

congreso internacional
international congress

fenómenos de delincuencia juvenil:
nuevas formas penales
phenomena in juvenile delinquency:
new penal forms

6-7 de noviembre de 2007 · Sevilla (España)
6th 7th November 2007 · Seville (Spain)

organiza / organizes



colabora / collaborates



Author

Dr. Albert R. Hauber

Title

**Halt: An alternative intervention for light-delinquent juveniles in the
Netherlands**

Halt: An alternative intervention for light-delinquent juveniles in the Netherlands

Dr. Albert R. Hauber

As in some other countries Holland has a separate penal law for juveniles in the age group 12- 18 years. Traditionally this meant for light cases a reprimand at the police office or at the court or a fine. Because of the low chance to be caught juvenile delinquency could increase tremendously in the course of the late seventies, especially vandalism and graffiti.

The costs of repair and cleaning became a real problem when at the end of the seventies an economic depression stroke Holland and the rest of the western world.

The city council of Rotterdam wanted to save money on this fields and asked a colleague and myself to develop a plan to reduce vandalism and graffiti.

After a research among members of the target group, it became clear that the traditional sanctions did not work and besides that in respect of their criminal behaviour two kinds of youngsters should be distinguished and as a consequence also two kinds of reactions, a limited one and a more extensive one.

After experimenting with cleaning and repair activities turned out to be successful- youngsters learned the consequences of their behaviour and in some cases even felt responsible- the community wanted this intervention to be institutionalized. This happened in autumn 1981 and we named it Halt

Birth, development and future

As in some other countries Holland has a separate penal law for juveniles in the age group 12- 18 years. Traditionally this meant for light cases a reprimand at the police office or at the court or a fine. Because of the low chance to be caught juvenile delinquency could increase tremendously in the course of the late seventies, especially vandalism and graffiti.

The costs of repair and cleaning became a real problem when at the end of the seventies an economic depression stroke Holland and the rest of the western world.

The city council of Rotterdam wanted to save money on this fields and asked a colleague and myself to develop a plan to reduce vandalism and graffiti.

After a research among members of the target group, it became clear that the traditional sanctions did not work and besides that in respect of their criminal behaviour two kinds of youngsters should be distinguished and as a consequence also two kinds of reactions, a limited one and a more extensive one.

Criteria for a more adequate sanction system were:

- high chance to be caught
- short time between offend and sanction
- intrinsic relation between offend and sanction
- approach the behaviour negative and the offender neutral

After experimenting with cleaning and repair activities turned out to be successful- youngsters learned the consequences of their behaviour and in some cases even felt responsible- the community wanted this intervention to be institutionalized. This happened in autumn 1981 and we named it Halt

This Halt intervention was offered under the strict conditions. It must be a first offender in the age category 12-18, who admit his offend, belonging to a selection of relative light offences. This Halt treatment generally includes one or two educational interviews, some hours work with a relation to the offend, compensation for the damage and excuse to the victim. When all works out well, no penal registration will take place.

While the Halt procedure increased the image of the community and besides the national government mainly paid the Halt operation, many other communities took over the Rotterdam Halt initiative and the number of Halt offices grew quickly to a maximum of 62. in the meantime the number of admitted offences increased with among others shoplifting, small fraud and un-allowed fire work. Since 1995 in the juvenile penal law is not longer an experiment but viewed as a main sanction which more than 20.000 youngsters received yearly.

Last year for the first time an extended evaluation with an experimental group and a control group was finished. It turned out that Halt is an excellent sanction for real first offenders, but can hardly reduce recidivism for those who are caught after many criminal activities. For this last group a new treatment is developed, so that Halt will get finally its multi track approach, which was already advised in 1981.

Leiden, 18 October 2007