EVIDENCE BASED PRIMARY PREVENTION.  
20 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL WORK.  
JON SIGFUSSON ICSRA
Positive development for 18 years

Drunk last 30 days
- 42% in 1998
- 23% in 2000
- 17% in 2002
- 12% in 2004
- 9% in 2006
- 7% in 2008
- 5% in 2016

Daily smoking
- 32 in 1998
- 16 in 2000
- 14 in 2002
- 12 in 2004
- 10 in 2006
- 9 in 2008
- 6 in 2012
- 5 in 2015
- 3 in 2016

Cannabis once or more
- 25 in 1998
- 26 in 2000
- 26 in 2002
- 25 in 2004
- 18 in 2006
- 14 in 2008
- 9 in 2010
- 7 in 2012
- 5 in 2015
- 3 in 2016

Youth IN EUROPE
EVIDENCE-BASED DRUG PREVENTION
Substance use trend in several countries 15-16 year old adolescents

(Alcohol use past 30 days, ESPAD 2011)
Substance use trend in several countries 15-16 year old adolescents
(Alcohol use past 30 days, ESPAD)
Substance use trend in several countries 15-16 year old adolescents

(Alcohol use past 30 days, ESPAD 2011)
Substance Use Amongst European Youth
(ESPAD, 2011)

- Cigarette use past 30 days
- Alcohol use past 30 days
- Lifetime use of cannabis

Iceland

Malta

Lichtenstein
Substance Use Amongst European Youth
(ESPAD, 2011)

- Cigarette use past 30 days
- Alcohol use past 30 days
- Lifetime use of cannabis

Iceland
- Alcohol use past 30 days: 10
- Lifetime use of cannabis: 10

Malta
- Alcohol use past 30 days: 70
- Lifetime use of cannabis: 10

Lichtenstein
- Alcohol use past 30 days: 20
- Lifetime use of cannabis: 10

ALCOHOL USE
MALTA
Substance Use Amongst European Youth

(ESPAD, 2011)

Cigarette use past 30 days
Alcohol use past 30 days
Lifetime use of cannabis

ALCOHOL USE
ICELAND

Iceland
Malta
Lichtenstein
Substance Use Amongst European Youth
(ESPAD, 2011)
The role of research
Why research based?

Medicine
Engineering
Tourism
Fisheries
Pharmaceutical industries
Children’s lives, health and well-being
Indicators

Health status indicators, anxiety, depressive symptoms, physical health status, lifestyle and leisure time activities, local community networks, negative life events and strain, parents and family, peer group economic and psychological issues, studies and school, substance use, values and attitudes, violence and delinquency, and more...
The twofold use of research

1. Scientific
2. Practical
The scientific role of research

1. In depth analysis of the data
2. 70 peer reviewed publications in journals in Europe and USA
3. Science forms the platform for practice
The practical role of research

• Data collections on substance use regularly
• Practical information immediately to the municipalities
• Local information INTO all levels of prevention work is a KEY issue
Importance of frequent measuring

Every school, every parent, every prevention worker can see the current situation in their close community and can act accordingly.

Not 2-3 years later but almost immediately
Children's rights

• Children have the right to have a say about what they want, what they do and how they feel

• We have the obligation to make good use of what they tell us, react and constantly try to make their lives better.
What did we learn?
Upward trend 1992 - 1998

- Smoke daily
- Have tried hashish
The year is 1998

At this point of time research had already showed us that certain circumstances and behaviour in the lives of adolescents were strongly connected with use.

We tried to establish the risk and protective factors.
The main risk and protective factors

- Family factors
- Peer group effect
- Extracurricular activities, sports
- General well being
And analysing deeper

**Organized activities vs. unorganized**

**Extracurricular activities, sports**

**General well being**

**Family factors**
- Time spent with parents
- Support
- Monitoring
- Control

**Peer group effect**
- Positive and negative effects.
- How we as parents approach the peer group
- Staying outside late
- Hanging out in malls

Inside and outside of school, at home, bullying e.t.c.
Youth in Iceland core elements:

• Evidence base

• Community approach

• Research – policy – practise: dialogue
1998 Drug-free Iceland

- A totally new methodology in substance use prevention
- Obviously, what we had been doing before, was not working.
Just Say NO!

TO RESIST DRUGS AND VIOLENCE.

D.A.R.E.

TO RESIST DRUGS AND VIOLENCE.

D.A.R.E.

JUST SAY NO DRUGS
Aim of *Drug-free Iceland*

- To change the actual behaviour of youth and not only their attitudes
- Change the life-style environment of our children so that they would be in lesser risk of substance use
Our focus is primary prevention

• Primary prevention, preventing the development of substance use before it starts

• Secondary prevention, that refers to measures that detect substance use

• Tertiary prevention efforts that focus on people already abusing substances
Substance use follows cohorts

Sigfusdottir et al., 2011, *Global Health Promotion*
Substance use follows cohorts

Sigfusdottir et al., 2011, *Global Health Promotion*
What else would we tell the policy makers?
Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade who have become drunk in the last 30 days depending on if their friends become drunk one per month.
Percentage of girls in 9th and 10th grade who have become drunk in the last 30 days depending on how much time they spend with parents.

Strong connection between drinking alcohol and time spent with parents.
Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade who smoke daily depending on if they practice sports

Strong connection between smoking and participation in sports

Girls who smoke daily

Almost never | Up to 3 times pr. week | 4 times or more often

- 24.9%
- 9.9%
- 3.5%

Almost never Up to 3 times pr. week 4 times or more often
How were the findings used?
Examples of local actions

1. Research as a basis in policy making and actions
2. Strengthen parent organizations and co-operation
3. Support extracurricular activities / sports
4. Support active NGOs’
5. Support young people at risk inside schools
6. Form co-operative work groups against drugs
7. Anti smoking / drinking campaigns
Examples of national actions

1. Age limits to buy tobacco and alcohol (18 and 20)
2. Advertising ban of tobacco and alcohol
3. Restricted access to alcohol and tobacco
4. Rules on outside hours for adolescents
5. Visibility ban of tobacco and alcohol
Tobacco and chewing gum
Peanuts and Gin
The scientific isolation needed to be broken
The researchers “guru” approach
The way we work now
Focus on close community

• How could an average figure on alcohol use in your country help prevention workers in your municipality?

• “Average” doesn’t tell all the story!
Knowing is not enough
How do you act?
The Reykjavík City Leisure Card

The Leisure Card initiative is to guarantee that all children up to the age of 18 have the opportunity to engage in leisure activities outside school.

The city of Reykjavik allocates approximately EUR 4,000,000, yearly to Leisure Card.
What else is gained?

Less health problems
Less crime / imprisonments
Less social benefits cost
Less unemployment
Less rehabilitation cost
Less broken families etc., etc.
What has changed?
Increased participation in organized leisure time activities

Percentage of students in 9th grade that participate in sports in a sports club four times per week or more
Parents and children spend more time together

Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade who spend time (often/almost always) with their parents during weekdays
Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade who have been out after 10 pm (3 times or more) in the past week
My parents know where I am in the evenings (applies very or rather well to me) 9th and 10th grade
...and substance use is going down
Youth in Europe started 2005.

Substance use down by 50% in 8 years.
Youth in Europe until 2015
The To-Do list

1. Map the situation in the local conditions
2. From the data find the local risk and protective factors
3. Address these factors through local community work
4. Form local networks from all institutions of the municipality
5. Give immediate, practical information out quickly
6. Measure regularly and frequently
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Thank you
Icelandic Model publications


