Individual Track Guidance
on paper and in practice

A study of the programme theory and implementation of
Hard-Core ITG and CRIEM-ITG

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Summary

Background of the study

Individual Track Guidance (ITG) (referred to in the Netherlands as Individuele Traject Begeleiding or ITB) is an intensive form of (juvenile) probation, often imposed as an alternative to detention or part thereof. The aim of ITG is to prevent recidivism by furthering social integration and improving youth’s personal skills. There are two variations of ITG: Hard-core ITG and CRIEM\(^1\)-ITG.

Hard-core ITG entails intensive guidance of adolescents (12- to 17-year-olds) and young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. CRIEM-ITG is aimed at youth from non-Western backgrounds who are apprehended for a first offence or have committed a number of minor offences.

The evaluation of ITG forms part of the Dutch government’s ‘Action Programme for tackling Juvenile Crime 2003 – 2006’ (Actieprogramme aanpak jeugdcriminaliteit 2003 – 2006), initiated in 2002. Main objectives of the Action Programme are preventing first offences and reducing recidivism. The programme also stresses the importance of systematically testing the effectiveness of various sanctions. In the future the Ministry of Justice will finance only those correction/sanction programmes deemed to be effective (in terms of preventing recidivism) or highly promising.

Aim of the study

The first aim of the study is to ascertain the programme theory behind ITG: how can the approach be characterized and what are its ‘active ingredients’ or effective components? The second part of the study consists of a programme evaluation. The evaluation examines how ITG is actually put into practice and to what extent this reflects the original programme ‘on paper’.

Based on the knowledge and insight gained in this study, the Ministry of Justice will decide on the future of ITG: whether or not it will be continued and if so, which improvements and/or additions are necessary or preferable. To achieve this objective, the following questions need to be answered for both Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG.

1. What are the characteristics of ITG and how does ITG differ from standard juvenile probation?
2. At which group is ITG aimed?
3. What are the possible effective components of ITG and what empirical evidence exists in their support (in other words: what is the underlying mechanism)?

\(^1\) CRIEM is a Dutch acronym for ‘Crime in Relation to the Integration of Ethnic Minorities’ (Criminaliteit in Relatie tot de Integratie van Etnische Minderheden). The CRIEM White Paper of 1997 led to numerous concrete proposals and activities in the area of crime prevention and was one of the precursors of the Dutch’s government’s ‘Prevention Policy’ from 2001 onwards.
Summary

4. How does ITG rate on the (other) ‘What works’\(^2\) criteria?
5. How is ITG carried out in practice?
6. What variations of ITG can be found throughout the Netherlands?
7. What are the characteristics of the youth who encounter ITG and how has ITG been implemented in their cases?
8. To what extent is the practice of ITG in line with the original intentions?
9. To what extent do the clients of ITG resemble the target youth?

Method

The study was conducted between July 2004 and January 2005. During this period information was gathered from various sources. The analysis of the programme theory was based on the manuals\(^3\) in which the ITG-methodology is described, as well as documents ranging from reports to government circulars. In addition a number of literature reviews were studied to determine the effective components (‘What works’ criteria) of outpatient programmes for juvenile delinquents. The researchers also used a checklist to assess the ‘solidity’ of Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG, as described on paper. Finally, interviews with key figures shed light on the original concept and rationale of ITG.

The programme evaluation consisted of three steps (see Figure 1). First, an inventory was made of the various forms of ITG in the Netherlands by means of a telephonic survey of all districts and the William Schrikker Group\(^4\). The second step involved more specific investigation within a smaller number of districts, whereby various aspects were probed more deeply. Thirdly, three of these districts (Amsterdam, Breda and Dordrecht) were selected for in-depth file (dossier) analysis. Registration data on the youth in question was obtained from the Youth Care Information System (Informatiesysteem Jeugdzorg or IJ) and the Research and Policy Database of Judicial Documentation (Onderzoek- en Beleidsdatabase Justitiële Documentatie or OBJD) belonging to the Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Justice.

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\(^2\) These criteria were derived from international literature on effective intervention programmes for youth with antisocial and delinquent behaviour. This ‘knowledge bank’ is the result of dozens of meta-evaluations of hundreds of evaluation programmes. The evaluations have shown ‘what works’ in the prevention and treatment of this kind of deviant behaviour.

\(^3\) In the case of ITG, the term ‘methodology description’ is in fact more appropriate than ‘manual’. It turns out that the descriptions contain no procedural guidelines and advice on how to implement ITG in practice. However, for the sake of clarity the documents describing the methodology are referred to in this summary as manuals. See for more information the conclusion on page 10.

\(^4\) An organisation specialised in juvenile probation for handicapped youth, including youth with (mild) mental disabilities, which operates throughout the Netherlands.
Step 1: Telephonic survey and obtaining of documents/printed material on ITG in all districts and the William Schrikker Group (n=19)

Step 2: Telephonic survey in those districts where a minimum of 10 participants are guided on a yearly basis (n=12)

Step 3: Dossier analysis and analysis of criminal justice data in 3 districts (n=3)

Figure 1 Schematic account of the programme evaluation

In the three districts mentioned, various key figures were questioned about the youth who came into contact with ITG, their judicial status, the programme content and aspects surrounding the implementation of ITG, including procedures, preconditions and cooperation with the various parties involved.

Results

The ITG-programme: characteristics and distinction between ITG and standard juvenile probation

The target group

Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG are programmes aimed at youth with problems on multiple fronts (including problems at home/within the family, at school/work and in their leisure time) who, as result of these problems, run a reasonable risk of slipping (further) into crime. Hard-core ITG targets youth with quite severe problems: delinquents (12 to 24 years old) who have been arrested several times for serious offences and are facing a heavy sentence. Many of these youth seem to have chosen a criminal career for themselves or to be heading for a 'life of crime'.\footnote{Although adults can also be sentenced to Hard-core ITG, this hardly ever occurs, as shown by the national inventory of ITG-programmes made in the present study. The study therefore focuses on Hard-core ITG for minors (unless otherwise specified).}

CRIEM-ITG targets adolescents (12 to 17 years of age) of non-Western descent,\footnote{CRIEM-ITG was originally only intended for ‘urban’ youth with roots in Morocco, Turkey, Suriname and the Antilles. Halfway through 2004 CRIEM-ITG was made available to all youth from a non-Dutch background. In addition, the programme spread nationwide and can now also be implemented in non-urban areas.} who have been apprehended for the first time (first offenders, ‘occasional’ delinquents). It is feared that without intervention, these youth will become increasingly involved in crime. Characteristic of the target group is the phenomenon of ‘being caught between two cultures’ and a low degree of assimilation of the parents/family of the youth. The non-Dutch background of these youth is seen as an important risk factor.

Standard juvenile probation is mainly aimed at a particular category of youth who raise concerns within the criminal justice system. These concerns pertain not only to the crimes themselves but...
also to the youth’s development and various problems that they experience in their personal lives and in the social sphere. In terms of ‘severity’ of the target group, standard juvenile probation fits in between the two ITG-programmes. There is a degree of overlap both at the lesser end (first offenders, occasional delinquents) and at the top (hard-core criminal youth).

**The intended interventions**

A predominant characteristic of ITG is the intensive contact between the juvenile probation officer and the clients. Thanks to a relatively low caseload of between 6 and 8 youngsters per officer, it is possible to see each youngster several times a week. In addition, the programme has a broad focus. The primary goal of the interventions is to visibly improve the personal performance of the youth in those areas related to delinquent behaviour and thereby, ultimately, prevent recidivism. Other goals, however, go beyond the level of the individual: interventions also take place within the family and in other educational contexts such as school and the neighbourhood. Compared to Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG, standard juvenile probation is far less intensive and the interventions focus more on the individual, partly due to the higher caseload and resultant time restrictions (caseload of 1:22).

**Box 1  Brief outline of the characteristic interventions of Hard-core ITG.**

- **Hard-core ITG** offers youth individual guidance, geared to their specific situation and to their personal history and skills. Initially, the task of the juvenile probation officer is limited to strict **supervision**. The police also play a role in (intensively) monitoring adherence to the rules. Gradually, the juvenile probation officer assumes a more **supportive role**. The method is based on a cognitive behavioural approach and emphasizes the training of social and cognitive skills. In addition to interventions aimed at the youth themselves, the parents are included in the guidance process as much as possible. Contact with the parents is aimed at restoring the parenting relationship and parental authority, as well as solving other possible problems at home. The actions of the juvenile probation officer are also aimed at setting up networks and preconditions, so that agencies and organizations that come into contact with the youth are better able to guide them and prevent drop-out or relapses. Finally, the Hard-core ITG programme offers the option of addressing and, if possible, repairing the material and/or immaterial damage resulting from the crime (through arbitration).

| a | The interventions that are underlined have been shown to be effective in the What works literature. |
| b | The task of the juvenile probation officer involves a combination of strict supervision and goal-oriented support. The interventions that are underlined have been shown to be effective in the What works literature. |

The interventions typical of Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG are sketched briefly in Box 1 and 2, respectively. The descriptions show that compared to Hard-core ITG, the CRIEM-ITG approach is more specific and is described more in terms of operational guidelines and recommendations. Another important difference concerns the judicial framework within which the programmes are imposed and carried out. The framework of Hard-core ITG is extremely strict and not negotiable. In this form of ‘extramural detention’ youth are caught – in a manner of speech – in a web of rules and surveillances. The programme is meant as a ‘last chance’. The framework of CRIEM-
ITG is far less strict and there is much more emphasis on guidance and solving, or learning to solve, problems. Hard-core ITG also has a longer duration than CRIEM-ITG (6 months vs. 3 months). Finally, CRIEM-ITG differs from Hard-core ITG in that the programme explicitly states that ITG-goals must be specific and measurable (the so-called ‘SMART-criteria’). 

### Box 2 Brief outline of the characteristic interventions of CRIEM-ITG

In the case of **CRIEM-ITG**, guidance is individual and ‘tailored’ to the individual’s needs. Guidance entails **cognitive behavioural training**, and addresses not only the developmental tasks which all adolescents encounter, but also the ‘extra’ task facing youth from ethnic minorities, namely ‘living in two cultures’. The aim is to **increase competence**, including so-called bicultural competence. The juvenile probation officer serves as a prosocial role model (**modelling**) who, together with the youth, reflects back on the offences committed (**delict analysis**). The programme also offers practical assistance in finding work or enrolling for school. Another programme element is **goal-oriented supervision and monitoring** by the juvenile probation officer.

CRIEM-ITG is further characterized by a **multimodal approach**: the intervention occurs within several contexts simultaneously (parents/family, school, leisure time). The juvenile probation officer can make use of various interventions: providing information about Dutch society (including social norms and values), conflict mediation/conflict solving (**counselling**) and bringing parents into contact with other educational contexts (such as school). The activities of the juvenile probation officer are also aimed at expanding and strengthening the youth’s social network. An important programme element in this regard is organizing and mobilizing social assistance, encouragement and support. This also includes efforts to ensure that agencies and organizations that come into contact with the youth are better able to guide them and prevent drop-out or relapses.

*The interventions that are underlined have been shown to be effective in the What works literature.*

### Components of the ITG-programme presumed to be effective

Based on the literature a number of ‘characteristic interventions’ of Hard-core ITG are regarded as potentially effective (see the interventions underlined in Box 1). At least, according to the **What works** literature these methods and techniques generally have a positive effect when applied in the outpatient guidance of delinquent youth. By comparison, it seems that somewhat fewer (characteristic) CRIEM-ITG interventions correspond to methods and techniques that have been shown to be effective.

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7 Goals must be **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Acceptable** (relevant) to the client, **Realistic** (attainable) and limited in terms of **Time**.

8 ‘Characteristic interventions’ are activities and means that are employed in order to influence (changeable) needs, wishes, desires and factors conducive to crime that are considered responsible for the development and the maintenance of delinquent behaviour. In theory these ‘crucial’ interventions should induce or promote the behavioural change intended.
Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG thus include evidently effective factors to a degree. Both programmes nevertheless contain a relatively large number of elements that are considered crucial, but have yet to be empirically supported in terms of effectiveness.

Other indications of the effectiveness of the ITG-programme

In all, there appears to be only a limited degree of matching between Hard-core ITG and a number of general assumptions and principles that form the basis of effective intervening. The What works literature shows that programmes that adhere to these principles are generally more successful and effective in tackling antisocial and delinquent behavior. The only explicit reference that can be found in Hard-core ITG is the method of taking the clients’ capacities and limitations into account (responsivity principle). The principle stating that the intervention should target factors that are (a) responsible for reinforcing and maintaining delinquent behaviour and (b) susceptible to outside influence (needs principle), is only partly elaborated in this programme.

Taken as a whole, CRIEM-ITG rates better on the effectiveness principles. The focus on needs and desires conducive to crime (needs principle) and on the match between the programme and the participants (responsivity principle) is convincing. However, the principle of ensuring good professional schooling and support (professionalism principle) is only incorporated in the programme design to a certain extent. In the design of both programmes, the risk of recidivism (risk principle) does not receive the (full) attention it deserves according to the literature, and the principle of ensuring that ITG is carried out as originally intended (principle of programme integrity) is ignored altogether.

The solidity of ITG provides a second indication of programme effectiveness. A solid programme is transparent, substantiated, extensively researched and the result of a thorough developmental process. The present evaluation reveals that the solidity of Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG is not convincing. An extenuating circumstance in the case of CRIEM-ITG is the fact that it is a very ‘young’ programme and has accordingly not been extensively researched. In the case of Hard-core ITG the substantiation in particular is poor, as is the thoroughness of the developmental process. The solidity of a programme is not a prerequisite or guarantee of success or efficacy. It is however more likely that a solid programme will achieve what it sets out to do (in this case: prevent recidivism). Seen in this light, CRIEM-ITG shows more promise than Hard-core ITG.

On the whole the indications of programme effectiveness add up to a rather poor showing. The scores of Hard-core ITG in particular range from mediocre to poor on a number of aspects. Claims of effectiveness are slightly more justified in the case of CRIEM-ITG. Here too though the programme theory could be more clearly, comprehensively and convincingly stated. The designers of the programme provide no insight (or explanation or proof) into how the activities and means deemed necessary, in fact make inroads on the factors and desires at the root of delinquent behaviour.

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9 The five principles are: the risk principle, the needs principle, the responsivity principle, the professionalism principle and the principle of programme integrity. These principles have a bearing on the youth as a person and the background and causes of his/her antisocial or delinquent behaviour, as well as the way in which the programme is implemented and carried out.
Inventory of the varieties and various methods of ITG

The national survey among ITG-coordinators confirms the existence of a large variety of ITG-programmes. The interviews with key figures provided further support for the findings of the survey.

The study reveals that the ‘official’ manuals in which Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG methodology is described cover a large portion of what actually takes place in practice (this is particularly the case with CRIEM-ITG). On the other hand, the manuals contain no compulsory elements and leave a lot of room for local initiatives and specific interpretations.

With regard to the programme set-up, marked differences can be seen, firstly, in the scale of the programme as measured by the hours put in by the juvenile probation officer(s) and the number of ITG-participants per district. In the majority of districts Hard-core ITG is not available to young adults. Secondly, the judicial framework is different in different districts. In a number of districts the selection criteria for ITG-participants have become more lenient. This leads to situations where, for example, youth with a ‘milder’ criminal background are admitted to Hard-core ITG or CRIEM-ITG is also open to repeat offenders or youth with a 100% Dutch background. It turns out that opinions also differ regarding the use of sanctions in the case of non-compliance (the ‘red card’ in Hard-core ITG). The rules that apply for extending CRIEM-ITG vary widely – in some districts extension is categorically ruled out, whereas in other it occurs quite frequently.

There are also differences concerning programme content. A large variety of so-called supplementary programmes (including social skills training, aggression regulation training and ‘Real Justice Conferences’) are employed. There is diversity in both the number of potentially usable programmes and their content. Incidentally, none of the districts keeps a formal record of how and why these additional interventions are used for the purpose of ITG. A second difference has to do with gathering information about the clients. Although there are a few notable exceptions, on the whole scant attention is paid to this programme element. The effectiveness principles mentioned earlier call for a thorough collection of individual client data regarding the risk of recidivism (risk principle), factors and needs that reinforce and maintain delinquent behaviour (needs principle), and intellectual and practical skills (responsivity principle). Finally, the survey shows that although the CRIEM-ITG manual focuses on the integration of ethnic minorities, this issue often receives less attention in practice. The interviewees are also of the opinion that the emphasis officially placed on the systemic approach is generally less evident in the daily practice of CRIEM-ITG.

The ITG-programme in practice

The clients reached by ITG

The dossier analysis (85 cases in total) reveals that the average age of Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG participants is almost 17 and 15½, respectively. Both groups are made up entirely of boys, who generally live ‘at home’ with at least one natural (biological) parent. Well over half of the boys attend some form of secondary education. More than half of the Hard-core ITG participants have a non-Dutch background. In both groups a large number of clients have had previous contact with mental health care/social work.
ITG is imposed in approximately equal measure in the suspension and the sentence variation. In those cases where ITG is imposed as a sentence, it is almost exclusively as a special provision within a suspended sentence of juvenile detention. In general, CRIEM-youth do not appear to match the profile of ‘lightweight’ juvenile delinquent or first offender. Data from the judicial database (OBJD) reveal that they have usually committed a number of offences in the past. In terms of type and severity, these offences are strikingly similar to those of the hard-core youth (who generally do match the expected profile). The criminal history of CRIEM-youth also differs only marginally from that of hard-core youth. In terms of risk factors for the development of antisocial behaviour, there are fewer differences between the two groups than expected; both groups are characterized by high-risk leisure activities. In other areas (behaviour characteristics, family, academic achievement/school) the risks are judged to be far lower and approximately equal for both groups.\textsuperscript{10}

**The interventions that were implemented**

According to the dossiers, the maximal duration of six months is only exceeded (occasionally) in the case of Hard-core ITG. CRIEM-ITG is extended in slightly more than half of the cases, Hard-core ITG seldom or never. Premature or unplanned termination of ITG is relatively frequent. This occurs with almost half the clients of Hard-core ITG, either at the youth’s own initiative or as a result of recidivism or non-compliance. In CRIEM-ITG one in five terminations is premature or unplanned.

The dossiers illustrate that ITG is an intensive form of guidance with frequent contacts. Although the parents and the youth’s network are included in this process, this is certainly not always the case. Contact with the extended network is less frequent; in over half the cases of Hard-core ITG and a lower percentage of CRIEM-ITG cases there is no contact whatsoever.

The goals set for the interventions concentrate mainly on recidivism, leisure time, school/day jobs and social, practical and cognitive skills. Remarkably, goals pertaining to dual culture are only found sporadically in CRIEM-ITG. Goals aimed at parental performance are also rare. It turns out that the goals are only evaluated at the end of ITG; systematic interim evaluations never take place.

**Correspondence between programme theory and realization**

**Comparison between the target group and the clients actually reached**

The Hard-core ITG manual lists four criteria for participant selection. The *judicial criterion* is met to a certain degree. None of the Hard-core ITG participants is an occasional delinquent and the crimes they have committed correspond with an expected sentence of at least three months’ detention. It is not clear from the files whether the criminal behaviour was a way of life for these youth. Hard core youth seem for the most part to meet the second criterion, which requires that there are *multiple problems*. In addition to behavioural problems (delinquent behaviour) almost eighty percent of the boys run increased risks in at least one area of their lives (relationships, academic achievement, family).

\textsuperscript{10}The estimation of the severity of the problems is probably on the conservative side. It is likely that the full extent of the problem behaviour is not registered in the files and that the boys’ situations may in reality be more serious.
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school and work, leisure time and friends). No conclusions can be drawn regarding the third criterion (There is at least some motivation to take part in the programme) and fourth criterion (The prognosis is that ITG is the means to bring about positive change), since the dossiers contain no (reliable) information on these aspects. To sum up, the dossier analysis provides insufficient grounds for the conclusion that the group at which Hard-core ITG is aimed, is in fact selected for participation. There is too much uncertainty regarding the judicial criterion, the motivation criterion and the prognosis criterion.

Five criteria apply for the selection of participants for CRIEM-ITG. The CRIEM-youth in the study do not meet the judicial criterion. Most have a fairly well-filled criminal record, generally consisting of pretty serious, and sometimes severe, transgressions; the characterization of first offender or occasional delinquent does not seem to apply to the youth involved in this study. The dossiers provide no information on the second criterion (The court investigator sees the youth’s ethnic background as an important risk factor). The third criterion – that first-stage problems can be seen in multiple areas – is met. Most participants, however, seem to have moved beyond the first stage of their problems. The group actually reached by CRIEM-ITG thus seems more ‘severe’ and problematic than the group for which it is originally intended. There is no exact information in the files concerning the fourth criterion – the youth and his/her parents are motivated to at least some degree to take part in the programme – both with regard to the youth and the parents. The same applies to the fifth criterion (The prognosis is that ITG is the means to bring about positive change). To sum up, there are clear indications that the group of clients actually reached does not resemble the target group for which CRIEM-ITG is intended. It would appear that the programme in fact serves a more severely problematic group than originally intended.

These conclusions about the target group are supported by findings from the interviews with key figures. The interviews confirm that the definitions of ‘hard care youth’ and ‘CRIEM-youth’ are sometimes very broad and that intake policy is adjusted accordingly.

The interventions as intended versus the interventions carried out

It appears that on the whole, the actual implementation of ITG corresponds with the intentions of the programme. There is also generally a high level of compliance with the formal procedures and agreements surrounding the programme. However, the dossier analysis does give rise to a few comments. Firstly, in the case of both Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG the goals set for the guidance of the youth often fail to meet the required SMART-criteria and they are not subjected to interim evaluation on a systematic basis. Secondly, in both programmes goals directed towards parental performance and the relationship between the youth and his/her parents are set only sporadically. This contrasts sharply with the emphasis placed on these issues in the manuals. Thirdly, in a surprisingly large number of cases the youth’s network is not included in the guidance process. Here too the interventions in practice deviate from what the programme prescribes. A fourth comment is directed specifically at CRIEM-ITG and concerns the scant attention paid in practice to the issue of ‘being caught between two cultures’. Hardly any of the goals focus on gaining bicultural competence. Finally, the Hard-core ITG-dossiers reveal that the
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intensity of personal contact is lower than intended: the client contacts at the beginning of the programme (in the first phase) are generally less frequent than suggested in the manual.

Conclusions

In this study ITG has, as it were, been held against the light of international expertise regarding effective factors and elements of interventions for antisocial and delinquent youth. Although gaps can be seen here and there in the structure of ITG (the programme theory), it can be concluded that the design of both ITG-programmes is reasonably promising. Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG contain an acceptable number of elements that have been shown to be effective. Even more important, perhaps, is that the omissions and imperfections are easy to rectify. This opens up prospects. The What works literature referred to in this study offers sufficient leads for further, conceptual improvement. This would increase the solidity of the programmes considerably. Hard-core ITG is in greater need of a ‘renovation’ than CRIEM-ITG, but the latter programme still has room for improvement. Although the manuals refer to the What works literature and claim that insights derived from the literature have been incorporated in the methodology, this has not been done explicitly and certainly not convincingly.

A second conclusion is that the implementation of ITG in practice does not fully correspond with the programmes as originally intended. Discrepancies – some of them large – were found with regard to client characteristics and programme set-up and content. In the case of CRIEM-ITG it turns out that the youth for whom the interventions were designed are generally not those actually admitted to the programme, while in the case of Hard-core ITG there is uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the selection. Moreover the study shows that there is a great deal of variation in terms of programme content. Not only do the districts differ from one another, in some cases there is also a large gap between the programme in practice and the programme as it was originally set up. Possibly, this variation results in judicial inequality for youth in different districts. The multiple manifestations of ITG also pose a threat to the programme integrity. Differences between the ‘programme described’ and the ‘programme carried out’ can undermine a successful method. This is because certain elements presumed to contribute effectively to the outcome are not (or not entirely) implemented according to the original idea. It can be argued on the basis of the programme theory that this will have negative consequences for the expected end result. Such ‘programme drift’ can be similarly detrimental to the identity, continuity and quality of the programme.

The final conclusion concerns the fact that the documents in which Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG are officially recorded, and which up to now have consistently been referred to as ‘manuals’, in fact do not function as such. What’s missing in the documents is a set of simple instructions on how to use programme: procedural guidelines and advice, tips and do’s & don’ts that the probation officers and their supervisors can use in the day-to-day implementation of programme.
Recommendations

The following recommendations are made (each provided with an ‘address’).

• In the light of the poor solidity of both ITG-programmes, investment in a project in which Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG are further developed is recommended (national government; Ministry of Justice.)

• It is advisable to reconsider the (judicial) framework in which CRIEM-ITG is implemented (national government; Ministry of Justice).

• An active policy is recommended with regard to programme integrity, in order to prevent Hard-core ITG and CRIEM-ITG from becoming ‘watered down’ or degenerating (national government; Ministry of Justice; the professional association of youth care providers, known in Dutch as the MOgroep).

• It is recommended that the providers of ITG (bureaus for youth care, in Dutch: bureaus jeugdzorg) make the relation between ITG and (potentially usable) supplementary programmes more explicit. By doing so, the position of these programmes is made clear and it is easier to explain (to youth, parents, judicial authorities, financiers) why they are used, or not used, in specific cases.

• It is advisable to initiate an active publicity campaign. This will have a positive effect on the intake of youth, in terms of both quantity and quality. While it is the responsibility of the regional ITG providers to take the lead (bureaus for youth care/ITG-teams), the national government has a role to play in facilitating the initiative (Ministry of Justice and/or the professional association MOgroep).

• In order to provide ‘tailor-made’ care, it is recommended that (a) the risk principle, the needs principle and the responsivity principle (all derived from the What works literature) are systematically implemented at the start of ITG, and (b) these procedures are adhered to from now on and included as standard elements in the guidance process (juvenile probation officers.)

• A (classic) effect study of ‘the’ methodology is deemed unnecessary and unrealistic on the basis of the present study. Instead, research into so-called ‘good practice’, possibly on a smaller scale, is recommended. Data should be collected not only on the target group and the intervention, but also on the outcomes of (selected) programmes. The results of this research should be applied in practice and utilized for the continued development and improvement of the methodology (national government; Ministry of Justice).

• It is advisable to investigate the level of demand for ITG for young adults and to take appropriate measures according to the outcome (national government; Ministry of Justice).