

Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information

It has been regrettably observed that nowadays, drug consumption is at its peak during youth years. It is especially during these years that adolescents have to cope with a whole new range of challenges related to growing up, such as the development of new social relationships, the construction of an individual, sexual and professional identity and the development of goal-oriented strategies for one's future. The conflicts and contradictions that arise from challenges related to growing-up (i.e. the anxiety of not living up to the expectations of parents, teachers and other key adult figures) lead many youth to turn to drugs. Such adolescents see drugs as a way of dealing with their problems on the short run and of coping with life. Another key element is their attraction to "trying out" and "experimenting" as well as their search for new experiences and to test limits.

Alcohol is the number one most popular drug. Although alcohol is a socially accepted drug, it also has the highest dependency rate amongst all other drugs. In Germany, 2.5 million people are addicted to alcohol. The alcohol problem is also serious in the Baltic States. For example, in Estonia, people drink an average of 13.4 litres of pure alcohol every year. Arne Onni who is familiar with the situation in America and in Estonia, finds a similarity between the alcohol problem amongst youth in both countries. He maintains that it is more difficult to come to grips with this problem in America. Also in Estonia, measures are continuously being sought to reduce alcohol consumption. Also, there is a constantly growing number of children with alcohol intoxication who have had to be admitted to hospitals, following a class celebration or a youth function.

In October 2006, the EU Commission published a strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related problems and harm. The following five priority themes were adopted:

- To protect young people, children and the unborn foetus
- To decrease the number of alcohol-related road accidents
- To prevent alcohol-related harm in adults and to reduce the negative impact of a high alcohol consumption on the economy
- To raise people's awareness about their own alcohol consumption and
- To obtain reliable and comparable data on the EU level.

Bibliography and List of Sources:

Biddulph, Steve: Poiste kasvatamine. Verlag Ersen. Tallinn 2008

Sinkkonen, Jari: Kasvamine poisine. Verlag Varrak. Tallinn 2007

Kull, Merike; Saat, Helve: Sotsiaalsete toimetulekuoskuste õpetus. Tartu 2001

Arne Onni: USA ja Eesti alkoholiprobleemid on sarnased. Õpetajatajate Leht Nr. 8. 2008

<http://ec.europa.eu>