Benchmarking Crime Prevention & Community Safety in EU

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DESIGN AGAINST CRIME

DaC

Benefits of Standardised Framework?

- Terminology
  - efficiency and accuracy for communication, collaboration and training
- Evaluation
  - decisions using known levels of reliability
- Precision tools
  - clear definitions, unambiguous, don't overlap, capable of translation, memorable
- Discipline/ rigour

What is Benchmarking?

- *Improving ourselves by learning from others*
(UK PSBS – much material at www.benchmarking.gov.uk)

- *Making comparisons with other organisations and then learning the lessons that those comparisons throw up*
(European Benchmarking Code of Conduct)

- *Continuous process of measuring products, services and practices against the toughest competitors or those companies recognised as industry leaders*
(Xerox Corporation)

What are Key Elements of Benchmarking?

- Regularly comparing aspects of performance (functions or processes) with best practitioners

- Identifying gaps in performance

- Seeking fresh approaches to bring about improvements in performance

- Following through with implementing improvements

- Following up by monitoring progress and reviewing the benefits

Benefits

- Step changes in performance and innovation
- Improving quality and productivity
- Improving performance measurement.
- Facilitates continuous improvement, eg via
  - raised awareness about performance and greater openness about relative strengths and weaknesses
  - learning from others and greater confidence in developing and applying new approaches
  - greater involvement/motivation of staff in change programs
  - greater willingness to share solutions to common problems & build consensus on what needed to facilitate changes
  - better understanding of 'big picture' and gaining broader perspective of interplay of the factors that facilitate implementation of good practice
  - Increasing collaboration and understanding of the interactions within and between organisations

European Context

- EC programme of benchmarking initiatives in which member states lead projects that will enable them to learn from shared experiences and good practice.

- In the Enterprise DG, benchmarking initiatives have been geared to improving the competitiveness of organisations working at three levels
  - Framework Conditions Benchmarking focuses on improving the **external environment** in which firms operate
  - Enterprise Benchmarking focuses on improving the **internal environment within firms** and aims to encourage the take-up of benchmarking particularly among small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
  - Sectoral Benchmarking focuses on the competitive challenges that firms encounter within specific sectors and involves working with partners from industries concerned

What Type of Benchmarking?

- Must be clear exactly what's to be achieved through benchmarking and apply appropriate methodology
- Types of benchmarking include
  - Strategic Benchmarking
  - Performance Benchmarking
  - Process Benchmarking
  - Functional or Generic Benchmarking
  - Internal Benchmarking
  - External Benchmarking
  - International Benchmarking

Strategic Benchmarking

- Where organisations seek better overall performance
  - By examining long-term strategies and general approaches that have enabled high-performers to succeed
  - By re-aligning strategies that have become inappropriate – eg in face of changes in the background such as technology or customer requirements
- Involves considering high level aspects such as
  - Core competencies
  - Developing new products and services
  - Changing the balance of activities
  - Improving capabilities for dealing with changes in the background environment (adaptability)
- Changes resulting from this type of benchmarking may be difficult to implement and benefits may take a long time to materialise

Performance Benchmarking

- Organisations consider their positions in relation to performance characteristics of key products and services that they share

- Benchmarking partners are drawn from the same sector

Process Benchmarking

- Focus on improving specific critical processes and operations

- Benchmarking partners sought from best practice organisations that perform similar work or deliver similar services

- Involves producing **process maps** to facilitate comparison & analysis

- Can give benefits in short term

Functional or Generic Benchmarking

- Works with partners drawn from different business sectors or areas of activity to find ways of improving similar functions or work processes

- This sort of benchmarking can lead to innovation and dramatic improvements, especially when:

  - Improving activities for which counterparts do not exist

  - When pressures prevent benchmarking within same sector

  - When radical change needed

External Benchmarking

- Involves seeking outside organisations known to be best in class
- Provides opportunities of learning from those who are at the leading edge (but note that not every best practice solution is transferable)
- Scope for innovation
- May take up more time and resources to ensure comparability of data and information, credibility of findings & sound recommendations
- External learning is also often slower because of the 'not invented here' syndrome

International Benchmarking

- Partners sought from other countries because best practitioners are located elsewhere in the world and/or there are too few benchmarking partners within the same country to produce valid results

- Can take more time and resources to set up and implement

- Results may need careful analysis due to national differences

Benchmarking Process

Wide range of process models but all along these lines:

- Planning

- Collecting data & information

- Analysing the findings

- Recommendations - making & doing

- Monitoring & reviewing

Seems familiar?

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Benchmarking for the sake of it
- Focusing entirely on comparisons of performance measures rather than the processes and activities that enable the achievement of good practice
- Expecting that benchmarking will be quick or easy
- Spending too long on one part of the process at the expense of other key parts
- Expecting to find benchmarking partners comparable in all respects to our organisation
- Asking for information and data without being prepared to share it with others (approved benchmarking code of conduct can help)

Making the Most of Benchmarking

- Opportunities occur when organisations have

  - Cultural change programmes

  - Gathering of data and information on performance and good practice

  - Knowledge-creating networks across traditional boundaries

- Opportunities can be harnessed by

  - Promoting benchmarking as part of a learning culture

  - integrating benchmarking with other tools and initiatives

  - encouraging effective management of knowledge and the spread of information on good practices

Benchmarking,
Crime Prevention
and Community Safety

How I got Involved…

Knowledge Management and Evaluation

- *Implementation failure* is a persistent problem in programmes and projects of Crime Prevention, Community safety and Problem-Oriented Policing

- Major causes include knowledge-centred factors:
  - *Oversimplification of the knowledge base*
  - *Inadequate capture* of knowledge via impact & process evaluation
  - *Inadequate sharing* of information through the structure, concepts and terminology of the knowledge base
  - *Inadequate process model* for planning/ implementing interventions

- Together, these factors constrain performance of national and local policymakers, delivery managers and practitioners

- Frameworks exist for systematically capturing & applying this kind of knowledge at *appropriate* levels of complexity

- These frameworks, & investment in organisational support, training and infrastructure, should routinely enable action *sophisticated enough to reduce crime & increase safety*

Community Safety is Pursued at Different Levels of Action

- **Policy**
  - **Strategic choice of priorities and performance targets and of broad types of action to meet these goals – locally, regionally, nationally or internationally**
  - **Establishing appropriate climate of understanding and acceptance for goals and actions to deliver them**

- **Delivery**
  - **Establishment & operation of systems to support & control action on the ground to achieve policy goals – including training, recruitment, information, performance monitoring; Climate setting among public and practitioners**

- **Practice**
  - **Action at local, regional national or international levels, direct focus on tackling specific crime/safety problems**

Benchmarking can be done at each of these Levels

- But what type/s of benchmarking are most appropriate for which Level?
  - Strategic Benchmarking – **Policy**?

  - Performance Benchmarking – **Delivery**?

  - Process Benchmarking – **Practice**?

  - Functional or Generic Benchmarking

  - External Benchmarking

  - International Benchmarking

Frameworks for Benchmarking Community Safety (1)

- Process Models at each Level for facilitating comparison, comprising tasks organised in (iterative) sequence

- Knowledge capture of the best performances, in form which can transfer across-contexts and support innovation

- Contextual information
  - To assist in selecting appropriate comparator/s (eg type of legal system, cultural issues, priorities)
  - To illuminate the pressures, constraints & tradeoffs that influence choice …cookbook copying won't work

- Evaluative Criteria not just for the ultimate outcome, but for performance at each stage, plus understanding of how such performance can help/hinder ultimate outcome

Frameworks for Benchmarking Community Safety (2)

- Knowledge and evaluation are not enough per se – need to be embedded in some kind of culture of **learning and motivation** to pursue excellence – how can this be fostered? Part of climate setting for practitioners, delivery agents and policymakers

- Evaluative criteria need to be
  - Based on explicit values which can be differently applied in different national contexts
  - Multidimensional

Knowledge Framework for Policy Choice
Multiple Dimensions of Policy Performance

- Selecting interventions that are *effective, cost-effective and whose benefit significantly outweighs cost*

- Efficient *targeting* on *causes* of crime/ safety problem at appropriate geog *level*; *primary, secondary, tertiary; prioritisation* on *consequences* of crime, *needs* of victim and wider society

- Appropriate *coverage* on the ground – *how much* of crime problem tackled?

- Appropriate *scope* – narrow range or broad range of crime types tackled?

- *Adaptability* – proofed Vs soc/ tech change/ adaptive offenders

- Taking action over appropriate *timescales*

- Pursuing policies that are *sustainable* financially and in Human Resource terms, relative to competing priorities

- Avoiding undesirable *side-effects* of action and balancing *tradeoffs* with other policy values

- Maximising *legitimacy/ acceptability* of actions

Knowledge for Delivery

Delivery requires making routine community safety action happen sufficiently well on the ground, so intervention methods known to work in *principle* reliably work in *practice*

- Knowledge of *delivery* includes:
    - *Capacity building* (infrastructure, human resources and training supplied 'off the shelf')
    - *Capacity development* (perhaps through R & D)
    - *Climate* (eg gaining acceptance of a particular community safety method by the public, or practitioners)
    - The appropriate *institutional settings* to support the action
- Knowledge of *delivery* feeds on know-how of *practice* –process eval'n of what infrastructure helps/hinders action
- All these can be benchmarked – eg 'is capacity building effort adequate for Crime Prevention tasks undertaken?

Practice-level Benchmarking

- Framework available for description of practice process which can be adapted to support benchmarking – 5Is

  - Intelligence

  - Intervention

  - Implementation

  - Involvement

  - Impact

- Currently descriptive but can easily develop an evaluative dimension

- How does that relate to/ merge with, Beccaria Quality Management?

Big Questions (1)

- Is benchmarking always to be done against the 'best in the field'?

- Are the answers always 'out there'?

- Or should we also be comparing with advanced, academic/theory-guided demonstration projects?
  - A bit like the 'theoretical maximum yield' in a chemical synthesis process

- How clear can we be about the 'fitness function' we want?

- Does benchmarking have any perverse effects like performance target setting?

- How might it interact with performance target setting?

Big Question (2)

- The diversity of EU Member States in Community Safety
  - Priorities – which crimes; crime versus other social problems
  - Amount of experience with prevention/safety
  - Institutional context in which safety is delivered
  - Degree to which action is evidence-based
  - Attitude to evaluation, benchmarking itself
- Benchmarking must somehow find its own level within this diversity

Big Answer?

- Can benchmark a whole set of **universal tasks** in Community Safety process – at least, have they been done? Are the infrastructure, organisational support and climate present to facilitate their being done?
  - COE Ukraine project
- Competencies for doing these tasks (eg crime pattern analysis, evaluation methods) may have a common core across range of contexts
- Priorities may differ locally but process of identifying priorities and then delivering on them is universal