

The Adolescent Diversion Project

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Introduction

The Adolescent Diversion Project (ADP) is a juvenile rehabilitation program that was developed at Michigan State University by Dr. William S. Davidson. The primary goal of the ADP is to lower the recidivism rate among juvenile offenders. The project seeks to do this by:

1. Diverting juvenile offenders away from the formal juvenile criminal justice system and into a community-based service system.
 2. Increasing the usage of community resources by juvenile offenders
 3. Strengthening familial and communal bonds among juvenile offenders
- The current project uses a formal policy evaluation framework to assess the promise and potential limitations of the ADP. The framework identifies; the potential benefits of the program; its theoretical underpinnings; its actual implementation; its outcomes and cost efficiency (Mears, 2010)

Needs Evaluation

- Over 60,000 Juveniles are incarcerated on any given day (ACLU)
- Incarcerated Juveniles are 39% less likely to complete high school (Aizer, A & Doyle, J. J., 2015, pg. 780)
- The absence of a high school diploma can lead to an average annual earnings loss of around \$7,456 (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- Juveniles that are incarcerated are 41% more likely to be found in an adult correctional facility by age 25 (Aizer, A & Doyle, J. J., 2015, pg. 786)

Theory Evaluation

The ADP is rooted in three social theories. These social theories being:

1. Social Control/Bonding Theory

Bonds to family, peers, or to general society are important preventative measures to juvenile crime.

2. Social Learning Theory

Crime/Delinquency are learned from one's social environment.

3. Social-Interactionist Theory

The labeling of one's actions can lead to these labeled individuals to embrace their newfound label

Implementation/Process Evaluation

The exact process of the ADP is as follows:

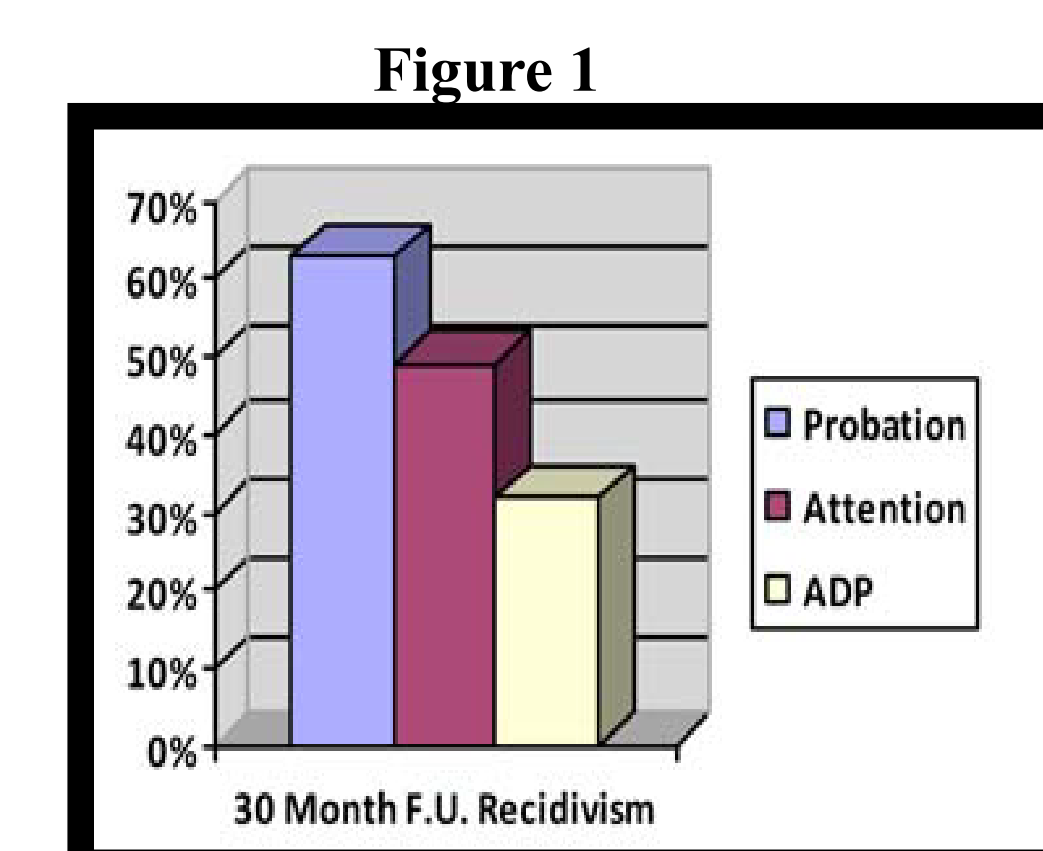
1. College students or community volunteers are given training in juvenile skill development by program directors.
2. These students or volunteers are then assigned to their own juvenile for eighteen weeks.
3. During these eighteen weeks, the student or volunteer meets with their juvenile for six to eight hours per week
4. In these meetings, the student or volunteer works with the juvenile to enroll them into community-service programs/activities, help them develop skills, rekindle familial and social bonds, and generally help them solve issues that are troubling them.
5. Intervention liaisons will interview both the juvenile and their parents in order to ensure progress is being made.
6. After the end of the eighteen weeks, the juvenile is released from the program, but is interviewed after a year or two to see whether the juvenile has either progressed or recessed.

The ADP can be implemented in both rural and urban communities. The project is intended to be carried out by either college students or community volunteers but can be expanded to work with government social workers.

Outcomes & Impact Evaluation

- Juveniles who participated in the ADP had recidivism rates half that of a control group randomly assigned to usual treatment
- Participants attended school at a 63% rate in a two-year follow-up compared to a 26% rate in the control group

- Finally, juveniles involved in ADP were less likely to commit further crimes compared to those placed on probation or given nonspecific attention (see figure 1)

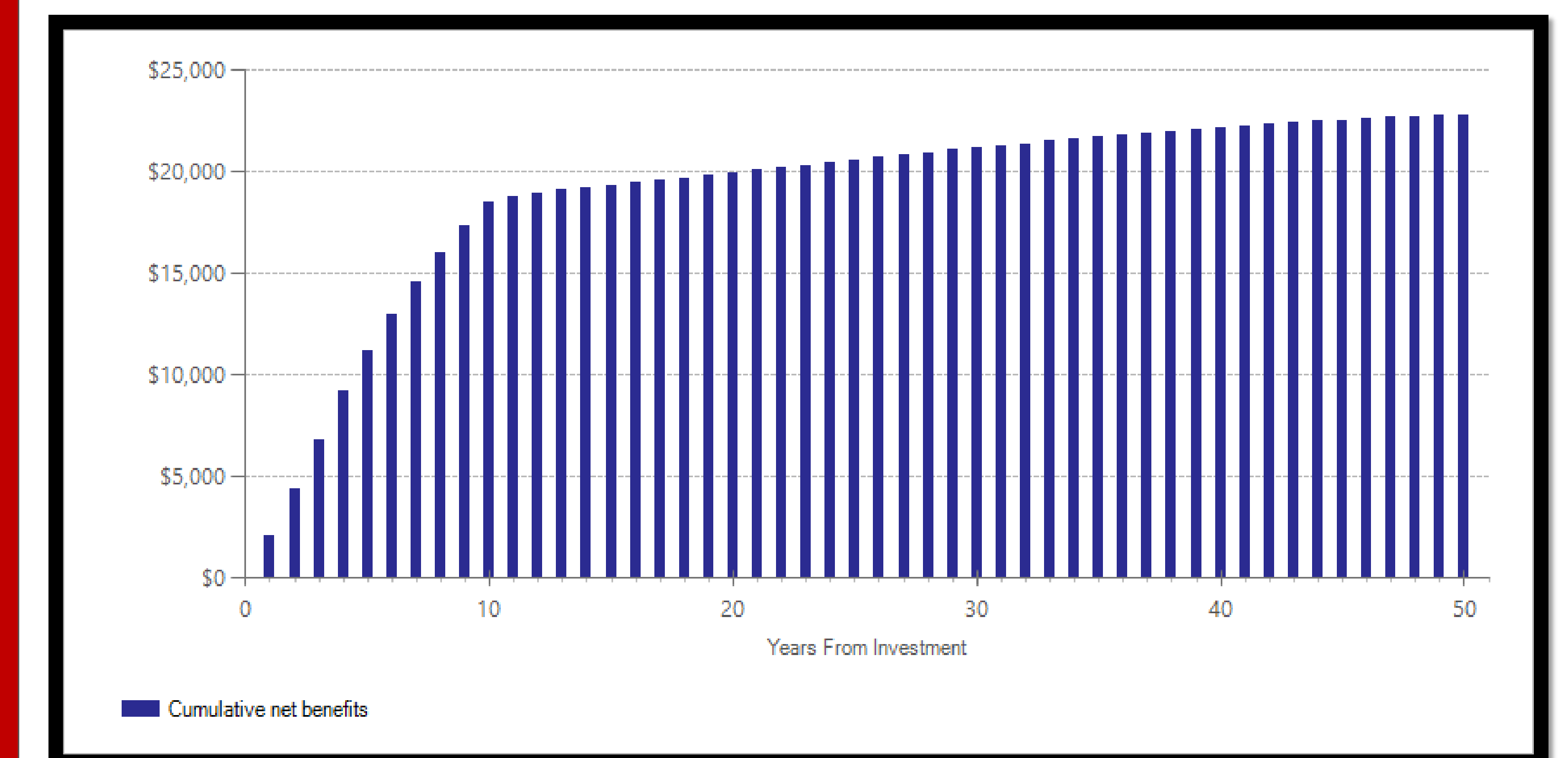


https://engage.msu.edu/upload/awards/magrathkellogg/abstracts/Michigan_packet_022709-1.pdf

Cost-Efficiency Evaluation

- The ADP will approximately cost \$1,029 per juvenile, while the average local court spends around \$13,466 for incarcerating a juvenile (M. L. Sturza & W. S. Davidson II, 2006, pg. 14)
- The ADP can this save over \$12,438 per juvenile nationally.
- Lastly, The ADP becomes even more cost-effective the longer it has been invested in (see figure 2)

Figure 2



<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/ProgramPdf/21/Adolescent-Diversion-Project-ADP-vs-traditional-juvenile-court-processing>

Conclusion

The Adolescent Diversion Project is an effective program that reduces recidivism rates for juvenile offender and has been proven to be a cost-effective program.

Sources

- (ACLU) <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/youth-incarceration/americas-addiction-juvenile-incarceration-state-state>
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- Median weekly earnings \$606 for high school dropouts, \$1,559 for advanced degree holders: The Economics Daily: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019, October 21). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2019/median-weekly-earnings-606-for-high-school-dropouts-1559-for-advanced-degree-holders.htm>
- Sturza, M. L., & Davidson II, W. S. (2006). Issues Facing the Dissemination. Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 32(1–2), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1300/j005v32n01_02