



Innovation in youth involvement in alcohol policy

Introduction:

Although there are youth organisations focused on alcohol policy at the European level, which empower their members and, at the same time, collaborate with other professional associations that share common goals, a lot remains to be discussed and done when it comes to youth involvement in reducing the alcohol related harm.



Sofia Ribeiro discusses the need for innovation in strategies to involve youth in alcohol policy.

(Click on the image to watch the video interview)

First, evidence-based information is often too technical and not appealing to youth organisations without a healthcare background; secondly, alcohol remains a controversial topic for several youth-run organisations. Furthermore, youth participation and representation is not being widely considered in professional organisations working in the topic, and there aren't effective networks to share the best practices and to ensure close collaboration between them. This workshop started the discussion on how to make the topic attractive to youth-run organisations and on how professional organisations could involve young people in their own activities.

The main aim was to list concrete actions that could be further developed and applied after the meeting.

Discussion and conclusions:

- First of all, the participants recognised the challenge of involving youth people in alcohol related issues: “The one who discovers an effective way of increasing youth participation will win a Nobel prize.”
- Nevertheless, the participants coming from different backgrounds and generations pointed out that sharing good practices (including interventions, projects and others), together with cohesion and interaction between different stakeholders and an integrative approach were the basis of the approach.
- Furthermore, it was highlighted that youth should be seen as just another relevant stakeholder instead of just “youth”, and participation of the under-aged should be discussed and encouraged.
- Attractive measures to increase youth involvement should be developed, and these could include competitions, campaigns and engagement of student organisations, namely the ones in the healthcare field, with a special focus on medical students.
- Finally, increasing the critical mass among youth was appointed as a priority.