

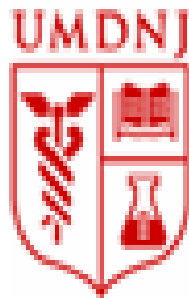


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# ***Project Northland in Croatia: A Community-Based Adolescent Alcohol Prevention Intervention***

A Partnership between:

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-  
School of Public Health & City of Split, Croatia



SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

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University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

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# Demographics: Croatia and Split

- ❖ Croatian gained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991
- ❖ Croatian Population: 4,381,352 (2001)
- ❖ Split Population: 265,000
- ❖ Main industry: tourism
- ❖ Transitioning from socialist to market economy
- ❖ Unemployment Rate: 21.7% (2002 est.)



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# Goal of US/Split Partnership

- Work collaboratively to strengthen public health capacity in Split by mobilizing key stakeholders for change:
    1. Mobilize community resources
    2. Promote community participation
    3. Develop/implement intervention to improve overall quality of life within community
    4. Address special needs of vulnerable populations
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# ***Youth: Vulnerable Population in Transitioning Society***

- n War and traumatic experiences lead to increased youth risk-taking behavior
  - n Cultural patterns often do not protect youth from risks associated with alcohol
  - n High unemployment → growing sense of hopelessness for future
  - n With frustrations, many choose alcohol as method of dealing with stress
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# *Alcohol Problems in Croatia*

- ❖ Substantial consumption of beer, wine and spirits: Where home production occurs—may be 2-3 times recorded level
  - ❖ Prevention efforts targeting substance abuse weakened after the war
  - ❖ Alcohol has negative consequences for population as whole: e.g., proportion of total traffic accidents in 1997 involving alcohol was 43%--more than twice EU average.
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# *Alcohol Use Among Adolescents In Croatia:*

- ❖ **1995: (WHO, 1999)**
- ❖ **70% drank alcoholic in past 12 months**
- ❖ **33% drank to intoxication in past 12 months**
- ❖ **82% reported alcohol use ever in their life**

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# ***Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)***

- Prevalence of risk-taking behaviors among youth
  - Data-collection tool developed by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Translated into Croatian and culturally adapted
  - Implemented in a sample of primary/secondary schools in Split (Spring '02)
  - ~ 987 students ages 12-17 completed survey
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## ***Findings of Split 2002 YRBS***

- ❖ **82% had 1st drink (other than a few sips) between ages of 8-16**
- ❖ **During the past 30 days:**
  - ❖ **11% had 5 or more drinks on at least 1 day**
  - ❖ **16% had 5 or more drinks on 2 to 5 days**
  - ❖ **3% had 5+ drinks on 10 or more days**
- ❖ **22% rode in a car driven by someone who had been drinking**
- ❖ **9% drank & rode a bicycle or motorcycle**
- ❖ **8% drank & were in a physical fight**
- ❖ **4% drank & drove fast**
- ❖ **9% drank & had sexual intercourse with a casual partner**



## ***Public Health Intervention: Project Northland***

- ❖ **Developed by School of Public Health, University of Minnesota w/funding from U.S. National Institutes of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) (license by Hazeldon).**
- ❖ **Targets all adolescents, not just those in need of chemical dependency treatment**
- ❖ **Gives strong no-use message**



# *Why Project Northland?*

- ❖ **Alcohol use begins in pre- and early adolescence**
- ❖ **Delaying onset is critical**
- ❖ **Alcohol is a gateway drug**
- ❖ **Lasting changes in adolescent alcohol use require the efforts of whole communities**

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# *Strategies to Address Individual & Social-Environmental Factors*

## **INDIVIDUAL (demand)**

- ❖ **Personality characteristics and ways of thinking that increase or decrease likelihood of alcohol use**

## **SOCIAL-ENVIRONMENTAL (supply/access and demand)**

- ❖ **Aspects of the environment that support or discourage alcohol use**
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# *Project Northland - Focus*

Slick Tracy  
(6<sup>th</sup> Grade)

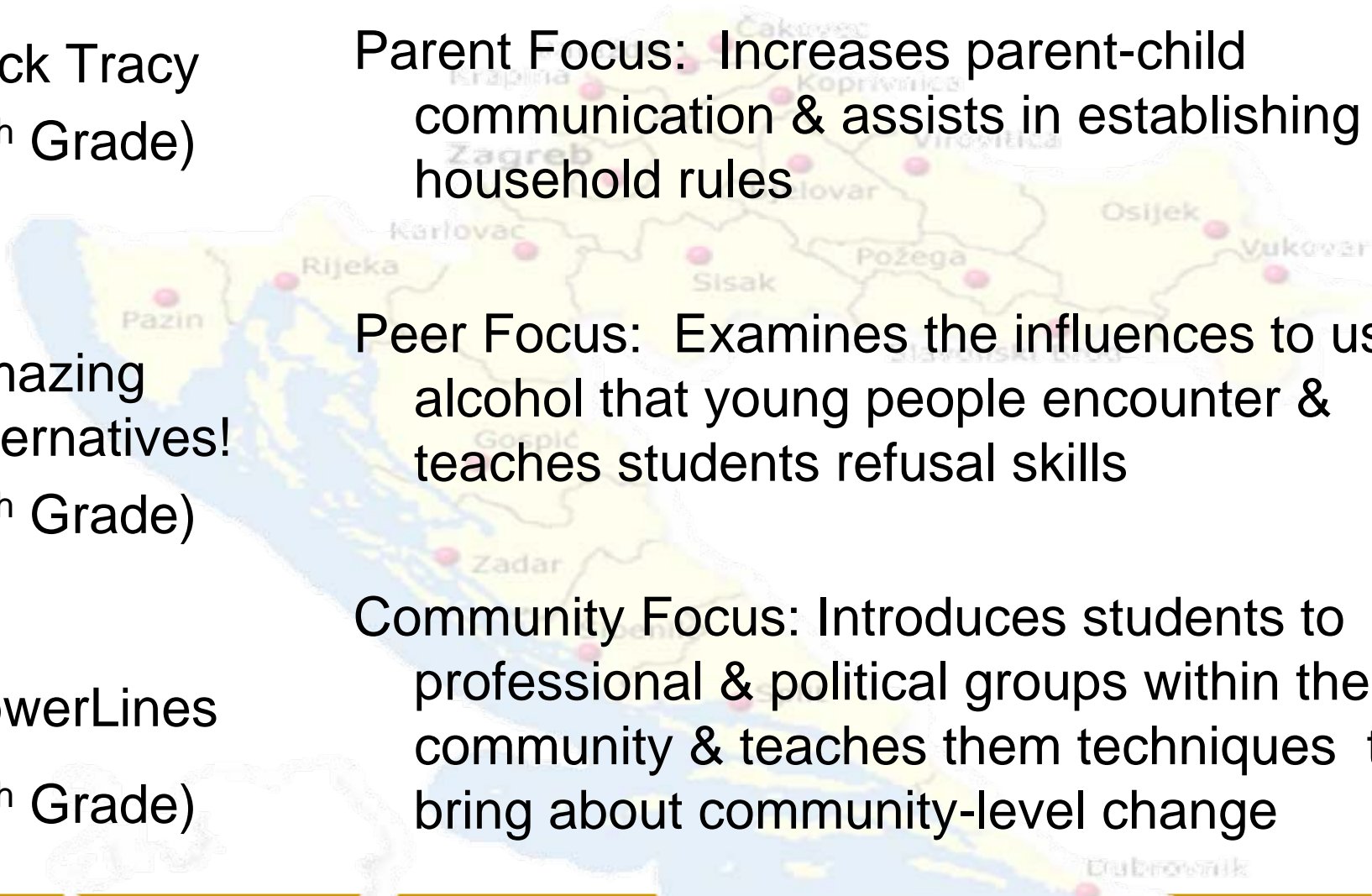
Parent Focus: Increases parent-child communication & assists in establishing household rules

Amazing  
Alternatives!  
(7<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Peer Focus: Examines the influences to use alcohol that young people encounter & teaches students refusal skills

PowerLines  
(8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Community Focus: Introduces students to professional & political groups within the community & teaches them techniques to bring about community-level change



# LUKA VRLI KUĆNI PROGRAM

TKO? ŠTO? KAD? GDJE?

To je Lahtina, govori dječji leži o alkohol!



Dovoljno je jednom rješenut da shvati što se događa u kući Jure Tukuma!



Vijerna je da se sprječimo zauvijek od ekipe Profi-profitea iz Propagandista!

Potom ćemo zaslati! Luč! Magnet, jer privlači djecu na stvari koje se žele!



Ne zovi me uzalud Luka Vrli - najbikavij privlači dječicu u ožbi!



Zapamtište što van kadem, je sam Zdravka Tijeana i nikad ne lažem! Gdje stidžem uni očajem prili!



HAZELDEN

PRVI TJEDAN

# THE SLICK TRACY HOME TEAM PROGRAM

WHY? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

Mages Felix She's telling kids lies about alcohol!



One breath is all you need to know what's happening at Marty 'the Party' Jones' house!



I say it's time to make those Buy-Buy Boys in the B&W Advertising business go bye-bye!

Then it's on to stop that Mad Magnet, for getting kids to do things they don't want to do!



They don't call me Slick Tracy—the alcohol, alcohol privals eye in the U.S.A.— for nothing!



Remember this from me, Breadbeat Mahoney: If you've got the crime, we've got the time!



HAZELDEN

WEEK ONE

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# *Training the Trainer*

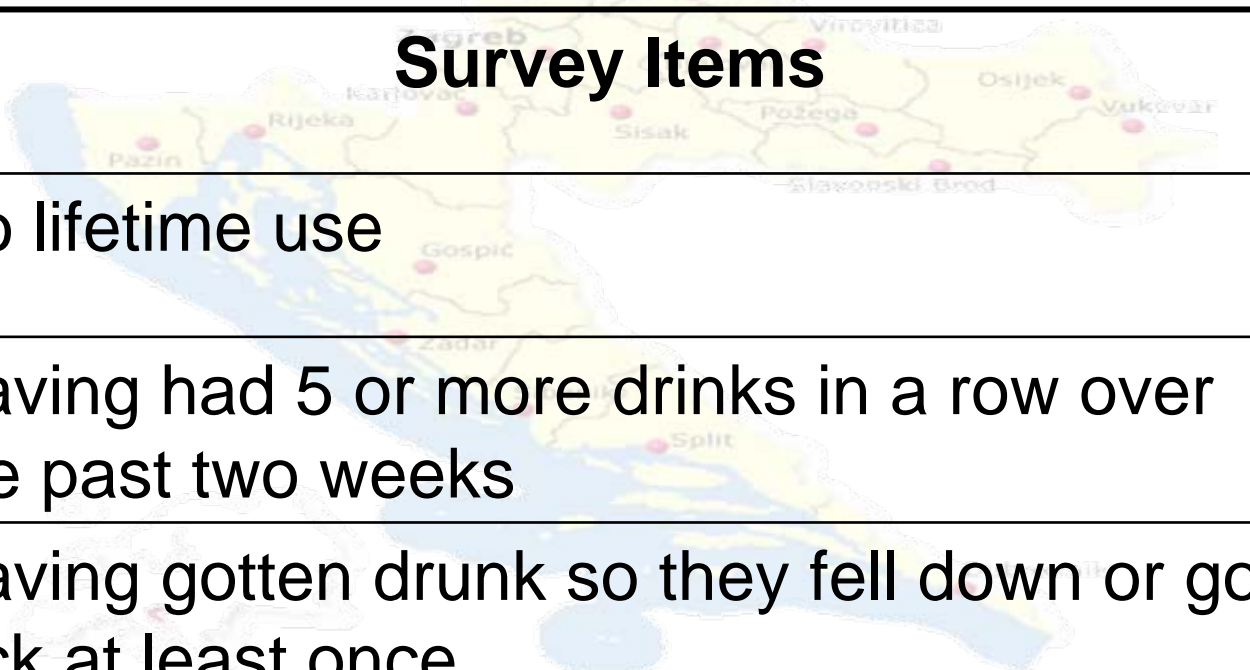
- ❖ **Licensing agreement**
  - ❖ **Training a cadre of teachers**
  - ❖ **Translation and cultural adaptation of training manuals/materials**
  - ❖ **Hiring a Project Northland Coordinator**
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# *Student Evaluation Design & Outcomes*

- ❖ 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in both intervention & control groups were pre and post-tested in January of 2003 and May 2003
  - ❖ Surveys assess change in attitudes, knowledge and skills.
  - ❖ Results of pretest showed students in intervention & control groups were similar with no statistically significant differences in demographics or responses to pretest (0.00098  $\alpha$  -level).
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# *Prevalence of alcohol use among students at pretest*

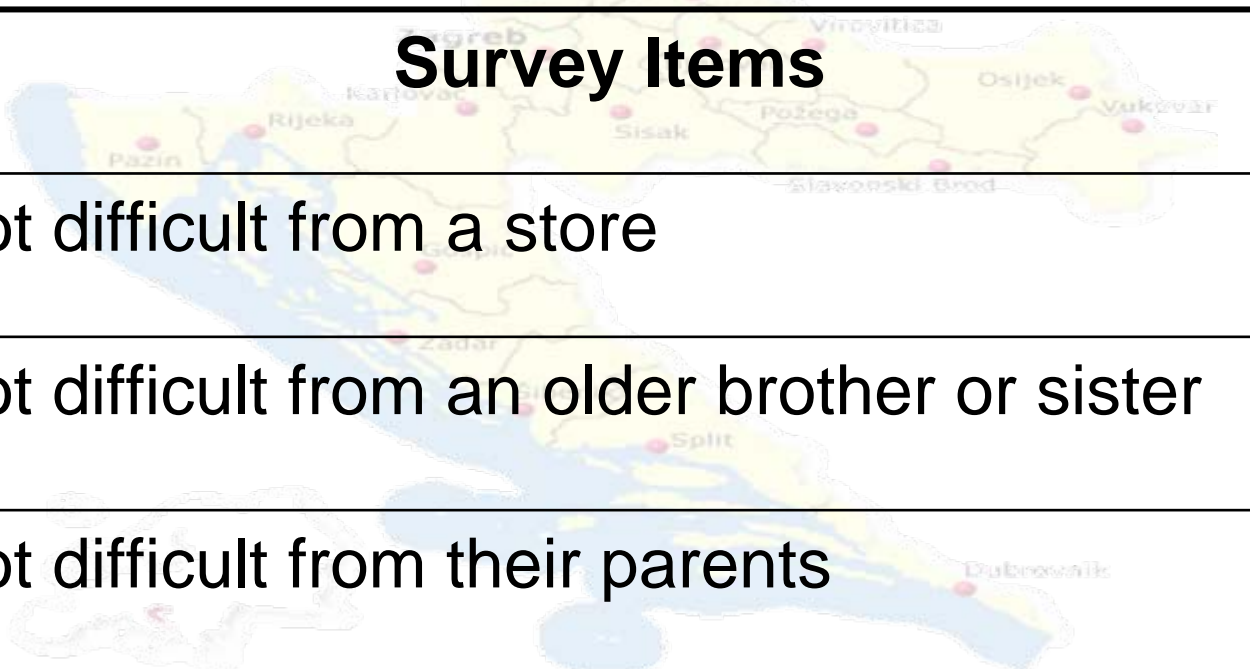


Survey Items	%
No lifetime use	57%
Having had 5 or more drinks in a row over the past two weeks	5%
Having gotten drunk so they fell down or got sick at least once	6%
Having attended activities or parties where their friends or others their age were drinking alcohol	14%

## *Students report family/friends role/rules regarding alcohol use at pretest*

Survey Items	%
Parents talk with them about the problems drinking alcohol can cause	81%
Parents would allow them to drink by the time they were a senior in high school	9%
Parents or a friend had provided alcoholic beverages for them at a party	15%
Parents told them what would happen if they were caught drinking	47%

# Students report level of difficulty obtaining alcohol at pretest



Survey Items	%
Not difficult from a store	15%
Not difficult from an older brother or sister	34%
Not difficult from their parents	7%
Not difficult from a bar	49%

A faint map of Croatia is visible in the background of the slide, showing major cities like Zagreb, Rijeka, and Split. The map is light blue and yellow, with city names in small black text.

# ***Students at pretest report ability to avoid being driven in a car by:***

<b>Survey Items</b>	<b>%</b>
...A young person who had been drinking	11%
....Parent or other adult who had been drinking	41%
....Boyfriend/girlfriend who had been drinking	19%

***Students at pretest report driving with someone in past 30 days who had:***



<b>Survey Items</b>	<b>%</b>
...1 - 4 drinks	33%
.... 5 or more drinks	6%

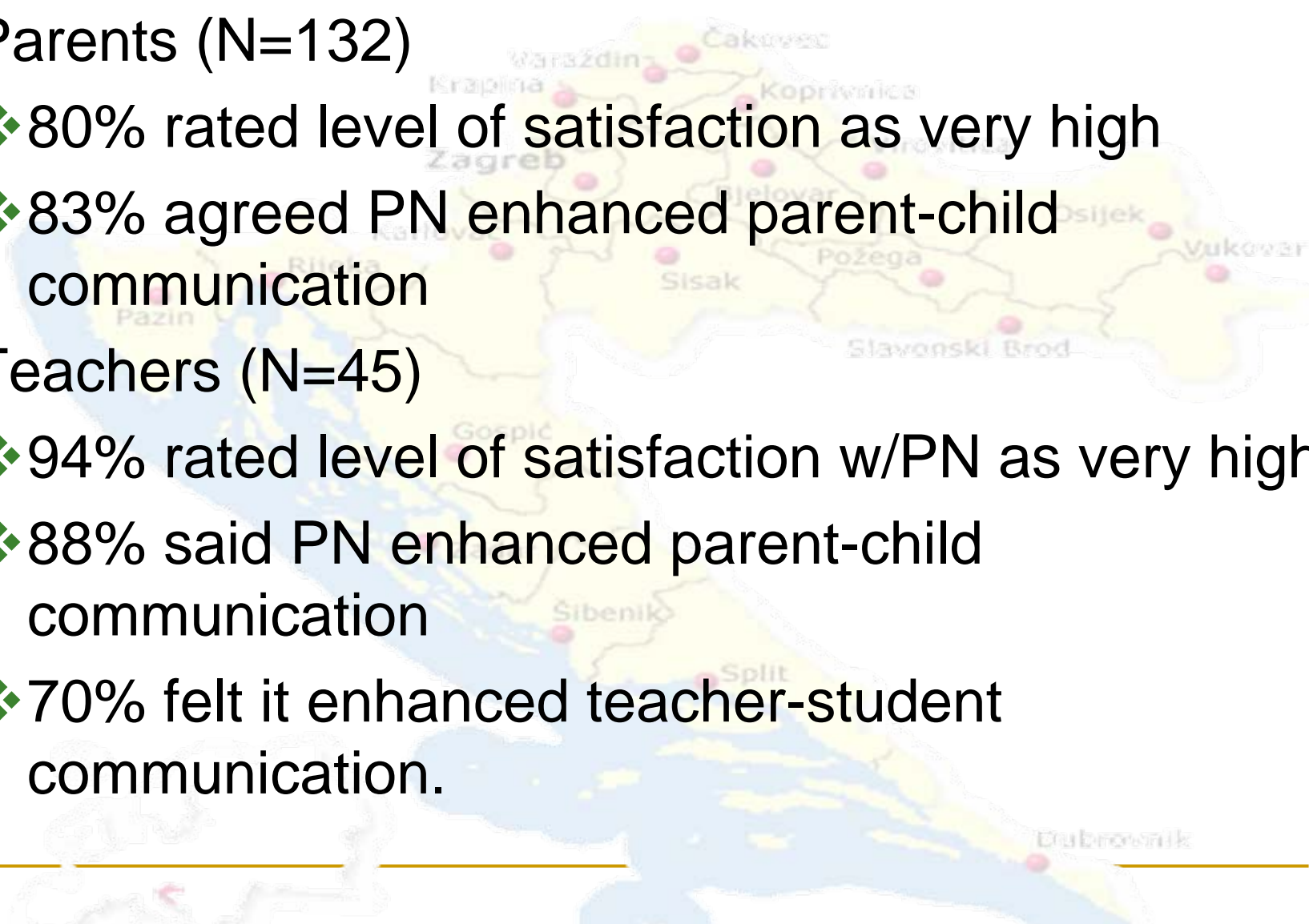
# *Evaluation: Parents and Teachers*

## ❖ Parents (N=132)

- ❖ 80% rated level of satisfaction as very high
- ❖ 83% agreed PN enhanced parent-child communication

## ❖ Teachers (N=45)

- ❖ 94% rated level of satisfaction w/PN as very high
- ❖ 88% said PN enhanced parent-child communication
- ❖ 70% felt it enhanced teacher-student communication.



## *Comments from Parents and Teachers*

“The comic strips are an appropriate way to give kids the opportunity to think about the choices they make.”

“The comic books... encouraged constant discussion. The role models are good for children to identify with.”

“Luka Vril was educational for parents and student alike.”

“It’s motivated students who did not show an interest in school.”

“It’s a fun way of making children aware of a sensitive subject—preaching of that sort is usually boring to kids.”

“.... it gives kids good guidelines for problem solving (using play, working together).

***“Intention to Use Alcohol” Scale:  
6th Graders Pre & Post Test Results***

	All students		Baseline non-users		Baseline users	
	intervention	controls	intervention	controls	intervention	controls
<b>Intention to use alcohol</b>						
Pretest 2003	5.89 (1.5)	5.05 (1.43)	0.91 (0.78)	0.6 (0.68)	13.02 (3.37)	10.49 (2.96)
Posttest 2003	10.54 (1.92)	7.88 (1.82)	1.97 (1.21)	1.22 (0.96)	19.62 (3.54)	17.34 (3.99)

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# *Challenges/Lessons Learned*

- ❖ In transitioning societies...
    - ❖ There is a tension between need to focus on decaying infrastructure v. less obvious public health issues—prevention
    - ❖ There is a need to deal with changing local governments
    - ❖ There is a need to have partners with government connection
    - ❖ There is a critical need for support from a strong NGO network
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# *Challenges/Lessons Learned*

- ❖ There is a need to...
    - ❖ Culturally adapt intervention programs
    - ❖ Prepare cadres of trainers to train teachers
    - ❖ Craft culturally sensitive public health message
    - ❖ Have computer/Internet support to facilitate flow of ideas from one continent to another
    - ❖ Funding challenges
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For further information about Project  
Northland Croatia contact:

Bernadette West: [westbm@umdnj.edu](mailto:westbm@umdnj.edu)

Diane Abatemarco: [abatemdj@umdnj.edu](mailto:abatemdj@umdnj.edu)

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