

Stop program – Alternative Solution for Preventing Juvenile Delinquency in Croatia?

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Starting point

- 8,000 violations committed by minors per year in Croatia
- Emphasis on prevention programs
- **Goal:** to reduce the incidence of violence among children using early intervention, education, consulting and/ or involving children and minors in social activities

Stop program

- First national program for preventing juvenile delinquency in Croatia
- Association of youth and family judges and specialists, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Interior, social welfare centres and associations in Zagreb
- Contemporary educational program based on the principles of restorative justice
- Offers rapid treatment of unacceptable behaviour by replacing the trial proceedings with voluntary work, counselling and social skills training

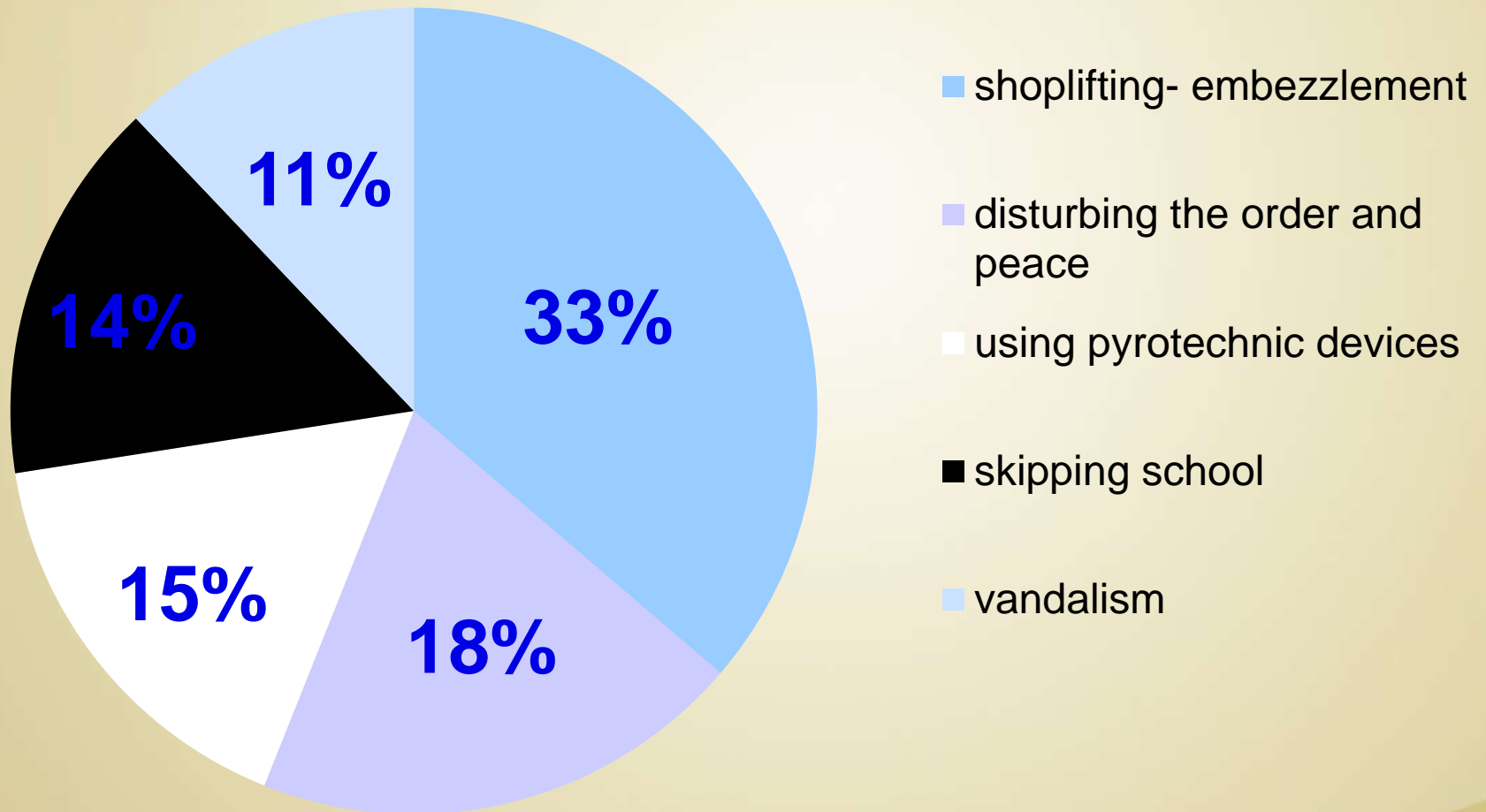
Halt program

- *Het Alternatief* → the alternative, 1981, Rotterdam
- Restorative program for juveniles- focus on minor offences
- Shoplifting, embezzlement and fencing goods, vandalism, graffiti, firework offence, disturbing the order in public transport

Criteria for Halt

- Age: 12 – 18 years
- Offence on the list of Halt offences
- Juvenile admits crime
- Juvenile is first (or second) offender
- Juvenile (and parents) agree with referral to Halt

Most committed offences of minors in 2009 (%)



Motivation for offending

- 25% wants to join the group
- 12% is stirred up by friends
- 11% does it for excitement/kick
- 10% does it for fun
- 7% does it out of being bored

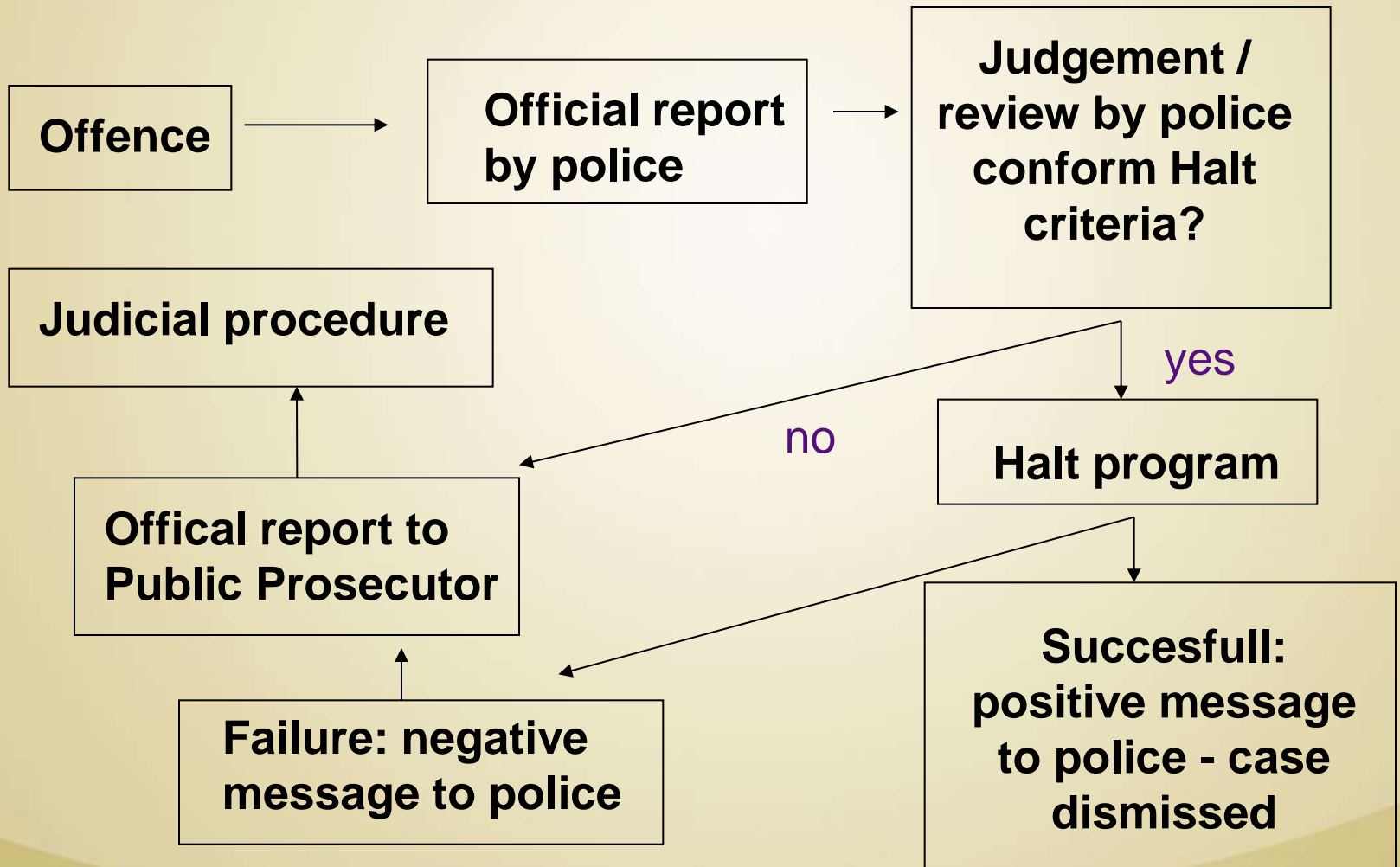
Restorative elements

- Victim and offender oriented
- Less focused on punishment, more on **empowerment**, **restoration** (apologies and compensation for damage) and **prevention** (diversion from the criminal justice system)
- Stronger emphasis on parent involvement and peer mediation programs in order to encourage reflection on behaviour

Advantages

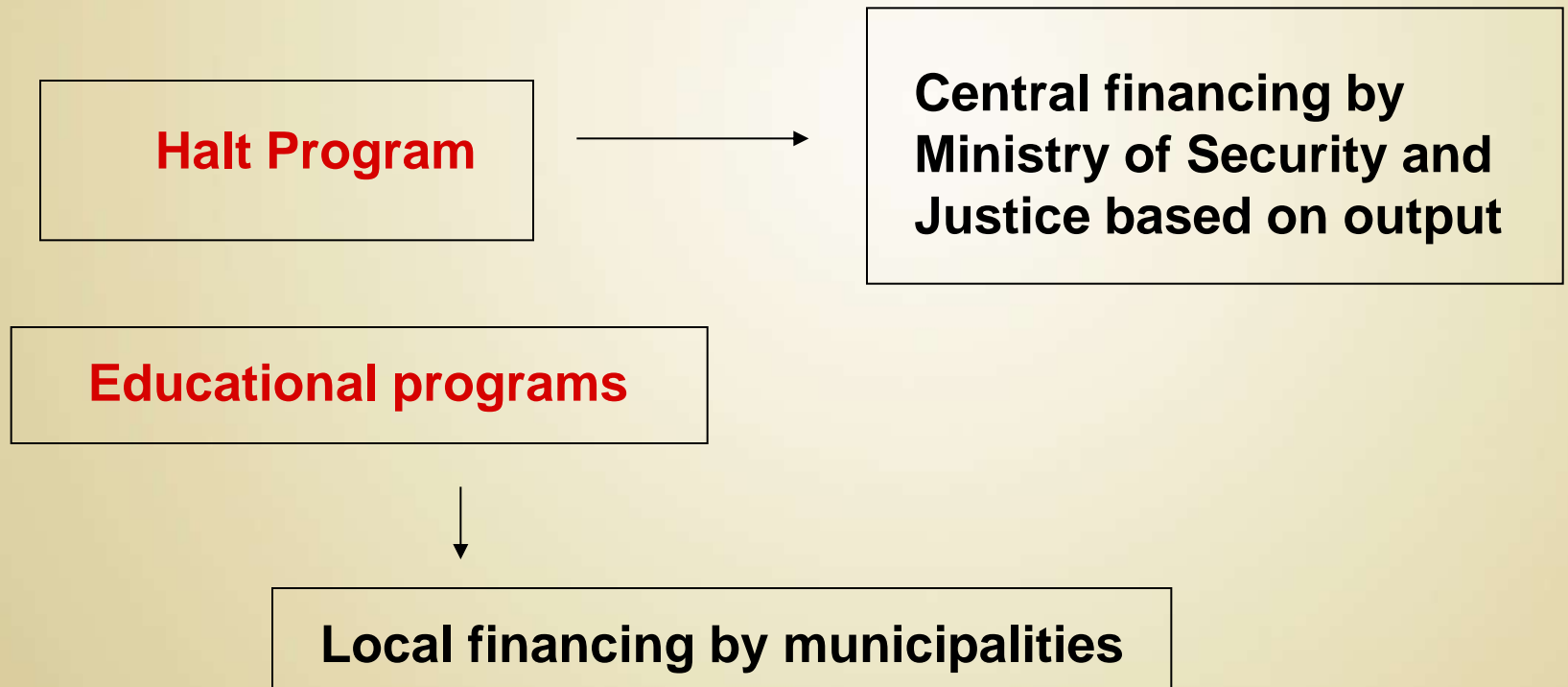
- Pedagogical alternative for traditional prosecution
- Reacts at early stage, swiftly and consistently to the offence
- Confronts juvenile with consequences of behavior
- Juvenile can avoid criminal record
- Less cases (Public Prosecution)

How does Halt work?



Financing

Overall budget approx. € 20 million (50 % / 50 %)



Stop program

- National strategy for the prevention of behavioral disorders of children and youth from 2009-2012 in 2009
- **GOALS:** Ensuring basic conditions necessary for successful and healthy growth and development of younger generation in Republic of Croatia
- Elimination of risk factors responsible for emergence of behavioral disorders

- In order to investigate the occurrence of behavioral disorders: Working Group → *Standards for terminology, definition, criteria and method of monitoring the occurrence of behavioral disorders in children and youth*
- **Standards:** allowed representatives of relevant institutions, civil society organizations and government bodies to:
 - 1) identify behavioral problems
 - 2) take appropriate measures in fighting them

Stop program

- **The main objective:** to improve alternative sanctions and educational measures for juveniles who started with inappropriate behavior and direct them towards socially acceptable behavior
- **Short-term goals:** to increase the number of experts who work with young people; network institutions and organizations; to create common ground in order to react to the first bad behavior of juveniles

Criteria for Stop

- Age: 14 – 16 years (**Halt: 12-18**)
- Offence on the list of Stop offences
- Juvenile admits crime
- Juvenile is first offender
- Juvenile (and parents) agree with referral to Stop

Offence on the list of Stop offences

- First driving without helmet
- Disturbing public peace and order
- Drawing graffiti or damaging the public land
- Consumption of alcohol or drugs

→ interference with the current Misdemeanour Law: all offences must pass the judicial process- **LIMITATIONS**

- The first phase of the program- minor being in a public place after 11 p.m. without an adult, in a group of people consuming alcohol
- Article 95 of the Family Law → parents have a duty to prohibit minors under 16 staying out unaccompanied
- Police annually records more than 3,000 cases of young people under 16 who are on the street after 11 p.m. without parental supervision
 - no penalties for this offence

Pilot project

- Municipality Trnje Dec. 2012 – Jan. 2013
- 10 minors
- Schools, associations, social services and the police in the district were connected and agreement on cooperation was signed

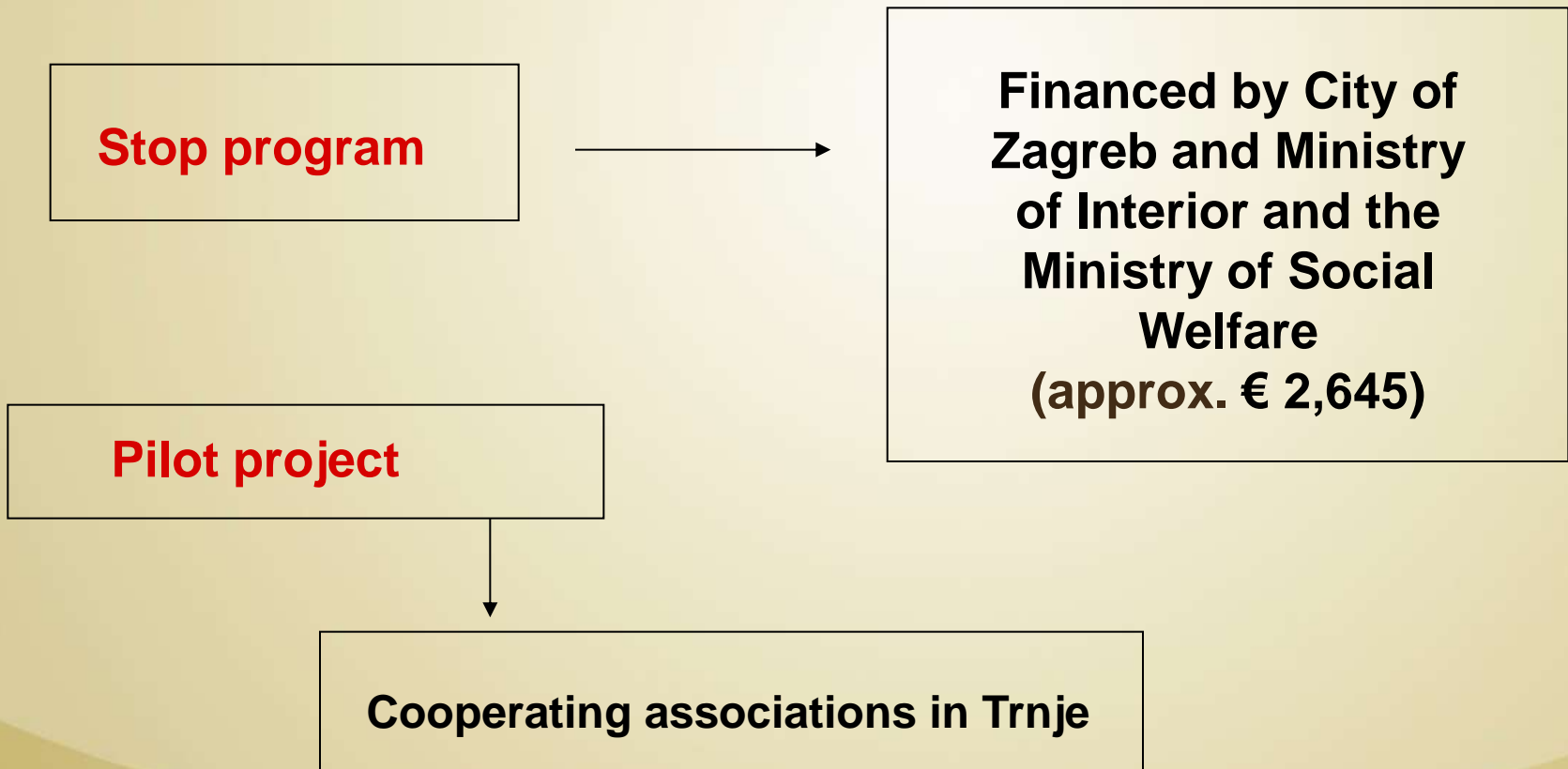
- 23rd to 25th of November → police approached 12 minors caught being in a public place without supervision and in company of people who consumed alcohol
- Minors and their parents were invited to the police station for a consultation and presentation of Stop program
- Out of 12 juvenile offenders 10 agreed to counselling and voluntary work in one of associations
- The program lasted for 3 weeks

Future projects

- The Centre and Sesvete
- End of summer 2013
- 15 minors

Financing Stop

Overall budget for pilot project: 40,000 HRK (approx. € 5,290)



Future projects

- Public bidding: approx. € 2,645
- Education Office: approx. € 2 000
- Local fund-raising activities:?

TWO MUNICIPALITIES= € 4645

Future challenges/ obstacles

- Lack of financial resources
- Modification of Misdemeanor Law
- Lack of specially educated social workers and pedagogues
- Recidivism
- Proving the necessity and effectiveness of Stop (cultural differences, different systems)

Thank you!