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## **Empowering youth organisations working on the field of alcohol**

**Amsterdam, 8th – 10th September 2014**

*Report of the event and the trainings*

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## **I. Introduction**

The event »Empowering youth organisations working on the field of alcohol« took place between 8th and 10th September in Amsterdam. The event was organised with the aim of joining the »Training for Project Leaders on how to implement a specific evidence-based alcohol intervention programme« from WP5 (Pilot testing phase and adaptation of the best practices on evidence based alcohol interventions in YO) and the »Training for trainers on how to conduct field studies« from WP7 (Empowerment of YO through law-enforcement). Additionally, it was decided among the project partners to add also »Training on alcohol advocacy and national consultations« covering WP6 (Review of existing alcohol legislation focusing on YP and suggestion for improvements) since in this way all three main areas of the project would be equally covered.

The reason the trainings were joined together was the additional European dimension of an event where many young people from different countries would gather together and discuss the topic of alcohol. From the previous APYN experiences, the international component and bringing many young people from different countries together in order to interact and share opinion, can have a great impact on the motivation of young people to continue with the further work on the topic.

Also for the purpose of promotion and dissemination it was easier to make a common thread as a youth activation story out of the trainings rather than just organise separate trainings at different times and locations.

### *Preparation and dissemination*

The preparation for the meeting started already in February 2014, with more intensive work from April 2014 on. The main partners involved were STAP and APYN. APYN was taking care of promotion, selection and communication with the participants, whereas STAP took care of arranging the accommodation and food and of the other logistical matters. Additionally, both partners collaborated in order to prepare the programme.

The event was promoted among collaborating partners and also among the participants of the Survey for mapping alcohol intervention programs that was disseminated earlier in the project. As the primary audience of the event were young people with already at

least some background on the field of alcohol, the event wasn't advertised to general public. Despite this the response was very good.

## **II. Event**

### *Specific goals of the training program*

- Inform the participating members of collaborating youth organizations about the evidence-based national and European alcohol policy measures.
- Inform participants about how to implement evidence-based alcohol intervention programs.
- Train the participants in how to implement field studies and how to assess the results of the field studies.

### *Overview of the participants*

Altogether, there were 42 participants from the following countries: Croatia, Turkey, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovenia, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Romania, Macedonia and the UK. Additionally, 5 APYN board and secretariat members were present (3 of which are employed on the project), as well as 3 representatives of STAP. All present APYN and STAP members acted as trainers, presenters and moderators of the activities.

Out of that:

- 14 participants participated in the Training on evidence-based interventions,
- 10 participated in Training on Youth research and law-enforcement and
- 19 in the Training on alcohol policies and national consultations.

When applying, the participants were able to choose the training of their own preference.

### *Logistics*

Participants were staying at the Shelter City Hostel (<http://www.shelter.nl>) in Amsterdam. They were assigned in 4-6 dorm bedrooms and separated by gender.

The training itself took place at a meeting venue at Groenburgwal 42 in Amsterdam.

Lunches were provided at the training venue, while the dinners were provided in the restaurants outside of city.

*Agenda*

	7th Sept	8th Sept	9th Sept	10th Sept	11th Sept
9:00	Arrivals/GA	Introduction, get to know each other activities	Workshops	Workshops	Departures
9:30					
10:00		Coffee break			
10:30		Basics of alcohol	Workshops	Workshops	
11:00					
11:30		Lunch			
12:00		Introduction to alcohol policy	Workshops	Workshops	
12:30					
13:00		Coffee break			
13:30		Case study: prevention practices in the Netherlands	Workshops	Presentations and closure	
14:00					
14:30		Dinner			
15:00					
15:30					
16:00					
16:30					
17:00					
17:30					
18:00					
18:30					

The sessions in red indicated collective activities among all participants, blue ones indicated plenary frontal presentations, while the green one indicated three parallel workshops.

**III. Programme of the training**

On the first day, there was a common introduction to the topic and the project. In the other two days, participants were working separately on a specific topic.

Detailed agenda of the 1st day was:

Morning:

- Introduction of the training: goal of the program, goal of the training and round of names, countries and organisations.
- Quiz about alcohol, health and alcohol policy (with green and red cards – agree or disagree about a specific fact).
- Presentation about basic facts of alcohol: health, health costs, statistics, culture, societal aspects, addiction etc.

Afternoon:

- Presentation of the Dutch national and European policies on alcohol, price, enforcement, marketing and education.
- Lecture: Prevention practices in the Netherlands.

Below you can find a detailed report about separate trainings.

a) **Training for Project Leaders on how to implement specific evidence-based alcohol intervention programmes**

The topics covered in the training were:

- Inventarisation of prevention activities of the organizations of the project leaders.
- Presentation of the existing scientific literature: what do we know about effectiveness of different prevention programs?
- Presentation and discussion about scientific and practical knowledge about mystery shopping and alcohol marketing.

### *Results of the training*

1. The project leaders were tested about their basic knowledge about alcohol and impact of drinking.
2. The project leaders were informed about recent scientific knowledge about health risk of harmful drinking, costs of harmful drinking for society and the existing alcohol policy measures on national and European level.
3. The project leaders were informed and later discussed about three main effective policy tools on how to prevent and reduce alcohol related harm on European and national level: price increase, restriction of availability and total ban on alcohol advertising, promotion and sponsorships.
4. The project leaders were informed about the criteria for evidence based prevention programs and they were trained how to bring these criteria in practice in their own organization.
5. The project leaders were trained about how to support and play a role in advocacy for effective alcohol prevention on local and national level. Specific attention was given to the specific risks of drinking in an early age, the role of NGOs and the strategies of the alcohol industry in how to influence the alcohol policy debate.
6. The project leaders were informed about the results of the EU/USA Transatlantic Dialogue on Underage Drinking (2010); this EU funded project resulted in concrete advises for advocates on how to lobby effectively for evidence based alcohol policy measures.
7. The project leaders were informed about the existing national and European alcohol marketing regulations and they were trained in how to assess the content of alcohol marketing practices and how to advise policy makers about effective alcohol marketing regulations.
8. The project leaders were informed about existing national laws regarding alcohol age limits, over-serving and about how to enforce these limits.
9. The project leaders were informed about different types of research they can promote and perform in their own country, and how they can use these data in their own organisation. They know how they can use some of these local data for (local) enforcement or how to influence (local) policy.

### *Results of the discussion with the participants*

1. Some project leaders stressed that implementing scientific knowledge about evidence based alcohol prevention programs in their own practice is a long-term process.
2. Some concluded that the members of their youth organisations can play an important role in influencing alcohol policy specifically because youngsters are a specific risk group for alcohol-related harm and alcohol marketing is often directed towards young people.
3. Those project leaders who are already involved in alcohol prevention activities in respective organizations commented that, although they realize after the training that alcohol education is a relative weak tool for changing drinking behaviour, they are more aware of the fact that strategies on how to raise awareness of alcohol related harm for the society are a very necessary tool for public and political support for policy change.
4. Some stressed that there is no money and real motivation for enforcement of alcohol laws by national governments. Because the national governments do not see any problems in alcohol abuse. They also realized that the alcohol industry and local sellers have a lot of influence on national and local alcohol policy. They hope that new research data can convince the national governments to be more involved in alcohol policy.
5. The project leaders discussed about the national alcohol laws. Some of them were not yet informed about the alcohol laws of their own country.

### **b) Training for Trainers on how to conduct field studies**

The topics covered in the training were:

- Presentations about the existing national alcohol laws in the EU member states, especially regarding age limits and alcohol marketing.
- Presentation and discussion about scientific and practical knowledge about mystery shopping and monitoring and assessing the impact of alcohol marketing
- Training on how to assess the compliance of alcohol marketing practices and of existing self-regulation measures from the alcohol industry.

- Translating the presented mystery shopping protocol for their own country and own organisation, given national and local laws and other policy practices.
- Explanation about other types of alcohol policy research young people can contribute to; one specific example was a research on how to monitor of alcohol consumption in bars and restaurants.
- How to make a plan of action (funding, training, protocol, policy-strategy, network, time-planning and communication of results).

### *Results of the training*

1. The trainers received the same basis information as the project leaders but were specifically trained in the practical aspects of fieldwork regarding alcohol age limits and assessing the impact of alcohol marketing.
2. The trainers were informed about existing national laws regarding alcohol age limits, over serving and alcohol marketing; they were also informed about how to enforce these limits.

The project leaders were informed about different types of research they can promote and implement in their own country, and how they can use these data in their own organisation and for their own advocacy role.

### *Conclusions of the training*

The main conclusions of the training were that the participants discovered in theory and in practice that their organization can really contribute to the implementation of effective alcohol policies. Field work seemed to be doable and the results were convincing. Especially regarding the compliance of age limits they were surprised how easy they can collect useful information on the condition that they use the existing proven research protocols in a strict way. They were convinced that their organizations could substantially contribute to the process of changing the alcohol policy in their respective countries.

### **c) Training on alcohol policy and national consultations**

The topics covered in the training were:

- The process of working package covering the consultations among young people about alcohol-related policies.
- What is advocacy and how can it be used to affect the attitude and behaviours of young people.
- What role do the “stake-holders” meetings within the Let it hAPYN project play.
- How shall the participants implement the Survey on the European Alcohol Strategy.
- How to organize a national consultation on alcohol.

#### *Results of the training*

1. The participants were informed about the “big picture” and the role that this working package has in the entire Let it hAPYN project.
2. The young leaders understood the role of advocacy in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm and the role the national consultations and stakeholders’ events play in it.
3. The young people were trained on how to carry out national consultations and stakeholders’ meetings and helped improve the guidelines of its implementation.
4. Participants contributed to the translation of the online survey about the European Alcohol Strategy and were trained on how to promote them among young people of their organization and countries.
5. Participants prepared different plans of implementation of national consultation activities and stakeholders’ meetings.

#### *Conclusions of the training*

We can sum up the conclusions of this training in mainly participants’ clearly understanding the purpose of this working package, the learning importance of identifying the local alcohol-laws and therefore connections with other working packages of this project. Young people were trained to become good implementers of the needed activities within the frames of the Let it hAPYN program and were presented with the real potential of implementation of the activities in their respective countries.

**Annexes:**

Annex 23A: Welcome pack for the participants

Annex 23B: Code of conduct for the participants

Annex 23C: Detailed agenda

Annex 23D: Presentations from the trainings