

16. 'SEARCH II' in Spain

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1. Brief description of Fundación Salud y Comunidad:

The Fundación Salud y Comunidad (FSC) is a charitable organisation that seeks to improve the health and social welfare of the community by developing activities for promoting health and living quality. Since 1980, the Fundación has been developing programmes tailored to the special needs of specific target groups and has been promoting integrative care systems. The projects are developed with the aim of providing support and prevention, social and professional integration and counselling and applied research.

Specifically, the FSC has a considerable range of experience in the areas:

- Prevention, care and support for persons with drug problems
- Interventions with problems related to HIV/Aids
- Care for (ex) prisoners
- Residential projects and domestic care services
- Prevention programmes against domestic violence
- Residential projects for battered women
- Programmes for health promotion and professional integration of immigrants
- Developing prevention materials
- Conducting applied research projects
- Developing instruments for social and health project problems using new information technologies
- Developing plans for communal health promotion
- Work with volunteers
- Evaluation of services and projects

Since the prevention and care services within the Fundación Salud y Comunidad's social and health areas were coming into increasing contact with migrants in risk situations, we took the opportunity in October 2000 of conducting the project „‘SEARCH’ – Drug prevention with refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in risk situations“ together with other organisations and professionals from the European Union. The main aim of such collaboration lies in the necessity of increasing our knowledge of the prevalence of addiction among the immigrant population in risk situations in order to develop suitable prevention services. FSC's involvement in 'SEARCH' provided the initial spark for developing specific prevention approaches for the project's target group. Moreover, acquainting ourselves with the Rapid Assessment and Response method in the field of immigrant addiction problems has enabled us to get closer to the reality faced by immigrants in risk situations and has supported us in designing and developing suitable prevention activities. Within the framework of the 'SEARCH' and 'SEARCH II' projects, we have concentrated our work on one of the most vulnerable groups in Spain affected by social exclusion: juvenile immigrants from Morocco who live in Spain without papers and are not accompanied by their families.

2. The transition from 'SEARCH' to 'SEARCH II':

The phenomenon of unaccompanied juvenile foreigners without papers (called MEINAs in Spanish) first became apparent between 1997 and 1998 and is a relatively new phenomenon in Catalonia, Spain and other European cities such as Marseilles and Amsterdam. The Catalan authorities first began to take it seriously in 1998. Since then, many approaches have been developed to counter this precarious situation, which is experienced by many youths who have started their migration process alone and are frequently minors. This is a more recent social phenomenon (1997-1998) that is difficult to quantify as

there are various related factors that hinder its control. According to the study "Unaccompanied juvenile foreigners without papers (1998-2002)", which was conducted by the "Centre d'Estudis Jurídics i Formació Especialitzada" on behalf of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Direcció General d'Atenció a la Infància i Adolescència (DGAIA) recorded 1659 unaccompanied juvenile foreigners without papers from the beginning of 1998 until the end of May 2002, of whom 262 were still in Barcelona in May 2002.

Using the RAR research method, in 2001 the Fundación Salud y Comunidad made an initial analysis of the situation concerning drug use among young and juvenile Moroccans living in the city of Barcelona, who are without papers and are unaccompanied by families. Based on the results of this first pilot analysis within the framework of the 'SEARCH' project, we reached a series of conclusions about drug use within the aforementioned target group that can be referred to in the handbook "Drug prevention for asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants"(p. 114). Based on the results of this study and the fact ascertained by other professionals that the primary drug problem with this target group is solvent use, we developed a "Pilot Guideline for Professionals on the Misuse of Inhalants". The first phase of the 'SEARCH' project was completed with the distribution of these guidelines among the most important organisations in Barcelona and Madrid that have combined to form the "Working Group for Defending the Rights of Juvenile Immigrants Unaccompanied by Families" (Plataforma en defensa de los derechos de los menores inmigrantes sin acompañamiento familiar). After a pause of several months, we continued the work in October 2003 as part of a second phase within the framework of the 'SEARCH II' project. Using a light version of the RAR, we again ascertained which immigrant groups in Barcelona are most vulnerable to drug use. Since, as before, we considered young and juvenile Moroccans unaccompanied by families to be the group most at risk, we decided to research their situation in order to determine whether it had changed since the previous initial analysis.

3. Re-examination of drug use among young and juvenile Moroccans unaccompanied by families: Most important factors and ascertained changes in comparison with the first analysis.

The second analysis confirmed most of the information from the first survey while providing some added detail concerning several aspects and introducing some news elements. Above all, however, it confirmed that specific Moroccan youths continue to misuse substances as a consequence of their living conditions and the failure of their immigration plans. The verification analysis was conducted using the RAR's Monitoring Module and the following analysis techniques:

- Analysis of the existing information
- General focus group (helicopter perspective)
- Specific focus group
- Interviews with youths from the target group.

The following information sources were used:

- **First focus group:** 6 addiction professionals who work in specific harm reduction centres and drug care facilities in Barcelona.
- **Second focus group:** 4 professionals from various areas who all have (professional) contact to the juvenile youths in the target group: a cultural mediator of Catalanian origin working in the prison; a Catalanian anthropologist who wrote her doctorate thesis on the subject of juvenile immigrants in Barcelona who are unaccompanied by families; a Moroccan social worker and a Moroccan cultural mediator.

- **Semi-structured interviews** with youths from the target group: From the target group, 2 groups of 5 youths were interviewed – each time by a Moroccan social worker, while a further group was conducted by a Moroccan cultural mediator.

Based on the updated information, the following section identifies the most important factors relating to drug use among youths from the target group and the changes in relation to the first analysis.

3.1. Most important factors

We concentrated the analysis on male juveniles and youths living in Barcelona who were without papers, were not accompanied by families, were aged between 14 and 18 years old and were mainly of Moroccan origin. The following assessments essentially refer to youths who have contact to educators, i.e. they are – or are supposed to be – cared for by the Catalan youth authorities. However, the clearest cases of misuse are generally associated with those youths who are not cared for by the youth authorities, either because they have eluded them or because they have never had or wanted to have access to the youth authority services.

3.2. The most important substances used

The drugs used most of all by both the adults and juveniles are tobacco and hashish, which the vast majority of youths have already used in the country of origin and are familiar with. The information that we received indicates that the use of alcohol has increased relative to the first analysis. Alcohol use currently appears to be very widespread, although most youths had not consumed alcohol in their homeland. There seem to be various reasons for this growth, including trying to assimilate to the patterns of use in Spain to show their degree of integration in the host culture and to discard the values of their original culture. In each case, the youths in the target group consider alcohol to be a dangerous substance ahead of hashish and tobacco (which they in turn consider not to be so dangerous).

The use of solvents, which was ascertained in the first study both with adults and youths, seems to have become more apparent among younger juveniles, who initially use it with playful, socialising intentions shortly after their arrival in Barcelona. Over time, and to the extent that they are in contact with other, older youths, they change their consumption habits and eventually give up using solvents because of the connotations associated with its use. A further reason for changes in the use behaviour is the fact that the use of this type of substance is very 'visible', both for the educators as well as for the police. The youths begin to view the use of this substance negatively because it draws them to the attention of the police and the authorities: when the youths reach adulthood they find themselves in an illegal situation; if they are minors and are unaccompanied by families they must be placed into the care of the Catalan youth office. Both in the former and in the latter situation, the use of solvents can easily be determined and therefore places their immigration plans at risk. In addition, as has already been mentioned, the use of very cheap solvents also has connotations associated with the phenomenon of 'street kids' in Morocco. Therefore other substances are increasingly preferred that have less negative connotations. The youths themselves still consider solvent use as clearly harmful and dangerous.

Thus, during the new RAR it was determined that:

- solvent use occurs particularly among youths aged between 13-14 and 16-17 who are spending their first months in Spain, although there is also occasional use among older youths due to its cheapness.

- the vast majority of youths from the target group have not used solvents in their homeland as most of them were not street kids.

One reason why solvents carry a negative connotation is because they are associated with extremely poor and marginalized street kids in the Moroccan cities, with whom the youths themselves do not wish to be associated.

We continue to register occasional use of synthetic drugs with the oldest youths in the target group, which is linked to alcohol use and the assimilation of their use patterns to that of the native youths during leisure activities. It is still not quite clear whether sedatives are still used, since in the first study its use was determined among youths who use solvents more or less habitually, whereas the information received in the second study was somewhat vague, thus making it impossible to draw any conclusions. Since synthetic drugs are known as 'pills', these are easily confused with sedatives (Trankimazin, Benzodiazepine, etc) which are also described as 'pills'. This is an aspect that must be considered in future, since the last study was unable to clarify this.

We ascertained the occasional use of cocaine, but only from older youths who have more money than the younger ones, either through their links to drug dealing or the pickpocket mafia.

3.3. Consequences of problematic use:

Physiological problems: The problems mentioned most frequently, particularly in relation to solvent use, were breathing problems, catarrh, dizziness, nausea, mouth wounds and infections of the respiratory tracts.

Psychological problems:

- The drug use is a reaction to the fears related to their living situation, and serves to cope with these.
- After using solvents, the youths mention feelings of fear, anxiety and depression, and, to a certain extent, hallucinatory problems
- They use the initial euphoria after taking solvents and alcohol to give them enough courage to steal or commit other crimes.
- They also describe drug use as a way of combating boredom.

Legal and economic problems: In some cases, the drug use brings them into contact with drug dealing or networks of thieves, but in many cases they also have legal and economic problems that are not connected to drug use. Although their original aim was to migrate, find work and send back money to their families, their age and illegal status in the country prevents them from working legally to obtain money, which is why they resort to illegal means. In the end it is their financial situation that determines which drugs they use. Solvents are, for example, very cheap, whereas cocaine is very expensive.

Social problems: The use and misuse of drugs distances them from their original community, creates problems with the neighbours, with the police and with the educators and the education dynamic in the centres.

3.4. Factors influencing problematic drug use

After observing and assessing the patterns of use displayed by the youths, we considered with them the factors that are connected to their drug use or could influence this. The following are aspects identified by the youths and the professionals:

- Easier access to drugs in Barcelona.
- The use is encouraged and maintained through the precarious living conditions that they experience, and in which some of the youths from the target group are still living (basic needs such as a permanent home, food, affection, safety, etc. are not covered).
- Use with the intention of relieving fear of the immediate future.
- Alcohol use is influenced by the normalised and socially accepted alcohol use in Spain.
- Drug use is influenced by their bitter experiences during the migration process.
- Drug use is influenced by the complete loss of contact to their own families, to key persons in the homeland and by the lack of positive, affective relations to adults.
- Drug use is influenced by the drug use of their peers who are also on the streets, but have already been living in Barcelona for a longer period of time.
- It is connected to the crushed hopes arising out of the differences between their original migration plans and reality.
- According to those youths who misuse drugs, they use them to counter an 'abstinence syndrome'.
- The use is influenced by imitating the patterns of use for (legal and illegal) substances shown by local youths and adults, as well as by misunderstood integration into the receiving culture.

4. Description of the local prevention activities and their implementation: developed actions and products

4.1. Evaluation of the "Pilot Guidelines for Professionals on the Misuse of Inhalants":

Of the facilities that had received the pilot guidelines developed during the first part of the project, a total of 8 facilities from Barcelona and Madrid sent us replies with their assessments. After analysing the assessments, we can confirm the necessity of having support material for professionals for providing drug prevention within the target group. Although the information offered in the guidelines was assessed very positively as far as their practicality, usefulness and clarity is concerned, the professionals also requested more precise information on the cultural reality of the homeland and on the social, cultural and religious views of the population regarding drugs. The proposed prevention measures were assessed very positively, as was likewise the guide's sensitising approach regarding the necessity to network drug prevention within the target group. Emphasis was also given to the importance of training professionals in contact with the target group, particularly in view of such a complex phenomenon with its many implications regarding, for example, drug misuse in the intercultural context.

After these observations and the results of the RAR verifying the situation, we began developing a new version of the guide as a handbook for supporting and instructing professionals, not just on the subject of solvents but on the various drugs determined and on the differences in their use between the country of origin and the host country. The main aim of the handbook is to help to understand the complexity of the phenomenon in terms of drug use, in particular the effect on the health of youths in the target group, and to offer concrete tools and instruments so that the professionals can begin the prevention work with the youths.

4.2. Conversion of the pilot guidelines into a "Handbook for professionals in drug prevention working with young Moroccan immigrants unaccompanied by families"

The new version of the material was started with the support of a Moroccan cultural mediator and experts working with unaccompanied juveniles and young Moroccans in Barcelona, who also work

closely together with the "Platform for Defending Juvenile Immigrants Without Papers". Together we developed the conceptual framework of the handbook by working out a series of initial, fundamental recommendations for professionals working with youths in the target group, so that they can begin with the drug prevention work and, where sensible, with harm reduction work relating to problematic drug use.

Objectives of the handbook:

As a first step in dealing preventatively with the problems of misuse, the handbook is intended to help understand the social use of each individual substance and their importance for the youths. In addition, it offers important specific information on every individual substance determined as well as providing general aids and special educational and preventive tools for professionals working with the target group on the following substances: cannabis, alcohol, tobacco, synthetic drugs, inhalants and medicines.

Features of the handbook:

The handbook has been published as a 64-page PDF file in DIN A5 size and as 30 hardcopy editions self-printed in colour. In terms of content, the handbook is divided into four chapters than are identified with different colours,

PART I:

YOUNG AND JUVENILE MOROCCANS UNACCOMPANIED BY FAMILIES IN BARCELONA

- 1.1. The phenomenon of youths and juveniles of Moroccan origin unaccompanied by families in Catalonia
- 1.2. Study of the drug use among the youths and juveniles of Moroccan origin unaccompanied by families in Barcelona
- 1.3. About the 'Handbook for professionals in drug prevention working with young Moroccan immigrants unaccompanied by families':
- 1.4. Most important observations on drug use among juvenile and young Moroccans without papers and families

PART II:

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS ON DRUG PREVENTION

- 2.1. Priority measures in the area of prevention and harm reduction**
 - 2.1.1. Approaches to prevention and drug misuse
 - 2.1.2. Approaches to harm reduction

PART III:

HEALTH EDUCATION BASED ON THE INDIVIDUAL SUBSTANCES THAT HAVE BEEN DETERMINED

3.1. Cannabis

- 3.1.1. Basic information on cannabis which the educators should know
- 3.1.2. The effects of cannabis
- 3.1.3. Advice that the educators can offer
- 3.1.4. Arguments that can be used to say NO

3.2. Tobacco

- 3.2.1. Basic information on tobacco which the educators should know
- 3.2.2. Preventive activities for tobacco
- 3.2.3. Preventive dialogue

3.3. Alcohol

- 3.3.1. Advice that the educators can offer

3.4. Synthetic drugs

- 3.4.1. Basic information on synthetic drugs which the educators should know
- 3.4.2. The effects of synthetic drugs
- 3.4.3. Advice that the educators can offer

3.5. Inhalants

- 3.5.1. Basic information on inhalants which the educators should know
- 3.5.2. The effects of inhalants
- 3.5.3. Aspects that should be taken in to account in crisis situations
- 3.5.4. Harm reduction with solvents users
- 3.5.5. Every day harm reduction

3.6. Medicines

PART IV:

ACTIVITIES FOR PREVENTING THE USE OF INHALANTS AND OTHER DRUGS

- 4.1. Aspects to be taken into consideration when planning and conducting activities
- 4.2. About the prevention activities
 - 4.2.1. Drug counselling
 - 4.2.2. Sport as a leisure activity and for making new contacts

Content of "Handbook for professionals in drug prevention working with young Moroccan immigrants unaccompanied by families":

4.3. Distribution of the handbook

To distribute the handbook, the intention is to use the network of organisations that work with and on behalf on young and juvenile immigrants in Madrid and Barcelona, the two conurbations where the phenomenon of juvenile immigrants unaccompanied by families is most apparent.

A total of 58 organisations, facilities and institutions have received the handbook, 46 of them by e-mail in PDF format and 12 by post as colour hardcopies in the DIN A5 format. The organisations have received the handbook together with a letter that describes the 'SEARCH' project and the handbook, and requests that they distribute the handbook further within their own local networks.

The following organisations have received the handbook:

- ➡ Facilities and professionals in Barcelona and Madrid that have worked together in implementing the 'SEARCH' project;
- ➡ Facilities affiliated with the "Platform for Defending Juvenile Immigrants Without Papers";
- ➡ Facilities belonging to the Comunidad de Madrid's platform of child protection organisations;
- ➡ Facilities from Ceuta, Malaga and Cordoba that were contacted during the development of the handbook.

4.4. Training professionals on drug prevention with young and juvenile immigrants of Moroccan origin unaccompanied by families:

After completing the development of the handbook, an initial ten-hour training session was held (with street workers, volunteer workers, cultural mediators and responsible persons from educational projects for juvenile Moroccan immigrants).

Profile of the participants:

13 participants; 1 coordinator and 4 street workers from the project "Support for youths from the old city", 5 voluntary workers and 2 Moroccan cultural mediators from the "Espacio de Inclusión y Formación del casco antiguo de Barcelona EICA", 1 coordinator from the social vocational training project for juvenile immigrants and the responsible person from the EICA-Youth project.

Content of the training:

- The situation of Moroccan juveniles and youths unaccompanied by families in Catalonia: Reflections on an unsuccessful migration project
- Description of the drug use in the target group
- Reflections on prevention and harm reduction. Prevention: When and how? Harm reduction: When and how?
- Training session on the substances: tobacco, cannabis, alcohol, inhalants, synthetic drugs and sedatives
- Description of the youths' relations to the substances in Morocco and Spain
- Basic information on the substances, effects and risks
- Preventive proposals and dialogue
- Development of preventive activities with the youths
- Work on cases from practice

Aims of the training:

- Initiating contacts between professionals from the different centres and facilities which work with young Moroccans unaccompanied by families
- Sensitising professionals to the importance of drug prevention and harm reduction
- Providing up-to-date information for professionals on the situation of drug use within the target group and on the substances used
- Providing communicative tools for preventing drug use within the target group
- Advising and supporting the professionals on dealing with situations concerning drug use among juveniles and youths
- Encouraging the sharing of information, experience and strategies concerning drug use among youths and juveniles from the target group

4.5. Evaluating the training

We decided to conduct a brief evaluation of the training with the aim of getting some feedback from the professionals regarding the usefulness and appropriateness of the developed handbook on whose basis the training was carried out. For this purpose, each participant was provided with a semi-structured questionnaire with ten questions, on the basis of which we analysed their assessment of the training. The analysis of the answers led to the following conclusions:

- The participants believed that the training gave them a better understanding of the features characterising drug use (type of substances, use patterns, influential factors) among the juvenile and young Moroccans.
- The training enabled the participants to deepen and re-examine their existing knowledge on the effect and risks of specific drugs (x = 7 from 10 points)
- They received new information on preventing drug use among juveniles (x = 7.5 von 10 points)
- They confirmed that the information which they received was useful (x = 7 from 10 points)
- The information provided during the training was clear and understandable (x = 8 from 10 points)
- They are able to use what they have learned during everyday work with the youths (x = 6.5 from 10 points)

Positive aspects that were mentioned included the integrated approach to training, the information on drug use by youths and juveniles, and in particular, the educational and preventive recommendations for dealing with the target group.

Negative aspects that were mentioned included the necessity for more intensive training, the need for information on the legal situation concerning drug possession, dealing and use, as well as the necessity to work using examples from practice.

It is interesting to learn from the FSC professionals that coherent and efficient prevention work with youths and the target group is hindered by both the professionals' level of experience and knowledge in the area of drug prevention as well as by the different positions (attitudes and behaviour) regarding drug use. In this regard we became convinced that future training will need to focus on the professionals' attitudes and behaviour regarding their own use or non-use of drugs, and how this can determine the efficiency of the drug prevention with young Moroccans.

5. Conclusions

As part of the prevention activities carried out within the framework of the 'SEARCH' and 'SEARCH II' projects, the Fundació Salut i Comunitat has developed tools for drug prevention that have been evaluated and, based on the RAR results regarding the drug use situation within the target group, have then been developed further. In view of the fact that we do not consider drug use as something static, but as something that is constantly changing, it must also be understood that the preventive tools that have been developed (handbook and training) will also need to be adapted to meet this permanent transformation.

6 Future activities

The Fundació Salut y Comunidad plans to continue working at the local level in order to be able to offer technical support (using the handbook and training) to professionals who work with and for the target group at the regional and national level. In this regard, the Fundació will establish contact with the Catalan local authorities and with Spain's national authorities in order to suitably present the material and results of the SEARCH II project and to find sufficient financial means to be able to continue implementing the training measures efficiently.