



ASK-project 2001-2003

# Final report



MLL  
THE MANNERHEIM LEAGUE  
FOR CHILD WELFARE

acciones  
integradas  
de desarrollo

## ASK-PROJECT: PREVENTION OF DRUG DEPENDENCE

Name of the project: "ASK"  
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ASK-project ran from December 2001 to March 2003 and presented partnership between 3 organizations in Finland, Spain and Greece, all committing to participatory methods in preventing the substance abuse of young people. The project developed working models to adjust in youth work, school and voluntary work. The project was funded by the European Commission.

The project worked on the primary level of addiction prevention and focused on the preventive factors of substance use. The activities of the project were based on participatory methods and activation of the target groups.

The project has produced 3 training models: two for training young people and one for training parents. All the training materials and reports of the project are free of charge and they can be obtained from the internet-pages <http://www.ask-project.org>.

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# 1 The starting points of the ASK-project

## 1.1 Aims and target groups

ASK is a drug prevention project funded by European Commission. The objective of the project was to develop a youth training programme that contributes healthy ways of living and prevents intoxicant abuse. The project started on December 15th 2001 and it ended on March 2003.

The main goal of the ASK-project was to prevent drug dependence and intoxicant abuse of young people. The goal was separated to the following aims:

- to activate youngsters to participate in the project as executors and seekers for solutions
- to teach youngsters social skills and problem-solving skills
- to strengthen youngsters' self-confidence
- to activate school, parents and authorities cooperate more closely
- to support and to develop parental skills and encourage parents to form a network or peer-group
- to offer new working-models for teachers, school nurses, youth workers and other adults working with children or young people

The target population of the project were young people aged 12-20 and the strategic target group were parents, teachers, youth workers and other adults in the near community.

The project has developed two training models that activate the participators and strengthen their well-being in the community. **The participatory training for young people** aims to activate the youngsters to make an action plan to increase the well-being of the near community. **The peer group training** gives the youngsters group leading abilities and encourages them to organize alternative free time activities.

By these two training models the project has taught youngsters social skills and problem-solving skills, strengthened their self-confidence and given them ways to use their abilities and develop their personal skills. The project has developed and piloted new methods for youth trainings. The main idea in the youth trainings was to apply participatory methods in training programmes and to activate young people to have an effect on their environment and community.

Another important goal in the project was to activate school, parents and authorities cooperate more closely. The project has offered new working-models for teachers, school nurses, youth workers and other adults working with children and young people and encouraged the schools to cultivate parent activities. The models are gathered in the training material **Tips for parent evenings**.

**The main principals of the project were:**

**Participation.** The whole idea of the trainings is based on the knowledge and motivation of the participants (young people). Instead of telling them what to do, they were activated to develop the actions themselves.

**Learning by doing.** In stead of theoretical lectures or “school teaching” the things were taught in different kind of activities, discussions and teamwork.

**Holistic view.** In stead of just talking about drugs, the trainings focused on well-being and supporting the “protective factors” (good social skills, self esteem, problem solving skills etc.) that protect the youngsters against drug abuse and drug related problems.

The Ask-project has been accomplished by the co-operation of three European countries. The organization responsible for the project is a Finnish non-governmental organization Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The partner-organizations are Acciones Intergradadas de Desarrollo (Spain) and Protasi (Greece). The participatory training for young people was planned and accomplished by all the partners, the peer group training and parent activities took part only in Finland.

In this final report of the ASK-project the national and transnational activities of the project are reported. In the chapter 1 the partners are presented and the management of the project is construed. The Chapters 2-4 look into the activities and experiences of the project both in national and transnational levels. In chapter 5 there are views about the results and dissemination and finally in chapter 6 the conclusions of the project are stated.

## 1.2 Partners of the project

### 1.2.1 ASK-project in Finland: MANNERHEIM LEAGUE FOR CHILD WELFARE (MLL)

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare is a non-governmental organization, which aims to promote the welfare of children, young people and families, to increase the evaluation and recognition of childhood in society as well as to bring children's and young people's viewpoints into decision-making.

The goals of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare are the following:

- A child is an equal member of society.
- Every child has a good and happy everyday environment.
- Parenthood and children's education are valued and supported.
- Voluntary work, helping, caring and joint responsibility increase in society.

The Mannerheim League is the largest child welfare organization in Finland. It has more than 85 000 members and 562 local associations throughout the country. The work of these local associations is supported by the League's 13 district organizations. The membership of the League is open to everyone.

The Mannerheim League relies on partnerships. It works with numerous organizations, businesses and networks in Finland and abroad. The League's Central Office in Helsinki cooperates closely with ministries, officials and other organizations while the district organizations and local associations operate on the regional level.

The Mannerheim League supports parenting and links between generations and works to promote health and a good environment for children. It arranges afternoon programmes for school children and educates them about substance abuse. Peer counsellors - older pupils - work to increase the feeling of belonging, congeniality and security at schools.

The peer counsellor activity takes part in upper level secondary schools. It aims to promote good relations between students and also between students and teachers, as well as to promote social responsibility and safe and encouraging atmosphere at schools. The peer counsellors receive education for their task; substance abuse is often the theme for their supplementary training.

The Mannerheim League also produces diverse services; provides home-help for families and telephone counselling for children, young people and parents. Rehabilitation and child welfare services support families in which there are sick or disabled children or mental and social problems.

The League offers families an opportunity to get acquainted and take part in volunteer work, to have a say in public affairs and to participate in a diverse range of activities. Local associations arrange clubs, groups for parents, excursions, training and special events. The associations keep the needs of children and families to the fore and seek to influence local decisions affecting families. Most of the activity of the local associations is based on volunteer work.

### **1.2.2. ASK-project in Spain: ACCIONES INTEGRADAS DE DESARROLLO (AID)**

Acciones Integradas de Desarrollo “Integrated actions for development” (AID) is a national area association without profit spirit, guided to the training and creation of employment. The main region where AID is working is Castilla-La Mancha, and more specific area in the Province of Ciudad Real (South of Spain). The organization was born in 1994 thanks to the collaboration between professional people who have been working in different social welfare programs.

AID offers training for disaffected and disabled young people, and counselling in the area of job creation. AID is also experienced in teacher training. It has collaborated on a number of trans-national projects.

The main objectives of A.I.D. are the following:

- To participate in the free citizen initiative in an autonomous way, in the social development to get an increment of the levels of quality of life trough a social and solidarity progress.
- To coordinate and to give possible solutions to the problems for the job market.
- To train young people who have given up the education system.
- To offer special training to disadvantaged young people into the job market.
- To implant active dynamics for creation of employment with the participation of all kind of socio-economic agents and with the non-governmental organizations.

AID provides training and qualification by training trainers programs for: advisers, agents of local development etc, to improve their knowledge and sensitisation in relative questions with the integration of disadvantaged people into the employment in which a major growth of employment is foreseen.

Since its creation, AID has grown up expanding its work for different target groups into the disadvantaged people group. The main target groups are: young people without any qualification to access to the labour market, children with problems living without their families and elderly people with serious health



problems. The new projects are developed according to the needs of the target groups.

One important part of the work of AID is “Social Guarantee Training Courses”. In these courses young people between ages 16 and 21 receive academical and vocational training to become a worker to be inserted into the job market, and at the same time, because of the ages, they receive also training for life.

### 1.2.3 ASK-project in Greece: PROTASI

"PROTASI", movement for another lifestyle, is a voluntary non-governmental organization aiming at the prevention of drugs. It exists in Patras and the area around it since 1988. Its goal is through well planned and complete projects in different sectors and many levels to encourage, animate, activate and train the members of local community in primary prevention. This goal responds to the need of citizens to be able to solve difficult situations in their lives, to take care of themselves, their fellow citizens and the environment and to create positive conditions for the development of personality.

Part of Movement “PROTASI” is the Center of Creative Occupation (C.C.O.), which aims to motivate young people between 12 to 18 to participate in creative occupation groups (theatre, puppet theatre, photography, painting, artistic handicrafts, carnival) in their leisure time.

The coordinators of the groups are volunteer school teachers, social workers, sociologists, psychologists who have been members of Movement “PROTASI” and have obtained efficient training in primary drug prevention. The coordinators try through a pedagogic approach to encourage, animate and motivate young people in their groups to obtain and develop self esteem, communicative and other skills, ability to plan and implement actions according to their needs and desires. Additionally, young people obtain knowledge and information on the subjects they have selected to participate, as well as in general issues such as human rights, social exclusion, discriminations etc.

The team of coordinators is consisted of highly committed volunteers who are continuously trained in youth work and participate themselves in activities which improve their skills and knowledge in pedagogy.

## 1.3 Project management and timetable

The project had originally two parts: transnational part consisting of the development of the participatory training and the internet pages and national part consisting of the peer work among parents and young people.

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare was in charge of the ASK-project and coordinated both the transnational activities and the activities in Finland. The work was supervised by a steering group that consisted of professionals and volunteers of The Mannerheim League. The steering group assembled 6 times during the project in order to supervise and instruct the implementation and progress of the ASK-project.

The transnational activities of the project were guided by the transnational development team.

### 1.3.1 The transnational development team

The co-operation between the three partner organizations focused on developing the participatory training model for young people. MLL; AID and Protasi formed together a transnational development team to develop and accomplish the participatory training model. In the development team there were members from all the organizations and the team had three meetings during the year 2002

The members of the transnational development team varied from meeting to meeting partly because of personnel changes in the organizations and partly because the organizations wanted to give their workers and volunteers the possibility to participate in a European project. The members of the transnational development team were:

Niina Lindström	MLL
Terhi Haiminen	MLL
Georg Henrik Wrede	MLL
Kirsi Autio	MLL
Marko Korhonen	MLL
Juha Pantzar	MLL
Pirkko Sassi	MLL
Angela Passa	PROTASI
Kleo Varou	PROTASI
Maria Kloukinioti	PROTASI
Angeliki Kotsoni	PROTASI
Magdalini Kourlesi	PROTASI
Maria Liakaki	PROTASI
Marianna Passa	PROTASI
Maria Pegiou	PROTASI
Angeliki Pountza	PROTASI

Chara Raftogianni	PROTASI
Mario Canales Dorado	AID
Ricardo Rodríguez Salcedo	AID
Esperanza Rubio Peláez	AID
María Ángeles Gálvez González	AID
Irene Sevillano Acero	AID
Jesús Salcedo Villanueva.	AID

The first preliminary meeting of the development team was in Finland in February 2002. In this meeting the idea of the training was presented to the members of the team and the timetable and local aims were drawn. Also the draft model of the training was designed and the team agreed on the contents of the training.

Before the second meeting, each partner organization had to look for national solutions to reach the aims of the training: exercises, games, practises and so on. In the second meeting in Spain in June, the training model was prepared. After the meeting the partners had a training programme that they were supposed to test in their own area. The pilot youth trainings were organized in each country during the summer and autumn.

After the pilot trainings the development team met again: the third meeting was in Greece in October. In this meeting the national representatives shared the experiences and the development team concluded the determinative training model.

The fourth and final meeting of the development team was in Finland in December 2002. In this meeting the training report and material were finalized.

### 1.3.2. Timetable of the project

December 2001	Initiation of the ASK-project and forming of the management group
January 2002	Definition of the goals and confirmation of the action plan Ex-ante evaluation of the project by an outside evaluator
February 2002	First preliminary meeting of the international work group Internet pages available for the use of the project
March 2002	Assembly of work group of peer group training for the young and planning of the training model

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April 2002	Training of the youth workers of different districts of the Mannerheim League
May 2002	Planning of the parent training program
June 2002	Planning meeting of the international project group in Spain Parent training: social workers
July 2002	Training events for the young in different participating organizations Interim evaluation and report
August 2002	Youth participatory trainings Training of peer group trainers
September 2002	Youth participatory trainings continue Youth peer group trainings
October 2002	Gathering of the international project group / planning meeting in Greece Internet pages available for public use
November 2002	Writing of the training report Parent training: teachers Parent evenings at schools
December 2002	Final meeting of the international project group Dissemination for trainers
January 2003	Final evaluation of the project Dissemination seminar
February 2003	Issue of the final report of the project Dissemination for volunteers

## 1.4 Publicity and communication

One main feature of the ASK-project was the internet pages that were designed to form the information forum of the transnational development team. The internet pages have also an important role in the dissemination of the training models. The material has not been printed but it is freely available in pdf-form.

The address of the internet pages is <http://www.ask-project.org>. The Internet pages serve as a forum and data bank of the international exchange of information. At the dissemination stage the internet pages were made the publication arena for the yield of the project. The pages also remain after the project has ended.

The pages have two sections: The public part is open for all visitors. There is information about the aims and actions of the project, contact information, possibility to give feedback and the products of the project. The other section is the members' area part. All the employees of the project, coordinators, experts and the voluntary workers were given user names and passwords so they could access the members' area. There they can find the information related to the internal acquirements of the ASK-project.

The internet pages have proved to be a useful tool in the project: the possibility to access the paces from all the countries has given the project workers and volunteers an equal position. It has also cut costs remarkably in the dissemination and publication of the training materials.

## 1.5 Connection to other projects

The work done in ASK-project is based on the long experience all of the partner organizations have done in national and European levels.

The Mannerheim League is part of many international networks and cooperation. In youth work the Mannerheim League has been involved in following European projects:

- Nuori-Youth (Y-1995-FIN-003)
- Europlus (Y-1997-FIN-511)
- EYE (connect DE-017)

The Participatory training has grown from the experiences of the peer education in Finland. The Mannerheim League coordinates the peer education in schools and has developed many training courses for the peer students.

The peer group training of the ASK-project is developed from the experiences gained especially in the Europlus-project. ASK-project has also been in contact

with the Euronet-network, European network for practical approaches in addiction prevention.

AID is involved many ways in training and supporting young disadvantaged people:

- Social Guarantee Courses.
- Plan of Insertion in the Job Market.
- Professional training programs.
- Project "Space Research + Development of young employment" - YOUTHSTART.
- Project "EVA" - SOCRATES.
- Project "C3" - SOCRATES
- Project "Information and Communication Technology: Changing the face of Adult Education in Europe" Grundtvig 2. Adult Education - SOCRATES.
- Project "EYE: Empower Youth for Europe " - CONNECT
- Centres of Information and Support for the Employment - HORIZON and YOUTHSTART
- Project "Urban Young" - URBAN.
- Project "TRADESA". Art. 10 ERDF
- Project "RVS" Virtual Network of Systems - ADAPT

PROTASI" and the C.C.O. have developed a wide national and international network of co-operations with governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions as well with individuals in the following fields:

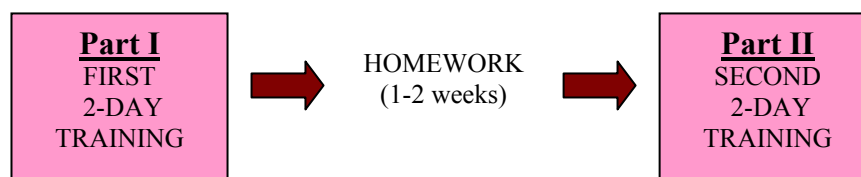
- Financial support (sponsors, fund raisers) Governmental and Municipality financial support through the implementation of certain projects from the Ministries of Education, Health, National Youth Agency, O.KA.NA. (Governmental organization for the prevention of drugs).
- Support of services from individuals, the Municipality and the Government.
- Co-operation in the implementation of prevention projects and training courses (Primary and Secondary local Education Authorities and the surrounding prefectures, O.KA.NA., KETHEA - Therapeutic Communities -, Army)
- Local Network of the professional, social and syndicate unions for the secondary prevention of drugs.
- Participation to and implementation of transnational projects with ICEA (International Community Education Association), INEPS (International Network of Productive Schools), IPLE (Institution of Productive Learning in Europe)

## 2 Transnational activities and experiences: Participatory training for young people

### 2.1 What is participatory training for young people?

Participatory training for young people is a tool that can be used to give youngsters a possibility to do something: to influence the well being of themselves and their community. The training can also support the healthy living and healthy choices of young people, teach them ways to communicate and co-operate in a group, increase their self-esteem and help them to cope with difficulties and troubles in their lives.

The training model consists of two educational parts and homework that is done between the two parts. The first and second parts of the training last for two days or a week-end each. The homework time is from one week to two weeks.



In the first part of the training the young people are made aware of their near community, the concept of well-being and their social surroundings. Then they are motivated and encouraged to make something to influence the community or increase the well-being of their community. The idea is to use participatory methods: use the knowledge and information that the youngsters have, and let them decide what is to be done. The first part ends in planning of the activities. The youngsters will do the homework and the activities they have planned in pairs or small groups.

The homework is actualizing the action plan or gathering more information about the subject the youngsters have chosen.

The second part of the training consists of presenting the work that has been done during the break (homework). The ideas of young people can be developed further and the activities can continue even after the training, if the youngsters are motivated and there is an adult instructor to support and guide them.

The drug prevention aspect can be emphasized depending on the participants. The original idea of this training was to ask youngsters themselves what leads to the drug use among young people and what can be done about it. Because most of the youngsters involved in this project were quite young and had no experience in drug abuse, the trainings focused more on the health promotion and life skills.

In the ASK-project the training model has been tested in different target groups: participating youngsters were from different age groups, different social backgrounds and different cultural contexts - also from different counties. By these diverse experiences the project has developed a training model that can be transferred in most youth groups in Europe.

The Participatory training for young people was piloted in the autumn of 2002 in all the three partner countries. All the three partners followed the same structure, but in each country the training model was adapted to the local target group(s) and local aims of the partner organization.

## 2.2 Experiences from the youth trainings in Finland

The Mannerheim League for Child welfare collaborates with local comprehensive schools and it has introduced peer activities in schools for 30 years ago. Another important area is the local associations and the local youth work that takes part after school. The Mannerheim League does a lot of voluntary work in general, but most of the youth activities are done by paid professionals. In ASK-project the workers were paid.

The participatory training was partly supporting the peer activities in school and this part was build on the structure that the League has developed in its earlier work before the project. Secondly the training was developing the voluntary youth work of the League.

### Target groups of the participatory training in Finland

In Finland there were two target groups in the training.

#### A) Peer students in schools

These peer students are pupils in upper grade comprehensive school. They have been chosen by their class mates and trained to be co-operators, listeners and helpers in the school community. The participatory training was introduced as a complementary training for a group of peer students.

The group consisted of 20 young people aged 14 to 16. There were both boys and girls in the group. The youngsters were selected by their teacher. The criteria were that they have to be active and ready to commit to this training and



the activities. There had been some discussions about drinking and smoking in this group, as is usual in this age group in Finland.

#### **B) Voluntary young people**

The other target group in Finland was a group of youngsters that go to a youth house after school. The participatory training was aimed to this group in order to enhance the voluntary activities in the community and to give the youngsters more possibilities to spend their free time. The youngsters were chosen by a local youth worker and volunteer.

The group was planned to be 15 people aged 14 to 16. Unfortunately there were misunderstandings in the preceding information about the training and only 3 participants came to the first meeting. The training was postponed and it was marketed to other youngsters too. However there were not enough participants and the training was decided to be cancelled.

#### **Structure of the training in Finland**

The training followed the training model: there were two training sessions and a homework that was done between these sessions. The training lasted for 15 hours, the homework was done in 10 days and there were also several additional meetings after the trainings. The well-being of social surroundings was emphasized and the intoxicants and addiction were present in the discussions.

#### **Activation of young people in Finland**

The homework was to get more information about the situation in the area and to plan the activities. The small groups had very different kind of targets in their action plans: Some of them wanted to focus on the environment and they for example tidied up the place they the youngsters hang around. Some of the youngsters saw the drug use as the problem and they organized training for younger students. Some of the youngsters focused on teasing at school. They interviewed their peers and made a video for the teachers as rules how to handle the situations. Most of the activities were quite large, and they were not possible to finish within the training sessions. The meetings and activities continued for some weeks or even some months after the training. The teachers of these peer students were involved, so they could support the work of the youngsters.

#### **Some national views on the training model**

The first experience with the peer students was very positive and for them this training model suits well. They are active people that are used to work as a

group. Also the school and their teachers helped to accomplish the training and the later activities.

The other target group was a failure and unfortunately the training couldn't be accomplished. The volunteer had too much responsibility about the training, and when she failed to gather the youngsters, the whole training failed.

The training model suits very well in the Finnish youth work. It also focuses more on the preventive factors that are important in the addiction and abuse prevention.

International co-operation has brought some new aspects to the training model. It has become more versatile and complex, and thus it will be easier to adjust the training according to different needs of the target group. In Finland this training will remain as part of the peer activities in schools and the peer students can participate the training as a complimentary education. The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare will also continue to develop the voluntary youth work and this training can be a big help in this area.

## 2.3 Experiences from the youth trainings in Spain

For AID the change to work in collaboration with The Mannerheim League and Protasi was an interesting opportunity to work deeper in the field of drugs prevention for young people, one of the most important target groups of the Association. This opportunity not only covered youngsters, also children who have been inserted in our fields of working, some of them with a very high social and familiar problems, and where drugs are the responsible of their problems.

The AID's experiences in drugs prevention have been addressed mainly to trainers or technical people who are working with young people, and also with very specific groups of young people who already knew drugs and who have had contact with them. In this point, AID has developed actions for volunteers working in projects and for other organisations under the Regional Government Funds.

The development of participatory training was opened and structured for different target groups, permitting to share knowledge and experiences between trainers, children and young people and making at the same time a common itinerary for training and adapting it to the specific social reality or surroundings.

The work made in an European Area has permitted AID to give the European concept to the actions; having the collaboration of public and private institutions and involving all the possible social agents in this task. At the same time, the fact of different countries involved, has permitted AID to know more about works made for drugs prevention and how is the reality in every country.

## Target groups of the participatory training in Spain

According to the main objectives in AID, the most important target group is disadvantaged people, but also, AID works with people who are going to work with this kind of people, or they are already working with. In participatory training there were two groups of young people. Also the trainers can be considered as a target group.

### A) Trainers

People who are working in the projects where this methodology has been developed: Pedagogues and Educators working with children and young people who are living in houses in ward of the Regional Government, and people working in the “Ludoteca” (a place where children can play and learn having ludic activities)

### B) Children

Children between 8 and 15 years old who came to the “Ludoteca” almost every day. Some of these children are the children living in the houses under the AID management and who are separated of their families for different reasons: abandonment, not familiar structures, problems with the law, etc.

### C) Young people

Young people taking part in the “Social Guarantee Courses”. These courses are integrated into the Educational Plan of Spain. They try to give training in different ways: academical training and vocational training, to young people between 16 and 21 years old who stopped formal studies without any qualification. Reasons for stopping studies are very varied, but most of them have a social or familiar problem.

## Structure of the training and evaluation of the model in Spain

The “Participatory Training Methodology” and all the documents in relation with the project: aims of the ASK project, conclusions for meeting carried up, etc. were translated from English to Spanish.

The trainers and people working in the project had a meeting to study the methodology and how to implant it into the projects and targets groups of AID. These discussions permitted the participants to know more about needs and field where to work with every group.

After the second meeting of the transnational development team, AID started to work with people working with young people into the projects that AID is managing now (training trainers): “Ludoteca” “Houses for children” and “Social Guarantee Courses”.

These Trainers are including now this methodology as a part of their “plans of education” in every project they are working. Specific activities are already developed with children and young people.

The “Participatory Training Methodology” is included in different training courses. This is going to facilitate the evaluation and further adaptations according with needs and target groups.

During training exercises, and according with every target group, motivations are very different. Children were looking for enjoyable activities during their free time. So, the trainers tried to focus all the activities like a game where they are the main actors. The “Ludoteca” offers to the children a good place where to find a big choice of activities. During the normal period, children have to pay a small price to go into this place, but, during the training they didn’t pay any money.

For young people, also games are interesting, but we use another tool: computers and all the possibilities that the internet offers us. Training with young people was reinforced with new exercises. The young people made a very basic level investigation about specific drugs they wanted to know more about. They studied the effects and made a small home work about it.

### **National conclusions**

The participatory training methodology is not isolated into the global methodology in the Association. AID considers this new training methodology like a exercise more to do with our target groups.

The participatory training methodology, as its name says, pretends the “active involvement” of young people into their learning processes. AID has worked with this kind of methodology for years trough the principle: “learning by doing” and they have had very good results with disadvantaged young people in all the training activities.

The Spanish team thinks that this methodology works better when some exercises are adapted to the “social reality” of every country and let to run the creativity and the interests according with the motivation of young people, target groups, ages, etc.

The participatory Training Methodology has been enlarged introducing the ICT as a tool in the field of research and investigation. These activities promote to take responsibilities in the small and big groups.

These exercises work indirectly in drugs prevention; they promote healthy habits of life trough good choices to have fun, to live and to have a good communication between people.

Working with young people between 16 and 21 years old, one of the target groups, AID included the “case study” for every person, as an activity which doesn’t exclude the others, but it permits to give us another point of view of young life and experiences in drugs.

## 2.4 Experiences from the youth trainings in Greece

Movement “PROTASI” is a non-governmental organization. It is a volunteer’s organization working in primary drug prevention in the local society of Patras. Part of Movement “PROTASI” is the Center of Creative Occupation (C.C.O.), which aims to motivate young people, between 12 to 18, to participate in creative occupation groups in their leisure time.

The coordinators of the groups are volunteers who are members of Movement “PROTASI” and have obtained efficient training in primary drug prevention. The coordinators try through a pedagogic approach to encourage, animate and motivate young people in their groups to obtain and develop self esteem, communicative and other skills, ability to plan and implement actions according to their needs and desires. Additionally, young people obtain knowledge and information on the subjects they have selected to participate, as well as in general issues such as human rights, social exclusion, discriminations etc.

Apart from the volunteers, a small number of professionals (prevention executives) are occupied in the project mainly motivating, training and facilitating in organizational and administration matters, the volunteer coordinators of the groups. Every year movement “PROTASI” is holding long-term seminars for new volunteer members, teachers, health professionals and volunteers.

### Target groups of the participatory training in Greece

In Greece there were two target groups in the training, which interacted between them forming a group of 31 young people. More specifically the target groups were:

#### A) Students from the CCO

17 young students, members of the groups of the CCO between 12 to 16 years old. Some of them are new members, some other older members of the CCO. All of them have developed the group esteem and are familiar to team working.

#### B) Students from the Secondary school

14 young students from the 6<sup>th</sup> Gymnasium of Patras, a school which is near the CCO and “PROTASI”, has developed good relations by training the teachers and implementing projects in the school community with the involvement of parents as well.

The students were selected by the teacher and the headmaster of the school as being very committed members of last year’s health promotion group, which was dealing with integration of immigrant students - equality - diversity.

## **Structure of the training in Greece**

The training was divided into 3 phases:

1. First training, which lasted for two days and took place in the Environmental Centre of Klitoria, 180 km away from Patras, at the mountains.
2. Homework phase, which lasted for two weeks just after the first training and the students worked in 6 subgroups with the assistance and counselling of the trainers. The students used the place of the CCO for their meetings.
3. Second training, which lasted for two days at the CCO and the students fulfilled their homeworks and decided for the intervention in their school.

The preparation, follow up and evaluations of the trainings were coordinated by the group of 10 Greek trainers, all members of "PROTASI", and took place in 22 meetings from the beginning until the end of the project.

## **Activation of young people in Greece**

The first training focused on rising the ASK group esteem (combining two different target groups) and deciding on a "contract" that would help the students to realize their availability, their responsibility and commitment. These principles helped them to work systematically on the ASK project but it was also a training itself creating multipliers on the ideas of ASK project by the pedagogic methods chosen for the occasion. This first training helped them to work effectively on their homework task of realizing their environment, investigating the needs of other young people and take actions themselves in their school community as a starting point, which would affect their wider environment.

The planning process was a great experience for them, as they had to elaborate in details ideas and goals in a realistic way. They also managed to combine a lot of different ideas to a final one (making a graffiti at their school) justifying and giving reasons for their choice.

The meetings and activities continue even now after the training and the students with the help of their teachers and coordinators of the CCO are on the way to realize their goal.

## **National conclusions of the training model**

The training model was very suitable to their needs, abilities and expectations of the organization. Having being themselves members of other groups the volunteers were adapted quickly to this new group and it seems that they want to continue to belong to the same group although the project has finished.

The results of the project were evaluated by a feedback questionnaire. The teachers and coordinators of the CCO realized that the students got a lot of benefit out of this project since these students play an important role in the school and CCO community and act as multipliers and leaders in other later activities.

The training model was very much similar to the principles and values "PROTASI" promotes to young people. The personal growth, the high commitment, the continuation of actions were some of the goals that the ASK project helped to be achieved. An active citizen is the preventive model, which was introduced to the life of young people.

Apart from the students, the volunteers and professionals of "PROTASI" who were involved in this project as trainers benefited a lot by gaining new experiences, realizing new training and methodological techniques and interacting with the transnational partners.

"PROTASI" will continue to implement this training in its voluntary youth work very much enriched, improved and tested in an international level through the ASK project.

Table 1. Matrix of the structure of the pilots

	PEER STUDENTS IN FINLAND	VOLUNTEER STUDENTS IN FINLAND	SOCIAL GUARANTEE GROUP IN SPAIN	CHILD PROTECTION GROUP IN SPAIN	LUDOTECA GROUP IN SPAIN	PRIMARY SCHOOL GROUP IN GREECE	CCO GROUP IN GREECE
<b>Who</b>	Peer Students in upper grade comprehensive school in Pori	Active youngsters in a small community of Loppi	Youngsters without educational qualifications who have some social problems in Ciudad Real	Children living without their family in Ciudad Real	Children who come to Ludoteca in Ciudad Real	Students in Patras	Youngsters who come to Center of Creative Occupation in Patras
<b>Age</b>	14-16 years	14-16 years	16-21 years		11-16		13-16
<b>Size of the Group</b>	20	15	10		20		31
<b>Selection of the group</b>	Teachers were told about the training and they chose the youngsters	Youngsters were asked personally to participate	Youngsters attend the Social Guarantee group to gain education and social support. ASK-training was accomplished within this group.		Those youngsters that come everyday after school to the Ludoteca		Participation was voluntary. Protasi was already co-operation with the school
<b>Training Structure</b>	Two 2-day sessions + homework		Regular meetings, homework was done in the group		Regular meetings in a 2 week time, homework was done in the place too		Two 2-day sessions + homework
<b>Home work</b>	Getting more information and going on with the action plan		Research work about drugs		The contract, the rules for Ludoteca, discussions about attitudes		Maps
<b>Action Plan</b>	Video, trainings for younger students, Environmental work		Youngsters made a "Case study" of themselves				Proposals for the future: changes in the school environment
<b>Future plans</b>	Training will be used as part of the peer student trainings		Training model will be used in as part of the Social Guarantee trainings				



## 2.5 Summary of the experiences of the participatory training

To sum up the experiences, all the three partner organizations were satisfied with the trainings. The trainings in the different countries varied to some extent: the structure of the training was modified according to the local facilities and resources and also to the needs of the partner organizations. The target groups were also different in each country. The education system of the countries also had an effect on the trainings, because they were done in collaboration with the local schools. The differences and similarities of the partners can be seen in table 1 where the main features of all the youth trainings are presented.

The development of the training model took place after the local youth trainings had been concluded in each country. The pros and cons of the training model were gathered by country and then compared together. All the countries could find both positive and negative factors in the training. However, there weren't any negative factors that would be common in all the three countries. So in this respect the training model can be considered successful and appropriate to adapt in different cultures and different target groups.

Greece and Spain named one shared negative element: the training could only be done during a very specific period of time and so it's hard to realize. Greece and Finland found two shared difficulties: the drop-out of participants and confusion about the project and the waste of time that it caused. The confusion about the projects refers to the fact that the young didn't know what the aim of the project was, and so they had various expectations/not expectations at all for the training. Finland and Spain didn't have any common difficulties.

Two negative or difficult aspects were taken to the general discussion in the development team: the difficulties to transfer and to disseminate the results of the training into the young's social environment (friends, families, etc.) and the lack of, or not very clear and strong, commitment of the parents to facilitate the programme. These factors should be taken into consideration in an earlier stage. When the training is re-accomplished, the parents will be more involved in the activities and the dissemination will be planned together with all the organizations and arrangements.

The problem of guidance was also an important topic in the development: where to draw the line between freedom and guidance? The methodology of participatory approach underlines the youngsters' involvement in the decision making, but in practise the trainings were introduced by adults and the youngsters had very little say in the development of the trainings. However, in separate exercises very good examples of the methods were seen.

The principal benefit from the project was the training for the youngsters. The training has activated these youngsters, they have learned new skills and have now better basis for intoxicant-free living. They have also multiplied the effects of the training by transferring their ideas and learning to their peers.

The Participatory training and the whole ASK-project gave a chance to the volunteer workers in the partner organizations to develop their skills as well. By taking part in the trainings the volunteers were committed to a process that gave them knowledge, initiative and contributed their personal growth.

The main result of the experiences was that the training model is suitable for training young people in drug prevention and activating the youngsters in order to influence their social surroundings and promote their well-being - in different counties. The training model is developed by the experiences to be adaptable in any European country.

## 3 National youth activates and experiences in Finland: Peer group training for the young

### 3.1 What is peer group training?

In the peer group training young people instruct other young people, their equals. Young people, as has been observed, learn and adopt new thoughts and behaviour patterns more easily from each other than from adults, parents or teachers. In youth groups, school classes, gangs, among friends or in hobby circles there are often persons who are peer educators or natural peer leaders. The other members of the group respect these peer leaders, listen to them and adopt their attitudes and behaviour patterns.

In the ASK-project the peer educators were taught know-how and skills, which they can convey to other young people after the schooling. The peer educators may function as support and help for other young people, take part in arranging activities or simply “hang around” with other youths. The target was that the peer educator is able to convey to the young the insights he has acquired in the peer educator training. The intent is to activate young people to influence their own life situation.

The target for the training was to make the young people reflect on their own behaviour and thus increase their ability to master the risks. Another target was to develop the youth activities; what could be done in the own peer group of the young as an alternative to, say, the intoxicant abuse on weekends.

The training comprises familiarization and group formation exercises, peer educating and peer activity determinations, exercises enhancing reflections on coping with life and risk behaviour as well as planning the activities, which are carried out by the young people themselves. After the training course, the young people function as peer educators while the instructor (the trainer) encourages their activities by regular meetings and giving opportunities to talk. The complete training model and exercises are published in the internet pages of the project.

### 3.2 Experiences of the youth trainings in four youth houses

Within the ASK project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare four pilot courses for the young focusing on preventive drug and intoxicant work were organized in Finland.

The group comprised 12 youth workers from Helsinki, Hämeenlinna and Kuusankoski. The instructor training contained peer education, participatory methods and planning a youth peer educator training for the own locality. The instructor training was carried out participatorily, utilizing the skill and experience of the whole group.

After the instructor training, each participating quarter organized its own youth training. Below are reports on these peer educator training pilot courses.

### **3.2.1 City of Helsinki, Youth Department: Pakila and Torpparinmäki Youth Houses**

The employees at Pakila and Torpparinmäki youth houses decided jointly to carry out the peer educator training for the young with the aim to facilitate the free movement of the young and dispel prejudices between the youths in the quarters of Pakila and Torpparinmäki as well as between various youth culture groups. In Helsinki, the quarters and suburbs form in some parts rather strong invisible barriers for the movement of the young. Besides, the aim for training peer educators was to make co-leaders and peer counsellors of the young for the youth houses, to influence a larger group of youths through the educators and support the young themselves through the training.

Owing to the diversity in targets, the participating crowd was very mixed. The youth workers gathered the participants by charting from the youth house visitors suitable and between themselves very different young people, as they saw fit, to join the training. Half of the participants were from Pakila (6 persons) and the other half from Torpparinmäki (5 persons). The ages ranged from a girl of 14 to two already adult boys of 18.

From Pakila four boys and two girls were selected. Three of the young belonged to those "hanging around" the youth house, whom the instructors considered passive youths at risk of becoming excluded. Two sporting youths represented the active ones. The sixth participant from Pakila was a 16 years old youth, whose intoxicant abuse had increased alarmingly within a short period of time.

From Torpparinmäki two active girls, who joined through the general advertising at the youth house and at schools, participated in the peer educator training. Through personal interviews three more passive and reserved youths were enrolled.

The entire Helsinki peer educator group was thus quite heterogeneous, and one training target was actually to test if the more passive youths would activate themselves when being brought together with active youths.

The training took place at the Pakila youth house during one weekend. People slept over at the youth house, and in all the training lasted for 32 hours.

After the training the youths have gathered once together to plan coming activities. They have also visited "each others'" youth houses. Up to now part of the young has been having jobs at, say, the youth house band nights. It is part of the plans to use the peer educators as co-leaders on the youth house outings, as well as to let them in on planning and implementing youth house events. The youth houses plan to reform the house democracy and the instructors actually brought up the idea that the young would have the responsibility for managing the house meetings and that the employees would be present there as participants and in problematic situations as supporters and promoters. In a planning stage is also to implement a Banned-under-16 Day (wished by the youths having activity or time of their own for the slightly older youth house visitors) on Sunday afternoons, when peer educators above 18 years of age would be in charge of the youth house localities and function as supervisors. Encouragement for their peer educator activity the youths are getting by personal talks at the youth houses, because the instructors are employees there and the youths who took part in the training are visitors there.

The instructors have been very satisfied with the training and they also conveyed the feedback from the young to the planning team of the training. The targets set for the training were fulfilled even beyond expectations. One of the unemployed youths involved got as a result of the training busy looking for a job and was employed, too. Further the instructors told about small changes which had happened in the youths' behaviour, telling about a growing responsibility. E.g. one of the young, who earlier could not care less about the youth house rules, now puts his shoes on the shelf when entering and asks others to do likewise, too. The peer educators have also been emboldened to contact with other young people.

The group forming was carried out splendidly, which laid a good foundation for the success of the whole training. Also the different views from four different instructors and a successful joint cooperation made the training successful and efficient. Especially the group debate on intoxicants was rewarding; the young started to think about intoxicant abuse through the six general questions by really going into the matter. The variety in the group and its age distribution added on its part to the group dynamics and many angles to the discussions. The trainers said you could see how some kind of reflection started off in the heads of most of the young during the first training weekend.

The new training to the youth workers has been asked for and on the other hand the peer educators are asking for continuation meetings and a common activity. Also the other youth centres in Helsinki have shown interest to the peer educator training. The application of the activity model goes on at the youth centres and a new course is already being planned for the autumn 2003.

### 3.2.2 City of Hämeenlinna, Youth Department

At Hämeenlinna nine girls took part in the training. The youth centre employees selected four participants by asking the girls directly about their interest in taking part in the training. However, one of the four skipped the training as it was about to begin. Also boys were invited, but for some reason or other they did not get excited about it. The rest of the participants were found through the schools, where the teachers were asked to recruit suitable young to the training. All the selected youths were quite active. In the group was a tacit girl with a cheerful disposition, though, and an active girl, however, needing support from the group, as her life situation was slightly without a course. The girls were aged 14 - 16.

The target of the training was to make co-leaders at the youth centre of the peer educators, to influence a larger group of young people through them, to help youths in the class themselves (concerning just one), to make the young participate and to offer them ways of influencing. The training was carried through in stages, with six separate gatherings in evenings during the autumn, and after the first two meetings there was a camp during the weekend. After the training the group meetings go on in the spring 2003 and the peer educator activity is supported through the meetings. The training comprised a total of ca. 30 hours.

During the training the group had a hoodie printed with "I am a true" on its front and "peer educator" on its back. The training comprised visits a.o. to the Youth Health Service Centre, Youth Welfare Office, the Family Centre's out-patient care and the town info-centre "Kastelli". The youths have expressed their wishes to be shown around in the Social Welfare Office and the Employment Development Centre.

For the coming spring the youths have composed these kinds of activities: Organizing a peer camp and winter events (say, a downhill skiing trip) and founding two club groups; one for the junior school pupils and the other for the seventh form pupils. At the beginning of every meeting there is an enquiry when the peer educators may tell about situations where they have made use of their peer educating skills.

The young had been pleased with the team spirit of the peer educator group. To every small group exercise, there was formed a new combination to prevent regular groups from forming during the training, but everyone was dealing with everyone. To the surprise of the instructors, in the part about coping with life, besides, drama the most important topic arising was the health issues and based on them it was arranged for the group to be shown around at the Youth Health Service Centre.

The most difficult thing to understand for the young was what a peer educator actually was about. Thus it is important to not only clearly define the qualities of

a peer educator but also his limits and go through the rights and duties of the young as a peer educator.

### **3.2.3 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and Kuusankoski Youth Department**

The training participants at Kuusankoski were youths spending their time at the local youth café with hardly any other hobbies. Of the eight youths 5 were boys, 3 girls, and they were acquainted from earlier. The age range was between 15 and 19. A peculiarity to other pilot courses was that in the Kuusankoski training there were three dating couples.

The aim of the training was to activate the youths and help them themselves as well as influence a larger group of young people through them. The training comprised a weekend camp (15h) and two gatherings (2 x 2.5h).

The youths' activity plans contained a.o. to bring up the youths' views through the local newspaper in order to establish an own youth column or youth supplement. Part of the plans were to organize meetings and a weekend at a cabin as well as an incentive trip to Lapland next autumn. There is further a plan to carry out a non-intoxicant event for the young monthly during spring 2003.

The instructors found the peer educator training to be a meaningful and inspiring tool, through which they themselves enjoy their work. They will in future, too, put the training into practice in their work. The instructors were also taken by complete surprise to see, how the passive young people at the youth café started to function actively during the training and how intensively they went into, say, the intoxicant discussion and got enthusiastic about their political influence possibilities. The instructors had also assessed that the youths should need more support than they actually need.

Also at Kuusankoski, a new peer educator training is planned for the next autumn and the model of activity will henceforth be put into practice.

### 3.2.4 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and City of Tampere, Youth Services

At Tampere 11 young were selected to the peer educator training among the frequenters at the Tesoma and Lentävänniemi youth centres. During the training 3 youths dropped out in the middle of the training, due to own passivity, pressures at work or resistance from the parents. The final peer educator group consisted of eight youths, only one of them a boy. The young people were aged 15 -17. According to the instructors the youths participating in the training were in a sense already qualified peer educators; they just had to become aware of and understand it themselves. The training gave them more self-confidence to act.

The aim of the peer educator training was to make the young co-leaders at the youth centre and influence a larger group of youths through them. The training, therefore, focused specially on comprehensive entities supporting these skills. The training was carried out in several stages: Two night classes at the youth centre, an adventure and group forming meeting at the Antaverkka camping centre and finally a training weekend at the youth centre. The training totalled 20 hours.

The first gathering comprised the introduction of those present and getting acquainted as well as getting through the background and the training scheme. Finally the group made it clear to the members, what is meant by peer education (what is a peer group, to what peer groups do you belong).

The theme of the contents during the second meeting was the role and qualities of the educator and the group dynamics. Further the group got the advance tasks for the training weekend (everyone had to choose a game to lead during the training weekend), and subjects dealt with previously were put into practice through problem solving games.

The theme of the third meeting was group forming, which took place at the forest path of the camping centre, where there were various grouping and problem solving tasks, by means of confidential games and adventure (wall climbing).

In the peer educators' activity plans is the foundation of a group leaders' group for girls aged 9 - 12 and leading a YAD group at the youth centre. The young are also thinking on how to gain from their training in practice when spending their time at the youth centre. The peer educator could e.g. act as an initiator for the young, visiting the youth centre for the first time, as a messenger between the employees and other youth, encouraging the young or generally as an active actor at the youth centre.

The young experienced the training as fun and inventive. A sound group spirit came true also in this training, and ,moreover, the young felt they had learnt to cope with critical situations and to deal with other than children. They felt they had got experiences, ideas, group leading skills and found the discussions and the exercises fun. On the debit side according to the youths and the instructors



was the brevity of the training and the fact that part of the group members interrupted the training.

The instructors experienced that, starting from ready material of the ASK project, it was quite easy to plan the training, even if the planning took longer than estimated. The circles established by the peer educators generate new activities for the local kids and from the YAD's point of view, the training produces more know-how to train the membership.

### 3.3 Summary of the peer education experiences

The trainings were carried out in very different ways at different places. There were differences in the selection processes of the young, in the marketing of the training and its implementation as well as the practical realization (one weekend or several gatherings and a camp) and in the contents (focussing on different sectors of the training). Table 1 shows a summary of the central features of the pilot courses.

In Helsinki the young were selected fairly carefully following criteria agreed on in advance. Thus a group of very miscellaneous young people joined, which, however, formed an integrated group after the process of familiarization and group formation. One objective with the Helsinki class was to decrease the mutual biases among the youth, which succeeded well. At other places the youths selected to the training were similar between them and in several cases acquainted to each other from earlier. Almost everyone of the Hämeenlinna and Tampere youths were also active youths, as they are called. The group sizes of the classes were 8 - 11 young people per class, which proved beneficial both from the team works' and the debates' point of view.

The youths' peer group was, at all localities, the own youth house. At Hämeenlinna part of the young was from the same school, thus the own school/class was the peer group for these young. The trained peer educators also had their more personal peer groups, e.g. in hobby circles. Through the trainings also the other peer educators became an important peer group for the participants.

At Helsinki, Hämeenlinna and Tampere, one function of the peer educator activity was to generate "co-leaders" to the youth centre. At Kuusankoski the main target was to support the youths themselves and activate them to act. At all places the peer educators have, after the training, been intensively involved in the youth centre activities, which has clearly increased their enthusiasm and commitment. In the peer activity other youths are being influenced during youth centre excursions, in circles and other group events.

The structure of the trainings was mainly the same at every place, and it followed the model shown in fig. 2 of this material. The stress on various sectors of the training model varied, however, quite a lot depending on the locality and the local aims. In Helsinki the focus was on forming group and acting together,

at Hämeenlinna the special feature of the training was the guided visits, at Tampere exercising leading was stressed and at Kuusankoski the human relations skills.

Common to all the trainings was the activity and motivation of the young in the class and their wish to make good use of the yield from the peer educator training in some way in the future. Many of the participants seemed to expect or hope for a continuation to the training. When writing this, in February 2003, a camp for all young people, who participated in the pilot courses, is in a planning stage. Moreover, each locality has planned continuation meetings for the peer educators during the entire spring.

## 4. National parent activities in Finland: Training for parent evenings

The parent activities of the ASK-project aimed to increase the co-operation between the adults that are in contact with the youngsters. The most important of these are the parents and the school personnel. Thus the co-operation between parents and class teachers was seen the essential objective in the ASK-project. The project wanted to strengthen the link between schools and the local associations of the Mannerheim League as well. The activities were based on the work and experience that were gathered from the earlier work of the league.

From the beginning of the project it was clear not to construct new structures for the collaboration but to utilize the existing working cultures and networks. Thus the natural function arena for the project was the parent evenings inside schools.

In the Finnish school system the teacher invites the parents of a class to meet each other and get to know the school. The aim of these meetings is to inform the parents about the school work and their children's doings. In many schools the teachers organize events, discussions, lectures and other activities for the parents. Drug prevention is an important topic in these activities, but mainly it is handled in theory based lectures. The ASK-project aimed at introducing the participatory methods as a tool how to deal with the substance abuse theme in the parent evenings.

In the starting point of the ASK-project the project workers tried to find a local association and a school that would be interested in developing and piloting the model together. In this situation the time shortage made this very difficult. Because the work in the local association is done by volunteers, the project couldn't oblige them in anyway. Also the schools had already made their timetable for the year. The development of the parent training model would have taken at least six months, thus the piloting of the trainings would have happened after the project had ended. This is why the project decided to focus on training teachers and other adults inside schools, so the activities would start in schools and continue on the local level in the future.

### 4.1 Contents of the training model

The ASK-project wanted to add the school personnel's facilities and ability to organize parent activities and familiarize them to participatory methods. The project organized two work groups training for two different target groups: A) The social workers that work inside schools and B) the teachers of the 7.th grade of the comprehensive schools.

The training consisted of:

- Presentation of the ASK-project
- Basic definitions of the substance use prevention
- Presentation of the parent evening model
- Participation
- Team work methods
- Activity hints
- Planning the local activities

The parents are activated to participate in the activities by organizing training and discussion-forums for them. The first objective is to get the parents know each other and thus increase the discussion in the group. The activities will take part in the secondary comprehensive school as part of the school activities. In addition to that, the school will also offer the parents an opportunity to take part in a peer-group for parents and train volunteers as group-coordinators. The activity will develop interaction between parents and the young and will create new meeting arenas between school and home.

The social workers' possibilities to adapt these methods to their own work are not always good. The social worker is invited to the parent evening to lecture or to tell about the problems inside school. Often these events are for the whole school or for the parents of all the grades, so there is no time or place to use the participatory methods.

The teachers however have much better possibilities of utilizing the methods in one-class parent evening. They organize usually one parent evening in the autumn and another in the spring and in addition to these they also have events for the whole school.

## 4.1 Experiences in the schools

The social workers and the teachers were both asked how they have benefited from the Ask-project, have they used the new methodology and what kind of parent evenings they have organized.

The social workers answered that they thought the training in itself was good and useful and the ideas of the parent activities were useful. However none of the social workers had utilized the ideas in practice. The class teacher is the key person as well as the headmaster of the school; they decide the content and methods of the parent evenings and other activities.

The teachers also answered that they had benefited from the training. The attitudes towards the ASK-projects methodology were more positive and they were seen even quite easy to realize. Some teachers had prepared extensive programme for the parent evenings. The implementation had however been less

successful. The headmaster of the school did not take part in the training and the teachers saw this as a block that made the implementation more difficult or even impossible.

The teachers intend to utilize the methodology of the ASK-project, but most of them answered that they intend to start next year. This only shows how early the preparation work should begin. The collaboration with the school started in the spring of 2002, the trainings started in the fall of 2002 and the actual parent evenings are planned to start in the fall of 2003. ASK-project has hopefully helped the teachers to adapt new working methods and change the old school routines, but it cannot support and facilitate the actual parent activities at school. To fulfil all the aims of the ASK-project, a more extended project would be required.

## 5 Results and utilization

### 5.1 The realized results: did we reach our aims?

The main goal of the ASK-project was to prevent drug dependence and intoxicant abuse of young people. The main goal was divided into smaller aims that are also possible to measure during the implementation of the project. The aims were based on the resent research and also the experiences and the methodologies of the partner organisations about prevention work.

Thus, the project had two target groups: young people and the adult network around them. The young people were reached through following aims:

- to activate youngsters to participate in the project as executors and seekers for solutions
- to teach youngsters social skills and problem-solving skills
- to strengthen youngsters' self-confidence

The adults, parents, teachers and officials, were reached trough these aims:

- to activate school, parents and authorities cooperate more closely
- to support and to develop parental skills and encourage parents to form a network or peer-group
- to offer new working-models for teachers, school nurses, youth workers and other adults working with children or young people

In a European project one main presumption is that the project will produce information or working models that are sharable and adaptable all around Europe. Thus one aim of the ASK-project was to enable the European exchange of ideas and information and produce results that are not bound to national, local or cultural background.

From the starting points of the project, it was clear that the project would try to reach its aims by developing concrete training programmes and material. So developing the models could be considered the objective of the ASK-project. The aims referring to young people are reached in the youth training programmes, the aims referring to adults are reached in the parent evening activities and trainings.

In table 2 a summary of the objectives, activities and results is presented. In the table also the input for the realization is analysed and the permanence of the results is estimated. All the aims of the project were reached. The youth trainings, activities and materials were realized very successfully.

In the parent activities the lack of time in the project made it more difficult to reach the aims. Also it became impossible to measure the indicators: most of

the parent evenings and the parent groups will come off after the project has finished. The ground work for the parent activities has however been done, so there is possibility to continue the activities.

**Table 2. Matrix of the Objectives, Activities and Results of the ASK-project**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Permanence</b>
<b>Participatory training for young people</b>	Project workers  Transnational development team	4 inter-national meetings  4-6 pilot trainings in 3 countries  Internet pages  Material production  Training for national officials and volunteers	Participatory methods are palpable in the exercises  Experiences about the usability of the contents  Dissemination: the material is provided in the internet  Trainers capabilities increase	In 2003 the participatory model is utilized in the partner organizations:  Training model for peer students  Training in CCO  Training in social guarantee course
<b>Peer group training for young people</b>	Project workers  National professionals  Trained youth workers	Trainers' training  4 youth trainings in 4 locations  Material production  Training for national volunteers	The peer education model is developed in addition prevention work  New trainer-network  Dissemination	Peer group training is utilized in local youth work and volunteer work
<b>Parent training</b>	Project workers  National professionals	Training for schools social workers  Training for teachers  Material production	New ideas and education for the adults  Trained social workers  Teacher network	The model remains as part of the schools practices

## 5.2 Dissemination on national level

The dissemination of the ASK-project has happened on two different levels:

- a) dissemination of the methodologies (knowledge)
- b) dissemination of the results (training materials)

The dissemination of the methodologies has taken part in the practices of the project: the professionals and the volunteers of each organization have learned about the project. Also all the target groups of the trainings: trainers, youth workers, teachers and so on.

The training materials have been marketed in international and national levels. Here are some details about the dissemination in each country:

### 5.2.1 Dissemination in Finland

In Finland the dissemination started already in the first period of the project. Because the League has a vast organization of the local level, the information and communication with the local level workers was seen very important.

Mannerheim League for Child Welfare has 13 district offices around Finland. Each office has named one employee as responsible person for peer support activities and youth work. Most of these employees are youth workers. In some district offices a local youth trainer is responsible for the youth work. The youth workers are in contact with the local schools. They provide material, training and counselling to schools and teachers and arrange youth trainings in co-operation with the schools.

To prepare the dissemination of the Participatory training ASK-project organized one-day training for the youth workers on April. The aim of the training was to open the idea of participatory methods and prepare the use and dissemination of the forthcoming training material.

The youth workers were very enthusiastic about the training model and satisfied with the opportunity to attend the training. Most of the youth workers have lot of training experience themselves, so they could give some useful tips and ideas how to develop and organize the youth trainings in ASK-project.

The youth workers also saw many possibilities in utilizing the training model and material next year. The participatory training answers the needs and requirements of the schools and local youth authorities. Peer student activities inside the school are one of the main arenas of the training, but also different districts have different needs and usages for the training.

ASK-project has also arranged initiation day for teachers. 15 teachers and youth workers attended the training in April. The idea of participatory methods was new to the trainees. The ASK-project was introduced to the preventive drug work group of Vantaa. The group consist of decision-makers of school system,



youth work and health care. After the introduction ASK-project offered two-day training for teachers and youth workers. Aim of the training was to initiate the participants to the participatory training, so they could use it later on in their every day school work with young people.

In the autumn also the new youth trainers of the Mannerheim League were trained in two-day training. The schools will later utilize these trainers when they need assistance in organizing the youth trainings.

In February 2003 the volunteers of the local associations were invited to dissemination training. These volunteers organize different kinds of youth activities in their local associations: youth cafés, trainings for peer students, trips etc. The training models of the ASK-project were introduced to the volunteers and they were encouraged to plan their own local activities and youth trainings.

### **5.2.2 Dissemination in Greece**

Protasi works with numerous volunteers and professionals in the area near Patras in Greece. The volunteers of the organization were trained and they have disseminated the training model in their own work. Because of the collaboration and networks, the national field of the prevention work is also informed about the results of the ASK-project.

Protasi has simultaneously with the transnational project and writing of the report published also a Greek version of the training and activities. This book remains as a tool for the trainers and helps the national dissemination.

In Greece the dissemination has also reached local schools. The pupils of the elementary school took part in the youth training and their teachers were informed about the project and the methodology.

The training is also presented in the 5th Panhellenic Congress on the 26 - 29 of March 2003.

### **5.2.3 Dissemination in Spain**

The Methodology of the participatory training has been translated to Spanish. This methodology has been explained in the specific training actions for educators and other people working with young people or children (pedagogues, psychologists, trainers, etc.). The purpose of these training actions was to give new tools not only into the field of drugs prevention, also in other actions to improve subjects like self-esteem, personality, working in groups, etc.

The way of working in A.I.D. and all the experiences carried out in the field of "young disadvantaged people" and children has permitted us to agglutinate resources to give "better services" to the specific group we are working with.

Because of this, ASK project has been developed and introduced in other activities: Social Guarantee Courses, Ludoteca, Youth Free Initiative, etc. All of these projects are funded by the Regional Government, so they are well informed about ASK project (objectives, institutions involved, activities, etc.)

In the near future AID will publish the results in the internet. AIS is going to inform the national, regional and local authorities about the project. The objective is to include a link for ASK project into the official Internet pages from these institutions, when all materials will be finished.

A copy of all the materials will be send to the Department of Health in the Regional Government. The purpose is to include this new methodology as a new tool in the Regional Plan for Drugs Prevention in Castilla-La Mancha.

## 6 Conclusions

ASK-project aimed to prevent the intoxicant abuse of young people by developing three training programmes. Two of the programmes were aimed at young people and one was for parents. All the programmes are based on participatory methods and they can be obtained from the internet pages of the project: [www.ask-project.org](http://www.ask-project.org).

**The participatory training for young people** was developed together with the transnational development team of the project. The development team consisted of professional experts of the partner organizations MLL, AID and Protasi. The international co-operation certified that the training model is not dependent of the culture or the country, but it can be adjusted for many different target groups.

In participatory training the youngsters gather information about their social surrounding and near community, and the alcohol and drug abuse situation of their near environment. The most important part of the training is to think about the reasons behind the abuse and what youngsters can do about them. The youngsters are activated to inform their peers or the adults about the situation and also to make an action plan for their activities.

The participatory training for young people is a tool for primary stage prevention work with children and young people. In the ASK-project the training model has been tested in three different countries and discovered to be functional, useful, adaptable and flexible. The training includes the important protective factors that should be maintained when working with youngsters and the used methodology helps to motivate and inspire the participants.

ASK-project has developed this training model as a support and inspiration to professionals and volunteers working with young people. The participatory training activates youngsters to participate as subjects, executors and seekers for solutions, not just objects of actions. The idea in the training is that the participants design and compose themselves actions and activities to promote the well-being of their social surroundings.

The participatory training has supported the collaboration between the adults in the social surroundings of a young person: educators, youth workers, teachers and parents. Because the training is accomplished outside the NGO:s, in schools and youth houses, it activates schools, parents and authorities cooperate more closely.

In the partner organizations, the training was also used as a tool to educate and motivate the volunteers involved in the project and the training. In all the countries there were a number of adults taking part in the training and the

aspect of motivation and commitment rose as an important aspect in respect to the succeeding of the training.

**The peer group training for young people** was aimed for young people in youth houses or youth centres. The youngsters were trained to become peer leaders and influence other youngsters of their own social scene. Aim of the training is to find alternatives to intoxicant abuse and healthy ways to spend free time.

Peer group training was actualised in Finland by training youth workers to become trainers. These peer trainers then trained young people in their own youth house. Also the peer group training was assembled to a training manual.

**The parent training** was developed together with municipal authorities and school teachers in Finland. School social workers and teachers were trained to organize parent evenings for the parent training or parent activities.

The Mannerheim League, Protasi and Acciones Integradas de Desarrollo have benefited from the project by getting education to their professionals and volunteers but also by getting people interested in their philosophy and methodology. The training was a way to get attention from the local authorities and media, and make the work of the organizations more widely known.

More importantly the project helped the partners to develop their methodologies and learn from each other. The European exchange of ideas and experiences helped the partners to make their work more effective. The experiences from the ASK-project and the knowledge shared in the transnational meetings will also direct the future plans of the organizations: the Finnish peer education model for example has raised interest in the other countries.

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