

European Cities for Alcohol Harm Reduction

Project Update - Copenhagen

Background

The European Cities for Alcohol Harm reduction Project aims to demonstrate how alcohol related health and social problems might be reduced by a range of appropriate interventions operating together within a city-wide context. In particular, we are interested in the role of alcohol harm reduction interventions that are designed to have an impact on the drinking environment and drinking behaviour. IHRA has funding to develop the project, and subject to stakeholder interest, funding for harm reduction projects. In addition there may be complementary actions taken by economic operators to minimise irresponsible behaviours and harms; and marketing-led interventions to raise awareness and shift attitudes relating to irresponsible consumption. The project will be developed in a number of European cities, and in 2006 we are undertaking a series of meetings with 'stakeholders' who are interested in participating in the project. Later in 2006 there will be further meetings with stakeholders in order to further elaborate the project and identify issues or which suitable projects could be funded.

Copenhagen

A first 'stakeholder's meeting' took place at the DGI Byen, Copenhagen on Tuesday 30th May 2006. The attendees were:

Erik Thorsted	Natteravnene (Founder)
Anett Wiingaard	GODA
Julie Bredfeldt Thomsen	National Institute of Public Health
Kristine Sorensen	Tryg Fonden ('Safe Foundation')
Morten Hulvej Jorgensen	National Institute of Public Health
Peter Bach	Police officer from Copenhagen
Rasmus Baagland	Public Health Copenhagen
Ronni Abergel	Integrationsministeriet
Sebastian Tugenges	Centre for Rusmiddel Forskning (University of Aarhus)
Vibeke Marie Asmussen	Centre for Rusmiddel Forskning (University of Aarhus)
Christophe Kirkegaard	Diageo (Head of Communications)
Naomi Zybler	Diageo (Intern)
Ernst Buning	Quest for Quality (Director)
Gerry Stimson	IHRA (Chief Executive)
Kamila Lenarczyk	Quest for Quality (Harm Reduction Project Manager)
Jamie Bridge	IHRA (Communications & Project Development Officer)

After introductions and a brief background to the project, the group discussed the current situation and problems in Copenhagen. The overall themes and discussion points were:

- Media focus on drinking amongst young people and tourists.
- Media focus on negative aspects of alcohol, such as drinking while pregnant and alcohol-related violence.
- Alcohol's central role in Danish culture (the general expectation is to drink at weekends, at sporting events and at celebrations).

- Young people's attitudes towards drunkenness.
- Public consensus on solutions, including harsher drink-driving penalties and more restrictions on advertising and selling to children.
- Important issues absent from the public agenda (such as drink-cycling, drinking amongst parents with small children and drinking at work).
- The perceived associations between alcohol problems and socially marginalized males (when, actually, problems occur amongst all social groups).
- Changes in drinking behaviour when students leave school for college/university (although drinking amongst 20-29 year olds has fallen).
- Changes in the average age of 'first drunkenness', which has risen from 13½ to 14½.
- Drinking patterns (for example, 90% of alcohol consumption is at home, especially for young people before going out later in the evening to pubs and clubs).
- Popular drinks (such as 'alcopops', beers and spirits).
- The general lack of awareness regarding alcohol 'units'.
- Public drinking venues (restaurants, cafes, 'trendy' cocktail bars, city centre 'V.I.P.' bars and independently owned pubs and clubs).
- Muslim youths drinking alcohol in order to integrate with their Danish peers
- The harms caused by alcohol (such as financial problems, harms to young children whose parents drink, vandalism and public nuisance, public violence, domestic violence, sexual risks, workplace accidents, long- and short-term health problems, binge drinking, road accidents and poly-drug use).
- The double standards amongst many parents who drink alcohol but don't want their children to (as children need positive role models).
- The problems with underage serving and irresponsible promotions and offers in bars (two-for-one drinks etc.)

Various existing interventions and policies in Copenhagen were also identified, including extended licensing hours (to reduce problems at closing times), targeted drink-driving campaigns (especially around Christmas), advertising restrictions, licensing checks by police, the 'Night Ravens' (parent groups), educational programmes, 'S.S.P.' programmes, training for industry staff and designated driver schemes. There is also a local alcohol plan in Copenhagen (2006-2009) and a code of conduct for event planning.

Further action

A rapid appraisal research project on drinking will be conducted in Copenhagen over the next few months. This project (conducted by Vibeke Marie Asmussen and Sebastian Tugenges) will describe the current situation in the city and map current interventions.

A second meeting has been arranged for the 10th and 11th October 2006. In this meeting, participants will further discuss which projects might be undertaken in order to reduce alcohol related harms in Copenhagen.

Timetable

Date	Action
30 th May 2006	1 st Stakeholder meeting
June-Sept 2006	'Rapid Appraisal' research
10 th & 11 th October 2006	2 nd Stakeholders meeting