



ECPA 2005

Czech Republic Entry

1. What is the title of the project?

City Police to Children

2. Please give a short general description of the project.

The City Police in Ústí nad Labem has launched a project tackling the problem of youth crime, violent crime committed in the streets included. Police officers systematically work with children, mainly with children from neighbourhoods inhabited by socially excluded communities, mostly by Roma minority. The Police work has two main pillars - the first pillar is an awareness raising in civic, penal and traffic issues and the second pillar is a providing of free time activities.

3. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?

The global objective is to offer an alternative way of life to children from socially excluded environment and introduce them the life in accordance with law. Further there are several specific objectives:

- i) to displace them from the streets, where they spend meaningless leisure time (vandalism, thefts, violent crime)
- ii) to change their attitude to law enforcement especially to police,
- iii) to convert and mitigate their improper “socialisation” and shift them from demotivating environment.

Children are influenced by two complementary methods - positive and deterrent approaches. Deflection method - awareness raising in legal and penal issues. Positive method - offering of an alternative way of life and changing of current attitudes.

4. How was the project implemented?

AWARENESS RAISING

There are awareness raising activities as the first pillar of the project. In practice children are explained the nature of the offence and crime and condition of their criminal liability. For this training activities seven elementary schools have been chosen. These schools are regularly visited by police officers, who approach to children in appropriate and understandable way. Acquired knowledge is proven by written test and the most successful children usually win one week-lasting trip with sport program, that is canoe riding, which is very prestige among children. And another consequence

should be mentioned - a lot of them have for the first time an opportunity to experience the “achievement motivation” - the feeling, that he or she is no longer outsider. During a school year approximately 600 pupils from seven elementary schools have been trained.

In special cases policepersons assist to limited number of children from socially excluded communities with homework preparation. These children are given a necessarily individual approach. It's very important moment in process of emancipation, because mostly low-educated parents couldn't provide this help.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

As the second pillar of the project we indicated leisure time activities. To a great extend they are provided by two centres - in Krásné Březno neighbourhood and in Předlice neighbourhood. These centres organize not only “everyday” activities like training of hockey ball team but even frequently held significant actions like trips and “Children festival”. At these events children have opportunity to meet police officers performing their equipment and police dogs. Clear message should be evident from this purpose - “persons in police uniform are not your enemies”.

5. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

The project has been invented and implemented by the City Police of Ústí nad Labem. From organisational point of view the City Police is a component of city administration, thus the city administration is a natural partner. Nonetheless main partners are schools. It is needed to emphasize their role, because schools make possible “awareness raising” training - they provide a link to official curriculum. And more over, they provide spaces and equipment for free time activities. For example the elementary school in Předlice disposes of well-appointed fitness centre, gymnasium, “little house” for needlework, those facilities are often lent for sport and cultural events.

Further partner of “City Police to Children” project is the Crime prevention department of the Ministry of the Interior, which offers consultation and financial support.

6. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project?

Project observes number of children, who are involved in project and who are provided the training. Furthermore project observes development of crime committed by children.

7. Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

External evaluation hasn't been done; but the City Police management screens the project. Police statistics show that the rate of crime committed by children has been decreasing since 1997, when project has been launched. (It's documented in Annex A). Unfortunately it's impossible to prove a connection of this development with the project.

8. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The offering of an alternative way of life was set as the main objective. This objective was achieved, because many children take part in sport and other activities and their attitude toward law enforcement and police officers is changing.

Czech Republic - City Police to Children

(Note: In the Czech Republic the sum of violent crime is 6.7% of total crime only, therefore it's not a priority for crime prevention policy.)

The project "City Police to Children" has been launched in Ústí nad Labem, city having approximately 100 thousand inhabitants. Ústí nad Labem is generally known because of its industrial character, high rate of unemployment and relatively high appearance of sociopathological phenomena, including the social exclusion. According to city representative Ústí nad Labem has one of the highest percentage of people of Roma origin in city population in Europe.

At the beginning of the 90th the City Police in Ústí nad Labem faced a problem of the offences committed by the same group of children and youth mainly in neighbourhood Předlice. As the solution the idea of awareness raising in legal and penal issues was born. For this purpose the City Police employed two educationists to provide training for children from socially excluded environment. Later a need to educate these children in traffic regulations appeared.

In practice seven elementary schools are visited by police officers. Lectures deal with legal, penal, civic and similar issues. Furthermore children are explained general moral norms and the concept of democracy. Acquired knowledge is proven through final test.

But an effort consisting of the explanation of the nature of penal liability only was in fact incomplete, because it emphasized possible threat, but it didn't offer any alternative. It was necessary to influence these children through positive approach and to introduce them life in accordance with the law. The City Police had to offer them attractive and amusing activities, in practice it means mostly sport activities. It's the only proven way how to displace them from the streets, where vandalism, thefts and violent crime might be committed. In particular children are offered to play hockey ball, volley ball, ride bicycle, etc. Sport activities also function as a prevention of drug dependence.

Leisure time activities provided in a framework of the project :

Krásné Březno:

"Children festival" children	5 times per year	average participation is 50
Sport events children	12 times per year	average participation is 40
Sport and cultural event children	12 times per year	average participation is 50

Předlice:

Hockey ball training children	once a week	average participation is 10
Sport event children	6 times per year	average participation is 40

The City Police day: children

4 time per year	approximately 1000
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There is a problem of motivation. The most significant motivation is a possibility to win one-week trip with canoe riding programme. This chance can motivate children to prepare better for final test (as mentioned above) as well the children competing in sport and other disciplines. Every year approximately 60 children win this trip. A lot of them are suffered from the lack of self-confidence and these two different types of competition could give them a chance to be successful.

There are two centres, where activities have been held. The first one is set in Předlice neighbourhood and operate with support of local elementary school.

The second centre is located in Krásné Březno neighbourhood. Both centres provide information on current and prepared actions as well. Further the City Police enables to children to use its space - traffic training-ground for children and adjacent building.

According to statistics, the rate of crime committed by children has been decreasing since 1997, when project has been launched. It's evident that the project is aimed exclusively at children and subsequently it has certain disadvantage - its main effect will be getting stronger during the time. Despite the impossibility to prove it, the city authorities believe that the connection between decreasing rate of crime committed by children and the project does really exist.