

Research Study of Juvenile Probation in Croatia - Design, Results and Potentials for Practice and Future Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

The type of sanction that best fits the concept of juvenile probation in Croatia is called Intensified Care and Supervision (ICS). This sanction is an educational measure that can last from six months to two years. As all probation sanctions, it is intended for juvenile offenders with low to medium criminogenic risk. Conducting of this measure is entrusted to the centres for social welfare, while ICS measure leaders (juvenile probation officers) can be professionals working in the centres or part-time associates (external measure leaders). This paper presents a short historical and legal background of ICS in Croatia, describes the basic principles of process and impact evaluation, and elaborates in more details basic methodological elements of the first national study of ICS, key results, limitations and implications for practice.

JUVENILE PROBATION IN CROATIA

Croatia has a long, century old tradition of implementing community (alternative) sanctions towards young offenders - minors/juveniles. Laws from 1922 emphasize specific rules for sanctioning young offenders with community sanctions which, in today's terms, could be characterized as probation sanctions. This tradition has been firmly maintained till nowadays and the juvenile justice system has a special position within Croatian criminal law. The most important characteristics of the Croatian juvenile justice system, including both criminal proceedings and implementation of sanctions, are the following:

- Beside the Criminal Code, two specific laws (*lat. Lex Specialis*) define sanctions for juvenile offenders, criminal procedure and detailed description of implementation framework - (1) The Law on Juvenile Courts (Official Gazette 84/11, 143/12,

148/13) and (2) The Law on Implementation of Sanctions Imposed to Juveniles for Criminal Offences and Misdemeanours (Official Gazette 133/12),

- Every criminal court and public prosecutor office has specially named judges/public prosecutors for juvenile offenders, as well as expert assistants (advisors) who are social pedagogues, social workers or psychologists,
- Almost all juvenile sanctions are implemented and conducted within a social welfare system, in community or open institutions (except juvenile prison and assignment to correction centre that are conducted within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice),
- The juvenile justice system in Croatia involves close collaboration between the police, justice system institutions (the court and public prosecutor) and social welfare institutions (centres for social welfare and open residential institutions for juveniles),
- The age of criminal responsibility of young offenders in Croatia is 14 years of age (exclusively, for all offences) and juveniles are considered persons from 14 to 18 years of age, while younger adult persons are from 18 to 21 years of age (they can also be prosecuted by the Law on Juvenile Courts if public prosecutors finds this to be appropriate).

The Law on Juvenile Courts (hereinafter: the Law) defines three types of sanctions: (1) Educational Measure; (2) Juvenile Prison and (3) Security Measures. Then, there are eight different educational measures which can be divided into three major groups: (1) Measure of Warning, (2) Measures of Intensified Supervision (Probation Measures) and (3) Institutional (Custodial) Measures.

By law, the main purpose of all these measures is to provide protection, care, help and supervision to the juvenile offender and to ensure their general and vocational education. This way the Law aims to influence the upbringing and education of the juvenile, development of their whole personality and strengthening sense of their own responsibility. The seriousness, motives and circumstances of the criminal offence, behaviour after the offence and recidivism are only one side of the criteria the Court must take into consideration when choosing a sanctions. Other criteria are more developmental and psychosocial, such as juvenile's age, physical and psychological development, (family) living conditions and circumstances, health, education, etc.

The type of educational measure that best fits the concept of juvenile probation in Croatia is called Intensified Care and Supervision (ICS). By law, this educational measure can last from a minimum of six months up to a maximum of two years, but the exact length will not be determined at the court with adjudication. It will depend on achieved changes and positive outcomes that the court needs to assess at least every six months. This means that the court's role and participation does not end with adjudication. On the contrary, through the meetings at the court, known as 'control-trials', judges' expert assistants/advisors (social pedagogues, social workers or psychologists working at the courts) assess changes in a juvenile's behaviour, relationship with family members and peers, schooling, work obligations etc. The juvenile with their parents and ICS measure leader are obliged to come to the court and present their perspective on the quality of conducting ICS.

After such a control-trial, the court can decide that conducting of ICS should be:

- a) continued,
- b) suspended due to positive and expected changes, or
- c) changed with a more intensive (mostly residential) educational measure - if the conditions of juvenile's behaviour and life circumstances have deteriorated.

Juvenile judges are the only ones who can formally decide about suspension or changing of this measure after their expert assistants/advisors give them such a recommendation in their report. If the ICS measure should continue, another control-trial should be held within six months period, and so on, until the maximum of two years.

Conducting of this measure is entrusted to the centres for social welfare, while ICS measure leaders (juvenile probation officers) can be professionals working in the centres or part-time associates (external measure leaders) (Ordinance on Modus of Conducting Educational Measures, Official Gazette 141/11).

ICS is intended for juvenile offenders with low to medium criminogenic risk. Their criminal activity should be a result of some excess, adolescent crisis (developmental factors) or circumstances defined by antisocial peers and situation. It is not intended for juveniles who have a long record of previous criminal offences (intensive recidivism), who have developed a criminal career pattern and who have highly negative and dysfunctional family circumstances.

Official data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2011, 2012, 2013)¹ show that in the past 15 years, ICS made around 40% of all juvenile sanctions, while the other 40% were measures of warning with different special obligations. These statistics emphasize the importance of this sanction in the Croatian juvenile justice system. Nevertheless, even though the tradition of conducting juvenile probation in Croatia is long, till nowadays there has not been any systematic national research that has measured the characteristics of juvenile offenders under probation, characteristics of their measure leaders and the interactions between them. The research study presented in this paper focused exactly on those elements that are important for improving its quality.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF YOUTH JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS

Evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs and it is intended to be useful for improving and informing programs and social actions (Rossi *et al*, 2004). The authors describe it as activities in social sciences focused on collection, analysis, interpretation and communication of information on performance and effectiveness of a specific social program. Program evaluation is the application of systematic methods to address questions about program operations and results (Newcomer *et al*, 2010, p5). Ajduković (2011) considers program evaluation as a tool for intervention program or project management. The importance of evaluation is unquestionable nowadays and it is seen as a necessary standard of each program implemented/carried out in

¹ The Croatian Bureau of Statistics is the main producer, disseminator and coordinator of the Official Statistical System of the Republic of Croatia as well as the main representative of the national statistical system in front of European and international bodies competent for statistical affairs. The Croatian Bureau of Statistics is a government administrative organisation that is autonomous in performing its activities. Data about justice system are reliable and easy to obtain as they are available on-line (http://www.dzs.hr/default_e.htm).

practice. The demand for systematic data on the performance of interventions and programs continues to rise across the world. In fact, as the resources are limited and usually pre-planned, it is logical that the sustainability of the social program depends on the assessment of its effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of evaluation can be defined as the clarification of relations between goals, invested resources and results, as well as the determination of the taken interventions/programs effects compared to the problems and objectives set.

Some authors (e.g. McDavid, 2013) divide evaluation into three main types with regards to its purpose: 1) assessing the need for a program; 2) process evaluation; 3) outcome or impact evaluation.

Process evaluation is a form of evaluation designed to describe how a program is operating and assesses how well it performs its intended functions (Rossi *et al*, 2004). It tries to determine the progress made towards the program objectives, specify the intervention users and services offered in order to provide recommendations for the further program implementation. In short, program process evaluation assesses whether the intervention is delivered as intended to targeted users, so that if the purpose is to demonstrate how the project is meeting its objectives, using its resources, and whether any modifications in its process are required, a process evaluation should be conducted. Process evaluation tracks operational activities and collects information related to the process.

More specifically, Ajduković (2008, 2011) talks about these process evaluation questions:

- *Is the program progressing in compliance to its intended goals?*
- *Who benefits from the program?*
- *Are those receiving a program the intended targets?*
- *How satisfied are the participants with their involvement in the program?*
- *Are they receiving the proper amount, type and quality of services?*
- *What could be done different?*
- *Did some unforeseen circumstances occur?*
- *What lessons can be learned from the way in which the project is unfolding?*

In other words, Ajduković (2008) specifies the main process evaluation questions as follows:

- *Is the project being implemented as intended?*
- *Does it serve its intended purpose?*
- *Can the program be improved in order to enhance its efficiency?*

Additionally, an important evaluation issue is choosing the evaluation model and methodology. The purpose of the evaluation (e.g. control, support, improvement), what one wants to find out, from whom (from whose perspective) and for who are relevant questions in this regard. To sum up: the key issues in deciding on which method or methods to use for any evaluation are the context of the situation and the evaluation questions that need to be addressed (Mc David, 2013).

The same author (p.167) states that “qualitative methods can be used in various stages of an evaluation: determining the focus of the evaluation; evaluating the implementation or the process of a program; determining improvements and changes to a program” (McDavid, 2013). Posavec and Carey (1989, cited in Mejovšek, 2013) argue that the usefulness of qualitative evaluation is that it offers an analysis of aspects that are hard to quantify, such as

personal experiences and perceptions of intervention. Patton (2002) and Mohr (1999) add that qualitative methodology is more oriented toward process evaluation while quantitative is more focused on impact evaluation. Qualitative evaluation has its focuses on the examination of personal experiences of target users and in the observation of program activities. Usage of qualitative methodology allows information about numerous details which are hard, or even impossible, to grasp quantitatively, meaning that qualitative methods can yield information with a breadth and depth not possible with quantitative approaches (Robson, 2001; Vanclay, 2012).

With regards to qualitative process evaluation, Ajduković (2008) lists indicators to assess program progress: feedback on benefits/effectiveness of a program, types of communications, observable changes in attitudes, behaviours, skills, habits, complaints about program, participant's perceptions of the program, etc. Information for this type of evaluation, among other (e.g. program documentation, treatment protocols and procedures) can be sought from program staff, management and beneficiaries.

Throughout the program's life course, at some point it is necessary to conduct an impact assessment of the program. Such assessment enables conclusions about program's effects on the intended, but also relevant unintended, outcomes (Gertler *et al*, 2011, Rossi *et al*, 2004). Impact assessment is also known as impact or outcome evaluation.

Every intervention in the youth justice system has goals or aims with a tendency to change a young person's attitudes, values, cognitive distortions, behaviour, etc. The only possible way to determine if wanted changes have occurred is by conducting an impact evaluation. Process evaluation imparts description of conducted interventions, numerous information about a person's reaction to the intervention, users' satisfaction with the program and dynamics in relationship between client and person that conducts the intervention. In contrast to process evaluation, impact evaluation establishes whether the intervention had an expected effect on individuals, households, and communities, and whether this effect can be attributed to the intervention concerned (Royse *et al*, 2006). Even if a particular program or intervention has been implemented as planned, and participants are extremely satisfied with this intervention, without impact evaluation there is still no evidence that this intervention had its effect on intended outcomes, i.e. that the participant's attitudes, values, behaviour or way of thinking has changed in intended direction.

In program evaluation, research is planned and conducted with the purpose of answering evaluation questions of interest (Mejovšek, 2013). The key evaluation question in the context of impact evaluation is "*What is the impact or causal effect of a program on an outcome of interest?*" (Gertler *et al*, 2011). However, numerous other impact evaluation questions could be of interest to evaluators. In impact evaluation of youth justice interventions evaluators, treatment staff and policy makers would probably want to know answers to the following questions:

- *Does risk and delinquent behaviour of juveniles reduce after implementation of the sanction?*
- *How long after the sanction was completed do risk and delinquent behaviour remain reduced?*
- *What are the characteristics of those juveniles on which the sanction had the most effects?*

Since the primary goal of impact evaluation is to determine whether intervention had the impact on desired outcomes (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014), it is crucial to determine outcome indicators and define them so they can be measured. It is important to select suitable outcome measures, but what will be a suitable outcome measure for a particular intervention depends on its goals and aims, i.e. it depends on expected outcomes. Royse *et al* (2006, p233) suggested “a good principle is to select measures that are as close as possible to the real problem that is the focus of intervention”. For example, if the outcomes of interest were behavioural (such as decreased risk/delinquent behaviour) questions would have to be very specific, at the individual level (Holden and Zimmerman, 2009) and in behavioural terms.

Intervention has an effect on the outcome if the desired outcome is in the greater extent accomplished in the group that received intervention than in the group that did not receive it (intervention and control groups). In addition, intervention is also effective if the group that received it shows significant difference before and after intervention. The mentioned difference could be determined in variety of characteristics (behaviour, attitudes, values, etc.) depending on what are the measured and expected outcomes. However, research design has to be planned and carried out in such a way that no factors other than the intervention itself affect outcomes.

In an impact evaluation, beside information about the outcomes, the evaluator also needs information on inputs, activities that are conducted and sometimes costs of the intervention (DPME Evaluation Guide No 2.2.13). Impact evaluation is therefore complemented by other types of evaluation, especially process evaluation. As impact evaluation examines the extent to which outcomes have been achieved, it only gives us information about an intervention effect size. It does not explain why some intervention has high effect or why the effect failed to occur. By planning and conducting impact evaluation in parallel with process evaluation, researchers should have enough information to identify the reasons for effectiveness or lack of one.

RESEARCH STUDY OF INTENSIFIED CARE AND SUPERVISION

In 2012 the UNICEF Office in Croatia identified a need to conduct a national research study on Intensified Care and Supervision, due to its importance in juvenile sanctions and the lack of research or scientific data in this field. The authors of this paper prepared a framework and research design for this study, that was accepted and conducted during 2013. The whole research was financed and organized by the UNICEF Office in Croatia, as well as publishing of the book (Ricijaš, *et. al*, 2014) available *online* at UNICEF web site <http://www.unicef.hr/> (under Publications). The book is written in Croatian, but with an extensive Executive Summary in English, where more detailed information on the background, aims, results and conclusions can be found. In this paper, we shall focus on the elements of research design and results that could be useful for practitioners and policy makers in preparing evaluative research, respecting an international context.

The general aim of this research was to gain insight into the specifics of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision in Croatia. With this aim in mind, we focused our research on three major scientific questions in the broadest sense:

1. What are the characteristics of the youth with ICS?
2. What are the characteristics of their measure leaders (probation officers)?

3. What are the characteristics of the process before and during implementation of this sanction?

It was important for us to include different perceptions of all major persons involved in this process, so the research was conducted with (1) ICS measure leaders, (2) juveniles and (3) their parents (who are by law obliged to participate in the execution of ICS). Official data from the records about juvenile offenders were also analyzed by measure leaders.

We prepared a parallel dual research design using two methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) with specific aims. In the quantitative part of the research, by using parallel sets of instruments for juveniles and measure leaders, we focused on exploring criminogenic risk factors and needs, official criminal activity of juveniles, self-reported risk/delinquent behaviour, characteristics of criminal procedure, perception of ICS by juveniles and their measure leaders, professional competencies of measure leaders and the frequency of using different treatment procedures and interventions during ICS, as well as exploring the perceived quality of relationship between juveniles and their measure leaders. In the qualitative part, by conducting different focus groups with measure leaders, juveniles and their parents, we focused on exploring the perception and experience of this sanction from all three perspectives, and to explore the process of implementation from professional and users' perspectives, methods used, (un)importance of gender issues between measure leaders and juveniles, as well as to gain insight into their perceived effectiveness of ICS (from all three perspectives).

Sampling for the quantitative component was more difficult as we aimed to achieve a proportional stratified sample of juveniles with ICS in Croatia. Strata were defined considering four criteria: the juvenile's gender, age, length of educational measure and level of community urbanization where the juvenile lives (rural/urban area). We contacted centres for social welfare from 32 Croatian cities/towns to provide us information about young offenders with ICS, with regard to the above mentioned criteria. After receiving that information, we defined sample ratios by gender, age, length of educational measure and level of community in accordance with the data collected from centres. In the end, a total of 182 young male and twelve young female offenders with ICS (N=194) participated in the research, with their measure leaders (N=141), from 28 Croatian cities/towns. This way we achieved a proportional stratified sample that enables us to generalize gained results to the wider population. Before starting this final research, a pilot study was conducted with six offenders and four measure leaders in order to test the understanding of each item in the instrument, to test the time needed for filling-out all questionnaires, to test the clarity of given instructions and to receive feedback and recommendations for improvement.

The qualitative part of the research was conducted separately, with a convenience sample of measure leaders, juvenile offenders and their parents from four major Croatian urban areas (cities). A total of 75 participants were included in these focus groups and they provided valuable information from their experience and perspectives. Although the data for this part of research could have been collected via interviews, in order to understand users' perspective, a focus group technique was used. This particular method was chosen mainly due to enable group participants to interact with each other and stimulate discussion about the topic. In addition, as Liamputtong (2007) states, when researching sensitive topics with vulnerable groups, speaking with others like you may be less intimidating than speaking just to the researcher. The other reason for choosing a focus group method was more pragmatic and is related to time and finance: focus groups are more economic than individual interviews. In

the research design, it was planned to include 84 participants in 14 focus groups, while the final number of participants was 75. Measure leaders and juveniles were rather easily accessible and no one declined participation in research. Parents, however, were the hardest participants to engage. It was difficult to gather all parents at the same time: some parents repeatedly cancelled the focus group meetings, so in the end some of them did not participate in the study. Even repeated telephone contacts with parents had no effect on increasing their motivation to participate. Part of the explanation why parents were hard to access, while measure leaders and juveniles rather easy, could be because every day practice reflected in research results: parents are in most cases not very cooperative and involved in ISC implementation (or other interventions for juveniles). Therefore, we suggest that in future studies more attention should be paid to motivating this group of research participants.

Since this was a national study, before starting our research it was necessary to obtain written consent for it from the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. In regard to the Code of Ethics in Research with Children (2003), but also in order to obtain official permission to use data within the jurisdiction of the Ministry, written consent of the mentioned Ministry for conducting the research in centres for social welfare was the first condition that had to be satisfied.

To ensure high quality and efficient implementation of such a complex and extensive research design, the Ministry delivered their consent to all 32 centres planned to be involved in the study and encouraged/motivated professionals in the centres to cooperate and to submit required data. In the same letter, it was also noted that focus groups with offenders, parents and measure leaders would be conducted, respecting prior consents of each of the potential participants.

Quantitative data were collected by employing services from the agency/company for market research which specializes in social research studies and data collection. As 32 centres for the social welfare are spread throughout the 32 cities/towns in the whole country, it was necessary to include an agency that has regional offices and interviewers with experience. Before administering the questionnaires, the agency's interviewers were trained by members of the research team in order to ensure their approach to the participants, especially to young offenders, to know how to carry out different questionnaires and how to react in ambiguous situations. Trainings were conducted in four different Croatian regions, while interviewers also received a manual prepared specifically for them. Research team members conducted all focus groups themselves, as they were organized only in four largest Croatian cities.

Since the quantitative part of this research design could not ensure participants' absolute anonymity, due to the different sources, and with respect to the need for data triangulation (juvenile offender, measure leader and formal documentation), it was very important to come up with the coding system, so the merging of the data from different sources would be enabled. The research team guaranteed participants confidentiality of collected data, while also ensuring that no one could associate a participant's identity with individual answers.

Both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research were conducted in the centres for social welfare.

In relation to the professional (and personal) ethics of the researchers, we followed the Code of Ethics in Research with Children (2003), and used a "matrix" proposed by Hill (2005). According to that matrix, potential research participants should be given the following, clear

and concrete information: (1) What is the purpose and the main goal of the research? (2) How much time should participants devote to the research and what will be their responsibilities? (3) Who will be informed about the results? (4) Will participants receive feedback on the results as well as conclusions of the research? (5) Is confidentiality and anonymity of information/data ensured? It was also important to fulfil Hill's postulates with two additional aspects: (1) the right to refuse participation in the study and (2) the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

As expected, from such an extensive research design, we gained many results and findings that confirmed current perceptions of practice, but also gained new and surprising results from all subgroups of participants. In summary, we could emphasize the following important results:

(A) Key psychosocial characteristics of juveniles

- Most of the risk factors are connected with high level of impulsiveness and sensation-seeking; high level of verbal and physical aggressive behaviour; antisocial attitudes and relationships with antisocial peers; growing up in families burdened with conflicts, verbal and physical abuse, neglect and mainly permissive parental style lacking supervision and consistency; rarely childhood traumatic experiences and an early beginning of substance use.

(B) Key characteristics of criminal offences and criminal procedure

- 37% of juveniles were recidivist; 33% of them have previously had different community measures imposed upon (mostly conditional processing from public prosecutor); 8% have been sanctioned by the court; 17% had previous misdemeanour sanctions; in 50% of cases the centre had previously implemented some interventions (mostly within the Family Law jurisdiction).
- ICS is in most cases (50.7%) pronounced for property crimes, then drug offences (15.2%) and different kind of violent crimes.
- With regard to the criminal procedure, results show objections mostly related to the sluggishness of the judicial system - lack of 'control-trials' (please see above) and the long duration of criminal process, as well as the lack of clear and uniform criteria for adjudicating this sanction.

(C) Perception of this educational measure

- In general, ICS is perceived positively by all groups of participants (juveniles, parents and measure leaders), although their perceptions are influenced by their specific role and experiences that come with these roles.
- In that sense, measure leaders have the most complex perception of ICS - they perceive it as the "most comprehensive, most quality, most effective" measure (compared to other educational measures), but at the same time very demanding for implementation.
- Parents perceive this measure as a benefit for themselves; primarily they speak about psychosocial help and counselling they received.
- Juveniles perceive ICS both as help and control, but also as an opportunity for changing their behaviour. Some of juveniles express certain feelings of stigmatization (mainly by peers).

(D) Perception of relationship quality

- All three groups of participants emphasized the importance of a good professional relationship, based both on their positive and/or negative experiences.
- All ICS measure leaders answered that they used many of their professional skills to establish positive relationships, while, as expected, juveniles didn't notice them to the same extent.
- Juveniles perceive their relationship with a measure leader as a good one, with high level of trust, and feelings of comfort in communication. However, compared to measure leaders, juveniles reported lower feeling of closeness.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIALS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION

This research provided a wide spectrum of information about the characteristics of juveniles on probation and their measure leaders, their perception of this sanction, the process and relationship. Parents of juveniles were also involved, ensuring a third perception of a very important party in this process. The main aim of every criminal sanction is to reduce recidivism and accomplish intervention goals defined in individual treatment plans, mostly oriented on behavioural changed. This can only be achieved if we know the characteristics of all persons involved in this process, as well as their perception of the sanction.

Due to the limited budget, in this research measurement was conducted at one point in time, and therefore we do not have information about the changes that might occur in the future (e.g. recidivism or positive behavioural changes). Nevertheless, the coding system used in this design enables us to perform a follow-up study and to request juvenile offenders and their measure leaders to participate in the research again after some period of time.

If there were greater financial resources, longitudinal research at least two points in time would have been conducted. The time between the two measurements would be at least one year which would give us an opportunity to collect the data about ICS's impact on juveniles that had this measure for a year and their sanction is still current, and also those whose measure was suspended in that year. Ideally, there would be three points in time – the second point one year after the first and a third point two years after the second. That kind of research design would give us information about ICS's proximal and distal outcomes on juveniles. We could also get insight into different psychosocial factors that contributed to such outcomes.

The primary goal of this research was to gain insight into the specifics of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision in Croatia. We planned the research design so it included key aspects of process evaluation and the possibility for impact evaluation. It was designed to ensure substantial information about ICS implementation and to provide recommendations for improvements. As we gathered both official and self-reported data about risk/delinquent behaviour of juveniles before the ICS, there is a possibility that we might contact the same participants after ICS has finished, and conduct impact evaluation. This research design can serve as an example of how to plan process evaluation of any intervention, by taking into account the importance and need for impact evaluation - even if the execution of impact evaluation may be questionable, mostly due to the lack of financial resources.

POTENTIALS FOR PRACTICE

It was important to publish a book with major findings from this research study. This way, not only was state of the art information about juvenile probation in Croatia made available to the public, but all recommendations and guidelines are written and available to major stakeholders in this field. They are mostly important for the centres of social welfare, public prosecutor office and juvenile courts, and policy makers in those areas.

When drawing conclusions and making recommendations, we followed key theoretical principles for effective community sanctions. Therefore we categorized them as recommendations important for (1) criminal procedure and decision-making process, (2) planning of interventions and (3) conducting Intensified Care and Supervision.

With regard to improving criminal procedure and decision-making processes, results indicate following recommendations:

- Need for an additional investment in creating fast criminal and court procedures in accordance with intensive developmental characteristic of young people, with the aim to enhance effectiveness,
- Mandatory standardization of risk assessment as a basic presumption for deciding about further procedure.

With regard to planning interventions, results indicate the need for:

- Further investment for encouraging individualization of this educational measure, with more active involvement of young people in creating individual treatment programs (in accordance with all legal documents), with clearly defined outcomes, expectations and aims of work,
- Printing of informative brochures for young people and their parents so they could be systematically informed about this sanction, their rights and obligations,
- Planning and implementing both individual and group work as modalities for conducting this sanction, in accordance with the needs and characteristics of young people.

With regard to improving the quality of conducting Intensified Care and Supervision, the results suggest the following recommendations:

- Organizing a variety of trainings for ICS measure leaders, depending upon their profession, previous education and position,
- Investments in suitable workspace conditions for conducting ICS in the Centres, but also for part-time associates who could, for example, use empty offices in the Centre in the afternoon (after working hours),
- More active involvement of the court in the process of conducting ICS, in accordance with legal documents,
- Better inter-agency cooperation with a clear system of education to elicit sensitization in teachers and other counselling school staff toward young offenders and to ensure partnership between centres for social welfare and schools with regard to mutual goals aimed at the healthy psychosocial development of young people.

One more gain for practice is the potential to use instruments that were specifically constructed for the purpose of this research - specially focused on this sanction and its context. That is a Questionnaire on the perception of this sanction, a Questionnaire about perceived quality of relationship with an ICS measure leader and a Questionnaire about the perception of the treatment methods use by the ICS measure leader. Practitioners can today use these instruments in their everyday practice if they want to gain more personal information about these topics, and that way we enabled practitioners to implement their own self-evaluations and feedback information for users - juvenile offenders under probation.

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