Youth counselling Streetwork

Prevention Advice

International Conference on SPICE Prevention Issues
26.09.2012 Frankfurt am Main
MA Alexander Bücheli
City of Zurich, Social Welfare Department, Youth Counselling Streetwork



Background

BackgroundQuestions for prevention and harm reduction

- Which substances with which effects are on the market?
- What are the effects and potential harms of these substances?
- Where are these substances sold?
- Who uses legal highs and in which context?
- What is the motivation for taking legal highs?
- Are there new (individual or external) risks related to the use of legal highs?
- What is the potential of the positive effects?
- Are the existent measures sufficient for this new phenomenon?
- Ftc.

Background Why people use legal highs?

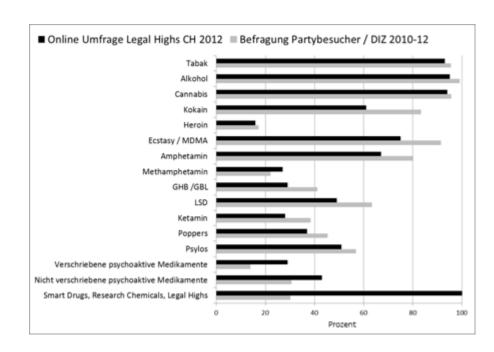
There are several motivations reported by user why they take legal highs.

The most important are:

- -To be high (mostly specific)
- -the quality aspect
- -the legal status
- -the access to the product
- -curiosity

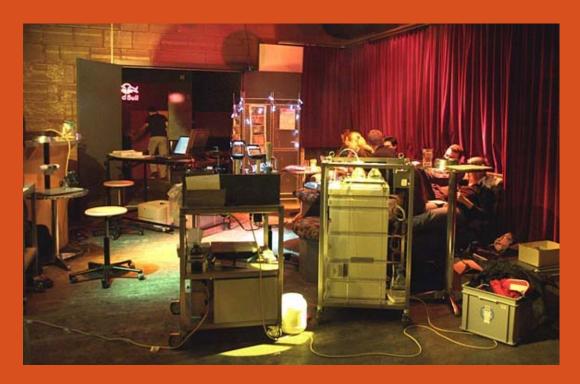
Background Who uses legal highs?

- The majority of users are over twenty years old and have already experiences with illegal drugs.
- Only a minority uses legal highs before illegal ones.
- Regularly use is not often reported
- There is no substitution of illegal drugs with legal highs.



Meier Larissa (2012): Unveröffentlichte Masterarbeit an der Universität Zürich Morgenstern, C./ Werse, B. (2012): Unveröffentlichter Bericht zur Online-Umfrage Legal Highs Schweiz

Successful prevention and harm reduction measures today



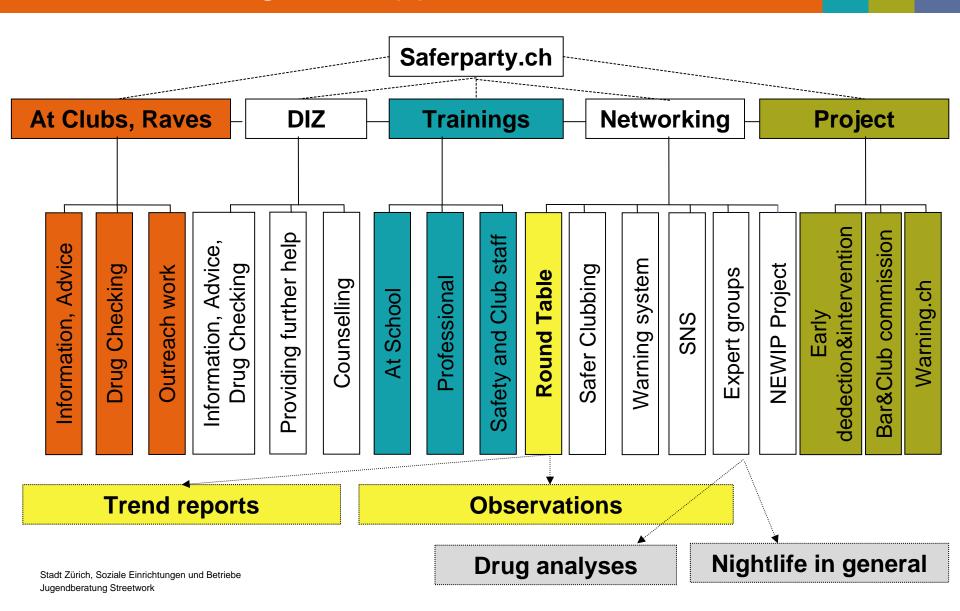
Successful measures today Basics

Accept orientation: The use of substances is accepted as a human fact. The goal is to create a fact based awareness concerning the risks related to drug use.

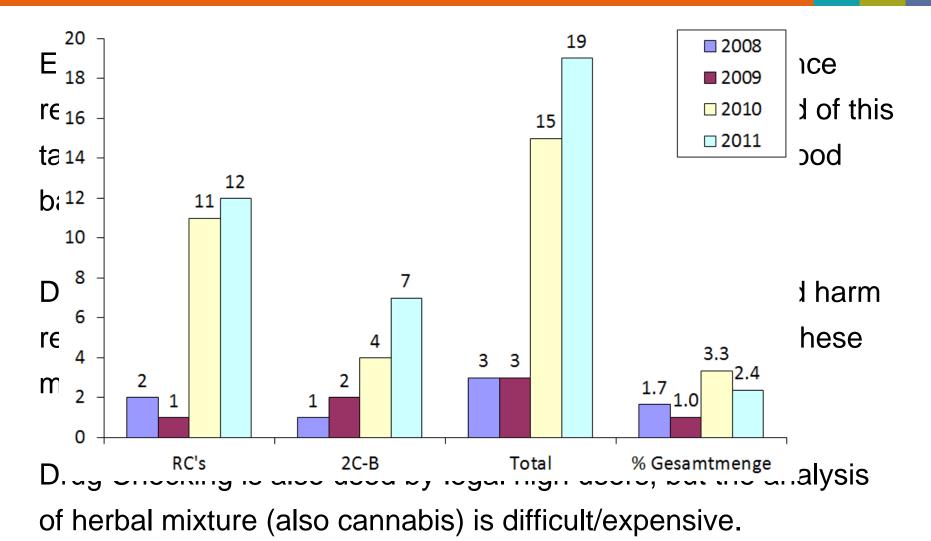
Risk management: Starts early in school, the aim is to teach humans how to manage the risk of life, including/for example drug use.

Low threshold: The access to prevention or harm reduction must be as easy as possible (free of charge, anonymous).

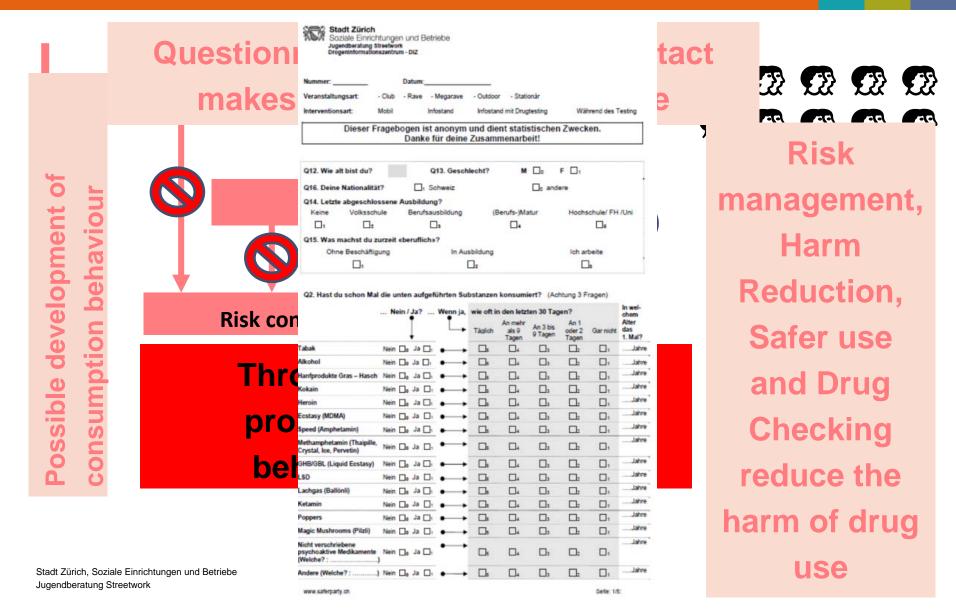
Successful measures today Zurich's integrated approach



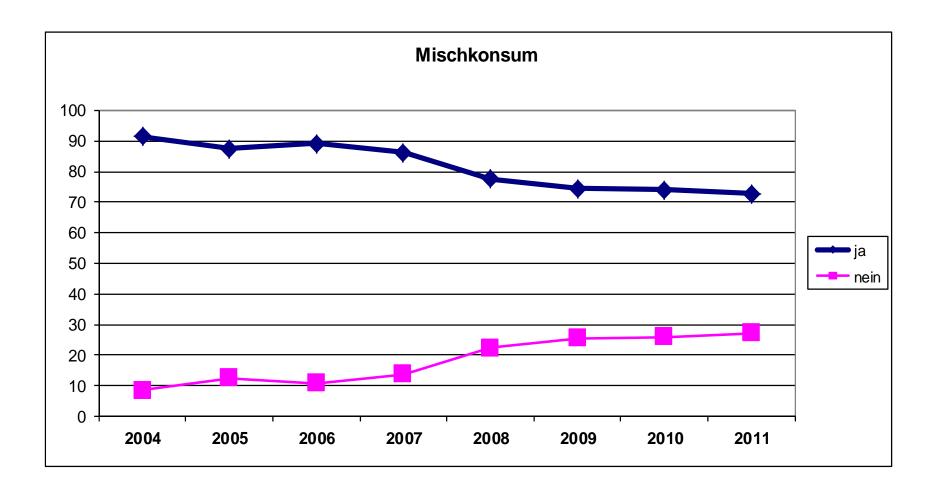
Successful measures today Important role of Drug Checking



Successful measures today Limiting individual problems and harm

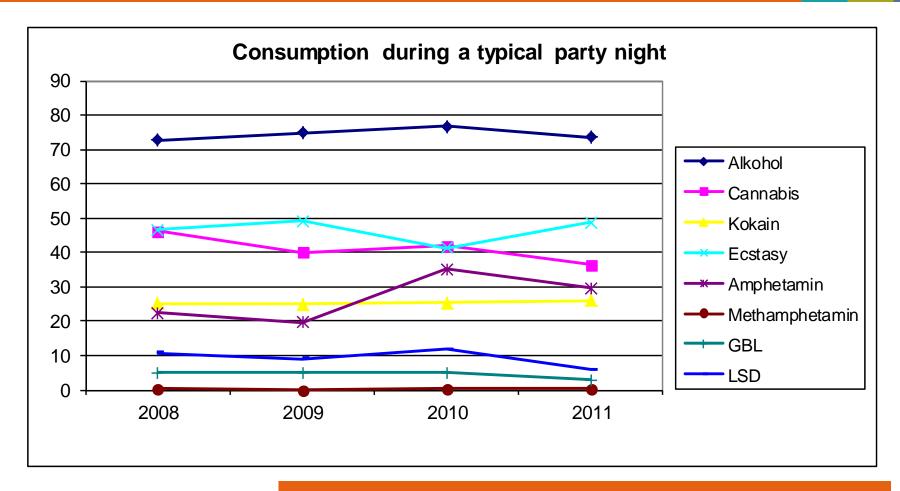


Successful measures today Less poly drug use



Streetwork 2012, n. 2200

Successful measures today Typical consumption during a party night



In 2011 0.8% reported the use of a legal high product during a typical party night.

Successful measures today Lacks today

Facts: No sufficient information about the effects, side effects and long term effects of new substances. More urban myths.

Mew media: Besides the project and information website, new media are less likely to be used for consultation, counselling and consumption management (web work).

Peers involvement: Users of legal highs have to be regarded as experts for these new substances and should therefore be integrated in or empowered to create peer support projects.

Conclusion?

Conclusion What we can do today

Exchange global facts about legal highs within existing and new networks (NEWIP project, EMCDDA).

An integrated, acceptance oriented and low threshold approach together with drug checking create more risk awareness, also concerning legal highs users.

Consultation and counselling embedded in this context make early detection and intervention possible and offers the opportunity to provide further help if needed.

ConclusionObstacles

- The illicit drug market is always one step ahead
- For several reasons, drug checking is not possible everywhere
- Risk management is not part of drug prevention in schools
- No exchange culture between police, prevention and harm reduction
- Many harm reduction offers are located in nightlife settings
- Concerning the motivation, an integrated approach has effects on:
 - being high, curiosity and the quality aspect
- No or less influence on:
 - the legal status and the access to the product

Conclusion Rethinking Drug Policy

The reality that taking drugs is human, the legal high phenomena and the limited prevention and harm reduction possibility should motivate us to rethink the current drug policy.

Because only a new drug market control approach offers the possibility to influence the motivation for taking legal highs in general and in a sustainable way. There is not only legalisation or prohibition, today we know different market control models in between.

Thank you for listening ©

For questions:

Alexander.buecheli@zuerich.ch

www.saferparty.ch

www.know-drugs.ch