



Layman's report (synopsis)

Main Partners

European Alcohol Policy Alliance



Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems



Ehkäisevä päihdetyö EHYT ry



Panstwowa Agencja Rozwiązywania Problemów Alkoholowych



Fundatia Romtens



Vereniging voor Alcohol-en andere Drugproblemen



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About FYFA

The FYFA (Focus on Youth Football & Alcohol) is a project funded by the European Commission's 3rd Health Programme. It aims to reduce alcohol-related harm with a specific focus on underage drinking and heavy episodic drinking among youth in sports settings. With the project we want to:

- Increase the awareness of different interested audiences at international, national, and local levels about the problems connected to young people, sport, marketing, and alcohol.
- Identify the best strategies to reduce drinking and harm for young people in football clubs.
- Deepen understanding of attitudes towards alcohol from young people in football clubs.
- Increase the capacity of relevant stakeholders to implement good preventive strategies in sports settings.

By relevant stakeholders, we mean: Policy makers, representatives of sports organizations, professionals in alcohol prevention, researchers, and other concerned audiences.

This comprehensive project organized into nine main strands, called Working Packages (WPs), focusing on international, national, and local levels:

- WPs 1-3 are dedicated to the management of the project, communication, dissemination, and evaluation.
- WP 4 is a review of international policies and practices related to alcohol, young people, marketing, and football.
- WP 5 is a review of national policies in 6 member states (countries) related to alcohol, young people, marketing, and football.
- WP 6 is a review of local policies and practices related to young people, sport, marketing, and alcohol in 6 local youth sports clubs in 6 Member States
- WP 7 is a research about exposure to alcohol, marketing attitudes & behaviours in relation to alcohol and effective practices. Young people in 6 Member States
- WP 8 is dedicated to video production, summarizing key themes regarding exposure to local marketing attitudes and behaviours relation to alcohol and effective policies
- WP 9 is dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and good practices

With this report we present a summary of the activities and results of the project for the lay public. Full versions of project reports can be found on www.fyfaproject.eu.



Key facts about young people, alcohol and sport



Harmful use of alcohol is **linked to more than 200 diseases**, injuries and causes a large economic and social burden for societies (WHO, 2016).



Young people are the most vulnerable part of the population in terms of alcohol- related harm. Deaths due to alcohol in Europe constitutes 5.5% of the whole population, but for the age group 20-24 years this percentage rises to 23.3% and for the age group 15-19 years it is 19%. (WHO, 2018, MOPAC project)



Several studies have linked alcohol use by young people to **various problems, both short- and long-term.**



Practicing sports is healthy and a positive way of spending free time; and is used to tackle behavioural problems of children and adolescents. However, the physical activity itself is not enough to prevent adolescents from partaking in alcohol use.



There is a **need to support strategic priorities and capacities of stakeholders** to improve the protective role of sports environment.



In this report lists **conclusions and recommendations** from the project that can support different relevant audiences and guide them to create a healthier environment for young people in sports settings.



Key findings from Work Packages (WPs)

WP4 – Key findings from international policies and practices

What have we learned?



The link between **exposure to alcohol advertising and alcohol use** is becoming more apparent.



Despite this link, the **international policies on alcohol advertising are relaxing** and there is pressure on countries to sell alcohol at International Tournaments.



In countries where **bans exist, they are being circumvented** by the industry. An example of this is France.



The main reason for partnerships with the alcohol industry is **the income it generates**.

What can be done?



Governments **can end alcohol advertising** in sport.



Organisations have significant power in health promotion and can **end their collaboration with the alcohol industry**. Best practices (such as the Scottish Women's Football team) show that **it is possible and profitable** to do so as they attract new, profitable, and more ethical partnerships.



WP5 – Key findings from national policies and practices

What we learned?



The prevention of alcohol-related harm among youth is an important matter within sport settings and **should be a priority** for national sporting bodies.



The 4 most influential target audiences that should be activated are: **players, coaches/training staff, spectators, and bar staff.**



Despite the presence of protective laws and regulations, there is a **low level of knowledge and enforcement** of these policies at national level.



There is a need for more collaboration between different organisations.



More resources are needed to overcome the main obstacles for effective implementation of alcohol policy.

What can be done?



An **increase in communicating** the health and social impact of alcohol.



More prevention initiatives and training programmes on alcohol-related harm in sports setting.



More dialogue between sporting and prevention settings.



Provide appropriate and relevant **training materials** on alcohol and alcohol-related harm for sports settings and different audiences within them.



Encourage **alcohol related harm prevention and collaboration** between and within sporting clubs.



WP6 – Key findings from local policies and practices

What have we learned?



Sports club stakeholders are aware of the risks caused by alcohol consumption of their young athletes, but they do not think it is a problem in their club.



Alcohol becomes **less of a problem among ambitions players** and high-level competitions.



Coaches and peers are seen as **important role models**.



Club stakeholders view responsible alcohol consumption as a duty of the **parents**.



There is little alcohol advertising in youth training and matches, however, alcohol advertising, especially on **social media, can influence** young people's attitudes and behaviours in relation to alcohol.



Sports clubs have a **positive attitude towards alcohol prevention** and health promotion; however, preventative actions are rarely put into practice.

What can be done?



Clubs can develop **comprehensive internal alcohol policies**, including bans on alcohol advertising.



Encourage more **awareness raising** about harmful alcohol consumption in sports clubs and importance of alcohol prevention.



Provide health **education to sports clubs' managers and key people** that enable practical implementation of health promoting and preventive activities for players and supporters.



WP7 - Young people's opinions on alcohol-related issues and sports

What have we learned?



Drinking alcohol is **common among young people**, but it is not consumed during or around sports clubs' activities. Adolescents believe that **youth engaged in sports drink less alcohol** than those who are not engaged in sports.



Young people see a **lot of alcohol marketing**, also in relation to sports, however, they feel that alcohol marketing does not affect them. Some argue for a ban on alcohol advertisement, while others recognized the importance of sponsorship agreements as a source of income.



Young people consider that excessive alcohol consumption leads to **negative consequences** (such as violence) in football stands. On the other hand, some interviewees felt that alcohol use by fans creates a good atmosphere at the stadiums.



School, parents, friends, and the Internet are the most important sources of information on alcohol issues for young people.



Adolescents **are willing to discuss** alcohol issues and they perceive it as appropriate that their coach would discuss alcohol with the team.



Young people have knowledge on how to reduce and prevent alcohol use in their age group.

What can be done?



Under the right conditions, **sports club participation has potential for alcohol prevention** in relation to young people.



In order to promote an alcohol-free lifestyle for young people, sport clubs should focus on **coach support, life skills reinforcement, club rules** and strategies, **discussions about alcohol issues** with young people, and **creating alcohol-free brand** for a club.



Young people should receive **more media literacy education** for better interpretation of the goals of alcohol advertising.



Decision-makers and event producers should **consider the perspective of children and young people** when operating in the field of sport and alcohol.



WP8 - Videos summarising key themes

What we learned?



You can find the videos here: [FYFA YouTube Channel](#)



Young people report **peer pressure** to drink alcohol, but that **sport is a good diversion**, because it instead emphasises a healthy lifestyle, affecting all aspects of their lives positively.



Young people involved in sports feel they are more **aware about harm caused by alcohol** than other young people. They know how alcohol can affect their physical performance, and they wish that young people in general would be more aware of the negative effects of alcohol.



Young people are **concerned for the safety** of other young people and for example want a better regulation of the sale of alcohol to underage.



Young people feel that **alcohol should not be sold** at sports events because it can cause fights and they do not feel that alcohol marketing in sport is appropriate.

What can be done?



These videos highlight that **listening to young people is crucial**. They are acutely aware of the positive impact sports has on their lives, and do not think that alcohol has a place in it.



WP9 - Exchange of knowledge and good practice

What have we learned?



A systematic review found **23 studies showing a positive association** between engagement in sports and alcohol consumption, no association was observed in 8 studies, only one paper indicated a negative association.



Sports activities, in particular the team sports, **seem not to be a protective factor** and under some circumstances (sports specifics, athletes' gender and ethnicity) may increase the risk of alcohol consumption.



Gender and ethnicity play a role of mediators therefore, **a careful examination of population structure is recommended** when a prevention program is planned.



The FYFA project expert meeting, indicated key elements of good practice in sport-based alcohol prevention: **adoption of the health promotion approach; inclusion of environmental, educational, and community-based activities; focus on law enforcement; role modelling by sports trainers/coaches/parents and clubmates; long-life perspective and sustainability of prevention.**

What can be done?



Sporting federations at international and national level **should explicitly ban the marketing and sponsorship of sports by the alcohol industry.**



More communication and information strategies (campaigns) in the sports settings about the impact of alcohol on health are needed.



National bodies (governmental and national sporting organizations) should **support alcohol prevention initiatives and training programmes** on alcohol-related harm for different target audiences in sports settings.



The dialogue between sporting and prevention professionals is a must!

