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Project Click for Support

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The project coordination reports

Click for Support at a glance

The EU project “Click for Support” has been developed because digital techniques have a big influence on the daily life of young people. They are used for communication with friends, as an information source, shopping and more. One could even state that a part of young people’s life actually takes place online.

However, although those techniques play such a big role in young people’s life and a fraction cannot be reached through conventional prevention work, still, in terms of drug prevention, the internet is seldom used on a regular basis.

Web-based methods would provide an easy access to young people and have, compared to face-to-face interviews, proved to be a cost-effective way to reach them. Also, the possibilities of web-based offers are wide-spread. They can provide professional feedback on consumption patterns, raise knowledge on drugs and support the reduction of drug consumption interactively.

Another reason why web-based methods should be implemented in daily prevention work is the recent development in the field of new psychoactive substances, so called “legal highs” which is a big cause for concern. Typical for these substances is the low-threshold purchase via internet. However, there are very few web-based offers providing information or feedback on these substances.

Although standardized guidelines could promote the introduction of good-quality web-based interventions with a sound basis of professional knowledge, currently no such guidelines do exist. Therefore the main objective of “Click for Support” is the development of effective guidelines for the development and implementation of good-quality web-based interventions.

A second objective is to raise awareness on the importance of web-based techniques in the daily work of prevention workers. They should keep up with the techniques the target group uses on a daily basis. The focus of the project will be on young people with risky drug consumption.

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Kick-off meeting in Alden Biesen

After a successful kick-off meeting in Alden Biesen, a former Landcommanderij in Belgium, the project “Click for Support” which is funded by the EU is now fully underway.

The kick-off had been organized by our Belgian partner and members of the steering group “Centra voor Alcohol-en andere Drugsproblemen vzw (CAD)” who had put a great effort into making this event successful and allow the project partners to build up a good basis for the advancing of the project.

At the kick-off all necessary organizational issues were addressed, first decisions were made and the foundation for a successful cooperation was laid. Amongst other things a project logo was chosen, a professional LinkedIn network was established and has already been joined by all project partners.

We laid the groundwork for the national research which will provide us with an overview of already existing web-based interventions. We also determined the criteria those interventions had to meet in order to be taken into account while writing the guidelines.

Another topic was the planning of national workshops during which the topic of web-based interventions will be assessed together with the target group of young drug consumers. Amongst other things we discussed the concept of those workshops, possible ways to gather all necessary information and feedback from the participants and how to get them to participate in the first place.



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A first impression of the national researches

In the current phase of the project our 13 partners in Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Luxembourg and Germany are busy researching national web-based interventions and prevention offers. It became apparent that in some cases this was not an easy thing to do. Some partners had problems identifying web-based interventions that matched the defined criteria; others had problems getting all relevant information from the providers.

The first impression of the national research results is that we are dealing with very different initial situations in our different partner countries. In Luxemburg, Portugal and Slovakia no web-based interventions concerning illicit drugs, alcohol or similar approaches have been found. In other countries, e.g. in Germany, a variety of approaches have been identified.

At the same time the LWL has been researching international good-practice examples - until now good-practice examples have been identified in Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

We should also mention that the first milestones of the project already have been reached. The website for "Click for Support" has been built, a LinkedIn network has been established and a project leaflet has been designed and will soon be distributed.

Rebekka Steffens
Project coordination
LWL Coordination Office for Drug-Related Issues

Picture 1: Good-practice example from Australia "Clear your vision"



CLEAR YOUR VISION
a do-it-yourself guide to quitting cannabis

Do you think you have a problem with cannabis?
Are other people telling you that you have a problem?
This site may be able to help you take steps to change.

Choose a story...

Samir
Samir is 19 and has been smoking cannabis since he was 12. He has lived on the streets on and off for the last six months since his mum freaked out about him stealing money from her to score some cannabis.

Tara
Tara has just turned 16. She was suspended from school for getting into fights with other students and threatening the school principal.

Kiah
Kiah is almost 17 and lives with her mum and little brother. She is going to TAFE to complete her schooling. She wants to eventually go to uni and maybe do nursing.

Alex
Alex is 14. He lives with his mum and step dad and has just started Year 9 at the local high school. He hangs out with some of his mates on the weekends.

Do you need help or advice?
Call the Cannabis information helpline
1800 30 40 50*
*Free call nationally, standard call rates may apply from mobiles

ncpic
national cannabis prevention and information centre

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Reports from our partner countries

How the project started in Belgium

At the beginning of the project we at the “Centra voor Alcohol-en andere Drugsproblemen vzw (CAD)” had our hands full with organizing the kick-off meeting at Alden Biesen. However, it was only afterwards it felt like we were rolling and the project had started.

The first step after the kick-off was researching web-based interventions in Belgium for youngsters on illicit drugs. The following are some good-practice examples in Belgium:

Our first example is “Druglijn.be”, a well-known Flemish website with lots of information, self-assessment tools and incentives to change something. Users are invited to chat, phone or email about their questions on drugs, alcohol, gambling or gaming.

The CAD is pioneering in the domain of online assistance and care, so naturally we took some of our own websites into account. As a subject for further assessment “drughulp.be”, “cannabishulp.be” and “alcoholhulp.be” were chosen. All three websites contain an information section, a self-help section and an online assistance and care section with professional guidance.

Last but not least a rather new offer called “slicmkicken.be” addresses cannabis and alcohol and is especially designed for youngsters and young adults with mental difficulties.

The research phase is directly leading into preparing the workshops with young drug consumers which will take place at the end of May.

David Fraters
CAD Limburg, Belgium

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“Click for Support” in the Netherlands

As for a country with a reputation as ‘liberal’ towards drug-use and with very high internet and smart phone density, the number of websites and apps that complied with the criteria for our project was surprisingly low. A first inventory only found eight websites concerning prevention of drug-use for young people, some also provided apps. Most of them already went online years ago, whereas recently developed offers are exceedingly rare.

Most websites needed sign-ups and login details to thoroughly research the contents, and since time was limited, most of our information was gathered by interviewing the people behind the interventions. Although these people often proved difficult to contact, in the end most were very forthcoming in answering our questions very interested in the results of “Click for Support”.

While reviewing our research results, a few things stand out: Almost all websites and apps concerning drug use focus on cannabis. A few offers mention cocaine and GHB (Liquid Ecstasy), but new psychoactive substances like mephedrone or 4-FMP are not mentioned at all. Also, most websites use an intervention or treatment protocol based on some form of cognitive behavioural therapy.

There are some differences regarding the objectives of the interventions: While some of them advocate abstinence, others rather work towards self-control in using drugs. Most work with email or similar forms of contact, but a few work ‘live’ with chats.

The conclusion so far is that, besides from the relative scarcity of the interventions, the results are not necessarily surprising. Most of the assessed interventions started a couple of years ago when relatively new drugs like 4-FMP had not yet made much of an impression. Also, and probably more importantly, the production of a good-quality intervention needs resources. In the current poor financial climate, organisations tend to focus their efforts on the largest target groups. Therefore the concentration on cannabis-use seems to be an obvious choice.

For our workshops which we will conduct in the next phase of the project, we have been looking for young people, preferably current drug users. We will show those youngsters two of the assessed interventions and will hopefully get a good impression of their ideas and wishes. All in all, we are optimistic to gather valuable data that will provide the basis for development of useful guidelines.

Bert-Jan von Regteren
Tactus, Addiction Treatment, the Netherlands

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The Slovenian approach to “Click for Support”

At the beginning of “Click for Support” we at the “National Institute of Public Health” were uncertain what to expect and whether there would be any relevant web-based interventions in Slovenia. Therefore we were rather surprised to find a promising website called “DrogArt” that offers face-to-face and online counseling via email, Skype, forums and an application called “Reduser” which went online in 2013. The website addresses illicit drugs (especially club drugs and cocaine) and alcohol.

The provider of “DrogArt”, a humanitarian organization which was established in 2005 and started with online consulting in 2006, follows a holistic approach in their work with young drug consumers, including street work, workshops and online offers.

A professional team of therapists in the field of addiction has developed “Reduser” as an interactive tool for (self-)help with the purpose of promoting reduction and/or quitting of drug consumption. The app records the user’s goals regarding their own drug consumption, their consumption patterns, how they feel while consuming drugs and circumstances that trigger their cravings. Also, professional help is offered and the user is constantly encouraged to visit a consultant.

The theory behind the concept of “Reduser” is based on the assumption that the recording of consumption patterns will lead to a change of habits. The user is supposed to recognize the triggers that lead to consuming drugs and therefore try to avoid them.

We are now starting to prepare the workshops with young drug consumers for which we will invite young people who have been sent to us because of using drugs in school territories.

According to the project objectives the workshops will be done interactively (using computers, smart phones) in the office. We will have group discussions or use individual approaches in some cases. I am confident that those workshops with young drug consumers will be of great value for the development of effective guidelines.

Jasmina Vrečko
National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia

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Germany's web-based interventions – the current situation at first glance

In Germany 24 web-based intervention platforms with at least one interactive element (chat, forum, intervention programs, online help, etc.) for young adolescences have been identified. Those platforms offer their support in the prevention of legal and illegal drugs; three of them address cannabis and one is set up specifically for party-drugs (www.party-pack.de). However, only one of those programs (<https://legal-high-inhaltsstoffe.de>) aims at “legal highs”, which indicates the underrepresentation of these new drugs in the field of interactive web-based prevention in Germany.

Particularly mention should be made of four extensive web-based intervention programs; three of them developed through financing and collaboration of the “Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA)”, our national authority of health prevention. These programs offer interactive support in the prevention of cannabis (“Quit the shit”), alcohol (“Change your drinking”) and nicotine (“rauchfrei”). One additional interactive intervention programme (“Lass das Gras”) is run by a self-help association with smaller funding.

The cannabis prevention programme “Quit the Shit” has been online since 2004. Over a period of 50 days users of the program are asked to monitor their cannabis consumption over a personal log or diary and to participate in exercises involving risk-factors and control strategies. Afterwards they will achieve personal feedback from a professional.

Other drug-related prevention websites in Germany mostly offer the opportunity to get in contact with a professional in personal chats or moderated forums, as well drug-related quizzes.

The field of smart phone-based applications (“Apps”) for interactive drug-related prevention in Germany seems not very well developed yet. We only found two professionally provided examples: In the role-playing game-based atmosphere of “BADS - besser nüchtern - besser ankommen”, (provided by the organization “Bund gegen Alkohol und Drogen im Straßenverkehr” – BADS) the user is able to exercise personal driving skills in public traffic by car, either under normal abstinent conditions or under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. Different scenarios can be played in comic-style environment, decisions between the usage of Alcohol and drugs and responsible driving can be made.

In conclusion, we found a range of programs aiming at the prevention of drug consumption, whereby the governmentally funded, national prevention platforms contain a larger variety of interactive offers. Smaller providers are mostly associated with regional drug-prevention centres, restricted to their local clients.

Tanja Legenbauer und Moritz Noack
LWL-Universitätsklinik Hamm

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Taking a look at Austria's web-based intervention offers

First of all, Austrian web-based prevention offers seem to be mostly intended for information purposes and the dissemination of knowledge to the target group. Also, most websites are built in a „copy & paste style“ with only a moderate demand of interaction. Web-based interventions which fit our defined criteria completely could not be identified in Austria.

Still, there are some web-based offers worth mentioning:

“Checkvourdrugs” is a website maintained by a drug counseling center in Vienna called “ChEckiT! ChEckiT!”, an institution established in party settings with a high reputation in the party scene. Among other offers it provides pill testing and interaction in forums and blogs.

Two websites for drug prevention that are also missing the interactive aspect but have some interesting points nevertheless are on the one hand “Suchthausen” which is an offer for young people, designed by the department of drug prevention in Vorarlberg/Austria. The interesting aspect is that the content of the website has been developed by young people themselves, in workshops and editorial team-meetings, and could therefore provide some information regarding the inclusion of young people in the developing process.

The other offer worth mentioning is “Feel ok”, a project of a German, Swiss and Austrian cooperation. The website mainly provides information for teachers and pupils and is very successful in fulfilling this purpose. Also, the usability of the website is very easy. The focus of this offer is a rather global one and includes e.g. information on cannabis and alcohol but also on fitness and health issues in general.

However, because both of these offers don't include an interactive aspect, therefore we will try and find other offers to assess together with a focus group of young drug consumers and during interviews with those youngsters. Our plan for the assessments is to gather a group of young people from the secondary labour market, a target group from whom we know that drug consumption plays a role in their life. We are aware that the interviews have to be conducted very carefully to get all the information we need.

It remains to be seen what information we will be able to retrieve during the assessment phase. Still, the Austrian research group is very motivated and will give their best to gain as much valuable information as possible.

Andreas Reiter
Institute for the prevention of addictions and drug abuse

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Dissemination

Website and LinkedIn network

The “Centra voor Alcohol-en andere Drugsproblemen vzw (CAD)” is a part of the steering group for “Click for Support” and besides our part of researching and assessing national web-based interventions, we are mainly responsible for the dissemination of the project. Our main tasks in this role during the last weeks have been developing a dissemination plan for “Click for Support” and building up a project website. The website (www.clickforsupport.eu) will inform all stakeholders about the project, the timetable and the development of the guidelines.

To enable and promote a discussion about the different drafts of the guidelines, we also established a [LinkedIn network](#). Experts on the topic, prevention workers and other stakeholders will be invited to contribute to the discussion which will hopefully provide important input for the development of the guidelines. The network will also be used to keep each other updated about national events and developments relevant to the project.

David Fraters
CAD Limburg, Belgium

News

Interim conference

The next main event or “Click for Support” will be the Interim conference in Athens, Greece, which will take place in December 2014.

At this meeting three good-practice examples for web-based interventions will be presented and assessed. We will invite one expert for each offer to join the conference and provide us with all necessary information and expertise on the subject.

Other central topics will be the results of the national workshops with young drug consumers and the following country reports.

In Athens we will lay the groundwork for developing the first draft of the guidelines, discussing all important aspects that should be covered. We expect a high potential of discussion due to the different national findings and situations.

During the following months the first draft of the guidelines will be developed and discussed in our LinkedIn network, using the Delphi method. In this phase all partners, experts and other stakeholders are strongly encouraged to provide input and suggest changes and improvements to the guidelines.