

Summary

What moves them

Research into explanatory factors of nuisance
and criminal behaviour of COA residents

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Summary

“What moves them”. Research into explanatory factors of nuisance and criminal behaviour of COA¹ residents

This summary first focuses in section 1 on the initial reason for the study, the research direction, and the research methods used. In section 2, we begin by describing the important general reflections of the research, before going into more detail in section 3 about the findings and the answers to the research questions. Every subsection within section 3 will start with the main research question. Finally, in section 4, the results of the research are placed in the context of the existing approach.

1 Reason, direction of the research and research methods

The asylum influx of recent decades has had peaks and troughs, with refugees mainly following violent geopolitical developments. Since the beginning of 2000, attention has also been paid to the problem of nuisance and crime among asylum seekers. In general, research shows that a small group of asylum seekers is suspected of crimes (3% in a recent overview) and that it mainly concerns cases such as shoplifting and drug trafficking. The existing knowledge about nuisance and criminal behaviour by asylum seekers mainly provides insight into the nature and extent of the incidents and crimes in which they are involved. There is also a general idea of the group of nuisance offenders from specific countries, in which a combina-

tion of addiction, psychological issues, and poor socio-economic conditions plays a role in their criminal behaviour. At the same time, the Scientific Research and Data Centre (WODC by its Dutch acronym), as the commissioner of the current study, notes a knowledge gap in the explanatory factors of nuisance and crime around reception centres of the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA by its Dutch acronym) and the motives of the asylum seekers involved. The WODC wants to fill this gap by means of research. The WODC also expects that the research can contribute to a more effective approach to crime and nuisance around COA reception locations.

Bureau Beke has been granted this research and has made several choices given the complexity of the subject. For example, the research focuses on COA residents (including asylum seekers, status holders, rejected asylum seekers awaiting deportation) and not exclusively on asylum seekers. Secondly, the research focuses on the nuisance and crime committed by COA residents outside the COA reception centres.

To get a better picture of the underlying circumstances and the explanatory factors of nuisance and crime outside COA reception centres and to be able to offer solutions for further development of the approach against this, we focused in this study on:

1. Describing factors that contribute to explaining nuisance and crime committed by COA residents outside the reception centre.
2. Describing any characteristic differences between COA residents who are suspected to be guilty of this or not.
3. Describing the existing approach to nuisance and crime and the experiences of professionals and COA residents with this approach.

These research directions have been translated into various research questions that will be presented and answered after the description of the research activities. We have reconstructed the causes of nuisance and criminal behaviour based on mixed research methods and data sources. Concisely formulated, we used (1) literature research, (2) a national survey among various stakeholders, (3) local research in four COA reception locations, (4) (group) interviews with other stakeholders, (5) qualitative and quantitative analysis of a selection of IBIS² files and, finally, (6)

interviews with residents of COA's enforcement and supervision centre (htl by its Dutch acronym) in Hoozevee. Based on these mixed methods and sources, we sketch a real and empirically rooted picture of the more fundamental and situational circumstances and factors that underlie the criminal and nuisance behaviour of COA residents. We apply the principle that certain factors are preferably confirmed or disproved by various sources. It is precisely by comparing sources with each other that the answers to the research questions become more robust.

Explanatory factors of nuisance and crime at three levels

In the study, we present circumstances and explanatory factors that give rise to nuisance and criminal behaviour at three levels, namely (1) the national level of the Dutch asylum and reception system, (2) the local level of the specific COA reception centre and (3) the individual level of the COA resident. These analytically distinguishable levels are emphatically linked to each other in everyday life and influence each other. The structure and design of the asylum policy and the asylum reception system at the national level determine for instance the interpretation and local embeddedness of the COA reception location and thus also the room for manoeuvre of the individual with their specific backgrounds, goals and preferences. In turn, the actions of individual COA residents can influence the design of asylum policy at the national level in the somewhat longer term. This means that the many individual circumstances and personal motivations cannot be seen separately from the larger structures of the local COA reception locations and the Dutch asylum reception system in which the COA residents operate.

Although we can base the definition of crime on the Criminal Code, this is less applicable to nuisance. Nuisance is ultimately a subjective concept implying that individuals can value behaviour differently according to time and place. Nuisance as a catch-all term also encompasses many different manifestations: from loose paving stones and litter lying around to groups of noisy young people gathering in public places. Certain punishable forms of nuisance are registered by the police, but not everything that is registered as a nuisance is also a criminal offense or is punishable locally in the General Local Ordinance (APV by its acronym in Dutch). During

the interviews and within the survey, where possible, we tried to distinguish between nuisance as a subjective concept and the punishable forms of nuisance.

2 Findings at a general level

Differentiation in the circumstances and factors of nuisance and crime

In this report, we have identified a whole range of circumstances and factors that give rise to nuisance and criminal behaviour by COA residents at three levels. We have also made a rough distinction between COA residents who commit property crime for various reasons (financing an addiction, family in the country of origin or simply to enrich themselves), in addition to COA residents who cause nuisance and violent crime from an addiction or trauma, and COA residents who, out of disregard, despair and frustration, mainly cause nuisance and aggression within the COA reception centres. We have clearly established that the factors at the national and local level help determine the motivational factors at the individual level.

Differentiation in the approach to nuisance and crime

It is important to continue the path of a differentiated approach to the problem and to clearly differentiate between the explanatory factors for this behaviour. In our opinion, the existing investigation, prosecution and trial offer an adequate response to deliberate and premeditated criminal behaviour, provided that the relevant parties can and do take appropriate action in this regard. These are often trivial cases, which do not seem worthwhile individually, but may offer opportunities for a tailor-made approach when stacked together. Nuisance behaviour due to misrecognition, confusion, psychological issues, on the other hand, deserves a completely different approach, for which it is important to have the care in order. A different treatment of the COA resident that is seen and heard more often also offers clear preventive possibilities in this context of causes.

More attention to behaviour and less to characteristics

The emphasis on the 'contrast' of people from safe countries versus people from non-safe countries or COA resident with a disadvantaged versus a promising application based on their country of origin, may be relevant from the point of view of asylum law but is less relevant regarding tackling nuisance and criminal behaviour. It leads to a feeling of exclusion among those who are labelled as asylum seekers from safe countries. For some, this also contributes to their feeling that positive behaviour does not matter. COA residents from safe countries feel that they are under a magnifying glass and that they are treated unequally compared to COA residents from an unsafe country. This can lead to frustration and verbally aggressive behaviour towards fellow residents and COA staff. Instead, the emphasis in the approach should focus more on the actual behaviour of asylum seekers and not on generic characteristics such as whether asylum seekers originate from safe or unsafe countries that are linked to deviant behaviour.

Human rights review, existing legal frameworks and research

In the context of existing and new measures to combat nuisance and crime within and outside the COA reception centre, it is important to test such (new) initiatives and measures against existing legal frameworks, human rights and scientific insights.

Knowing how to deal with the mobility of COA residents

COA residents regularly move from reception centre to reception centre. This stands in the way of good (psychological) care because there is often already a waiting list for this in the region and a treatment sometimes must be followed for a longer period. This mobility also hinders daytime activities (work); it is not worthwhile to invest in employees who can only be deployed for a short time. The mobility of COA residents can also be at odds with a criminal process because suspected COA residents have often moved out before the investigation, prosecution and trial process by the police and the Public Prosecution Service (OM by its Dutch acronym) has been completed. It therefore seems worthwhile to invest in (existing) strategies that know how to deal with the obstacles that now arise in the above areas due to the mobility of COA residents.

The power of structural centres over emergency shelter

The often-temporary emergency shelter does not contribute to the prevention of nuisance and crime. A more structured, long-term reception centre offers better prospects for COA residents than ad hoc solutions as it should come along with fewer transfers of COA residents. Additionally, staff will be able to build up more expertise and will gain more insight into those same COA residents. A structural reception centre creates better conditions for professionals to become aware of the COA resident and thus counteract the anonymity of the COA resident.

The importance of paying attention to COA residents and locally working professionals

From all kinds of sources, the importance of good treatment of the COA residents is pointed out. It is essential that COA residents are seen and heard and are treated appropriately by all parties involved with COA residents. In a preventive sense, this can already lead to better considerations regarding a COA resident who is in danger of going off the rails but can also offer a solution in a care-related or repressive sense if he or she has already gone off the rails. This can only be achieved if the professionals who work locally in the COA reception centre have sufficient time and skills to pick up on such signals. More structural and less temporary reception locations and targeted investments in and appreciation for staff who work for the COA residents can mutually reinforce each other in the preventive approach to behaviour that could lead to nuisance and crime at a later stage.

The value of small-scale

Small-scale reception as such does not necessarily go hand in hand with less nuisance or criminal incidents outside the COA reception centre. Even in a small-scale COA reception centre, professionals can pay little attention to the COA residents and there too, COA residents can cause nuisance and commit criminal offences outside and inside the reception centre. But the smaller centres do make it easier for professionals to see the COA residents in their everyday circumstances, it makes the setting less anonymous and thus facilitates straight-forward lines of communication between professionals and COA residents. The research also shows that the small-scale reception centre with few incidents registered by COA also goes hand in

hand with more room for a preventive approach for the external actors (police, municipality) that is characterised, among other things, in direct, straight-forward communication in addition to involvement with and investment in the relevant parties that matter: local residents, entrepreneurs and COA residents. Instead of mainly dealing with incidents, this method of action prevents or nips incidents in the bud.

Better use of existing resources and measures

When professionals are asked about measures, they feel are lacking, they do not come up with many new solutions. Apparently, the current measures already offer the necessary relief. The question is therefore how to make better use of the existing measures. There is potentially a world to be gained in terms of reducing nuisance and criminal behaviour.

3 Findings at the concrete level of the research questions

Explanatory factors of nuisance and criminal behaviour by COA residents outside the reception centre

The central question we answer in this study is: “Which explanatory factors at national, local and individual level underlie different forms of nuisance and criminal behaviour of COA residents?”

Various factors have been found at the *national level* that underlie nuisance and criminal behaviour. In the first place, the frequent changes in reception locations emerge as a factor from the three types of sources (surveys, interviews and analysis of IBIS files). To some extent, the national factors mentioned by respondents in the survey are also reflected in the local factors mentioned in the interviews. This concerns the placement of too many nuisances at a few locations and keeping COA residents in the reception centre after nuisance behaviour (read: insufficient compliance with house rules/measures). But the lack of regulations and procedural streamlining around daytime activities (especially work and school) has also been frequently mentioned. In this context, the difficulty of obtaining a Citizen Service Number has been regularly heard in the research. In addition, the surveys and interviews show that, according to respondents,

the long duration of the asylum procedure is a major factor for nuisance and crime. The feeling of hopelessness, frustration and the development of psychological problems then seems to be a kind of catalyst for nuisance behaviour. Furthermore, several respondents remain critical of the procedural possibilities for asylum seekers to repeatedly enter a new asylum procedure. They then talk about the opportunities that asylum seekers are given time and time again, even if these have already built up a track record of nuisance and criminal behaviour. The distinction between COA residents with a promising and disadvantaged application has two sides. On the one hand, respondents note that this leads to feelings of inequality and injustice among people with a disadvantaged application. On the other hand, respondents also note that (a small group of) asylum seekers with a disadvantaged application are largely responsible for the nuisance and crime. A few professionals refer to the existence of nationally operating criminal networks of which COA residents are sometimes part.

At the *local level*, too, several sources indicate that the lack of daytime activities in the area is an important factor. The lack of strict enforcement outside the reception location is also a factor for nuisance and crime. In addition, the location of a reception location is a point of concern, although this is estimated on different scenarios. According to some, COA reception centres that are too close to shops, pose a risk. According to others, if this is not the case, an illegal market can arise. The point of the non-strict enforcement of house rules and the non-imposition of measures after nuisance/crime at the reception location itself emerges from all three sources. The result, according to the analysis of the IBIS files, is that an incident is not always followed by a response from the COA nor other organisations and that threats against staff do not always lead to consequences. In that case, the learning moment for the COA resident is missing. Furthermore, it emerges from all sources that local criminal networks can be a factor, especially regarding the (incitement to) illegal trade by COA residents who, in the (alleged) absence of sanctions, have developed the feeling that they do not have to comply with rules and regulations.

With some caution, the size of the reception locations seems to be related to the occurrence of nuisance and crime committed by COA residents. This occurrence is not so much related directly to the size but much more with the opportunities that come along with the size. In the inter-

views, a relationship is made with a more anonymous lifestyle at the larger reception locations. At the same time, small locations do not necessarily have to be less anonymous. This partly depends on the workload of COA employees and other organizations involved in the reception. Another factor that emerges from various sources refers to the concentration of COA residents from a safe country in certain reception centres. In this context, the IBIS analysis provides some indications that COA residents with antecedents are more likely to be registered for incidents in a regular reception centre. Finally, various sources mention the compulsory mobility of COA residents moving from reception centre to reception centre, that hinders them in establishing social bonds with fellow residents, staff or the environment.

On an *individual level*, these are factors that can first be summarised under the topics of ‘problems’ (addiction, psychological, financial) and feeling of powerlessness, hopelessness due to the length of the asylum procedure and boredom. In addition, the family in the country of origin can also play a role, both in terms of stress for their well-being and pressure to send money. In the area of the individual asylum procedure, several factors can also be noted. This concerns COA residents from a safe country who applied for asylum and feel that they have nothing to lose, and who do not (or no longer) wish to be part of society. They are not (or no longer) in the Netherlands with the intention of applying for asylum and repeatedly start new procedures for reasons that we have not further investigated. Furthermore, the interviews mention a shift in the nuisance target groups, especially under youngsters: from nuisance North African youths to recently arrived Syrian youths. These young people regularly face problematic substance use and have learned to survive on the streets in countries on the edges of Europe. This factor was also mentioned, to a lesser extent, in the surveys. Finally, the absence of important role models, such as family members, is mentioned in several sources as a factor for nuisance and crime.

Statements according to COA residents who commit nuisance and crime

How do COA residents who are held responsible for nuisance and/or criminal behaviour experience and interpret their own actions, the circumstances in which this behaviour took place and the reactions to it?

We have spoken with COA residents who have been placed in the htl in Hoogeveen by COA, based on the observation that the incident they were guilty of has had a major impact on their fellow residents, the COA employees and other people working at the COA centre. The htl residents often experience the nuisance incidents that are responsible for their stay at the htl as (considerably) less serious than the bystanders as well as the COA, which imposes the measure. On the one hand, they interpret these incidents as the result of misunderstanding and not listening and responding properly to the problems they experience. On the other hand, these htl residents note that the incident is the result of their personal problem in dealing with aggression that is sometimes fuelled by alcohol and/or drugs. Finally, the htl residents point to acute conflicts with fellow residents, partly in the everyday hustle and bustle of the COA reception centre, to which they feel they had to react physically or verbally violently, but of which they were the only ones to suffer the punishment. Earlier we pointed out the care with which the COA has surrounded the placement process on the htl. At the same time, we note that the htl as a measure is predominantly experienced by the htl residents as unjust, disproportionate and stigmatizing. A small group of htl residents is more positive about the measure and says they benefit from the small scale and structured nature of the htl.

Differences between COA residents who do or do not cause nuisance and commit crime

In what respect(s) does the group of COA residents who cause criminal behaviour and nuisance differ from other groups of COA residents?

Based on the analysis of the IBIS files, we conclude that the group of residents with antecedents and the group of residents without antecedents differ considerably in terms of personal characteristics, residence situation, behaviour inside and outside the COA reception centre and, finally, the multiple problems. However, there may be a possible bias here: due to the many incidents and signals, the files of the group of residents with antecedents are significantly more extensive and contain more documentation of domain discussions and guidance plans. COA employees are more likely to have kept an extra eye on people who have previously exhibited

nuisance or criminal behaviour. The differences between the groups, the group with antecedents and the group without, are evident on four levels:

1. Personal characteristics: the group with antecedents consists largely of young men (96% male, mostly between 20–40 years old), mostly from Algeria and Morocco. The group without antecedents is largely from Syria, has a more diverse origin and contains relatively more women.
2. Residence situation: the group with antecedents is more likely to be in uncertain procedures (asylum seeker in/without procedure), while the group without antecedents is more likely to have a residence permit.
3. Behaviour within the shelter: the group with antecedents is responsible for a multitude of incidents, including violence, aggression, substance abuse and violation of house rules. The group without antecedents has considerably fewer incidents, of which more than 70 percent consists of 'absenteeism of the obligation to report'.
4. Multiple problems: addiction, psychological problems and trauma are more likely to play a role in the criminal/nuisance group. The other residents also must deal with stress-increasing factors, but this seems to lead to escalation less often for them.

The significance of multiple problems among COA residents in relation to nuisance and crime

What does any multi-problem consist of among COA residents who create nuisance and/or display criminal behaviour and to what extent does this differ from the multi-problem of non-nuisance COA residents?

The IBIS analysis shows that the multiple problems faced by the group of disruptive and criminal COA residents primarily involve addiction issues, with these COA residents often using substances (alcohol and drugs) as a coping mechanism for trauma or stress (for various reasons). In addition, there are psychological issues that many professionals frequently identify and are concerned about; these can negatively affect the mental and/or physical condition of these COA residents, with escalations, especially under the influence of substances, often following specific triggers. Traumas and an accumulation of stress and frustrations play an important role in this multi-problem. These traumas are linked to the troubles

in the country of origin or are incurred on the way to the Netherlands. Substantial stress is exacerbated by the lengthy asylum procedures, feelings of hopelessness, a lack of control over the situation and frustrations due to living together with others in a reception centre. The group of residents who do not create nuisance or commit criminal offences also experience an accumulation of stress and frustration, but for them this rarely leads to escalation or nuisance.

COA residents and their asylum motives in relation to whether or not they commit crime

What were the considerations for applying for asylum for the group of COA residents who exhibit criminal behaviour and to what extent does this differ from the motives of non-nuisance COA residents?

From the interviews with professionals, the core difference lies in the intention of the asylum seekers to settle. These professionals note that the group of nuisance and criminal COA residents partly consists of COA residents with intentions other than asylum (such as making money, seeking adventure). According to respondents, this leads to more calculating and to criminal behaviour. According to the professionals, this group often consists of COA residents from safe countries or 'Dubliners': asylum seekers who must continue their asylum procedure in the country of entry into the European Union. Respondents emphasise that 'having nothing to lose' also plays an important role in the behaviour of this group. On the other hand, according to these professionals, the non-nuisance/criminal group is characterised by asylum seekers with 'real asylum intentions'. For them, the stress and frustration sometimes lead to minor incidents, but normally not to structural nuisance nor criminal behaviour. The intention to establish themselves thus influences the type and frequency of nuisance and criminal behaviour.

Procedural path of nuisance and/or criminal asylum seekers

What procedural paths have nuisance and/or criminal COA residents taken? Within the group of nuisance and/or criminal COA residents, there are more often people in an asylum procedure or people who have repeatedly submitted an asylum procedure (whether or not interspersed with

a negative result) than status holders. Various sources point out that within this nuisance/criminal group there is more often no intention for asylum (anymore). Respondents also speak of a greater presence of asylum seekers from safe countries and 'Dubliners' in the group of COA residents who commit nuisance or crime. This lack of a legal perspective in the Netherlands contributes to frustration and stress and thus increases the risk of nuisance and crime. The relationship between uncertainty in the asylum procedure and crime/nuisance has already been described by De Boom et al. (2008). The IBIS analysis also shows that they are more often involved in incidents in the first week of their stay at a COA reception centre.

4 Tackling nuisance and crime, experiences, and alternatives

What is the approach to nuisance and crime outside the COA reception centres?

What does the approach to nuisance and crime outside the COA reception centres consist of and which organisations are involved?

When it comes to tackling nuisance and crime, the COA is responsible for what happens at the COA reception centre, but in practice COA professionals are also regularly involved in partnerships that deal with non-criminal forms of nuisance outside the reception centres. The criminal forms of nuisance and crime are a task that is primarily assigned to the police. A distinction can be made between a national approach and a local approach. Nationally, the regular criminal justice chain is available for criminal offenses: the COA can report to the police, who can continue further investigation. In the event of incidents at the COA location (violating house rules, failure to comply with the obligation to report or other behaviour that 'exceeds the boundary of what is acceptable') in which COA residents are involved, the COA can impose measures on the residents concerned that vary from measures without or with withholding of supplies. In the event of incidents at the COA location (violation of house rules, failure to comply with the reporting obligation or other behaviour that "crosses the line of what is acceptable") involving COA residents, the COA

may impose measures on the residents concerned, ranging from measures without or with withholding of provisions. In case of serious nuisance inside or outside the COA location, the COA can impose an htl measure on the COA resident. The htl measure is a freedom-restricting measure, but not a closed detention centre. Special investigating officers (so-called boa's) supervise this and the house rules in the htl are stricter than in an asylum seekers' centre. Placement on an htl is covered by various safeguards (COA, 2025a).

At a COA location, if an incident with a major impact has taken place or if a succession of incidents has taken place for a longer period, the help of the so-called Ambulatory Support Team (AOT by its Dutch acronym) of the COA can be called in, who provide local support in the daily supervision of the nuisance COA residents. In addition, the COA is working through pilots such as the so-called enhanced supervision location (vtl) to reverse nuisance and crime caused by COA residents. The aim of the vtl is to positively influence the behaviour of troublemakers in a low-stimulus environment with intensive supervision to prevent recurrence of nuisance. In addition, the so-called process availability location (pbl) was opened on June 1st, 2025, in which the freedom of movement of nuisance COA residents can be further restricted. Other forms of approach concern the 'national approach to nuisance asylum seekers' as of 2022, in which the asylum and criminal justice chains work together. The main means used in this national approach run along four lines: (a) quick decision-making in asylum procedures, (b) offering tailor-made reception, (c) tit-for-tat policy in public spaces and (d) prioritising return. In addition, the Ministry of Justice and Security (2024), and more recently the Ministry of Asylum and Migration, has developed a toolbox with information on measures against nuisance and/or criminal behaviour, contact with partners in the migration chain, carrying out a problem analysis and preventive measures. At the local level, the various integral partnerships around a COA location stand out. An important form is the Local Chain Consultation (LKO) in which the COA, the Repatriation and Department Service (DTenV), the police and often also the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) work together around one reception centre to which other parties can join by invitation. Locally, other more preventively designed consultation structures have also been organised in which, for example, the police, municipality, COA, residents and entrepreneurs meet periodically and discuss problems with each other.

Within the COA reception centre, nuisance often involves forms that are connected to the everyday dynamics that go hand in hand with the presence of many people from different cultures, religions, ages and household forms, who live with and next to each other in a period of relative powerlessness in a small area. Noise pollution, tensions and mutual irritations can be the result of this. When it comes to crime, it mainly concerns verbal and physical violence towards fellow residents and COA professionals and property crime (theft of each other's belongings). Drug trafficking is also reported. Nuisance outside the COA reception centre is often reported by local residents and among others concerns young COA residents loitering around on squares or near shops. As to crime outside the COA reception centre, professionals mainly talk about property crime (theft and burglary) and drug-related crime (drug trafficking and nuisance related to drug use). A limited number of professionals also point to a more organised context in which vulnerable asylum seekers are made dependent by financial debts, in order to carry out forced criminal activities for malicious individuals or a criminal network (human trafficking).

How do professionals and COA residents experience the approach to nuisance and crime?

How is the existing approach experienced by the parties involved? What bottlenecks, if any, do they encounter and how could they be solved?

Based on the interviews with the professionals, various bottlenecks occur that are partly related to the tasks of the organizations. For example, the COA is an organization that is primarily responsible for the reception and guidance of asylum seekers in the Netherlands and not a supervisory or enforcement body. In that sense COA professionals sometimes feel overburdened. It also becomes clear that nuisance and criminal COA residents can continue their business relatively undisturbed, whereby COA measures do not seem to have the desired deterrent effect. Moreover, professionals and COA residents experience criminal law as largely absent in designated situations. COA residents can also experience measures as unjust; they indicate that they do not understand the imposed COA measures (sometimes due to language problems) or do not agree with the seriousness of the description of the incident they have committed. They also sometimes

question the proportionality of measures, such as the htl measure that can last up to three months. Professionals also point to the group of nuisance and criminal COA residents who turn away from the COA professionals, go their own way, have little connection with other COA residents and stay aloof from activities and training at the COA location.

The nuisance experienced by residents living near the COA locations seems to decrease in those situations where local consultation structures of COA, community police officers and the municipality also involve residents and entrepreneurs in the cooperation at an early stage. The 'short lines' that result from this mean that nuisance can also be solved faster.

Does the existing approach fit in with the explanatory factors of nuisance and crime?

To what extent does the approach to nuisance and crime match the established factors and motives of the nuisance and criminal COA residents?

The existing approach could better distinguish between the various factors that play an important role in nuisance and crime. In particular, the nuisance and crime behind which psychological problems, traumas and addiction are hidden, differs from the more 'deliberate and calculating' nuisance and crime committed by 'unhinged youths', people who operate more in a criminal partnership and COA residents who entered the Dutch asylum procedure with intentions other than asylum. It would be wise if this basic difference would be considered in the approach.

Possible effective preventive and repressive measures against nuisance and crime

What can be said based on the research results about possible effective (preventive and repressive) measures to reduce nuisance and crime among COA residents?

To combat boredom and to promote bonding with others and thus to combat the risks of nuisance and criminal behaviour, it is very important to focus on activities including education and work, with the accelerated provision of a bsn. In the field of labour, local initiatives are visible in which COA professionals have found a connection with local entrepreneurs who make paid jobs available for COA residents. The question is whether

this should be a task of the COA or of another local actor. The COA does not seem to be able to do this now, given a limited capacity and the required expertise. Perhaps we can learn from experiences within the Department of Correctional Institutions (DJI) when it comes to penitentiary work and how local connections with the business community are made within the penitentiary institutions.

Addiction problems and psychological problems are important factors for explaining nuisance and crime. This means the need for a focus on increased access to care, to better cope with the treatment of (serious) psychological complaints and addiction problems among COA residents. A care-delaying factor is that a COA resident is regularly assigned a new residence location, after which they must stand in line again of a (long) mental health waiting lists. Both phenomena (mobility of COA residents and waiting lists for care) reinforce each other in a negative sense.

For the effectiveness and visibility of the criminal law approach, it is important that nuisance and criminal behaviour are always reported so that the police can deal with them. This implies, more than is already happening, awareness campaigns among COA residents and local residents that point out the importance of filing a report. This could also be communicated to residents and entrepreneurs through local consultation structures. The responsibility for filing a report ultimately lies with the local residents and the entrepreneurs themselves.

The findings of this study show as a perverse effect of the so-called two-track policy with asylum seekers from safe countries versus non-safe countries as COA residents who are labelled as originating from a safe country or 'asylum seekers with a disadvantaged application' sometimes also behave accordingly and cause nuisance and crime from that alleged hopelessness. We realise that this policy is at the heart of the current (European) asylum procedure and is intended to speed up the procedure, but we also note that the terms used here do not do justice to reality. Asylum seekers from a safe country can also make a successful asylum application and, at the same time, so-called 'promising asylum seekers originating from an unsafe country' can be rejected in the asylum procedure. Therefore, it is worth considering letting go of this distinction and replacing it with factual indications, for example by putting nuisance behaviour at the centre

of the terminology. This also implies a different treatment of all asylum seekers and so-called 'COA residents from a safe country' in particular; it is, as is also apparent from the previous points, rather about an adequate approach to nuisance and criminal behaviour of COA residents.

Finally, this summary provides a concisely summarizing overview that, by its very nature, cannot do justice to the multitude of explanatory factors at national, local and individual level and the interactions between factors at these levels. For a good understanding of the problem and to do justice to the depth and nuance of the findings, we invite the reader to read the full report.

Endnotes

1. COA means Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers. This is the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers.
2. IBIS is the administration system used by COA that is linked to registration of asylum seekers.



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