Project number: 710063

Project title:
ALLCOOL - Raising awareness and action-research on Heavy Episodic Drinking among low income youth and young adults in Southern Europe

LOCAL PILOT INTERVENTION
Bologna - ITALY

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| **Level of intervention** | The intervention will involve fifty youths aged over 18 years, with low income and unemployed, attending the Vocational Training Centres of Bologna (CFP), with the aim of transmitting and spreading good practices and reducing damage with respect to alcoholic substance abuse. The CFPs deal with welcoming students who must complete their compulsory schooling; these are youngsters who have had drop-out episodes during their school careers. The training pathway is three years long and is aimed at achieving the vocational qualifications relating to various types of tasks (system mechanic, electrical plants, thermos-hydraulics, car repairs, tourism worker, sales worker). It also includes an alternation between theoretical periods in the classroom and placements in working contexts, coordinated by professional figures (tutors) who mediate between the theoretical part and the practical part, fostering the development of transversal skills. |
| **Problems and needs** | It is a school-age population with particular social vulnerabilities (low-income families, working precarity of the parents, reports to the social services of the youth or the family nucleus), characterized by a strong presence of people with a disadvantaged socio-economic background and first and second-generation immigrants. |
| **Goals and Aims** | The main aim is finalized to the dissemination of good practices in respect to the fight against alcoholic substance abuse, and is addressed to the increase in awareness and the evaluation of the risks and the dangers correlate to the consumption of alcohol, especially Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED). We will train 50 youngsters (Peers) of adult age who attend the CFPs so as to co-construct a knowledge and a competence on the evaluation of the risks and the dangers correlated to the consumption of alcohol and specifically to the episodes of HED, with particular attention to the trend towards the normalization of abuse and the identification of the behaviours. In a perspective of health promotion, we will deepen how alcohol abuse is becoming a widespread custom, accepted and planned among the young, within a reality in which the market proposes low-priced goods and a clandestine trade in alcoholic beverages emerges. Some aspects connected to the acceptance of the damage and the malaise provoked by alcohol abuse, which will be dealt with as individual issues and not as collective ones, redrafting inclusive models that alter social self-control. The planned work will make the youths involved active, using their experiential knowhow and the subjective experiences that most of the social and therapeutic contexts instead tend to belittle and not consider as an active part of health promotion. |

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Activities

There will be two meetings with the teachers and the tutors of the CFPs in order to provide relevant tools for the relationships with the youngsters during the training year and not only for the targeted training interventions. For the youngsters, divided into two groups, there will be three meetings and the creation of a closed Facebook group.

1) A first formative/informative meeting is scheduled with the teachers and the tutors of the CFPs, conducted by the experts of the sector involved in the consultative forums of the ALLCOOL project, in which the issues related to the health and the psycho-social aspects will be deepened (alcohol in history, from drug to food, the acute and chronic alcohol-induced damage, the consequences on the relational and psychological aspects).

At the end of the activity, a second follow-up and assessment meeting will take place.

2) Training addressed to fifty adult youngster who attend the CFP chosen by the tutors on the grounds of their motivations and communicative capacities. The youngsters will be divided into two groups, and three meetings are scheduled for each group. The meetings will last about three hours. An interactive methodology will be used finalized to the design of in situ interventions by means of a peer education pathway1.

The aim is to a) sensitize the adolescents on the issues of the risk and the abuse of alcoholic substances; b) provide adequate instruments in order to enable the peers to communication in the peer group they frequent in places of socialization, working on the communication of risk and on the capacity to deepen behaviours like the one investigated (HED); c) create a network among youths, project operator and teachers.

2.1 In the first meeting with the sector experts (the imagined research), starting from the mutual acquaintances of the youngsters and from their accounts, the dimension of the phenomenon will be analysed, the risks connected to consumption, the negative practices, the main techniques for damage reduction, the protective practices to be adopted when alcohol is consumed.

2.2 In the second meeting (Development of the interview instrument), managed by professional o prevention, the health education materials provided

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1 Peer education is an efficacious technique that allows for the use of youth languages and slangs, it makes the youngsters the protagonists of the experience and uses the group as the place for learning and transmission of information, starting from the individual representation to the communication of risk, as the fundamental aspect in the paths of growth and experience of the self (“risk taking” vs. “sensation seeking”).

The expression ‘peer education,’ which can be understood as education among people of equal standing, generally speaking indicates the reciprocal passage of information between people who are of similar age, status and experience without there being a relationship of power. However, under this definition many different approaches can be found, and there is a lack of an adequate theoretical reference, hence peer education is configured as a working methodology on the field (Zani and Cicognani, 2000).

As such it historically dates back to the 1920s and has attracted growing interest since the 1970s in Europe; in Italy, it was introduced in the 1990s. This methodology owes its success, above all within the scope of prevention in adolescence, to the fact that the peer group becomes central starting from puberty, as the crossroads of learning, a place of encounter and definition of one’s own identity. Indeed, it refers to the concept of social influence (Pellai, 2002); it aims to exploit the natural tendency of the peers to have an influence on their same-same group, so as to orient it in terms of an educational objective and to make the youngsters themselves the actors in their own educational process; the adult’s role is that of facilitator of the educational processes and trainer of the leaders. Education among peers is used in projects for health promotion in relation to different themes: from the prevention of risky sexual behaviours to the use of substances, up to the promotion of wellbeing and the education to lawfullness.

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at the first meeting will be re-elaborated, so as to translate them into a language that can be used by the youngsters with their peers in pathways of sensitization and evaluation of the risks and the dangers linked to the HED phenomenon. In particular, work will be done for the co-construction of a short interview that the peers will use to investigate the level of knowledge of the phenomenon among their peers. The most effective means to realize the interview will also be identified.

2.3 In the third meeting (Follow-up interview), the results of the interview will be analysed; at the meeting experts of the sector involved in the project will also attend.

3 A closed Facebook (FB) group will be created, where informative materials and lines to thematic sites will be made available. The participants will be able to upload and download information2.

N.B. We believe it to be fundamental that the products realized with the youngsters should maintain an easily comprehensible language, so that the knowledge acquired during the training can be fruitfully used in the places where the peers come together. The intervention scheduled by the peers will take place in places and situations where alcohol is consumed. Situations in which the actions of the youngsters, based chiefly in experience, on the capacity to speak the same language, will construct possibilities to transmit knowhow and knowledge useful for socializing practices for the reduction of the damage relating to alcohol abuse in general and to HED in particular.

### Duration
- The intervention will start in October 2017 and will end in November 2017.

### Expected outcomes
- formation of a group of peer educators capable of sensitizing their peers on the risks correlated to the HED phenomenon and of promoting damage reduction practices.
- Developing a web platform through the closed FB group in which materials and information can be exchanged between experts and peers.

### Expected Barriers
- The students of the CFPs belong to a socially disadvantaged area, they manifest various evolving cultural identities, in many cases they are first or second-generation immigrants. The scholastic shortcomings and the abandonment of previous cycles of study are the characteristics that this specific target have in common.

The greatest difficulties consist in the communicative barriers between the academic knowledge of the experts and the youngster’s common sense. Another critical aspect concerns the real capacities of the peers to transmit the information to their peers in an effective way.

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2 The social network has become an instrument for work as well as an ambience for socialization and learning, according to a formative approach that has taken into account both the cognitive aspects and the affective ones, fundamental in the transmission of knowledge. The network allows for the acquisition of a new dimension and new forms of sociality, it is a virtual space that, however, is present in our real lives and allows us to meet, communicate, exchange, potential come (virtually) into contact with new knowledge.
### Stakeholders
Teachers and tutors of the CFPs, professionals involved in the research as consultants.

### Evaluation
There will be a qualitative type evaluation (according to the project)

### Dissemination
- The project results will be published on the website, on the Facebook page and on the Twitter account of the **Allcool project**.
- In March 2018 there will be a study congress with the teachers, tutors, students and parents to discuss the main project results.