-material. Trainers did not appear on three of the five intervention-schools, on one just once and on the fifth several times.

The differences in time scheduled for training resulted in differences in quality of the implementation of the program on the five intervention-schools. Together with the developmental status of the program itself, the implementation of the program was problematic from the beginning.

## **Execution of the programme**

Following differences in the quality of the implementation of the program, the intervention schools also differed in the execution of the programme. There was no manual to work with. Program fidelity was therefore not realized. The C&SCO-part of the program was implemented at two of the five schools. The CAM-part of the program was implemented better, but also not entirely in a uniform and systematic manner. The part that did get taken up in five schools was the step-by-step plan of CAM (Stop, pause, look back, look forward, pick your option from the menu, play (do), and look back). Posters with this step-by-step plan could be found in the

hallways and classrooms and teachers knew the CAM-language and symbolism. CAM was implemented well at two of the five schools, while at the other schools this was done poorly. One of these latter schools found a creative way to use the CAM- step-by-step plan by incorporating it in the forms used in case of incidents or suspensions from the classroom. Halfway through the third year of the pilot these forms were put into practice, but by the end of the year it became clear that the reflection part was too laborious. That is, it turned out to be difficult for teachers to plan a meeting with a student to reflect on what had happened and to what degree a plan to prevent new incidents or suspensions had worked.

### **Evaluation**

Once a year a survey was conducted among teachers to evaluate the program. The first year of the pilot only two schools participated in this survey. One school declined because they wanted to stop participating in the pilot. The other two declined, because they had worked too little with the program. In the second year of the pilot all five schools participated in the evaluation survey. In the third year the only school that participated in the survey was the school where the trainer had been several times.

Positive aspects mentioned by teachers during the three years of the pilot were an increase in openness and involvement among teachers. This was the result of team meetings, action learning groups and intervision. The usefulness of team meetings was described as: the equalizing effect on the relationship between management and staff, the team building effect, the motivating effect on working with C&SCO-CAM, getting to know team members in a new way and working on self reflection. Especially action learning groups are considered valuable. They are said to stimulate teachers to learn from each other and to enhance openness and positive feedback to one another. Negative aspects mentioned by teachers concern the timing of trainings at the end of a day. Some teachers consider the trainers to be hazy or tedious. Other teachers consider the team meetings not practical enough. Action learning groups and intervision are hampered by the difficulty of planning them.

During the three school years of the pilot the trainers have organised one central training for the teachers to learn working with CAM-lessons. These central trainings are valued by the teachers, because of the ability to exchange experiences with teachers from other schools and to help solve problems with giving the CAM-lessons. Some teachers did not appreciate contributing to the development of the material instead. They would have rather received training in using the material, instead of helping develop it. In addition, some teachers did not appreciate the differences between schools in student population and didactic style employed within schools. Some teachers considered the trainers not clear enough regarding use of the material. The material itself was also evaluated negatively, because of the time and effort teachers have to invest in order to use it for a class. For instance, initially the material was too abstract and visually unattractive for the students.

### **Contributing and hampering factors in working with the program**

Interviews with mentor teachers, and internal and external supervisors revealed a number of factors that hampered working with the program. Instability in the school organisation coincided with resistance among teachers and resulted in quitting participation in the pilot at two schools. Resistance against participation among teachers also occurred on schools where the decision to participate had been taken by the school management instead of together with teachers. The developmental

status of the material caused additional resistance, due to the effort that still had to be taken to make the material suitable for the students.

### **Program goals**

The fact that the program was still under development during the pilot phase and the low degree of implementation of the program, has made it difficult to conduct a proper effect evaluation. We can therefore only speak of preliminary results with a program under development.

With regards to the C&SCO-CAM goal 'enhancing feelings of safety' there were no significant changes found over time. However, most participants indicated feeling safe at the beginning of the pilot and the number of violent incidents reported is low. With regards to the other C&SCO-CAM goals, there were not many significant changes found between the intervention-schools and the control schools. For instance, at one of the intervention-schools, students reported less aggressive behaviour, however, at the corresponding control schools, there was also a reduction of self-reported aggressive behaviour. Further, some control schools (both students and teachers) report more feelings of safety than intervention-schools at the start of the pilot.

C&SCO-CAM aims to attain a positive school climate and a low number of violent incidents. This goal consists of a number of sub goals, for instance a change in attitude of teachers towards students and a change in the way classes are organised by teachers. Some of the sub goals were not attained on any of the intervention-schools, such as peer mentoring and student participation (in for instance decisions regarding the lesson). That is, according to the C&SCO-CAM-program teachers should incorporate these aspects into their classes, but few teachers have done this. Students did not indicate a shift of making and complying with rules by teachers to teachers and students. Also, handling fights and bullying and self control by students did not show changes in the desired direction.

### **Working mechanisms**

In addition to the question whether or not the program achieves its goals, the way in which the program aims to achieve this was also studied. Based on the C&SCO-materials of the trainers, an overview of the assumed working mechanisms was made. In this process, the researchers identified three main goals, which all have sub goals. The three main goals are (1) enhancing a safe and positive school climate, (2) enhancing social competencies of students, (3) and preventing violence. In the C&SCO program, the attitude of the teachers is used as a means to achieve the first goal. By changing their attitude towards a more open and more involved attitude, it is assumed that a more positive school climate can be achieved. Second, social competencies are assumed to be enhanced by changing the way the teachers organise the classes. This reorganisation should entail more cooperation between students and more autonomy of students. Third, the CAM-part of the programme is supposed to enhance the conflict management skills of students thereby decreasing the amount of violent incidents. According to the trainers, the merits of the program can be found more in the program as a whole, and taking the specific components and their workings apart is somewhat artificial. Unfortunately, the present study did not allow for testing of the various assumed working mechanisms, due to the earlier identified problems with the implementation of the program.

## Conclusions

C&SCO-CAM is a program suitable for students and teachers of the first two years of lower secondary professional education (LSPE) and secondary special education (SSE). This concerns students of the age of roughly 12 to 15. The development of the program exceeded the foreseen first year of the pilot, and turned out to last throughout the three years of the pilot. This had serious consequences for the quality of the implementation of the program and consequently, also for the scope of the study that could be conducted. The process evaluation has shown a number of shortcomings to the program. First, the goals of the program are not clearly defined. In the present study the goals have been systematically mapped, but the program does not provide for this itself. Second, the program lacks program integrity, since the needs of training among teachers differ between schools. This type of attunement between teachers' needs and the trainers reduces the amount of program integrity. On the other hand, it enhances motivation to participate, which in turn is positively related to effectiveness of behavioural interventions. However, the systematic mapping and monitoring of program goals is also positively related to effectiveness. Third, training components of C&SCO-CAM were not systematically worked out, leaving room for interpretation by participants. Programs that come with a clear and concise manual and an appointed program leader (that is, with enough program integrity) are more likely to be effective.

The present study showed that teachers find participation in the program useful and helpful in interacting with students when a number of conditions have been met: a preparatory period of sufficient length to ascertain motivation for participation by teachers, enthusiastic forerunners in the team, and sufficient time scheduled for training. When these preconditions were met, participation strengthened ties among teachers as team members and self reflection by teachers was stimulated. This study also showed that not all teachers are able or willing to work according to the program's principles. Successful implementation of the program therefore depends upon the management team to ensure necessary conditions are met and motivation for participation among teachers is sufficient.

Following the developmental status of the program and differences in implementation between schools, program integrity was not realized. An effect study was planned, but the present study only allows for results of a preliminary nature. Also, feelings of unsafety and occurrence of violent incidents were rare at the schools in this study. A number of the goals of C&SCO-CAM to achieve a positive school climate, such as increased student participation and peer mentoring, were not met during the pilot, the results on the effect measures showed both expected and unexpected results on both intervention-schools and control schools. Therefore, the effectiveness of the program could not be determined in this study.

The analysis of the assumed working mechanisms showed that C&SCO-CAM aims to facilitate a positive school climate by means of three main program components: changing the attitude of teachers towards students, organising classes according to C&SCO-CAM principles to stimulate social competencies of students and improving conflict management skills of students. The degree to which the assumed working mechanisms actually function as such, could not be determined in this study.

Future research could answer the questions regarding the effectiveness of the program, assumed working mechanisms and the circumstances under which the program could be effective. Prevention of violence at schools remains an important

topic, especially at schools where this is a pressing issue. Future studies are needed to shed more light on this important aspect of individual and public safety.