Assessment of Drug Education

in Lithuania

ETMP

YOUNG WAVE

The National Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control and use Prevention Programme

2018–2028

Core principles:

- **Fostering of human rights**

- Respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, right to education, health care, social security and equal access to services.

- **Individual approach**

- Assessment of the personal, social, cultural, situational risk factors, measures applied on its basis in the immediate environment; proportionate and effective measures for person's criminal behaviour related to the use of psychoactive substances.

- **Service quality**

- Purposeful funding and provision of services (prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, social integration, harm reduction) that meets national and international quality standards and different society needs.

- **Balanced policy and responsible management**

- Coordinated, cost-effective, innovative, evidence-based solutions for problems involving legal, illicit psychoactive substances and their cross-sectoral implementation, while maintaining the balance between supply and demand.
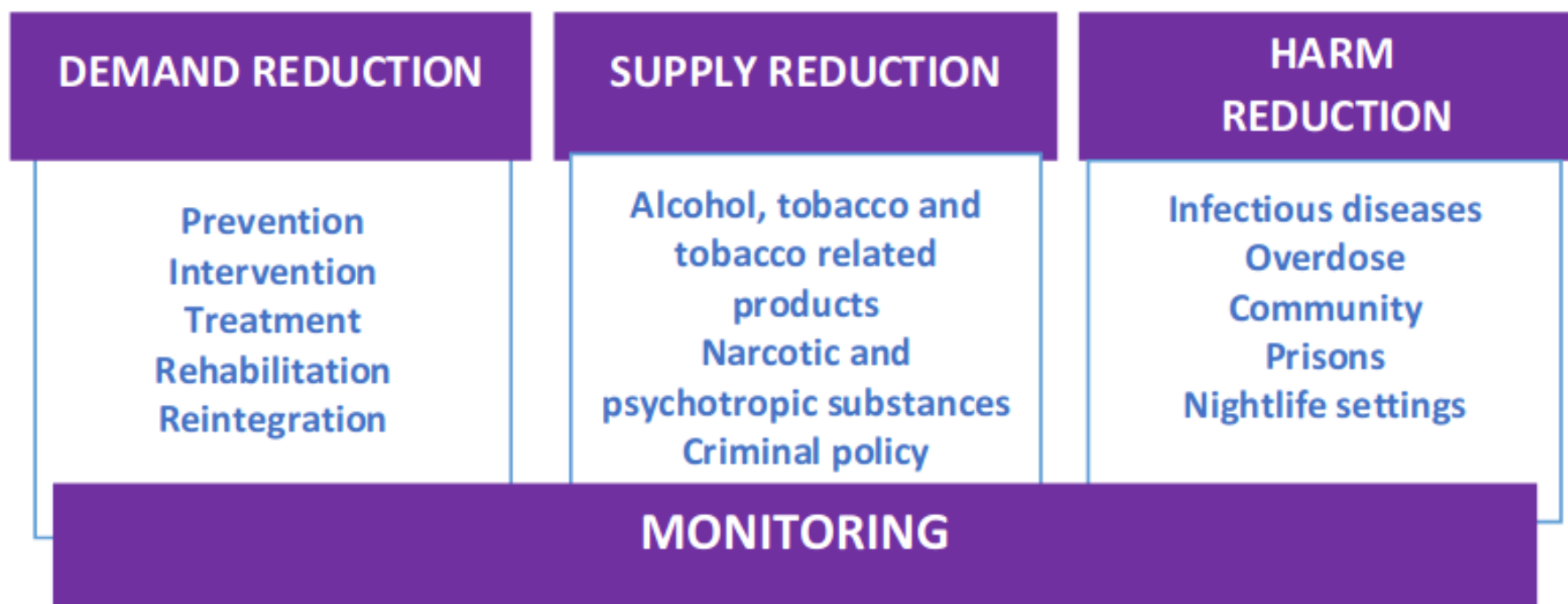
- **Comprehensiveness and continuity**

- Integrated and systematic approach to human security and risk management, consistent implementation and review of policy related to the use of psychoactive substances and openness in applying the international experience.

- **Partnership and unified vision**

- Promotion of partnership between public and non-governmental sectors, local communities, regions in the integrated and coordinated manner at the national and international levels.

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Policy cornerstones:

DEMAND REDUCTION	SUPPLY REDUCTION	HARM REDUCTION
Prevention Intervention Treatment Rehabilitation Reintegration	Alcohol, tobacco and tobacco related products Narcotic and psychotropic substances Criminal policy	Infectious diseases Overdose Community Prisons Nightlife settings

MONITORING

- The implementation of the Programme is organized and coordinated by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

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LAW OF PROTECTION OF MINORS AGAINST THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

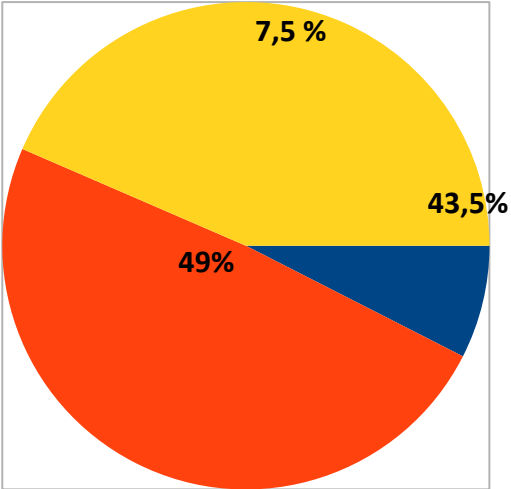"Public information adversely affecting the development of minors:

[...]

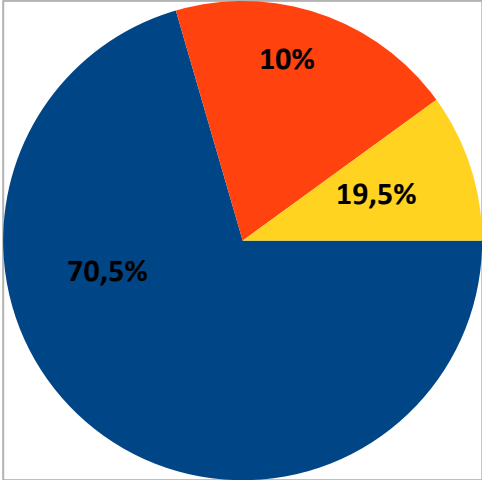Which promotes dependence on narcotic drugs, toxic substances, psychotropic substances, tobacco

●In the research there were 200 of participants, of which 122 women (61%), 75 men (37,5%) and 3 (1,5%) did not specified their gender.

Age range:

Demography:

Age range:
- 16 - 18 y.o.
- 19 - 24 y.o.
- 25 - 30 y.o.

7,5 %
43,5%
49%

Demography:
- Metropolitan area
- Other town/urban centre
- Rular area

10%
19,5%
70,5%

- 51% of the participants answered that they have never got any kind of formal or informal drug-education.

- 65,3% of those who have received drug-education, have received it at school.

- In most cases (78,78%) drug-education was organized as one-time formal lecture lead by teacher/ social worker/ psychologist/ police officer.

- Main information provided was information about effects and risks of substance use.

- 53,52% of the participants do not agree that they could honestly share their experiences during this lecture and 41,43% do not agree that the education was provided in a non-judgmental way.

- 25.35% of the participants think that the content was evidence-based. 26,76% think that provided information was useful.

- 27,5% of participants answer that police representative with a trained dog had came to their school to search for drugs.
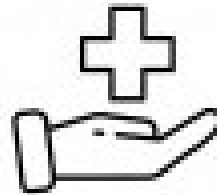
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What youth wants to know about drugs?

- information about substances and risks (67%)

- available harm reduction services (51%)

- available health and social services (38,5%)

- laws regulating drug use and its implementation (55%)

- available legal help in the cases related to drug-law offences (56%)

- information about drug overdose and overdose prevention (60,5%)

- youth organisations working with people who use drugs (44,5%)

- treatment of drug dependence (40,5%)

- 85,5% think that drug education should be provided by a specialised drug counsellor.

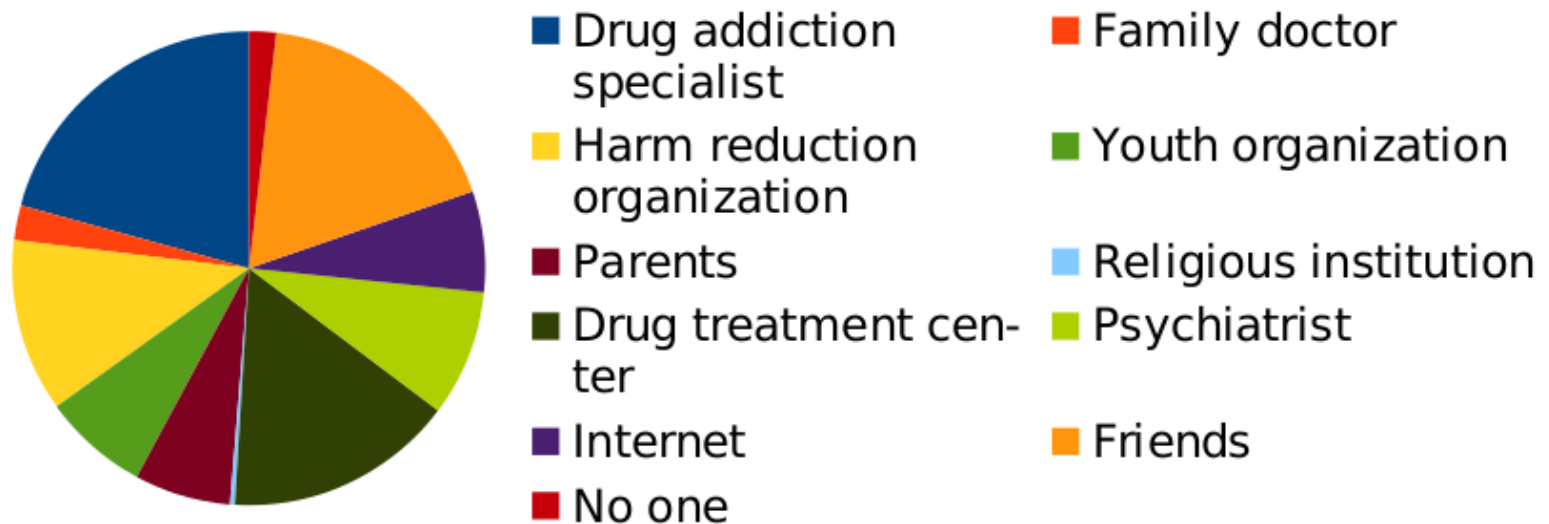# Participants think that three most effective ways for public authorities to reduce drug problems are:

- Harm-reduction services and information about psychoactive substances and their use

- Legalization of drugs

- Treatment and rehabilitation of drug users

- 93,47% answered that psychoactive substances can be both harmful and beneficial and should be regulated accordingly.

- 96,48% have tried legal psychoactive substances and 87,5% have tried illegal psychoactive substances.

Where would you turn to if you or your friends would have problems with substance use?

Legend:
- Drug addiction specialist
- Harm reduction organization
- Parents
- Drug treatment center
- Internet
- No one
- Family doctor
- Youth organization
- Religious institution
- Psychiatrist
- Friends

Interviews with focus groups

- **Focus group I** - youth workers, social workers, educators who are not working in the field of prevention, harm reduction, drug education but have access to young people

- **Focus group II** - youth workers, social workers, peer-to-peer educators, specialists who are working in the field of prevention, harm reduction, drug education and have access to young people

- **Focus group III** - young people who would be able to share their opinion and knowledge about drug education in their country

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Problems we face/may face by providing drug education for young people:

- Lack of information

- Policy

- Risk of stigmatization and discrimination

- Mentality of the society

- *"It's not the first year we work and in my opinion, the main challenge that we face is the public attitude towards that kind of services. By public, I mainly mean law enforcement officials and decision makers, who's ignorance and inability to make appropriate decisions can cause negative consequences for society as a whole."*

Evaluation of existing drug education in Lithuania

- **Poor quality**

- **Not objective**

- **Stigmatizing**

- *"[...]prevention programs in schools exists only formally, but in practice they are not implemented or high quality. Speaking about lack of specialist knowledge, ineffective prevention measures are still taking place and specialist do not show any kind of motivation to deepen their knowledge or change some points of view. When speaking about drug-education main role in it is taken by the NVOs [...]."*

- *"Education remains short-term, that means it is mostly provided by schools I the "informative lecture" form, and this form is evaluated as ineffective prevention tool, efficiency of it is almost equal to zero, so you can say that ineffective prevention services are provided, even though Lithuania has credited prevention programs, that are paid, but they are usually not implemented, [...] so we can say that we actually do not have drug-education".*

Effective drug education

- Should be:

  - Objective

  - Science-based

  - Building trust with youth and ensuring that they can feel safe

  - Cooperative product of educational institutions, governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations

  - Integrated continued programme

  - Led by prepared specialist

- Should include:

  - Information about substances: short-term & long-term effects, side effects, looks.

What kind of messages should we as a society translate?

- *"Educate yourself to make a right choice".*

- *"We can talk, there is no one alone with his/hers problems".*

- *"Support, don't punish".*

- *"[…] by pretending that problem is not there, we won't get rid of it, if something is something is, we can close our eyes but that something still will be there, so we need to talk abut it for a better change".*

- *"Support, don't punish. And our solidarity for each other in general, as a human being. Talking about young people, we should support them especially, to show them that they can trust us, that we are adults who care for them".*

- *"First of all we should translate that such thing as "drug war" is no longer existing; And that person who use, no matter if legal or illegal substances, is equal member of society; that any repressive measures won't help to solve neither social, nor health problems related to psychoactive substances use; that for a change we need time and education".*

- *"You can always choose".*

- *"Educate, give a right to choose and respect that choice".*

https://drugeducationyouth.org/

https://youngwave.net/
https://www.facebook.com/jaunabanga