



Localize It!

NEWSLETTER

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THE PROJECT

Münster • For reducing underage and heavy episodic drinking, action needs to be taken by the authorities closest to the citizens and where alcohol consumption actually takes place – that is on the local level. A coordinated local alcohol strategy has proven to be the most promising approach. Besides, the municipalities have the public responsibility and the power for implementing such a strategy and are therefore the appropriate authority for this task.

The EU-funded project “Localize It! – local strategies for reducing underage and heavy episodic drinking” aims to support municipalities in developing and implementing coordinated and custom-fit local alcohol strategies. Two municipalities each in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovakia will be supported by the national project partners who have extensive expertise in prevention work.

Seven different settings for alcohol prevention will be addressed, including parental work; schools; children in families with alcohol problems; alcohol in public space; party scenes, festivals, gastronomy & retail; refugees and traffic safety. For each setting, good practices will be collected, assessed and exchanged at a European conference on 13-14 March 2018. These good practices will serve as a catalogue of measures for the individual local action plans.

SAVE THE DATE

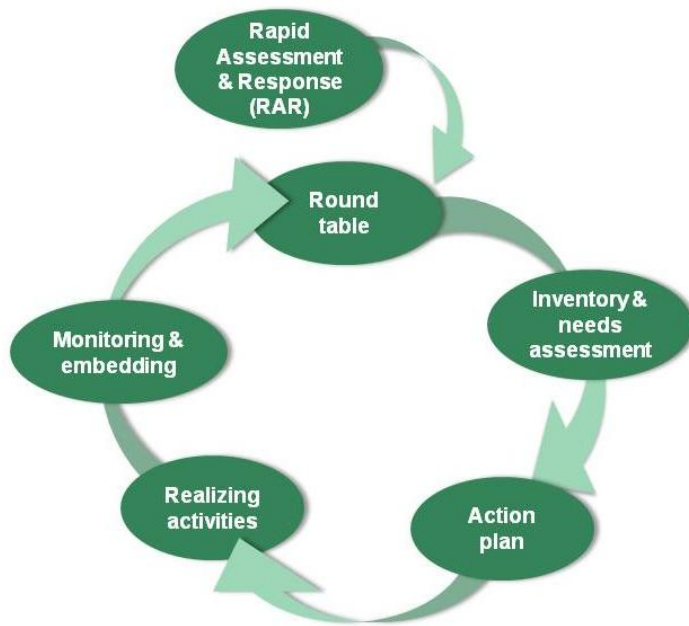
→ **Localize It! –
European conference,**
Münster, Germany, 13-
14 March 2018



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LWL

Für die Menschen.
Für Westfalen-Lippe.



The Rapid Assessment & Response (RAR) will provide an overview of the individual local situations and raise the awareness for the problem among relevant local actors. Round tables in each municipality will be set up to function as a steering group of the strategy. They will develop individual action plans for at least one of the seven settings, including at least four different – structural and individual – measures. A process and outcome evaluation (p. 7) will assess the development of local and European networks as well as the specific mea-

asures. Finally, a manual addressing European prevention experts and addiction facilities will be developed to raise the awareness for the problem of underage and heavy episodic drinking. It will summarize the options for actions and possibilities for the development of a local alcohol strategy. The manual will provide information on the local alcohol strategy concept, approaches for initiating the process, different settings that can be addressed by the strategy, cultural particularities, experiences of European experts with local alcohol strategies and good practices for individual and structural alcohol prevention.

Localize It! is coordinated by the LWL-Coordination Office for Drug-Related Issues in Münster, Germany.

KICK-OFF IN LUXEMBOURG



Rebekka Steffens
Project coordinator (LWL)

Luxembourg ▪ In May 2017, the consortium met for the project kick-off in Luxembourg where the partners got acquainted with their tasks and are now prepared to start the implementation in their regions.

The first obstacle partners have to overcome is to find two municipalities, if feasible one urban and one rural, where they can implement the project.

To initiate the communication process in the municipalities, partners have been prepared with a policy brief about local alcohol strategies and a flyer with information about the project. The next step for the partners is the RAR (Work Package 4) which will be carried out in each municipality to collect information about

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the alcohol consumption of young people and obtain a comprehensive picture of the local situation. During the kick-off, the partners have received instructions and tools for the RAR which have been prepared by the LWL.

In parallel, they will start the collection of good practices for individual and structural alcohol prevention for the settings mentioned above.

Besides the project partners, representatives of the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (Chafea) and of the DG SANTE participated in the kick-off meeting. They underlined their strong interest in "Localize It!" and their high expectations for the project's results.



The project managers met for the kick off in Luxembourg from 8-10 May 2017.

THE RAPID ASSESSMENT & RESPONSE (RAR)

Münster • Work Package 4 of the Localize It! project focuses on the Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) which will be carried out in each of the 22 to-be-chosen municipalities. The specific objectives of this Work Package are to provide an overview of the local situation concerning underage and heavy episodic drinking and to identify the areas with the highest demand for action. Further, with the RAR results, the aim is to raise the awareness of relevant people in the municipalities for the problem and to motivate them to take action.

For achieving the above, the RAR is a highly pragmatic approach. It has been developed as an alternative for traditional research methods, which have the tendency of being expensive and time-consuming in assessing and responding to complex health issues and behaviour

within a short time frame¹. The RAR is particularly suitable for rapidly investigating problems and collecting relevant information within the public health sector without relying on unscientific methods. The effectiveness of the RAR has been proven with various populations in different settings, e.g. by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The approach has been adapted by the Trimbos Institute (Netherlands) and has for example been used within the European research project SEARCH² which investigated the problematic substance use of refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.

In Localize It!, the RAR follows three steps:

1. Collection of local/regional context information about the alcohol consumption of young people between 12 and 25 years;
2. semi-structured interviews with 15-20 local key persons along key questions addressing perceived alcohol-related problems, settings and places where young people engage in heavy episodic drinking;
3. focus groups to discuss diverging views and inconsistent information with the respondents and draw conclusions on the basis of the results.

Prepared with the RAR results, partners will address their contact persons in the municipalities, e.g. health authorities, youth welfare offices and politics (mayor, city council, aldermen) and initiate the establishment of the round table with relevant local actors.

Beneficial side effects of the RAR within the Localize It! project are the establishment of first network structures which can later be useful for the implementation of the local alcohol strategy and the involvement of the target group and key actors right from the beginning. The results of the RAR will be available in January 2018.

¹ *Stimson, G.V., Fitch, C. & Rhodes, T. (1998). Rapid Assessment and Response Guide on Injecting Drug Use: Draft for Field Testing. Geneva: WHO.*

² <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/search>

THE PARTNERS

LOCAL ALCOHOL PREVENTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

(TACTUS ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTER)

Deventer ▪ In the Netherlands, we have many years of experience with alcohol prevention at the local level. In several municipalities, Tactus is involved in local projects, aiming at reducing the alcohol consumption among young people. The most successful interventions with this particular objective have an integrated approach in common. An integrated approach implies the involvement of multiple partners and addresses various factors which affect alcohol consumption. Alcohol prevention can never be aimed solely at the individual; it is just as important to influence the environment of the young drinker. For example, parents, schools, peers and alcohol distributors play an important role on the individual level.



Sonja Basemans

Tactus

Tactus gladly takes part in the 'Localize It!' project. Numerous good local prevention strategies are already being implemented in the Netherlands and we would like to share them with the other countries. We also believe that it is important to be able to learn from best practices in other countries. The community approach of the project fits well with the Dutch way of locally embedding addiction policies and the fact that several European countries are working together in this policy area can only make us stronger.

One of the municipalities with whom Tactus cooperates in combating alcohol abuse of young people is the municipality of Voorst. The Voorst alderman states: "Lowering the use of alcohol is not a project but a trajectory. Continuing commitment to prevention is the key to success." Currently, the collaboration with Voorst is in the embedding phase. There is already a high level of awareness about the dangers of alcohol abuse by young people and the responsible people know that real results can only be achieved in the long term. Now it is important to hold on to this subject and to ensure that there is permanent attention to this issue. That is the municipality's responsibility.

We expect that in the long term, most people will actually be aware of the dangers of alcohol consumption by young people and excessive alcohol consumption in general and will adapt their way of life to this. In the area of smoking, this development is already evident and can hopefully be realized likewise in the field of alcohol consumption.



EXPERIENCES WITH COMMUNITY PREVENTION IN PORTUGAL

(IREFREA)

Coimbra ▪ For several years, IREFREA has been developing and implementing community prevention projects. Because of their mobilizing capacity and their desire to get involved in areas of work linked to public health, municipalities have always played a central role in these projects. IREFREA always aims to involve the municipalities in order to:



Fernando Mendes
IREFREA

- ✓ enable and use synergy effects of actions within the areas of health, education, security forces, employment and sport;
- ✓ integrate different levels of administration;
- ✓ promote health education and citizenship as key pillars of intervention;
- ✓ strengthen social co-responsibility and promote active participation of citizens in municipal interventions;
- ✓ reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors in the community and
- ✓ to promote overall health and well-being.

Furthermore, cooperating with the municipalities facilitates an effective use of resources, creates and/or optimizes adequate responses to the issues at hand and promotes social support networks. Local prevention strategies can strengthen conditions favorable for a greater participation of local people and organizations; creating a greater sense of security, belonging and well-being.

Through IREFERA's activities in the municipalities, we have the opportunity to:

- ✓ prioritize the involvement of the educational sector in prevention and contribute to the awareness of health problems like alcohol and drug consumption;
- ✓ communicate the cooperation within different structures whenever useful;
- ✓ share information and elaborate instruments capable of fine-tuning interventions and
- ✓ share the results of our actions and promote the methodologies for other communities.

When the LWL challenged us to be part of the Localize It! project which addresses an area of intervention that increasingly concerns politicians, public, private organizations and in particular parents and educators, we felt we could make a difference by proposing this innovative intervention strategy. At the moment, we are in the process of selecting the municipalities to work with in Localize It! All of those we have contacted have voiced interest in joining or, if not capable, in following the project, receiving the information and profiting from the results.



We are now anxious to start working, to compare our experiences with the other countries involved and to disseminate our insights at regional, national and European level.

EVALUATE IT!

(GERMAN CENTER FOR ADDICTION RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD & ADOLESCENCE)

Hamburg ▪ Aside from the eleven project partners in the different European countries and the project coordination at the LWL, Localize It! has an additional project partner who is responsible for the evaluation of the project. Run by the German Center for Addiction Research in Childhood and Adolescence (Hamburg, Germany), Work Package 3 "Evaluation" aims at answering a range of questions, e.g. "How are local alcohol prevention networks established? How do they work and what factors contribute to an effective, well working network? What are the pitfalls in (and resources for) exchanging good practice examples for a reduction of underage and heavy episodic drinking between different countries?"



Silke Diestelkamp
UKE Hamburg

In addition to this structural perspective of alcohol prevention, the evaluation will also address the alcohol prevention measures which will be introduced in the participating municipalities. Municipalities will choose from a list of alcohol prevention measures which can be recommended as "good practice". But the best programme with the best evidence and theory base does not help much if it does not reach the target population or if it is difficult to implement under real-world conditions. Therefore, an important aspect of the evaluation of measures will be the question to which extent the measures reach the target population of underage and heavy episodic drinkers? Furthermore, it is of great interest which measures are most feasible for implementation and what resources are needed for implementation of different measures? In order to gather information on all these aspects, the evaluation will address the three levels (1) European network, (2) local round tables, and (3) alcohol prevention measures by analyzing qualitative as well as quantitative data.

In sum, the evaluation aims at making the whole process of the project Localize it!, i.e. European networking, good practice exchange, implementation of round tables on a local level, and introduction of alcohol prevention measures for young people transparent, so that other municipalities who would like to adopt the programme in the future can be informed by the lessons learned in this project.



BACKGROUND

THE JOINT ACTION RARHA (2014-2016) AND LOCAL ALCOHOL STRATEGIES



Münster ▪ Young people are especially at risk to experience alcohol-related harm; therefore, they have been a priority theme in the EU Alcohol Strategy and the focus of the Action Plan on Youth Drinking and Heavy Episodic Drinking (Binge Drinking) for 2014-2016. According to the EU Alcohol Strategy, the proportion of youth and young adults with harmful and hazardous consumption patterns has increased in many member states.

On this account, within the Work Package “Guidelines” of the Joint Action RARHA (Reducing alcohol-related harm), the LWL-Coordination Office for Drug-Related Issues has provided an overview of guidelines concerning young people’s alcohol consumption and has defined key recommendations for reducing alcohol-related harm for this group. In the course of this work, the subject of integrated local alcohol policies has been specifically addressed within a Delphi survey including about 60 European alcohol prevention and public health experts.

The importance of the local community’s role in preventing alcohol-related harm for young people has been stressed by the Delphi expert panel and it has been agreed that in order to realize the community’s potential, an integrated alcohol policy under the leadership of the municipality is required.

A widely shared view has been that for raising awareness and enforcing age limits, an

integrated alcohol policy with a combination of structural and individual prevention measures is needed. According to the experts, it should include a prohibition of drinking in public areas (e.g. parks, streets, squares), limited hours for selling alcohol in shops, bars and restaurants, and measures targeted to festivals and the nightlife scene (e.g. providing free transport). At the same time, local alcohol strategies need to aim at the individual, i.e. changing the drinking patterns of young people and adults.

In order to be successful, a local alcohol policy needs efficient cooperation of relevant actors in the municipalities and between municipal sectors. Actors who should be involved are the city or municipality council, local health authorities, schools, youth centres, leisure services, sports and music clubs, alcohol retailers (e.g. liquor stores, supermarkets, kiosks, petrol stations), bar owners/hospitality associations, social welfare and youth welfare offices, festival organizers and the media.

The indications of the Joint Action RARHA point out the importance of local action and policy to reduce alcohol-related harm. With “Localize It!”, we are promoting local action of politicians and prevention experts in European member states. For more information on the Joint Action RARHA, please visit www.rarha.eu.

LOCAL ALCOHOL STRATEGIES - EXAMPLES

Local alcohol strategies or policies are already being developed and implemented in several places, e.g. in Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands but also in New Zealand, Canada or in the United States. However, they are not implemented nationwide but rather sporadically and research evaluating these approaches is still scarce. Also, not many local alcohol policies focus on a combination of structural and individual measures but rather concentrate only on structural measures like alcohol bans and licensing.

Still, there are some successful examples of local alcohol policy initiatives, focusing on a combination of both structural and individual measures, including:

- “RADIX – Die Gemeinden Handeln”³ is an approach widely used in Switzerland for community-based health promotion and prevention, addressing alcohol and other substance use. The aim is an overall improvement of the quality of life in the community as well as protection of children and young people.
- In Germany the RADIX approach has been adopted e.g. for the project “Wegschauen ist keine Lösung” (looking away is no solution) in the Southwest of Germany and for “Stadt, Land, Alkohol” (City, country, alcohol) in the West.
- The German model “HaLT – Hart am Limit” (close to the limit) includes a reactive and a proactive element. The proactive element is basically a local alcohol strategy, aiming at preventing risky alcohol consumption of young people. The approach is based on the cooperation of the local network.⁴
- The approaches of the cities of Winterthur⁵, Zurich⁶ and St. Gallen⁷ in Switzerland to engage local actors in the protection of youth against alcohol-related harm.
- Stockholm (Sweden), the STAD-model including mobilization, training in responsible beverage service, and improved enforcement. STAD is currently being implemented within the EU-funded project “STAD in Europe” in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Spain, UK, Germany and Sweden. Seven tailored STAD-based interventions will be developed in the project duration.⁸

³ <https://www.radix.ch/Gesunde-Gemeinden/Alkohol-und-Tabakpraevention/Alkoholpraevention/Pa1DO/>

⁴ <http://www.halt-projekt.de>

⁵ <https://stadt.winterthur.ch/themen/leben-in-winterthur/alter-gesundheit-und-soziales/sucht/suchtpolitik-winterthur-1>

⁶ https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/ssd/de/index/gesundheit_und_praevention/suchtpraevention/familie_freizeit/jugendschutz1.html

⁷ <http://www.stadt.sg.ch/home/gesellschaft-sicherheit/jugendliche/drogen-alkohol-suchtmittel.html>

⁸ For more information, visit <http://stadineurope.eu/>.

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF LOCAL SELF-ADMINISTRATION

The increasing role of local democracy in the European political spectrum led to the adoption of the European Charter of Local Self-Government as a treaty of the Council of Europe which has entered into force in 1988. The Charter has been the first international binding treaty guaranteeing the rights and obligations of communities and their elected authorities and affirming their role as the first level for exercising democracy. It has become the benchmark international treaty in this area.

All Council of Europe member states are Parties to the Charter. By ratifying the Charter, the countries are bound by its provisions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities ensures that these principles are observed. The Charter commits the

Parties to applying basic rules guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities. The principle of local self-government shall be recognized in national legislation and in the constitution and the principles of local self-government contained in the Charter apply to all the categories of local authorities. It further proclaims that public responsibilities should be preferably exercised by the authorities closest to the citizens. This is exactly where Localize It! comes in since health issues and the prevention of alcohol-related harm are part of those public responsibilities.

→ [The charter is available for download here](#)

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