



Notes de seguretat

ENGLISH / PREVENTION POLICIES

“Perception Matters”: a guide to managing outbreaks of insecurity

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The *Cutting Crime Impact* project (CCI), funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Programme, aims to prevent ordinary crime (non-organised crime) where possible and, should it occur, reduce its impact. To this end, the project will address four focus areas: predictive policing, community policing, crime prevention through urban design & planning and citizens’ perceptions of insecurity. The project will develop tailored “tool kits” for each of the four focus areas that law enforcement agencies can use to achieve the project’s goals.



LA PERCEPCIÓ IMPORTA

La seguretat de les
persones

La Percepció Importa



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament
d'Interior

Regarding the perception of security or subjective security, the Ministry of Home Affairs, as a partner in the project, was tasked with designing a tool that can help to enhance citizens' feelings of security. The chosen formula for the tool was a guide called "Perception matters", which provides practical and useful advice to security managers dealing with the public's response to outbreaks of insecurity in specific areas of the city. Manifestations of feelings of insecurity are often linked to particular neighbourhoods and even certain times of the day. A standard, generic response is doomed to failure; an at least somewhat in-depth (and, if possible, quick) analysis is needed to identify the reasons behind that particular outbreak of insecurity (rather than insecurity in general) in order to adopt measures that specifically address those causes.

Security officials come under a lot of pressure when there is a public manifestation of insecurity or fear of crime. This pressure often prevents them from having enough time and space to analyse the situation properly, leading them to fall back on routine and highly visible actions that may reduce public and political pressure but do nothing to solve the problem. The "Perception Matters" guide contains simple and practical criteria that those tasked with responding to public manifestations of insecurity can use to identify which urgent measures, if any, they should take. Once those urgent measures have been implemented, security managers should conduct an in-depth analysis of the situation to inform a more comprehensive response with short, medium and long-term measures, rather than relying on actions that may "divert" attention away from the problem but, in the end, often help to entrench it further.

"Perception Matters" comprises five documents that make up a single strategy. They can be used in conjunction with one another or separately. **Booklet 1** constitutes **the guide**, in the strictest sense of the word. It covers the key questions that anyone with security management responsibilities should ask in the event of an insecurity incident. It also lists the sources that security officials can refer to for more information. At the end of the booklet, some of the concepts to be considered when managing subjective insecurity crises are clarified to improve understanding of the dynamics involved in these types of situations.

Booklet 2 helps us assess whether we are dealing with an incident that requires urgent, immediate action, while continuing with a more comprehensive analysis of the problem. The document includes indicators that can be used to decide whether urgent measures are required or not and recommendations for the type of measures that can be employed.

Booklet 3 provides a straightforward account of the various research methodologies used in social science and practical advice on how they should be managed to obtain the required information without resorting to long-winded reflection procedures. Rather than being a methodology manual, the booklet aims to offer advice on how some methodologies can be used as a simple and effective tool for improving our diagnosis of insecurity.

Booklet 4 offers the reader a set of criteria that can be used to design targeted measures that address the specific contributing factors behind an outbreak of insecurity so that it can be contained and reversed. Various types of cross-cutting short, medium and long-term measures are suggested. It also includes a link to documents that compile good practices in this field.

Booklet 5 offers, on the one hand, guidelines to understanding the importance of communicating with the public in matters of subjective security, and on the other, the criteria that should be followed to ensure that communication leads to an improvement in the public's perception of security or, at the very least, does not aggravate it further in times of crisis.

In short, rather than attempting to offer new insight into the matter, the guide intends to set out the existing knowledge in a simple and, we hope, efficient way to facilitate the orderly and agile management of outbreaks of insecurity in our cities and public spaces. You can access the guide from the Ministry of Home Affairs website

http://interior.gencat.cat/ca/el_departament/publicacions/seguretat/projecte-europeu-toolkit-la-percepcio-importa/

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