Evidence Based Primary Prevention

The Icelandic Model

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ICSRA
Introduction
Reykjavik in the summer of 1997
Iceland knows how to stop teen substance abuse

But the rest of the world isn’t listening
Based on the Icelandic Prevention Model

From highest to lowest in substance use – 15/16 year old students
Heavy episodic drinking in the last 30 days*

*ESPAD 2015
Iceland knows how to stop teen substance abuse but the rest of the world isn’t listening

In Iceland, teenage smoking, drinking and drug use have been radically cut in the past 20 years. Emma Young finds out how they did it, and why other countries won’t follow suit

Emma Young | Tuesday 17 January 2017 | 1 comment
Easily Transferable

• The Model can be implemented in any community
• Everywhere parents are afraid that their children start using drugs
• If the solution is there, why not at least give it a try?
Substance Use Amongst European Youth

(ESPAD, 2015)

![Bar chart comparing cigarette use, drunk past 30 days, and lifetime use of cannabis in Iceland and Malta.](chart.png)
Building blocks
The three pillars of success

The Icelandic model is predicated upon three pillars:

1) Evidence-based practice
2) Using a community-based approach
3) Creating and maintaining a dialogue among research, policy and practice
Upon reflection

evidence
community
dialogue
Why research based?

• Medicine
• Engineering
• Tourism
• Fisheries
• Pharmaceutical industries
• Children’s lives, health and well-being
Youth in Iceland database 1992 - 2018

Data collections in schools

- 10 – 13 year old (since 2000) Primary school
- 14 – 16 year old (since 1992) Primary school
- 16 – 20 year old (since 1992) High-school
Indicators
The twofold use of research

1. Scientific
2. Practical
The scientific role of research

- In depth analysis of the data
- Over 100 peer reviewed publications in international journals
- 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
Sophisticated data systems

- Guarantee immediate feedback to municipalities, schools and practitioners about the local situation amongst youth.

- Speed and accuracy
From research to practice

1. Don’t steer blind...

2. ...but set sail based on knowledge!
What did we learn?
Analysis

• We learnt several things
• Use of substances on an upward trend
The year is 1998

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

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

- Family factors
- Peer group effect
- General well being
- Extracurricular activities, sports
Strong connection between drinking alcohol and time spent with parents

Girls who have become drunk last 30 days

- Almost never: 42%
- Seldom: 27.8%
- Sometimes: 17.6%
- Often: 12%
- Almost always: 10.4%
Strong connection between smoking and participation in sports

Girls who smoke daily

- Almost never: 24.9
- Up to 3 times per week: 9.9
- 4 times or more often: 3.5
And analysing deeper

Organized activities vs. unorganized

Extracurricular activities, sports

Family factors

General well being

Peer group effect

Time spent with parents Support, Monitoring, Control

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.
1998 Drug-free Iceland

• A totally new methodology in substance use prevention

• Obviously, what we had been doing before, was not working
We had been doing this
Remember this?
SEE THE HORRORS
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
Digging deeper
Substance use follows cohorts

- **Children born 1985**
  - 13 years: 20%
  - 14 years: 57%
  - 15 years: 41%

- **Children born 1991**
  - 13 years: 20%
  - 14 years: 10%
  - 15 years: 10%
Alcohol onset – From the 2009 Nordic Youth Study

![Graph showing alcohol onset from the 2009 Nordic Youth Study. The x-axis represents age, ranging from ‘Never’ to ‘18 years or older.’ The y-axis represents the percentage of young people who started drinking alcohol. The graph shows data for Åland Islands, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Faroe Islands, and Greenland. The peak onset age is between 16 and 17 years old.](image-url)
Alcohol onset – From the 2009 Nordic Youth Study
Alcohol use trend in Icelandic High-Schools 16 - 20 year old students
Alcohol use trend in Icelandic High-Schools 16 - 20 year old students
Drunk past 30 days – once or more often

15-16 year old students in 1998: 42%
Under 18 year old students in High-school in 2016: 25%
Never got drunk in lifetime
High-Schools 16 - 20 year old students
Quote from NIH*

“Underage drinking is a leading public health problem. People who reported starting to drink before the age of 15 were four times more likely to report meeting the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives”

* National Institute of Health
Our focus is primary prevention

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

2. Secondary prevention, that refers to measures that detect substance use

3. Tertiary prevention efforts that focus on people already abusing substances
How were the findings used?
This we knew was important

Family factors

Extracurricular activities, sports

Peer group effect

General well being
Examples of local/community actions

- Research as a basis before deciding on any actions
- Strengthen parent organizations and co-operation
- Support young people at risk inside schools
- Form co-operative work groups against drugs
- Support active NGOs’
- Support extracurricular activities / sports
Leisure time of adolescents
Leisure time of adolescents

+ 70% of awake time
Reykjavik City grants to organizations NGO´s in the year 2015

Total grants around 7% of the overall budget of the City

- Youth- and Sports Organizations Euro 48 m.
- Youth clubs/centres, after school activities Euro 24 m.
- Cultural organizations Euro 14 m.
- Music schools and schoolbands Euro 8 millj.
- The Leisure Card – Euro 6 millj.
The Leisure Card

• The grant is **400 Euro pr. child** since the beginning of 2017.
• Parents have the right to allocate / transfer a certain amount in the name of their child, to refund the registration fees.
• The purpose of the Leisure Card is that all children and adolescents in Reykjavik 6-18 years old can participate in constructive leisure activities regardless of economic or social circumstances.
Registration for activities - development

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<td>16-18 years old</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>87%</td>
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Examples of national/government actions

- Age limits to buy tobacco and alcohol (18 and 20)
- Age of adulthood raised from 16 to 18
- Advertising ban of tobacco and alcohol
- Guidelines on outside hours for adolescents
- Visibility ban of tobacco and alcohol
Tobacco and chewing gum
Peanuts and gin
Community focus
Focus on close community

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

“Average” doesn’t tell all the story!
Focus on the close community

Denmark

• Helsingor
• Esbjerg
Local information fuels dialogue

Dialogue between key stakeholders
Politicians, municipalities and local authorities
Parental groups and family planners
School authorities and school workers
Health educators, health and social services
Leisure time workers, prevention workers
Sports and youth institutions
Actual status

“First time we see the actual status of youth in the community”. 
Impact
“My parents know where I am in the evenings” (applies very or rather well to me) 9th and 10th grade
Rates of students in 9th and 10th grade who have been outside after 10 pm, 3 times+ in the past week
Percentage of students in 9th and 10th grade that participate in sports in a sports club four times per week or more

Increased participation in extracurricular activities
And substance use is going down
REMINDER

Long term population changes will require long-term, population level, interventions.

Short term, individual level interventions are appropriate to achieve short term, individual level, changes.
International Development
International development of the Model

Youth in Europe started 2005
The three “logical” pillars of success

1. Evidence
2. Community
3. Dialogue
Municipalities become members

Fees for the full guidance program for 5 years?

Ten to fourteen thousand Euros pr. annum average

For the full program, guidance and support
Immediate local feedback

- Practical information out immediately after data collection
- Local information within weeks of data collection
Comments from the cities

“Data from research is now used as a basis for decision making”

“Information from data is already having impact on policymaking”

“The Planet Youth method is a successful step in drug prevention”

“Empirical data is of vital support in our work today”
Data Center
Data Processing and Coordination Center (DPCC)

• This is where our data processing and coordination center comes in
Guidance and coordination

Cross cultural Co-ordination

Local training, Translation methods, Questionnaires, Sampling, Printing, Layout, Implementation, School approach, Optical scanning, Delivery of data to Data processing and coordination center (DPCC), Quality control, Reports and data, and more
Guidance

Hands on cooperation for five years for best results.

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Chronological order of work processes

**Community / Municipality**

- Appointing of contact person
- Appointing of local work team
- Translation of questionnaire / Back translation
- Drawing of a sample (where needed)
- School contact and preparation of questionnaire implementation

**ICSRA / Data processing center**

- Local training on methodology and coordination
- Joint questionnaire preparation
- Coordinated questionnaire layout in all languages / setup
- Guidelines for school approach
- Guidelines for questionnaire printing
Continued

**Community / Municipality**

- Printing of questionnaire and confidential envelopes
- Delivery of questionnaires to schools
- Scanning of questionnaires to PDF/TIFF
- Delivery of files to cloud
- Technical report

**ICSRA / Data processing center**

- Optical data capturing
- Verifying of data / quality control
- Data cleaning / data processing
- Delivery of full report / descriptive
- Delivery of dataset
- Follow-up
Overview of adolescents lives

• Substance use – all categories
• Parental factors – support, monitoring, caring, warmth and more
• Peer group effect
• Leisure time – sports, youth activities
• Mental and physical health
Global reach

As of 2018 we have partnered with a total of 58 communities in Chile, Portugal, Spain, France, Malta, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Faeroe Islands, Netherlands, Ireland, Ukraine, Kenya and Guinea-Bissau.
Planetyouth.org

- Overview of publications
- Members area with more info on processes
- News
- Overview of the team
- Our history
- The method
- Examples from our data collection
- Applications and contact us forms
Upcoming workshop in Iceland
6th to 8th March 2019

www.planetyouth.org
Thank you!

www.planetyouth.org
Icelandic Model publications


