

No Excuse Slovenia – the model for youth empowerment and participation



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Description of the project including the project's goal

*Although No Excuse Slovenia is a youth organization, it was established mainly to carry out the No Excuse Slovenia campaign.

Aims

The main aim is to achieve positive social change and personal growth of young people to foster their social participation and activate their peers. By peer-to-peer and intergenerational dialogue the project aims at raising awareness about actual topics and encouraging their critical thinking.

Through various activities the campaign promotes and advocates for sustainable development, tolerance, healthy lifestyle, active citizenship and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the society.

Project's objectives, activities and achievements

Objectives

The main objectives are :

- to transform at least 50 new young people aged 15-16 in activists of change on three levels – themselves, their peers and the society on the fields of healthy lifestyle and sustainable development ;
- to stimulate personal growth of the older members through a detailed competence achievement model ;
- to reach at least 40% of all young people in the age of 12 and 15 in Slovenia in 2011, 45% in 2012 (reached 48,6%) and at least 90% by end of 2016/17 school year.
- To keep the structure of members and leaders of the organization 100% within the age of 15 and 30.

In order to understand the youth work that is happening in No Excuse Slovenia, we would like to illustrate how does our peer education (peer-to-peer; P2P) concept work. The P2P education in No Excuse Slovenia is aiming at two age groups:

- 15 to 25 years – the peer educators (activists) and
- 12 to 19 years – the listeners.

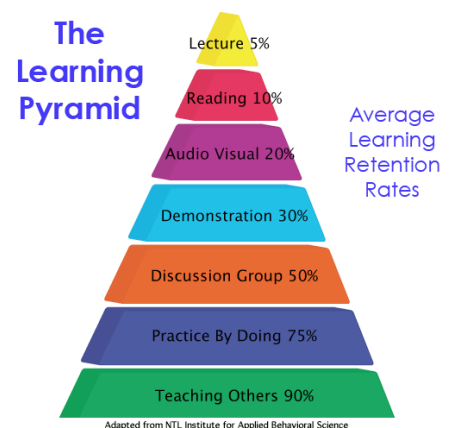
The listeners

The listeners are approached in classrooms (i.e. with non-formal education in a formal environment) in Slovenian schools with 45 – 90 minutes interactive workshops on different topics (e.g. tobacco, alcohol, climate change, active citizenship). The primal goal of the workshops is not the behavioral change (although a side-effect of the workshops can be this) of the listeners, but raising awareness about a certain topic. As we all see that the above-mentioned topics can be very quickly considered as cliché by the listeners, we are addressing those topics from a different angle – the economic interest/ backgrounds of the industries selling their products and services (e.g. tobacco and alcohol industry, media)

The outreach of the tobacco and alcohol workshops in Slovenia is 13,6% in 2009, 19,8% in 2010 and 25% in 2011 (the goal) of the total 12 and 15 years olds that are the target group for this topics, while for the climate change and sustainable development workshops in Slovenia is 4,7% in 2010 and 8% in 2011 (the goal). The number of listeners in Slovenia varies from year to year and differs by elementary/ high schools. Just as an example, for tobacco and alcohol 25% in 2011 would mean 12.500 informed young people out of approximately 50.000 between the age of 12 and 15 in eleven (out of twelve) Slovenian regions.

Peer educators/ activists

When it comes to the peer educators, the training process on different topics is aiming at the development of critical consciousness, that focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the topics, allowing the perception and exposure of perceived social and political contradictions. The activists are also motivated to take action not only by raising awareness campaigns to the above mentioned listeners but also, later in life, in media, political or others stakeholders' advocacy on different topics. The average age when peer educators join our organization is from 15 to 17 years old.



The peer educators in No Excuse Slovenia are not just informed and interested in different topics (e.g. healthy lifestyle, sustainable development, inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities), but also trained on different social skills (e.g. how to resist peer-pressure, effective time management, personal-professional goals, rhetorics and public speaking) mostly by more experienced peers.

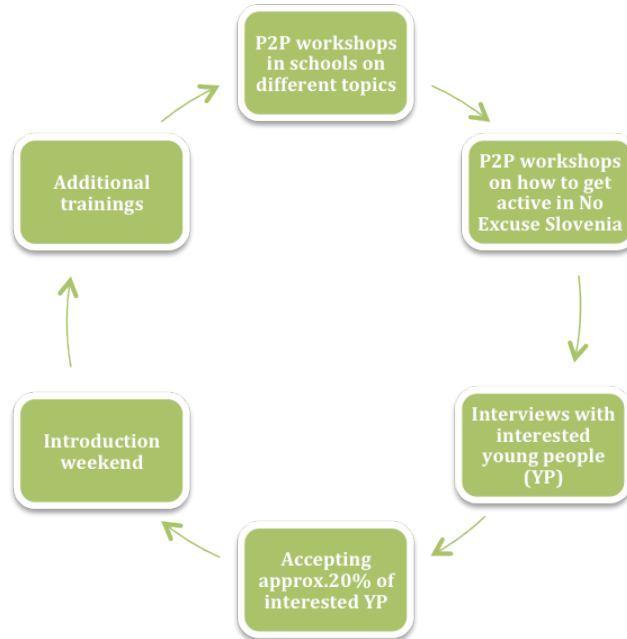
In contrast with the listeners, the planned goal is behavioural change (e.g. tobacco-products or alcohol products free lifestyle or against harmful drinking or responsible environmental-friendly lifestyle), although we don't motivate anyone to, for example, quit smoking or drinking or to start recycling per sé. Having the title »peer-educators«, a young person will either stay active with the group and believe in what he/she is spreading, or voluntarily leave the group.

However, sometimes it still happens that there are young people that don't believe in

»what they are preaching« and are still members of the youth organization. In these cases this person gets additional guidance from more experience peers and are included in additional activities where his/her critical thinking is challenged.

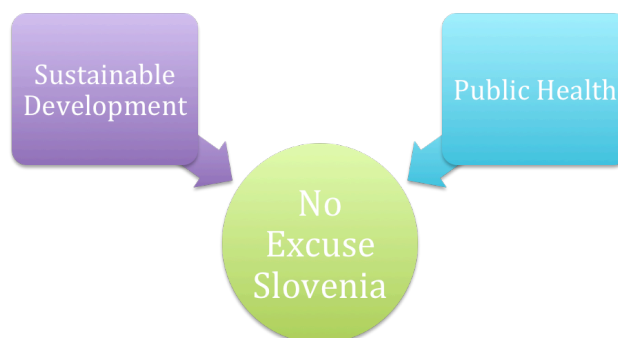
The activists are introduced into project work where they teach others about certain topics, as being an effective method for getting-to-know the subjects. During the »acquiring the knowledge« part, the activists are going through a series of different methods, including reading, interactive presentations, various demonstrations, discussions groups, learning by doing examples and »teaching the others« part.

The circle of P2P training for activists in No Excuse



The working fields

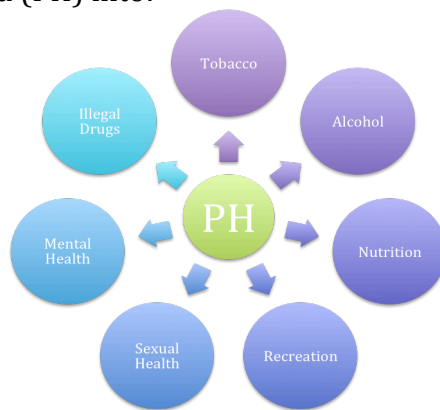
No Excuse Slovenia works on two main fields – public health (health promotion) and sustainable development.



The sustainable development field (SD) is then split into:



While the public health field (PH) into:



We are furthermore developing the third field – the connection between the two fields – i.e. the environmental and health field:



How young people were involved.

The No Excuse Slovenia as a totally youth-led and youth-developed campaign that started in 2006 by a 20-year old.

Youth has been involved in all steps of the project – preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up.

The recruiting process can be found in the previous point.

The project wasn't part of any ongoing youth participation activities.

Project funding

The campaign is 100% funded by non-private sponsors. The main founders are the European Commission, 3 Slovenian Ministries, 7 Slovenian Municipalities and private contributions by members and participants at its international activities.

The project leaders (within No Excuse Slovenia campaign) are responsible for their own fund-raising. No report in English available.

Project's connections to national or international environment processes

The National Youth Programme (just adapted), the Ministry of Health's Action Plan on Tobacco, Guidelines of the Inter-ministerial Group for Alcohol Policy

Follow up, outcomes and future plans

Ongoing until 2016. No follow-up determined yet.