Research Review

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Editorial

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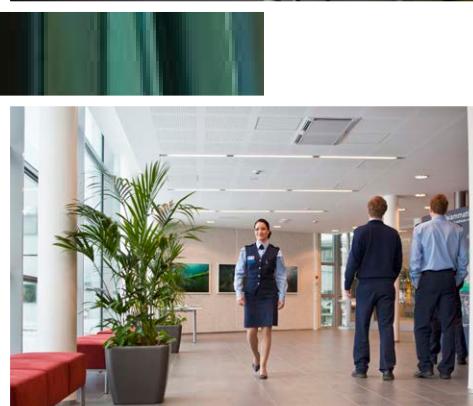
Project news

The Police University College has launched new projects on identifying signs of radicalization and extremism on the internet, the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure, and intelligence legislation in different countries. Details about other projects, both previous and ongoing, can be found on the webpage of the Police University College.
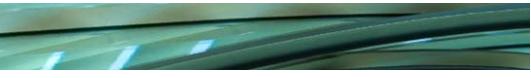
Research Results

The latest publications and project results of the Police University College are presented. The projects concern illegal waste shipments and illegal trade in waste in Europe, strengthening of the connection between the police and communities, as well as the development of innovative emergency services.

New emphases in RDI activities

The Police University College (Polamk) is both a national police unit and a higher education institution, whose RDI (Research, Development, and Innovation) activities serve the needs of internal security, policing, and education. The objective is to produce information, products, and services for the purpose of developing security in society.

The profile of the Police University College's RDI activities has clearly changed in the 2010s. Previously, the focus of RDI activities centered on a research-based perspective, national funding, a criminological approach, and the production of publications. However, more recently, development-oriented projects, international funding, a multi-disciplinary approach, and project-based outputs other than publications have strongly emerged alongside scientific research.

The growth resulting from a stronger emphasis on development has been particularly apparent in EU projects carried out by international consortia. Most fixed-term RDI staff work on long-term projects funded by the EU. These projects involve not only public administration organizations and higher education institutions, but also third sector operators and companies.

For example, the following ongoing international projects are very descriptive of the current profile of the Police University College's RDI activities. The MindB4Act project funded by the Horizon 2020 program concerns identifying signs of radicalization and extremism on the internet. The Kivi project funded by the EU Internal Security Fund (ISF) involves studying the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure. The Taking Surveillance Apart project based on Nordic funding examines intelligence legislation in different countries.

An international audit of the Police University College's quality system (FINEEC 2018) confirms that the basic elements of the college's RDI activities are in order. The college has a versatile range of RDI projects involving a large network of partners. A direct connection to the police organization offers a unique opportunity to carry out RDI activities. In the future, it will be possible to enhance these activities by developing the college's individual service concept and establishing strategic partnerships.

Dr Vesa Muttilainen
Director of Research

More information about the projects

To find out more about the projects, click on our project website: http://www.polamk.fi/en/rdi/projects

The project webpages include information on the Police University College's research and development projects. In addition to a general description of each project, the pages contain information on schedules, funding, and coordinators. Previous projects can be found in the project archives.

MINDb4ACT – Mapping, identifying and developing skills and opportunities in operating environments for the co-creation of innovative, ethical and effective practices to tackle radicalization leading to violent extremism

The MINDb4ACT research and development project involves charting existing practices and developing new ones in order to help prevent violent radicalization and extremism. The project focuses on analyzing the current status of the prevention of violent radicalization and extremism in Europe. It also involves systematizing the available information and competencies in order to support authorities' operations and strategic decision-making, and strengthening multidisciplinary cooperation to prevent violent radicalization. In addition to research work, the project involves exchange programs for authorities, practices, courses and pilot projects. Through these measures, recommendations will be produced for the development of current practices, as well as practical solutions for stakeholders, end-users and decision-makers in the security sector.

Next in the project, living labs will be utilized to find and co-create best practices for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism.

KIVI – Vulnerability of critical infrastructure and operational capability of authorities

Through the development of the appropriate risk management, the project is enabling the anticipation of and preparedness for crises and disturbances of human origin, related to critical infrastructure, among service providers and authorities.

Through the project, updatable tools are being developed for the evaluation of the authorities' risk-management capabilities in relation to critical infrastructure. A self-evaluation tool (stress test) will be designed for service providers, which can be connected to the ICT system of the National Emergency Supply Agency, for example.

The tool will be piloted in a few selected operative units towards the end of the project. A simulation method will be developed for the capability evaluation and preparedness training of the police and emergency authorities. The method will focus on vulnerabilities in information exchange between the private and public sectors and the authorities, and on the common operating picture and leadership.

Project researchers are currently working with co-partners to define key research problems. A stress test and simulation platform are also under development.

Taking surveillance apart? – Accountability and legitimacy of internet surveillance and expanded investigatory powers

In this multidisciplinary study, legal provisions defining the powers enabling intelligence and law enforcement authorities to monitor information networks and communications data are being assessed and compared between Finland, Norway and the UK. The comparison covers the supervision of surveillance and various stakeholders' arguments justifying online monitoring. In addition, citizens' online behavior and perceptions of surveillance and privacy are analyzed. Through this investigation, recommendations for improving the accountability and legitimacy of online surveillance are made. The project is highly topical in Finland, since intelligence legislation is currently under preparation.

This project is in the data collection phase and interviews of different stakeholders are about to begin.

TURVA project – Promoting the understanding of basic human rights and preventing crimes among asylum seekers

The primary objective of the project is to promote knowledge of basic human rights and understanding of Finnish society among asylum seekers, to prevent crime and to train the staff of reception centers and detention units in anti-violence work. The goal is to use these measures to reduce victimization, including domestic violence, and strengthen the general feeling of safety in Finnish society.

The project will be divided into 3 phases: 1) collecting research data on crime related to asylum seekers, 2) creating general guidance material for asylum seekers and other immigrants about basic human rights and key provisions in the Criminal Code, information about the Police of Finland, and criminal sanctions, and 3) improving anti-violence work and training staff in reception centers and detention units.

In phase 1, current and key data on crimes related to asylum seekers was collected based on police reports from 2016. The data will be utilized in phases 2 and 3 and thereafter. A report on the information gathered in phase 1 has just been released.

OTHER ONGOING PROJECTS

- **Further Support for Public Safety Education in Kosovo** – The objective is to enhance the professional education of public security authorities in order to meet the needs of Kosovan society.

- **Epras** – Enhancing Professional Skills and Raising Awareness of Domestic Violence, Violence against Women and Shelter Services

- **Improdova** – Improving Frontline Responses to High Impact Domestic Violence

Further information on R&D projects:

www.polamk.fi/en/rdi/projects

BlockWaste – Blocking loopholes enabling illicit waste trafficking

The project aims to strengthen the fight against illegal waste shipments and illegal trade in waste in Europe. It involves producing information on the threats and risks associated with illegal waste shipments in order to support strategic planning. The project will identify illegal operating practices related to waste trading and shipments, and estimate the amount of illegal earnings made in the waste sector. It will also analyze legislation to examine whether it can be amended to better expose and prevent criminal activity.

The final report of the BlockWaste project notes that blocking the loopholes in EU and national legislation will make overseeing the markets easier in the future. It emphasizes the role played by preventing environmental crimes at the early stage, by interfering with networks providing false documents. The report also notes that cooperation and sufficient resources are vital to cross-border crime prevention. To support the enforcement of environmental law, use should also be made of various administrative consequences and electronical tools. In addition, more accounting obligations should be imposed on producers.

Project Website

Unity – Strengthening the connection between the police and communities to maximize the safety and security of all citizens

The starting point of the project is a community and citizen centric approach to community policing. The goal of the project is increasingly efficient and impactful community policing. The project also aims to facilitate and speed up communication between the police and citizens. The project involves developing and testing new communication platforms, including a mobile application and a web portal, together with citizens. The purpose is to identify best practices for cooperation between the police and citizens and develop a communications technology to facilitate, strengthen and accelerate communication between citizens and the police. Furthermore, the project aimed to design, develop and deliver training for Law Enforcement Agencies and awareness raising activities on Community Policing.

During the project, a mobile application platform has been created to support future community policing. The application includes two interactive systems: one to be used for interacting with the public and another closed system to be used for analyzing data and sharing good practices among the police for strategic decision-making. In addition, an educational package for the police has been produced.
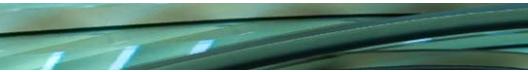
Project website

NEXES – NEXt generation Emergency Services

NEXt generation Emergency Services (NEXES) is a project engaged in the development of innovative emergency services. The aim of the project is to create a framework for smart communication technologies and multi-format media content in emergency services, by utilizing existing smart communication devices to enable a more comprehensive emergency response. NEXES is seeking solutions for providing instructions to callers, locating callers and incident sites, and collecting information, as well as alternative methods of placing emergency calls. The project will also address groups with special needs, such as people with disabilities, impairments, language barriers and mental or physical health issues.

Four sets of products can be identified as an end product of the NEXES-project. The main product, NEXES System, was created to enable IP-enabled communication channels that offer bi-directional total conversation with rich data. The second product, NEXES Mobile Applications (Apps), allows the full and ethically responsible end-to-end exploitation of the new functionalities empowered by the IP-based communications system for citizens. The third product, the NEXES Testing Regime and Validation Framework, includes an open testbed, enabling the testing and validation of the NEXES System and Apps. The project has also provided guidelines, educational and training materials, and has made contributions to future standards and regulations on IP-based communications and interoperability for emergency services.

Project Website

SOME PUBLICATIONS

- Kalalahti, J. (2017). Poliisiammattikorkeakoulun tutkimus-, koulutus-, kehittämis- ja innovaatiotoiminnan kehittäminen palvelukonseptin avulla. (Development of the research, training, development and innovation activities of the Police University College in Finland by means of a service concept). Available here.

- Mansikkamäki, S.-T., Kankaanranta, T., Ranki, M., & Muttilainen, V. (2017). Talousrikostutkinta poliisissa vuonna 2015: tutkintahenkilöstölle osoitetun kyselyn tuloksia. (Economic crime investigation by the police in 2015. Results of the survey among investigation staff in Finland). Available here.

- Mansikkamäki, S.-T. Houtsonen, J., & Laitinen, K. (2018). Poliisin tietoon tullut turvapaikanhakijoihin liittyvä rikollisuus 2016. (Crimes Related to Asylum Seekers in 2016). Available here.

- Rauta, J. (2017): Poliisin tietoon tullut viharikollisuus Suomessa 2016. (Hate crimes in Finland in 2016). Poliisiammattikorkeakoulun katsauksia 12/2017. Available here.

- Sahramäki, I., & Kankaanranta, T. (2017). Waste no money – reducing opportunities for illicit waste dumping. Crime, Law and Social Change, 68(1–2), 217–232. Available here.

- Vuorensyrjä, M., & Lehmuskoski, A. (2017). Poliisikoulutuksen vaikuttavuusarviointi 2017: vuosina 2014–2015 valmistuneiden poliisien työllisyys ja arviot koulutuksen työelämävastaavuudesta. (Evaluation of the effectiveness of police education program 2017. Employment and occupational validity of the program as assessed by police officers who graduated during 2014–2015). Available here.