

# RONDPUNT

JE BONDGENOOT NA EEN  
VERKEERSONGEVAL

YOUR ALLY AFTER A  
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT



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# Getuigen onderweg

(“Witnesses on the Way”,  
aka “Traffic Informers”)

Program to raise traffic safety awareness  
amongst 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupils (high school)

from here: **GOW**



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# Today's topics

- About Rondpunt
- The ins and outs of the GOW program



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## Flemish Centre of Expertise

for the support and care of all persons involved in a traffic accident, directly or indirectly

Victims, bereaved, relatives, offenders, emergency staff, social workers, employers, ...

starting from **their experiences**



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# Flanders in (traffic) numbers

- Densely populated 6.5 mio inh./13.522 km<sup>2</sup>  
(481 inh. / km<sup>2</sup>)
- Extensive road network 75.000 km / 883 km motorw.
- European traffic junction 16 E-roads
- Aggravating circumstances Economic hub  
Appr. 1 car/inhabitant  
Linear settlements



# Dire consequences

24 978

traffic accidents

28 767

lightly injured persons

2 871

seriously injured

318

fatalities

Source: [www.statbel.fgov.be](http://www.statbel.fgov.be) Verkeersongevallen dossier 2016



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# We provide **GUIDANCE**

For victims and all others involved  
in a traffic accident

- Website
- Direct contact (e-mail & phone)
- Guide:  
*'Als het verkeer je raakt' ('When traffic hits you')*
- Various training courses



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# We provide **SUPPORT**

- Primarily aimed at re-integration of ABI patients
- Close cooperation with peer associations
- Dedicated programs
  - FIVE2NINE
  - GELIJK-SPEL (*“Even Score”*)
  - VERLOOND TALENT (*“Talent rewarded”*)



# We try to INFLUENCE

- General public
    - Make people aware of their own responsibilities in traffic and make them act accordingly
    - e.g. GOW, “*Week without hit-and-runs*”
  - Policy makers
    - Improve the rights of traffic victims
    - e.g. EU-project to improve information for traffic victims
- See: <https://rondpunt.be/projecten/eu-project-victims-of-road-traffic-offences/>



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# Programs aimed at 12-18-year olds

- Booster Education pack 1<sup>st</sup> en 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- Fractie van een seconde (“*A split second*”) Theatre performance 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Getuigen onderweg (GOW) Classroom testimonials 3<sup>rd</sup> grade



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# Getuigen onderweg (GOW)



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# GOW – The program

Large-scale school-based road safety education program using testimonials

Started in 2012, running till 2018 (at least)

Organized by Rondpunt, subsidised by the Flemish Ministry of Transportation and Public Works

Targeted at 16–18 year old high school pupils of three education types: general, technical and occupational



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# GOW – Motivation and objectives

The targeted pupils are

- at an age where they become more active in traffic (pre-driver training from 16  $\frac{3}{4}$  yrs)
- at an increasing risk of becoming an offender (moped, car, professional driver)
- to be made aware of:
  - their own responsibilities in traffic
  - the possible consequences if they do not take traffic seriously

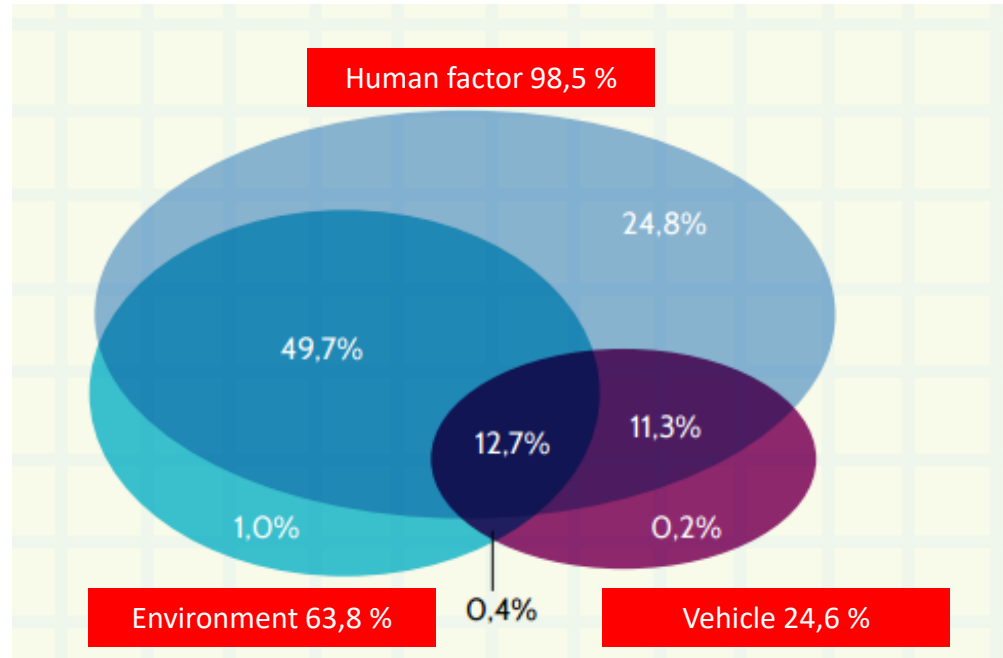


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# Human factor in accident causes: 98,5 %



Source: Jaarboek Verkeersveiligheid 2015



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# GOW – The Set-up

A victim, bereaved person, relative or offender tells her/his story of the traffic accident (s)he was involved in and its consequences

Event is organised in the classroom (max 35 pupils)

Rondpunt provides preparatory materials to teacher(s)

Teacher(s) organise pre- and post-sessions



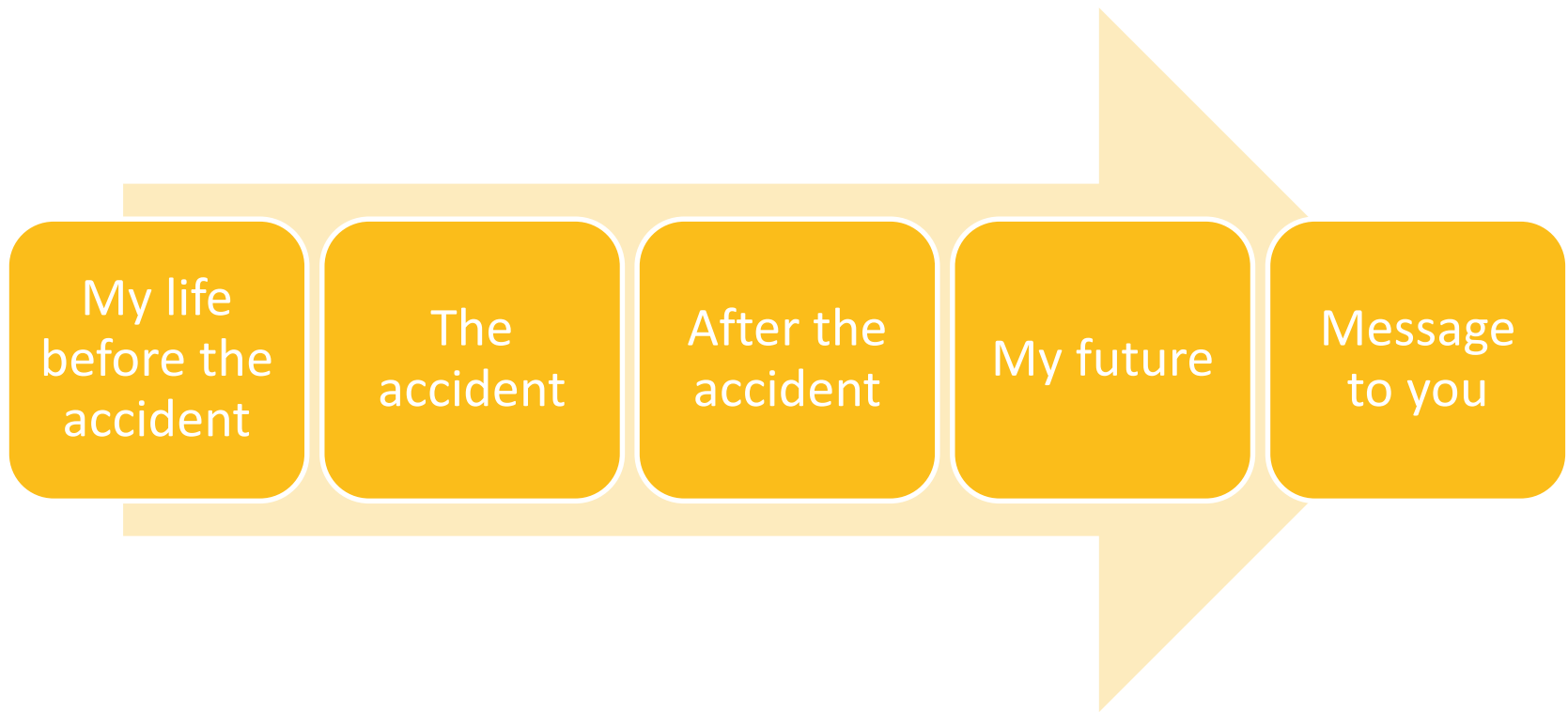
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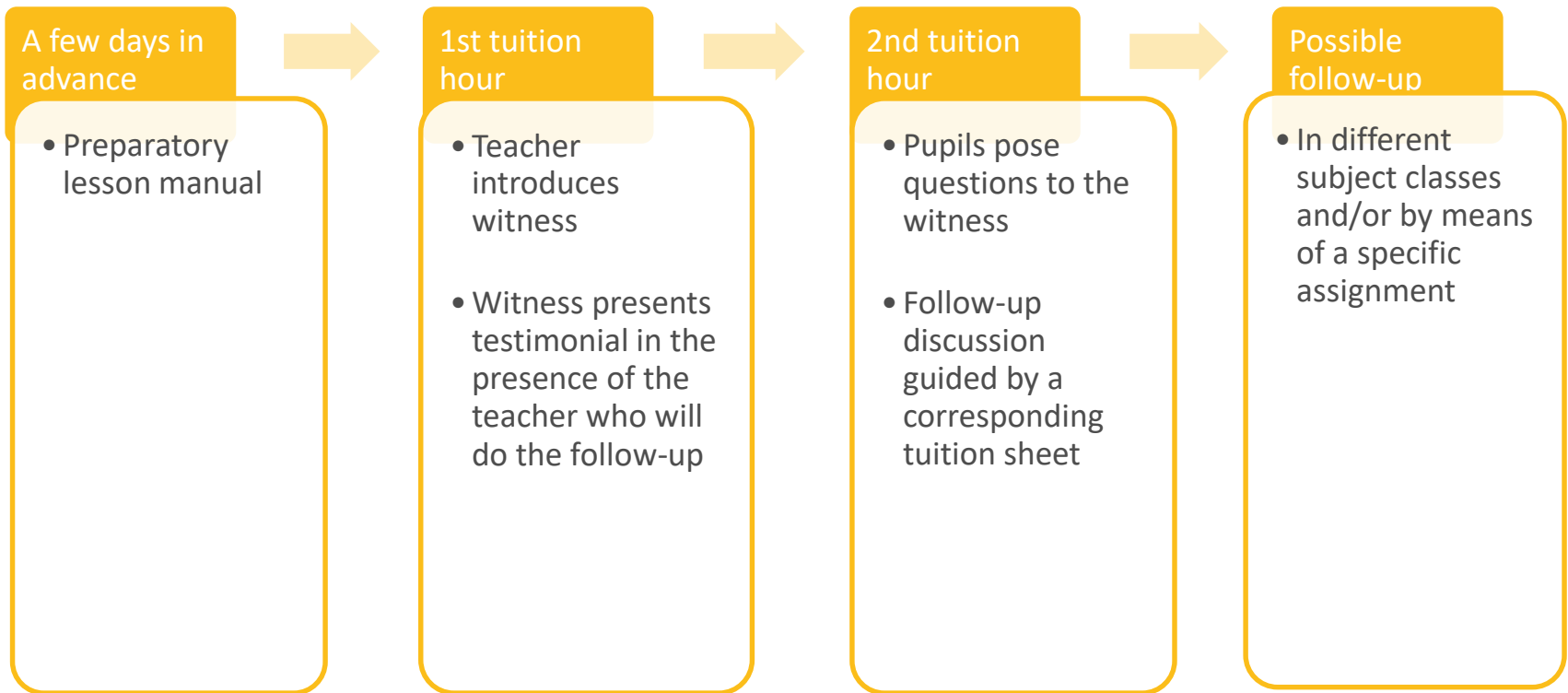
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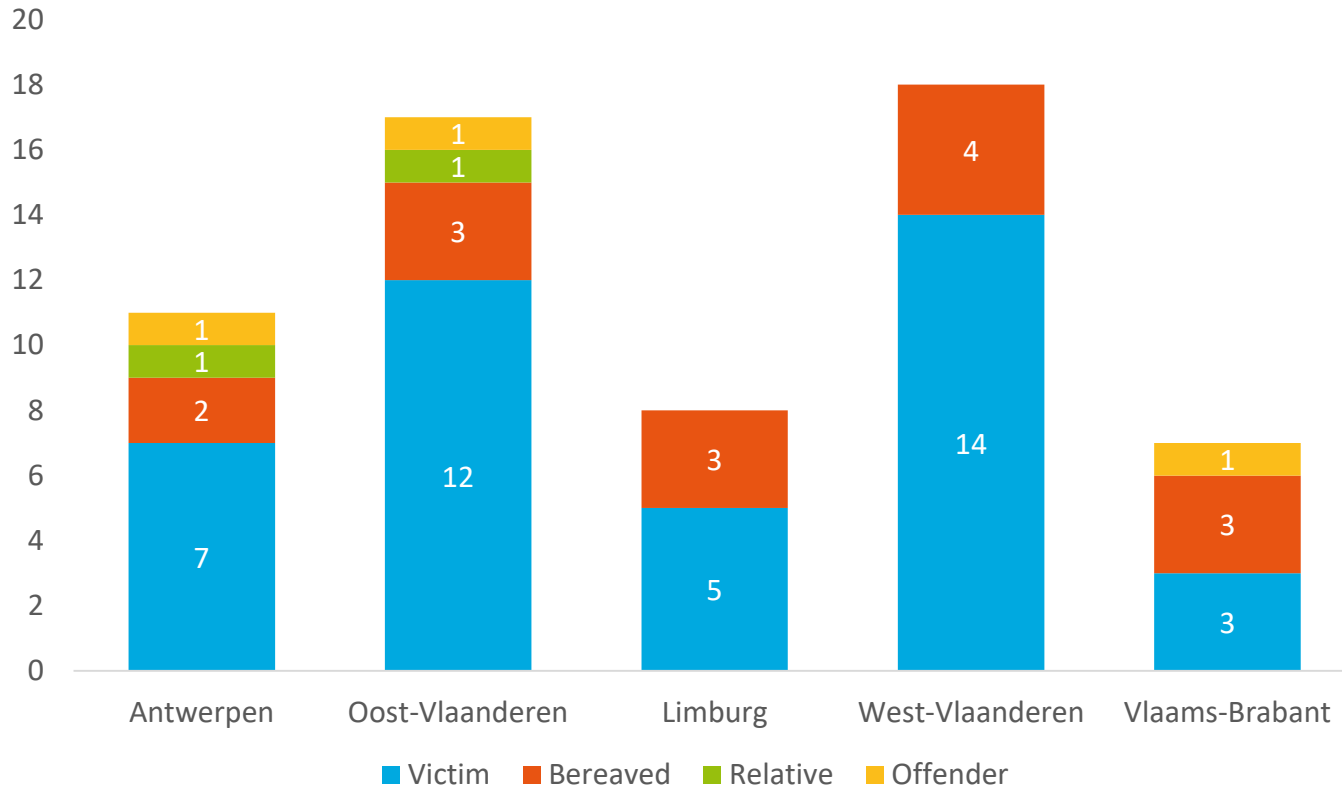
# The testimonial structure



# The testimonial process



# Active number of witnesses = 61



# Coaching the witnesses

Candidate-witnesses receive a concise formal training, to be able to:

- Establish an empathetic connection with the audience
- Use a serene style, not a sensational one
- Aim for maximal impact by emphasizing the long term effects of a physical, emotional, social, financial, professional nature
- Stress main message: a traffic accident is never just a matter of bad luck

Witnesses are assigned a personal coach and, if necessary, a personal companion



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# GOW: Results and outlook



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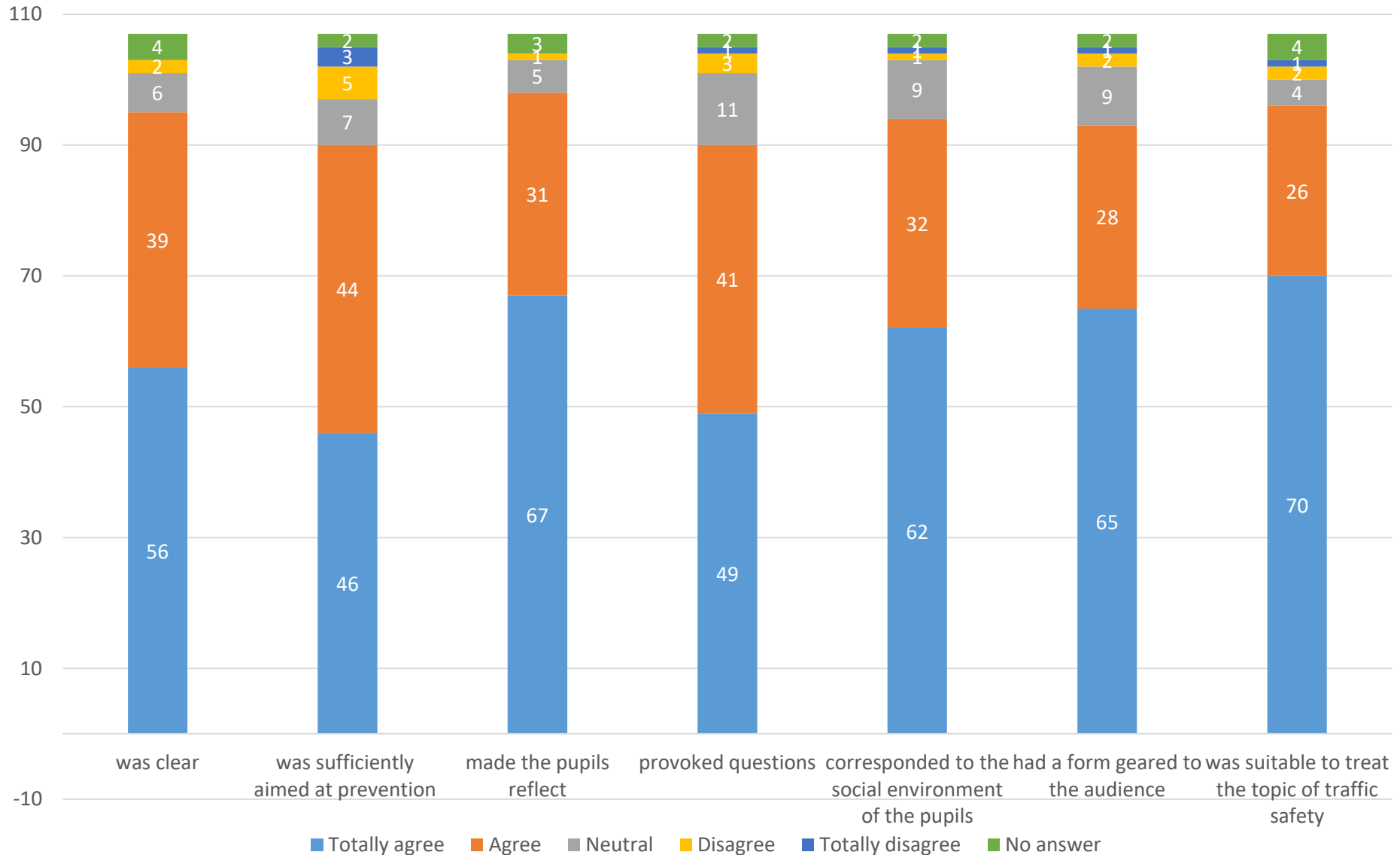
# GOW in actual numbers: 2012-17

	Age group	Number of testimonials	Number of persons reached
Via schools	16-20	2.216	68.696
Via companies	18-65	26	1.118
Via offender courses	16-45	47	376
TOTALS:		2.289	70.190



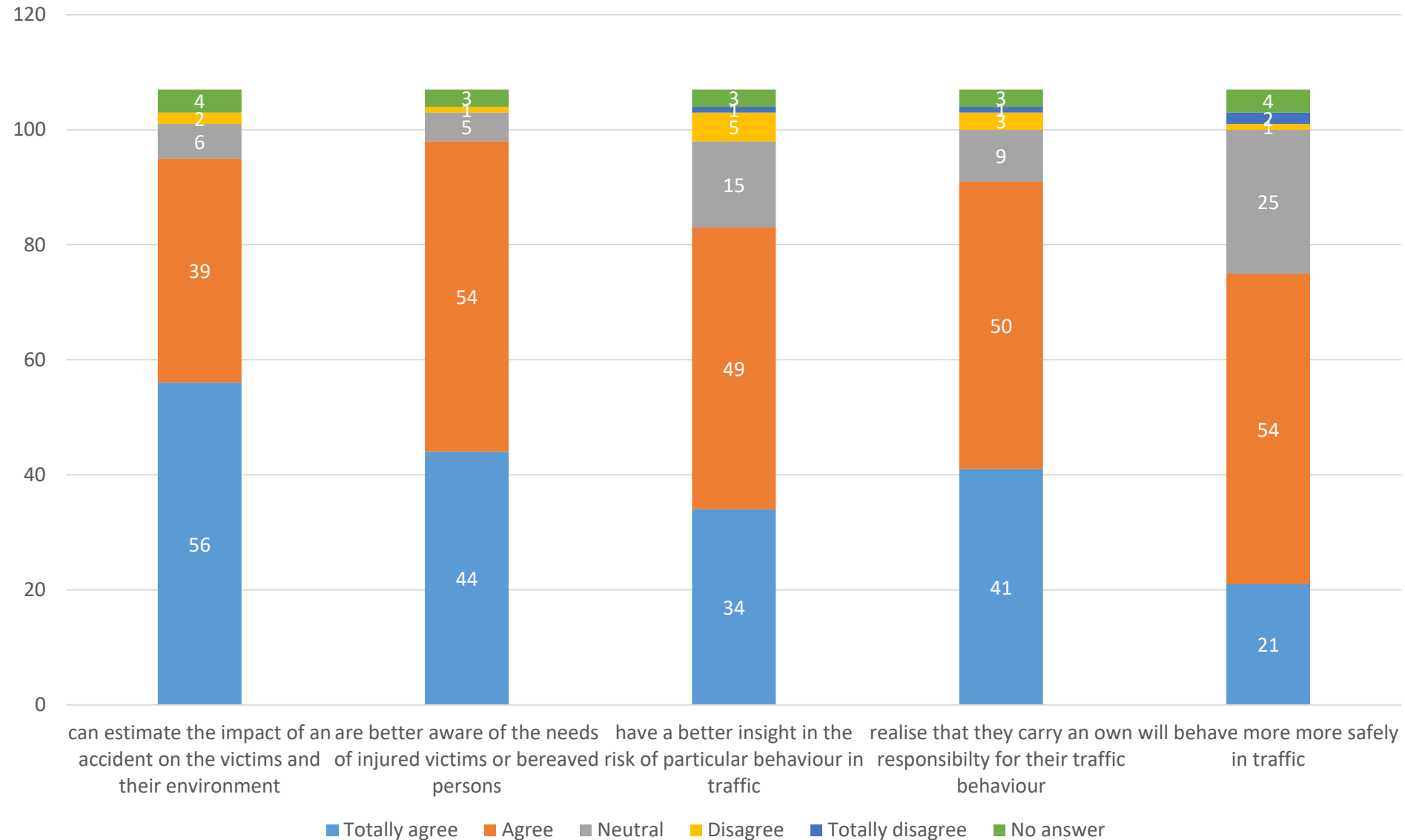
# Feedback from participating schools

The testimonial



# Feedback from participating schools (2)

Thanks to the testimonial the pupils





# Empirical evaluation of the program's effectiveness

- Research conducted by the Transportation Research Institute (IMOB, UHasselt)
- Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour
- Executed during the first session of the program (2012-2013)
- Reported in A. Cuenen et al: *Effect evaluation of a road safety education program based on victim testimonials in high schools in Belgium.*

In: *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, Vol. 94, September 2016, Pages 18-27, cf.:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2016.05.006>



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# Findings of the study

- Program received positively by the participants
  - ✓ Informative, useful and credible
  - ✓ In some cases also frightening and worrying
- Positive effect on all participants
  - ✓ Attitude towards traffic safety
  - ✓ Traffic behaviour (decreases with time)
- Participants were affected both cognitively and emotionally
  - ✓ Female pupils more affected than male pupils
  - ✓ BSO (occupational) rather emotionally, ASO (general) rather cognitively



# What we learnt - Strengths

- Interactivity of the testimonials (max. 35 pupils)
- Direct confrontation with an actual witness
  - ✓ very educative and effective
  - ✓ leads to increased awareness of:
    - Need for safe behaviour in traffic
    - Risk of lifelong consequences of an accident
    - Impact of physical limitations / Process of mourning



# What we learnt – Strengths (2)

- Positive effects for the witnesses
  - ✓ An important step in the process of coping (*'giving it all a purpose'*)
  - ✓ A meaningful occupation of their time



# What we learnt - Weaknesses

- Often an individual initiative of a single teacher  
→ not all pupils in the participating school are reached
- Price of a testimonial (75 €) can be an obstacle
- Intended impact is not always achieved
- Notwithstanding the coordinated and active coaching, not all testimonials are given in the same way
- Some witnesses are hard to understand (due to ABI)



# What we learnt - Pitfalls

- Risk of too much focus on the personal story
  - traffic safety message gets lost
- Not possible to send Rondpunt associate along for each testimonial
  - only indirect monitoring



## What we learnt – Pitfalls (2)

- Stories do not always relate to the pupils' world
- Not all teachers organise proper preparatory and/or follow-up sessions
  - Pupils do not know what to expect
  - Pupils are left with their questions and worries (also outside the traffic safety subject, e.g. ABI)



# Planned improvements & expansions

- Increase promotion of the program
  - ✓ Go via the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade coordinator of the schools  
→ all pupils can attend a testimonial
  - ✓ Increase effort in provinces with low number of requests
  - ✓ Dedicated focus on the safety managers of companies



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# Planned improvements & expansions (2)

- Continuous improvement of testimonials
  - ✓ More focus on interaction with the pupils
  - ✓ Stress importance of preparatory session and follow-up sessions more actively
  - ✓ Organise focus group with pupils
    - Planned for this school year
    - Use feedback to further improve the program



# Thank you!

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