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Project title:

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

Project beneficiaries: Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento, Spora Sinergies SCCL, Azienda Unita
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Evaluation Intermediate Report

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Short background:

ALLCOOL is a project where a consortium of research and collaborating stakeholders in 3 South European countries (Portugal, Spain and Italy) aim to tackle the growing trend of Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED) in the region. More research is needed to analyse the relationship between HED and lower socio-economic youth and young adults (15-30 years old).

This is particularly relevant in Southern European countries going through a socioeconomic crisis, with increasing unemployment rates especially among recently graduated students and decreasing family income.

By promoting healthy lifestyles, filling research gaps and implementing innovative and replicable local interventions focusing on prevention of heavy episodic drinking among youth this project will: 1) promote good health among EU youth population; 2) in the long-term, contribute to the sustainability of the health systems and healthy work forces.

This document is the evaluation intermediate report of the ALLCOOL project. The first year of the ALLCOOL project has three main activities: Dissemination (Work Package 2), Research (Work Package 3) and Consultative Forums (Work Package 4). Nevertheless, the Coordination has an important role, namely through the project Meetings. So we are going to do an analysis by Work Package.

Work Package Coordination (WP0)

The three Projects Meetings were evaluated by the participants. The evaluation increases between the first and the second Project Meeting and then remains stable between in the second and the third Project Meeting. In a scale of 4 points (1 = needs improvement; 4 = excellent), the overall evaluation in the first Project Meeting is 2.77, the second is 3.27 and the third 3.36.

The Critical points and improvements appointed by this WP are:

- During this first year, the WP has changed the person in charge: Cristiana Pires. This has supposed a coordination and transference effort;
- For bureaucratic reasons in the beginning of the project there were some delays on definition of the work teams;
- Challenges in managing the common guidelines that each partner should followed in implementing the project and the need to attend to specificities of each local realities;
- Challenges in communication between partners. These were completely resolved by implementing simple strategies as establishing a limit of time for responding to partners; improve number of skype meeting between face-to-face project meetings;
- Challenges in establishing a common framework for the deliverables namely in what concerns documents formatting. A template with all the information required for the deliverables were produced;
- During this first year, communication between partners was the main challenge. Although we have different work methodologies and dynamics there was a common respect of the project activities and timelines. We assist also to a great improvement in what concerns for instance dissemination outputs and this has to do both with the availability of the partners to give feedback and the availability of the partner to improve dissemination strategies. Additionally, the team concluded all the activities and deliverables that proposes it selves for in the grant agreement as also produced additional deliverables that we considered important when implementing as for instance:

- Improve on data collection on research WP - increase on the number of questionnaires collected
- Produce of 3 research national reports in national language (Catalan, Italian and Portuguese) with national data to deliver for the Consultative Forum partners.
- Dissemination activities included already the production of additional deliverables:

2 Publications:

- Heavy episodic drinking among youngster aged 18-29. Preliminary results of a study performed in the Metropolitan Area of Bologna accepted for publication RIMA - Rivista Italiana Medicina Adolescenza - a cura della "Società Italiana di Medicina dell'Adolescenza"
- Heavy episodic drinking: I risultati preliminari del progetto ALLCOOL. Accepted for publication Alcologia - rivista quadrimestrale multidisciplinare pubblicata sotto il patrocinio della Società italiana di alcologia.

2 communications in international scientific meetings:

- Vale Pires, C., Carvalho, H, Rego, X., Garcia, N. & Guerrero, J. (25 May, 2017). Allcool: Raising awareness and action-research on Heavy Episodic Drinking among low income youth and young adults in Southern Europe. Paper presented at 10th International Conference on Nightlife, substance use and related health issues, 24 – 26 May 2017. Ireland: Dublin
- Carvalho, H, Vale Pires, C., Rego, X., Ribeiro, A. & Garcia, N. (to be presented). Allcool: Raising awareness and action-research on Heavy Episodic Drinking among low income youth and young adults in Southern Europe. Paper presented at 10th International Conference on Nightlife, substance use and related health issues, 24 – 26 October 2017. Portugal: Lisbon

2 communications in a Portuguese National event about Heavy Episodic drinking:

- Carvalho, H., Vale Pires, C. & Garcia, N. (30 May, 2017). Allcool Project: scope, methodology and action research on HED in Southern Europe. Paper presented in Check!n Lx Seminar. Lisbon, Portugal.
- Balasch, M. & Faucha, M. (30 May, 2017). Research on heavy episodic drinking in young and young adults in Porto, Bologna and Tarragona. Paper presented in Check!n Lx Seminar. Lisbon, Portugal.

Work Package Dissemination (WP2)

The project website <https://allcool.ausl.bologna.it/> is the main sources of information about the project available to most stakeholders. The website was established immediately at the start of the project and will be maintained for at least one year after the project ends.

There were published 3 Articles on achieved project's activities.

- An article on the main results concerning the 382 questionnaires collected and the 2 focus-groups held. Here it is specially highlighted the social dynamics that underline the HED phenomenon among youth aged between 18 and 29 years old in Porto.
- A survey involving 390 girls and boys between the ages of 18 and 29, Bologna residents, divided among students, workers and unemployed. 366 of them were interviewed, 24 attended 3 focus groups

- A research has been developed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology approach, including 372 questionnaires and 2 Focus Groups held among youth aged 18-29, as well as 1 Group Interview to professionals. In this post, we sum up some of the main results related to the protective and risky behaviours youth from Tarragona (Spain) carry out.

There were also 1 press release in Italian and three following Consultative Forum Meetings:

- 4 in Italy
- 3 in Spain
- 4 in Portugal

One newsletter was produced and 6104 newsletters were sent.

In the Social Media:

- Facebook page has 50 post and "Like" at 700 persons.
- Twitter account is followed by 152 followers and follows the updates of more than 1.041 following. The contacts are growing. There were made 117 tweet

The logo of the ALLCOOL Project consists of a square from the white background to which internal of the word "ALLCOOL" black inserted into a roar of white background. The roar is surrounded by blacks glasses that make a circle.

Finally, a flyer was created to present the project. The flyer can be downloaded from the website and social media. Paper copies were also printed and distributed during public events. The flyer is in English and translated into Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

The Critical points and improvements appointed by this WP are:

- It has been really difficult to structure a shared dissemination strategy by all partners.
- The dissemination strategy didn't provide clear timeline with all the tasks explained step by step. Partners asked for a chart with the main information organized monthly (What tasks should be done? Who is responsible of them? When should they be done?)
- Some dissemination methods had no clear objectives, such as the flyers and the twitter account.
- The dissemination project was revised in partnership with Partners in May 2017 and many of the weaknesses are overcoming.
- We are learning how to increase our visibility on social networks.
- We should be more active on the project dissemination outcomes in the three partner countries
- We should anticipate the project deliverables: send the deliverables one week in advance for partners and coordination
- Since the 4th project meeting will be at the end of the project, Skype meetings will be more frequent (there are already scheduled a skype meeting in June and September)
- Improve dissemination namely in academic and decision making settings

Work Package Research (WP3)

In terms of data collections there were developed the following actions:

- Data collection guideline: Spora elaborated a desktop research guideline that describes the research process and offers the necessary tools and step by step guidance for the research implementation at local level.
- Data collection tools: Spora designed the questionnaire, the Focus Group Script, as well as the Group Interview script.
- Discussion and approval: a Skype meeting was carried out to discuss the questionnaire, FG script and GI script drafts and validate the final versions.
- Translation into Italian and Portuguese and language review: Each partner translated the original tools (questionnaire and FG and GI scripts) in English into his/her language. Moreover, they reviewed the questionnaire and tested that it was correct and understandable by a common young person. (1st to 30th of August).
- Field work team training: Each partner and their field work team received a training by Spora via Skype to prepare the questionnaire administration.
- Data collection in each city: Each partner collected the data. (September 12th to November 12th 2016. M5-M7).
- Number of questionnaires implemented: 1141 questionnaires were collected in the 3 cities:
 - Porto: 403 questionnaires.
 - Bologna: 366 questionnaires.
 - Tarragona: 372 questionnaires.
- Number of FG and number participants: 6 FG were held, 2 in each city the first FG was composed by people from 18 to 23 years old, and the second one by people from 24 to 29 years old.
 - Porto: the first FG (18-23 years of age) was composed by 8 participants, and the second one (24-29 years of age) by 9 participants.
 - Bologna: the first FG (18-23 years of age) was composed by 8 participants, and the second one (24-29 years of age) by 8 participants.
 - Tarragona: the first FG (18-23 years of age) was composed by 8 participants, and the second one (24-29 years of age) by 7 participants.

The Data analysis actions were:

- Quantitative data codification: Each partner codified the data. (4th to 14th of November. M7)
- FG and GI transcription: Each partner transcribed the records. (4th to 14th of November. M7)
- Quantitative data validation: Each partner sent the SPSS coded data to Spora. Spora cleaned and validated the three integrated matrixes and sent it back to each partner.
- Analysis indications: Spora sent a document with basic analysis recommendations. (28th of November. M7)
- Qualitative data analysis summary: Spora sent a table for each partner to fill it with the main results of the qualitative data. (1st to 9th of December. M8)
- National Report Schema: Spora elaborated and sent a schema for the National Reports to share a similar structure. (20th of January. M9)
- Data analysis and National Report writing: Each partner wrote the National Report. (From January 20th to March 24th. M9-M12)
- Final Report writing: Spora elaborated the Final Report. (From March 24th to May 31st. M14)

The Critical points and improvements appointed by this WP are:

- Social position calculation: The bibliographical review has shown that there is no international agreement on the algorithm to be applied to calculate the social class of respondents. This controversy is accentuated when it comes to identifying the

class of young people. One of the criteria commonly used to locate people based on social status is the level of income. However, when it comes to young people, this approach can present significant low. Specifically, the fact that the person lives with her family and / or family receives financial support makes it inadvisable to calculate their social attending solely to their income. Given this discussion, it was decided to implement an algorithm that is not based on income but on other variables. The questionnaire includes socio-economic and educational variables to establish the social position of the respondents. There are multiple methodologies to calculate social position, but in the research it was used ESOMAR System (Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Chile, 2011; Office for National Statistics, 2010). This system was the most appropriate considering the respondents' profile (young people) and the need to limit the extent and time of the survey administration. For the socio-economic class calculation, the father occupation/education level has been crossed, as the father is traditionally the main holder of the family. On those few cases where there is no father's occupation or education level data, it has been used the per capita income of the household. On those cases where we hadn't data of father's occupation/education level and either per capita income data, socio-economic position has not been calculated. This decision allows to solve the problem of how to calculate the social position in the case of young people without using only income. Thus, however, there is no specific data on the "low income", nor the "young unemployment", although it was one of the aspects set out to define the study population. During the project meeting sessions, partners have discussed this matter in order to share this limitation of the research study and specifically consider the effects it will have when planning the Pilot Intervention.

- Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED) is a theoretical construct that refers to the intake of large volumes of alcohol in a short period of time. This term is used as a boundary between non-problematic and problematic alcohol consumption. Nevertheless, there are different operational definitions of this concept in the literature, which differ on the cut-offs for number of drinks, as well as on the duration of a HED episode. Therefore, stating whether a person has conducted a HED or not can change depending on these variables. The HED concept is, then, a controversial concept which hasn't achieved an international consensus (Pearson, 2015; Gmel, 2011). However, some studies claim establishing this kind of dichotomic measure is problematic, since it collapses drinkers with very different drinking patterns in just one category. "Using a cut-off with linearly related data is essentially falsely dichotomizing a continuous measure(...) Dichotomization of a continuous measure can result in a loss of statistical power, making statistical tests less sensitive to detecting existing effects, which has serious implications when these measures are used to quantify the effects of preventions/interventions" (Pearson et. al, 2015). This false dichotomization may be problematic when analyzing intervention effects. Not asking for the number of drinks consumed on a HED episode means researchers assume uncritically that these occasions contained the same but unknown amount (Gmel, Kuntsche, Rehm, 2011). Having 5 or 10 drinks on one occasion are different drinking patterns that can cause different negative

consequences, so researchers should be able to establish which is the exact problematic drinking pattern present in the studied population. Another main controversy related to HED concerns the time-frame criterion. On one hand, some studies define HED as the intake of a specific number of standard drinks in a single occasion. On the other hand, some studies frame the intake within a 2-hour period (for a revision of this controversy see Pearson, 2015 or Parada et al., 2011). Given the lack of scientific agreement, the research includes questions about the time taken to complete a HED episode, as well as about the total amount of drinks consumed within the HED episode. This approach overcomes the debate, since it allows to calculate different alcohol consumption intensities and frequencies. Moreover, it allows to calculate the HED most common pattern, as well as analyse HED trends among youngsters.

WP Consultative Forums (WP4)

Until the present time 4 Consultative Forum were conducted in Bologna, Porto and three in Tarragona.

So far the consultative forums had involved 33 different institutions: 17 in Portugal, 9 in Bologna and 7 in Spain. When we consider 46 participants of that consultative forums, 11 refer as main work activity youth intervention, 8 health intervention, 8 law enforcement, 4 public transportation, 3 social intervention, 3 decision maker, 2 youth or student associations and 7 other activities.

In a likert scale (from 0 - None - to 6 - very high) the participants at the second consultative forum refer a low knowledge of the phenomenon at European level (2.49 ± 1.57) and a middle knowledge of the phenomenon in their country (3.37 ± 1.46) and in their city (3.28 ± 1.28). Theoretical (3.36 ± 1.55) and practical (3.34 ± 1.41) knowledge about the phenomenon, as skills to intervene (3.16 ± 1.52) are also middle in the Likert scale

Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of the participants answers to questionnaire of the second consultative forum (N=38)

	M±SD
Knowledge of the phenomenon at European level	2.49±1.57
Knowledge of the phenomenon in your country	3.37±1.46
Knowledge of the phenomenon in your city	3.28±1.28
Theoretical knowledge about the phenomenon	3.36±1.55
Practical knowledge about the phenomenon	3.34±1.41
Skills to intervene	3.16±1.52

The Critical points and improvements appointed by this WP are:

- In Portugal, given the number of issues concerning the project and the number of participants, we felt the need to extend the number of hours of the consultative forum.

- Overall, the different Consultative Forum have reached really interesting inputs for the project implementation, being an excellent tool for designing the pilot intervention and for interpreting research results.

To sum up, during the first year, the ALLCOOL project faced some difficulties, especially in the first months, but find out some strategies that reduce the entropy. For instance, challenges in managing the common guidelines and in the communication were reduce by an increase in the number of Skype meetings. The project was disseminated by a website, a facebook page and a twitter account. A research with questionnaires collected in the 3 cities was developed. The Consultative Forum gave inputs for the project implementation, the designing of the pilot intervention and the interpretation of the research results. There were produced some deliverables like publications and communications in national and international scientific meetings.