NOTES FROM THE WORKSHOP

PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION TO ADOLESCENTS

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Bruxelles June 5, 2012
European Parliament
DISCLAIMER

These notes relate to the workshop “Public health issues and online communication to adolescents: challenges and opportunities” held on June 5, 2012 at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The workshop is part of the European funded project “Boys and Girls”. www.boysandgirlslabs.eu

The opinions expressed in these notes are those of the participants involved in the workshop and do not reflect the views neither of any organizations represented at the workshop nor the views of the European Commission.

Boys and Girls international partnership includes the following organizations:

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In the WHO European Region more than 300 young people die every day from largely preventable causes.

Almost 1 in 10 18-year-olds in the Region suffers from depression.

Concern is growing about the increased use of alcohol and binge-drinking, and the high rates of homicides, traffic injuries and suicides, particularly among young men in eastern Europe.

Increasing burden of chronic conditions among adolescents will put a growing pressure on health systems in the coming decades.

Estimated 618,000 deaths attributable to alcohol a year in Europe (2004).

Injuries are the main cause of death among young people, many of them related to alcohol.

Alcohol use has been associated with suicidal and homicidal behaviour among young people.

We are deeply concerned about the escalation in smoking and other forms of tobacco consumption by children and adolescents worldwide particularly smoking at the increasing early age.

GIRLS DO BETTER...

- Injuries, overweight/obese, fruit, soft drinks, oral health.
- Early tobacco initiation, weekly drinking, drunkenness, sexual health, fighting, bullying.
- Electronic media communication with friends, liking school, perceived school performance.

...BOYS DO BETTER

- Self-rated health, life satisfaction, health complaints, body image, breakfast, physical activity.
- Easy communication with father, 3+ close friends, evenings out with friends, feel less pressured by schoolwork.

FROM DATA INTO ACTION

Making health services available to young people is not enough. Their unexpressed health and health care needs need to be anticipated.

This involves having the right professional staff and partners but also using the right technologies, from hotlines to social media, not as occasional bolt-on projects but as a central part of both mainstream and specialized services.

Investing in young people’s health is the right thing to do, from both human rights and the economic perspective. It is investing in the future of society.
HOW TEENAGERS CONSUME ONLINE MEDIA (EU KIDS ONLINE SURVEY 2011)

- 60% 9-16 year olds use every day or almost daily
- 93% 9-16 year olds use weekly
- 88 minutes spent online (average day)

Children go online younger and younger. Across all countries, 1/3 of 9-10 year old who use the internet goes online daily. This rises to 80% for the 15-16 year old.

WHAT THEY DO ONLINE?

How can children be enabled to climb further up the ladder of opportunities? It is important to provide:

- More own-language content
- More age-appropriate positive creative, educational, expressive, Participatory content.

HOW NEW MEDIA IMPACTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

- IQ contributes only 20% to factors determining life success
- From a neurological perspective when children engage in creativity their brains process signals at a higher level

We need to understand that the brain of new generation are changing, from a neurological point of view they are different.

“We have to listen teenagers and let them help us to build appropriate contents”

“We need to prepare children for their future and not for our past”

Jacqueline Harding © Marković 2012
USING SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR PREVENTION

Researches found out that there were not programmes using Facebook or other social media and no programmes on smartphones. In particular:

ONLY FEW INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

● slow research process
Knowledge of the media -> idea for a project -> applications -> research -> evaluation  -> Too much time needed!

● fears about new media
Prevention specialists are often little enthusiastic about New Media and students are often more technologically adept than their instructors

● insufficient knowledge
Viral marketing is simple to use. WRONG!

● competition with other providers
Self help discussion forum and peer information sites are more attractive and can have higher credibility

EXISTING PROJECTS

● Little known and used by the target group
● often only for a limited time available and maintained,
● very basic evaluations
● novelty effects?

DRINKING = SOCIAL DESIRABLE?
American colleges: Drinking is important to make friends
To post something critical about alcohol consumption could signal to your friends that you are not a very sociable person. Since most people use their proper name on Facebook it is unlikely that they raise concerns over a theme that is a social taboo.

DIFFICULTY OF PREVENTION

● New Media are supposed to be fun (for young people)
● If you use them in school for prevention, prevention might become fun
● If you want to use them outside the school setting – you have to make them fun from the beginning (New, exciting Information, Fun Stuff, Controversial discussion, provocation)

HOW TO SUCCEED WITH SOCIAL NETWORKS?

● Become part of an established network; get yourself a positive image
● Know the network well before you try using it for your own purposes
● Get attention; dare to be provocative
● Let the target group be an important constitutive part of the services you provide
● Find new ways to evaluate your projects

“Our research system is not fast enough to keep up with the evolution of new media and applications“
HOW TO SUCCEED IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Normally we are used to hear about challenges of social media and less about opportunities...but there are a lot of opportunities!

HOW TO SUCCEED?
We had the opportunity to engage and cooperate with the third sector, NGOs and associations, when they come to us with:
- a clear campaign
- a clear idea
- a clear target

In this case the collaboration was simple and the results come easy.

The key success in interacting with the Internet and social media campaigns is to come with specific and concrete tasks.

A STORY OF SUCCESS
Collaboration between Youtube, an NGO and the Italian Postal Police to set a campaign providing on line and off line contents aimed to give easy suggestions about how to deal with privacy and security to young people.

Click to see the spot of the campaign “Don’t lose your bearings” (in Italian)

The mix between on line and off line communication is a key factor of success...

BUT

...it is important a big effort to build educational contents.

WHAT WE CAN DO?
We are expert of technologies and we can:
- provide visibility
- give a technical support
- give information about how to use the tools in order to make the campaign successful

We will never be expert as the real experts are about the needs of young people and their families in terms of information, content and support...that’s why we ask you to come and propose your ideas!
SOME SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS ON FACEBOOK

SOME FIGURES

Facebook is about share and connect with friends. Today 500 millions of persons share more than 1 billion or more piece of content tales.

Facebook can also evolve in a great tool for communication and problem solving, as it happened during the last catastrophes such as the Tsunami when people used Facebook to communicate they were safe.

STOP BULLYING: SPEAK UP!

There is a lot of ways to explore and use our technologies and to encourage people to use our platform and be creative about it because:

- Young people learn from social media
- They want interactive campaigns
- They are on Facebook

If you have a good idea, come to us and let’s talk!
NOTES

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- In the UK heart disease is the single biggest killer
- BHF is the third largest charity in the UK, with an annual turnover of £125 m
- Single biggest independent funder of cardiac research in the UK (circa £50 m per year)
- Websites for children & young people since 2005

HOW DO BHF PRODUCES RESOURCES?

- Involve young people in workshops
- Use youth orientated design, video and market research agencies
- Test design options with young people (Teen Think Tank)
- Multiple evaluation methods from young people (online, face to face...)

THE CHALLENGES

- Competing with commercial marketing / advertising
- Long term studies to prove effective prevention
- Affecting appropriate government policy changes in spite of industry lobbying
- Keeping current and up to date
- Fractured media platforms and personalised consumption (touch points)
- Not to treat young people as homogenous group
- Defeating the notion of ‘they’ will do it anyway

ONLINE GAMES

Stub Out Joe
Five Arcade levels to discover the effects of tobacco on your health and the environment

Yoobot
Create an avatar with your own face, play making physical activity and diet choices and see what you look like after 50 years of your chosen regime

Liferunner: ELS
A game to learn emergency life support skills

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Facebook page with regular competitions and peer to peer support
Yheart videos where youth produced video series
Up coming projects Yheart reporters project, Mobile marketing campaign with Blyk to free sim card users, App game development with business unit at Oxford University

Robert Cope © Markovic 2012
USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE SAFE SEX

SOME EUROPEAN FIGURES

CHLAMYDIA
- 75% of youngster between 15-24 years old contract Chlamydia
- Notification rate: 976 per 100.000
- Rising trend

HIV
- In 2008, 51.600 cases of HIV were diagnosed and reported by 48 of 53 countries in the WHO EU Region and Liechtenstein
- The number of cases is more than doubled since 2000
- In Ukraine there is the HIV fastest growing epidemic. 360.000 currently living with HIV

CONDOM USE IN THE NETHERLANDS
- Indications condom in use is declining
- Initial condom use above 75% (15 y/o)
- Hormonal anti conceptional are more popular in Western Europe
- The maintenance of condom use between partners has been tested...?

THE SOA AIDS NETHERLAND CAMPAIGN
(click to watch, video in Dutch subtitled in English)

SOME TIPS FOR CAMPAIGNERS
- Be active
- Be interesting
- Be humble
- Be unprofessional
- Be honest
- Adapt to your surroundings
- Be relevant BUT be yourself
- Easy is more important than fun
- Take your audience seriously
- Keep your promises
THE PROJECT BOYS AND GIRLS

The aim of the project is to better understand how best to use Social media to communicate health-related issues to young people.

THE MAIN FEATURES

- The development of a web series
- The designing and piloting of a web campaign
- Assessment

What are the issues the series covers? Nutrition, alcohol and drug addiction and sexual health.

Who is the target audience? Teenagers between the ages of 15 and 18 years old.

In the project have been involved 9 organizations from 8 countries, NGOs, universities, public and private organizations, 632 teens involved via focus groups and online questionnaires.

THE PRODUCTION METHODOLOGY

- Messages, storylines and scripts are reviewed and validated at each key phase of development
- The web series developed reflects the needs of the target audience, messages and formats are scientifically sounds and age appropriate

HOW TEENS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED?

- They helped us during the content development
- 3 rounds of peer reviews, 246 peers involved in the focus groups and 372 through online questionnaires

THE WEB CAMPAIGN

We are evaluating how these tools can be used to leverage the promotion of health messages to teenagers.

HOW DO ASSESS THE CAMPAIGN?

We are looking at:

POPULARITY

- People reached
- Views of the web series
- Views of the web series page
- Others (articles, blog, etc)

ENGAGEMENT

- Friends and Subscribers
- Positive/negative comments
- Likes

We will have an evaluation report by the end of 2012.
Activities in social media are necessary and must be further studied and intensified, however they are also a reality. A lot related to health or social issues is being done today.

There are far more activities in the social media industry or profit sector deployed. That is in some cases a competition, certainly when it concerns e.g. online drug shops. But we also heard of examples where the industry supports social, health or mental health initiatives, sometimes substantially. One of the big mediaplayers, Google, explicitly invited NGO’s or educational institutes get in contact for collaboration.

For most local NGO’s and educational institutes support and international cooperation are the only ways to be able to focus on innovation and trying out new methodologies.

Differentiation and segmentation to, for example, gender-specific but also to social economical status context is necessary to create and provide solutions for our target groups. Social media can deliver the appropriate channels to reach exactly the segment we want to reach.

Take as example the Boys and Girls project: a strong and positive content is combined with quality of looks, bringing a dynamic and refreshing atmosphere in the deliveries. Such an approach is also involving young people and giving them ownership.

Combine research and practice, not only by the more classical ways of pretesting and evaluating afterwards, but moreover by implying adjustment and flexibility in the action itself. This is intrinsically connected to social media!

The need of international sharing of good practices using social media is obvious. Duplicate good examples, adapt them, securing the core components in order not to loose the effectiveness level. Duplication and adaptation goes along with the changed view on copyright and royalties in the digital media world, where more interventions are put in the public domain.

Practitioners wish to combine interventions for different risk factors and risk behaviors like teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, violence, suicide, loneliness, etc..., to prevent repetition and saturation. Recent studies confirm effectiveness on multiple risk factors from interventions. So focus on generic interventions.
PICTURES
Boys and Girls - The web series

www.youtube.com/boysandgirlswebserie

www.boysandgirlslabs.eu

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