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# Drug education in Hungary

# DRUG POLICY SYSTEM

## DRUG COORDINATION

- Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI) – national anti-drug strategy (2013-20)
- KEFs: local drug coordination forums, established in 2000
- LEKs/EFIs: centers of mental health/health development bureaus, created after 2010

## ORGANISATIONS

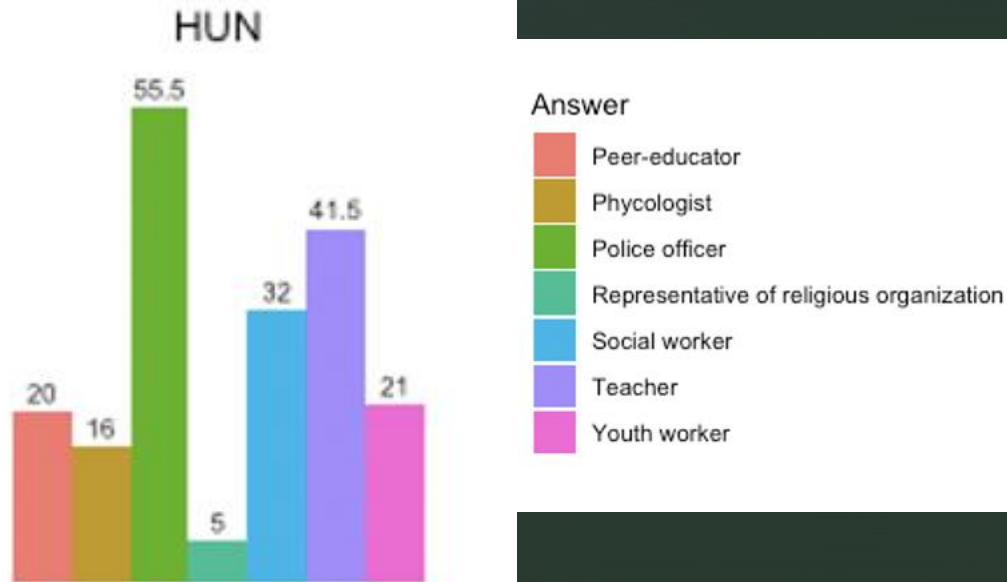
- 2013-15: 253 organisations reported to work on drug prevention – among these, 194 had concrete programs
- 80% of them are NGOs, 24% local governments, 6% for profit org. – for 70% prevention is not the main activity

## FUNDING

- EMMI provides funding through annual grants (KABs)
- 350 Million HUF for 2019 – 2-6 million HUF/organisation - abolished this year
- EU funds: outside of Budapest
- Funding linked to quality assessment



# Dominant role of the police



Ministry of Home Affairs –  
abundance of funding

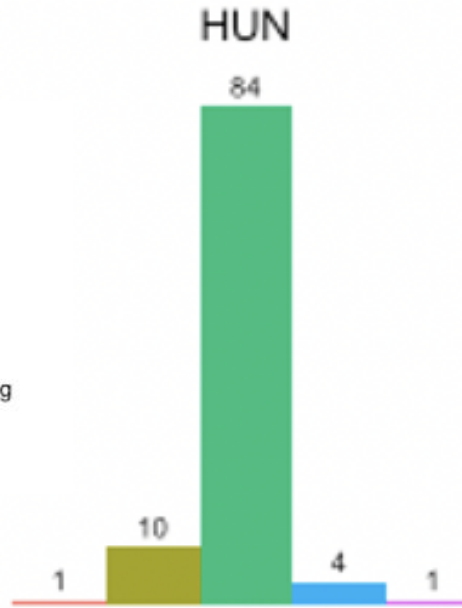
Introduction of

- School criminal assistant in 2013
- School Guards in 2020
- “If you use drugs, you die”

# Outdated paradigm: One-time formal lecture about the risks of drug use

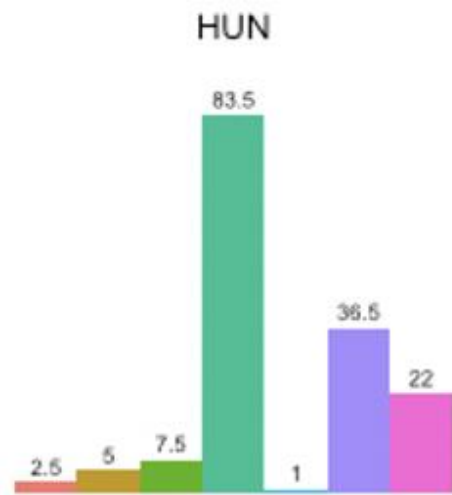
## Answer

- A course
- Informal meeting
- One-time formal lecture
- Other
- Private conversation/counselling



## Answer

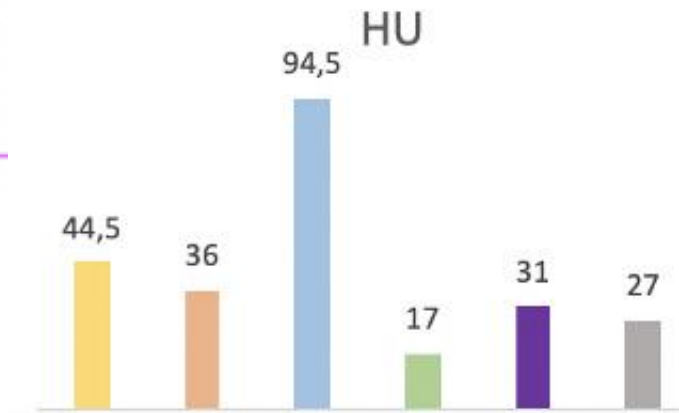
- Art
- Drama/play
- Exhibition
- Lecture
- Sport
- Watching movie
- Workshop



## Chart Area

Chart Area

- Laws regulating illegal drugs
- Treatment of drug dependence
- Information about effects and risks of substances
- Practices and tools to minimize harms related to drug use
- Information about drug overdose and overdose prevention
- Information about available health and social support services including harm reduction services



## Lack of information about programs

Those in need of drug education (schools, families, young people, etc.) have no information about the quality drug education programs available.

There is no system or guidance from the government on what kind of programs should be implemented in schools and how.

Very few studies are conducted on the evaluation of drug prevention programs. Most programs are ad hoc and not continuous.



# Lack of sustainable funding



Most service providers complained about budget cuts and growing difficulties in applying for and receiving public grants to conduct drug prevention activities.

The calls for the KAB grants are announced late, and the contracts are signed late, so it is very difficult to implement school drug prevention programs. This year the grants have not been announced at all, and no budget has been allocated to drug prevention for next year.

# Lack of school autonomy

Due to the new, centralized educational system, schools have very little autonomy to decide which programs to invite.

Most participants complained that it is increasingly difficult for civil society organizations to cooperate with schools, while it is much easier for police-based programs to enter schools.



# Lack of real quality control

Only a few drug education programs have certificates, and schools do not require certificates from programs so cannot filter out those of low quality.

There is no mechanism or authority that controls school drug prevention activities.

In December 2019 there were only 30 programs approved by the NNK (listed on its website: <https://www.nnk.gov.hu/>).

Church of Scientology has infiltrated several Hungarian schools and recruits new supporters under the pretext of drug prevention programs.





# Lack of trained professionals



Working in the drug field is not a well-paid or well-respected profession, funding is scarce and unstable, and programs are not sustainable; therefore, only a few committed and well-trained professionals work in drug prevention.

There is no specific training for drug prevention professionals, and no required curricula.

## Lack of methodological guidance

There is a gap between the available international literature about good practices in drug prevention and the actual prevention policies and programs in Hungary.

After the National Drug Prevention Institute was abolished in 2016, no government institution has been providing professional support and training on drug prevention.





## Good practice: Köztes Átmenetek

- Interactive exhibition that guides young people through different stages of the drug use spectrum and discusses risks and benefits



# What we need is so much more than drug education for students!

- Creating interactive methods to work on emotions/experiences - listening to and learning from students
- Focusing on joy/health maximisation rather than only on risks and harms
- Regulating the risk environment rather than focusing on individual risks
- Training teachers, club staff, police etc.
- Decriminalising drug use
- Reaching out to kids in vulnerable neighbourhoods / supporting kids who come from vulnerable families

