

# 9TH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE ON LOCAL SAFETY AND SECURITY



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## JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION: THE IMPACT OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN RURAL AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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# Introduction

## *What is Juvenile Delinquency?*

- Unwanted behaviour from the youth (smoking before the age of 18, skipping school, ...)
- Can be illegal (vandalism, (drunk) driving, violence, ...)

## *Why is it important to understand and prevent it?*

- Risk of developing a criminal career
- Early contact with the judicial system

# Wider context

- An important period of child development
- The formation of values, habits and behavioural patterns
- Not only perpetrators, often victims themselves
- Role of the environment - offers opportunities, imposes limits, other kinds of influences

# 01

# Urban Environment



- Big, densely populated areas
- Population heterogeneity (ethnic, social, cultural)
- Impersonal interactions, anonymity
- Reduced feeling of belonging
- Greater social differences
- Higher crime rates





# 02 Rural Environment

- Villages and small cities
- Low population density
- Higher connectedness, informal social control and more personal relationships
- Limited access to services (education, healthcare, public transport)
- Fewer opportunities for conventional free-time activities (because of work, infrastructure, ...)

# Slovenia vs larger countries

## *Key differences:*

- relationships, source availability, the way of life

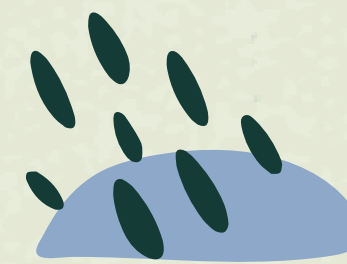
## *Context of Slovenia is quite different because:*

- e.g. in the US the towns can be hundreds of kilometers apart
- in Slovenia the distance is much smaller → differences are less palpable

## *Differences regarding crime:*

- Urban environments - higher crime ratio
- Rural environments - specific crimes are prevalent (drunk driving)

*Interesting: the trend of crime rate in recent years*



# Juvenile delinquency prevention

- Measures to *reduce* the likelihood of juvenile delinquency
- Different approaches: improving family relationships (family therapy), school environment (funding, professional education), free-time activities
- However: same approach  $\neq$  same effect
  - Must be adjusted to the environment and specific needs of the adolescent





# Risk Factors

- Increase the risk for juvenile delinquency
- Examples: bad family relationship, lack of parental oversight, poverty, failure in school, peer pressure, ...
- Early contact with the judicial system

REDUCE ↓

## RISK FACTORS

- Family history of substance use
- Favorable parental attitudes toward the behavior
- Poor parental monitoring
- Parental substance use
- Family rejection of sexual orientation or gender identity
- Association with delinquent or substance-using peers
- Lack of school connectedness
- Low academic achievement
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Mental health issues

NATURALH





# Protective Factors

- Reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency
- Examples: strong family bonds, supportive parents with good informal control, close-knit community
- More protective factors = bigger effect

**STRENGTHEN** ↑

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

- Self-efficacy
- Parental monitoring and support
- Parental disapproval of substance use
- Positive relationships
- Good grades
- School anti-drug policies
- Neighborhood resources
- School connectedness
- Engagement in healthy recreational activities
- Good coping skills

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# ✦ Rural vs Urban

- The same protective factors will not have the same effect in both rural and urban environment
- *Rural environments:*
  - Family, community, social control
- *Urban environments:*
  - More focus on institutions (schools, organisations), different programmes



**THANKS!**

