

2008 European Prevention Prize

APPLICATION

To be returned to e-mail: preventionprize2008@coe.int

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this application in full and return it as text attachment to the above **e-mail** address. Applications submitted by post or fax cannot be considered. The application must be in English or French language, the official working languages of the Pompidou Group. They must reach the Secretariat **NO LATER THAN 1 December 2007**.

A. PROJECT DETAILS

A.1. Name/Title: SWEEP THE WEED OUT OF THE GATE !
A.2. If the Project is part of an organisation, please give the organisation's name: The BalkanKids Foundation
A.3. Country or countries of activities: Bulgaria
A.4. Number of Participants in the Project: 653 students aged 11 – 19 42 volunteers aged 11 – 19 233 parents, teachers, local community
A.5. Country/Countries of Activity: Bulgaria

B. CONTACT DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

B.1. Full Name: Antoaneta Pophlebarova	
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Country: Bulgaria	B.5. E-mail: balkankids@gmail.com
B.6. Other contact person (this should be a person who knows the Project and is able to speak about it in English or French): Penka Kozhuharova	

B.7. Contact details if different to the above:
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C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Keep strictly to the word limits in this section of the application form. You will have the opportunity to provide more details in a later section of the application form.

C.1 Is the Project solely concerned with drug prevention, or does it have broader aims/goals/objectives/intended outcome. (Underline one choice)

Solely concerned with drug prevention.

Some aims other than drug prevention.

C.2 Please summarise the goals or aims or objectives or intended outcomes of the Project as they relate to drug prevention. (Maximum 100 words)

In a child-friendly games-based creative way our project aims to empower young people from an early age with a set of life skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to combat health threats and subtain from anti-social behaviour. Raising awareness on the complexity of alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse through peer counselling, drama, strategy games and creative outdoor workshops the project boosts teens' self-confidence and encourages them to step off the track to unhealthy lifestyle. It aims at continual involvement of youth and the suburb community – parents, school, authorities in series of friendly Drug-Free events providing a positive atmosphere of intergenerational tolerance.

C.3 Provide a summary of the Project. Please describe its functions, activities, organisation, accomplishments, etc... Focus especially on the drug prevention aspects and on the participation of young people. (Maximum 1,000 words)

The project builds on an on-going three-year prevention program among teenagers of 5- 8 grade in three big Varna schools, sponsored by the National Drug Prevention Agency and preceded by a year voluntary work in two community based youth Health4US clubs. It is run by a team of 7 teachers/experts and 42 young volunteers on both a school curriculum and non-formal basis and is greatly popular in our town. The activity is streamlined in three directions :

1. WWW ? DRUGS. OVER game set

1.1. Children's passion for games is a strong motivator to participate in these health focussed workshops that run on a regular basis with one lesson/ month in each of the 14 classes (5 – 7 grade) of the three schools throughout the school year and twice a week in the vacation months. The idea, developed in a partnership with « Club of Knowledge - Varna », is based on a widely popular Russian quiz game « **What ? Where ? When ?** »shortly « **WWW ? DRUGS**». The quiz show takes place regularly in three months with a final performance in the Town Congress Centre with a large audience. Three teams of the project schools meet at a spinning round table with 12 sectors/ questions /problem cases on drug prevention devised by the rivals/the audience. A highlight is the Black Box -a riddle of the object inside. The show is really challenging as it demands intensive team consultations done in public, wide knowledge on drug abuse issues and gamers' luck. The winners face a final challenge – to contest the team of parents – a volunteer mix of the three schools. Prizes are membership cards to gyms, free English lessons, camp discounts.

1.2. Computer gamers' thrill is mobilised towards health-promotion in the computer lessons of the club where teens explore pre-screened drug prevention portals (attached list) and play online interactive games, send e-cards with facts on tobacco and drug abuse to relatives and friends. These workshops are facilitated entirely by peers assisted by an English teacher thus expanding the teens' language skills as well.

1.3 Club volunteers have designed an interactive computer game with lessons on drug abuse which is a hit with teenagers and an inspiration to transform the « WWW ?DRUGS » into a PC game.

2. SWEEP THE WEED

OUT OF THE GATE ! educational program

The project fills a gap in the school curriculum as there are no regular classes on drug prevention in this age group. Nationwide surveys, however, show that the age of first drug attempt has been considerably lowered, therefore the need to address smaller children within the regular school program. It delivers a three-year peer counselling 5 – 7 grade educational programme with grade topics respectively « Healthy nutrition and tobacco abuse » , « Alcohol and Marijuana Abuse » and « Hallucinogen and Illegal drugs » .

Since 2004 the Foundation has run a Health4US youth club with 42 active student volunteers (aged 12 – 19) and university students who are trained as peer educators and mediators for conflict solving in two densely populated suburban areas. They lead the workshops at project partner schools, facilitate the game shows, discuss cases from online forums, survey intergenerational attitudes on drug abuse and prevention.

Each school year there is a contest on best NO DRUGS ! poster, comics, installation, photo session, graffiti . The materials are exhibited in the schools and in public places in the suburb. Special attention is paid to the involvement of children with anti-social behaviour and indications for drug abuse who are also trained as volunteers. This year the club organised a 120 participants Halloween party « Say Boo to Drugs ! » which attracted so many participants that it will surely be a tradition.

3. HEALTH MATTERS ! outdoor leisure time activities.

They are favourites among teens as we camp and trek for two months in summer (2 week camps) in beautiful nature spots with an exciting health promotion holistic program. Workshops are environmental, led by scouts or by volunteer teenagers from the Club – based on popular TV shows e.g. « Survivor » but with missions on health safety, recognition of risk factors and techniques for avoiding risk, « Who wants to be a millionaire ? » - quiz show on drugs with achievement levels and health points materialised in fruit.

These camps have special drama workshops with plots written by the teens based on popular fairy tales from the point of view of teen problem cases. « Cinderella and the Drug Prince » or on environmental campaigns. A best example of this is the day performance we had in a peak public place against GM foods – « Monster Tompkins » - genetically modified mix of tomatoes and pumpkins funded by the Agrolink Foundation, based on a humorous verse script written by the club and with fantastic self-made costumes..

All project activities are based on a methodical ground of staging a lesson as a theatre performance based on the classic dramaturgical Arc of Suspense, acquired as a skill in our 5 year close cooperation with The Green Island NGO in Austria. This method achieves a great resonance in the students for their attention is kept closely by varied animation methods and adds to a HOLISTIC educational approach where knowledge is gained with the senses, heart and the mind.

C.4 Please summarize how young people actively participate in the Project. (Maximum 500 words)

The philosophy of the project is that WEED, tobacco and alcohol are a GATE to stronger drugs in such a threshold GATE age as adolescence. Kids, however, have an inborn power to do good and be positive. Thus the power to resist drug pressure is in them and needs to be supported and enhanced rather than transplanted.

The project started in 2004 with a circle of friends who, with first steps into puberty, were faced with the peer pressure for being different, showing off “who-cares” attitude, curiosity for drugs and experiencing a U-turn in their lifestyle and learning habits. Some resisted, others didn’t. And since “A friend in need is a friend indeed” the teens started planning actions to take their friends back to healthy lifestyle. Thus, the two youth clubs were formed in two suburbs of the town. Facilitated by an experienced teacher for a year they involved neighbourhood friends at a risk to social exclusion in the weekly meetings of the clubs, drug awareness campaigns and friendly leisure activities like trekking and mountain climbing. An NGO was formed to seek sponsorship for the activity and nowadays the project is greatly popular in the communities of two large Varna suburbs and three big schools.

Young people are the core as they are the main implementers in the project work.

They plan the yearly program in Balint groups, collect and present materials, lead peer-to-peer workshops and facilitate the WWW?DRUGS.OVER game set, invent games, write and direct drama performances, role plays, write articles and essays, participate in radio and TV presentations. All the activities are planned according to their particular needs surveyed in preliminary peer opinion polls in larger school and neighbourhood communities. The modules of the course are upgraded each year so that these volunteers who facilitate the discussion on tobacco abuse in a year lower age group can next year be familiarised with other types of drug abuse and thus undergo a three year training course. And most important – the format of all activities is based on popular TV and media formulas as game and quiz shows, board games and online resources that are familiar, friendly and exciting to explore. In this way the prevention workshops are both competitive and informative, team friendly and personal and able to be enjoyed by kids of that age.

Roma children and hard to teach teens with indications for drug abuse are actively involved in the project with cooperation with the suburban local committee for teen risk prevention, school staff and club volunteers. They are encouraged to integrate within creative workshops – graffiti and poster painting, drama and eco-camping which help them open up and be interested in further volunteer informative activities.

And last but not least the project has already acquired an international perspective as since 2004 the program is closely linked with the UBW Wien YES initiative www.ubw.at – a yearly series of three 5-day international eco-camps attended for free by the most active Foundation volunteers and a great stimulus for project participation.

C.5 Are young people involved in:

Item	Definition	Yes / No	If yes, describe how
Strategy	Young people are involved in helping to create plans and strategies	yes	<p>In the beginning of the school year the club volunteers have a session of needs assessment in <i>Balint group discussion</i> – problem cases in their circle of friends, class, school, friends in need etc. and an <i>“Info world café” day seminar</i> – teens/young adults join different age groups sitting round café tales, listening and adding info on risk prevention in the community accompanied by figures of authority in the local community. Based on these discussions the teens decide on the main accents of the educational work and assisted by a team of expert teachers program the course topics.</p> <p>The club members contribute to the course program by adding experience from other NGO forums – we are in close cooperation with a 25 16/17 year-old volunteers of a Varna chapter of PTPI Foundation – the Dolphins, the European Network of Animators ENOA who add to our program team building ideas and research useful links with other drug prevention online practices in</p>

			English and German. By raising money for charity – we are preparing a Christmas fair – hand-made items and cookies sale - the volunteers will donate the Children Oncological hospital with individual Christmas gifts.
<i>Structures</i>	Young people are involved in decision-making processes	yes	In the beginning of each month there is a regular teen team meeting in which are discussed future activities, partners, worksheets and materials. When there is a WWW? event, a drama performance or publicity event the children review scripts, decide on the game show format and prepare publicity material – articles, brochures.
<i>Systems</i>	Systems are in place to ensure and enshrine young people’s involvement	yes	The project is closely integrated to the school system and the classes on prevention are agreed upon with the schools’ staff. That means that the target group – 5- 7 grade children is closely embedded in the project organisation. Some of the volunteers are recommended by the Municipality Volunteer Service and the “hard-to-reach” children are involved as volunteers and in the leisure time activities with the assistance of the Local Committee for prevention of anti-social behaviour.
<i>Staffing</i>	Paid staff and adult volunteers (if any) work alongside young people and respect their contribution	yes	The project employs seven specialists in different fields – 2 teachers, a university lecturer, a sociologist, 2 social workers and a doctor on part time contracts with project sponsored fees. They all live and work in the club neighbourhoods. They have worked in a team with the teens for three years already and enjoy a mutually friendly cooperation.
<i>Development of skills and knowledge:</i>	The contribution that young people’s experience can make to improve the service is acknowledged and utilised	yes	The developed materials - texts, collages, installations, games and presentations are compiled in topic based packs that are left in the partner schools and can be used either in future health education classes or by the university students in their workshops with children with deviant

			<p>behaviour. Copies of the materials are given to the Municipal Centre for Drug prevention and are uploaded into the websites of the schools and of the town hall.</p> <p>Twice a year these continuously updated packs are presented at the Drug Prevention Fair inviting our and other youth NGOs involved in health promotion.</p> <p>All the materials are in bright colours and vivid graphic design and bear the names of the children that have created them.</p> <p>The posters and collages take part not only in the three school joint exhibition and contest but in other local and national level contests and win prizes.</p>
<i>Management:</i>	Young people have a role in the management of the project and have the power to hold adult staff and volunteers to account	yes	<p>Three students (one of each 6 – 8) grade per school are included in the management team of the project. Thus the ratio students: adults in the board is 9:7 and the decisions are taken with majority vote.</p> <p>In the Health4US Club volunteers form three groups depending on the grade they do the peer counselling with. The next year they serve as mentors of lower grade topic group and can affect the program by adding insight about the degree of success of various initiatives.</p> <p>Apart from being part of this project the teens are actively interested in applying to other sponsoring bodies – they decide on possible partnerships, project framework, feasibility of plans.</p>
<i>Delivery</i>	Young people are involved in the delivery of services and activities	yes	<p>The project is based on peer counselling. Its aim is to train young people as moderators of group discussions and games so that they deliver the program themselves not just in project workshops but in non-formal surroundings as well. The sustainability of the program is ensured with the fact that it runs in three consecutive grades of school curriculum. Moreover, the project's philosophy is that teaching should be done with fun and art so that it is varied</p>

			with multiple games, art exhibitions, drama performances and leisure activities so that it appeals to the target generation and involves them at their best.
<i>Assessment</i>	Young people are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of project activities.	yes	In the beginning of the school year the student coordinators of the three schools make a needs assessment in Balint groups and Info café based on which they develop the indicators for evaluation, the feedback questionnaires, the opinion polls, the interviews, the processing of the acquired data and its presentation in graphic form and in public. In every three months the peer counsellors from the three schools make a joint periodical report and publish a part of the results in the school newspaper and presented at the regular sessions of the National Drug Prevention Committee at parents meetings and mostly – at the WWW? Game shows.
<i>'Hard to Reach'</i>	The Project involves so-called 'difficult-to-reach' young people.	yes	The school counsellors regularly inform the Health4US club about teens with problems with study and social adaptation and the Foundation makes an effort to involve them in the volunteer leisure activities first and second in the prevention informative campaigns. The Foundation experts are specifically involved with the students with indications for drug use – they are integrated first in the computer game lessons, second at the game shows and leisure activities and later in the info dissemination campaign.
<i>'Service User Involvement'</i>	The Project involves young people who are recipients of the service offered.	yes	The 11-19 year-old students are both recipients and implementers of the project. For example, a target 5 th grade student is first involved in peer workshops with 6 th grade counsellors on tobacco abuse, the next year trained as counsellor in the field and educated on alcohol and marijuana abuse by a 7 th grade counsellor and the next year involved as a counsellor on last year's topic and trained on illegal drugs abuse.

**C.6 Does the Project address issues of social equality? If yes, how ?
(How does it aim to reach stigmatised groups, or ensure fair participation by groups traditionally excluded, such as young people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, etc.) (Maximum 100 words)**

The children under the risk of social exclusion due to minority origin, poor parents or study difficulties are the most vulnerable to drug abuse. We work with SOS Families in Risk Foundation and deliver creative workshops on risk prevention with the parents of children at risk . The school projects closely involve Roma children, deviant students and such with learning disabilities, and children of former Russian republic immigrants . The benefit of such participation is double as it is a faster way for these kids to be integrated within a school community through amusing fun activities with a health focus.

C.7 Why do you believe that the Jury should select your Project as a recipient of the European Prevention Prize? (Maximum 100 words)

Bulgaria is a country in difficult social transition and adaptation of its school system to more varied and child friendly ways of active student involvement. Our project successfully addresses a need of lower age students for varied risk prevention program integrated in the school curriculum and in large-scope (though scarcely funded –800 euro/schoolv year) voluntary non-formal activity. It is appreciated by the community and would be greatly encouraged if supported with the prize – adding to it European prestige and affording financial means to develop new interactive web-based dimensions.

C.8 How would your Project use the Prize of 5.000 €? (Maximum 100 words)

All of it would be used to the development of modern information and communication tools -we would be able to develop a professional highly interactive web site, to transfer the WWW ? game to an online version, to launch CDs with it in Varna schools and organise an online drug awareness contest. Of course, the beneficiaries of the prize would be the teens themselves as such a large scope funding would guarantee the sustainable development of the Clubs for two years in advance.

D. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Include with your application any supplementary evidence and documentation from the Project that you think will assist the Jury in making its decision. You can also provide any relevant website addresses.

For examples and information, please refer to the Prevention Prize guidance leaflet. Please note that any material that you send becomes the property of the Pompidou Group – it will not be returned. We reserve the right to use material that you send in publicity etc. However, if you indicate that particular material is for the Jury's consideration only and not to be used for other purposes, we will respect this – please indicate on each item if this is the case.

If you include materials that require equipment to view them – such as videos, *PowerPoint* presentations, etc, please make sure that they are in a suitable format for viewing on standard Western European equipment. Computer material should run on a standard, basic *Windows* PC. Any videos or film presentations should be limited to a maximum of five minutes running time. *PowerPoint* or other slide-type presentations should be limited to a maximum of 10 slides.

List, in the table below, the supplementary information that you are including.

Item/content	Format	Language	Reason for inclusion
Presentation of the project	PowerPoint	English	general presentation
3 Poster presentations	PowerPoint	English	the best of No DRUGS! Three – year art contests
Presentation of survey	PowerPoint	English	needs assessment analysis
Game on Drug Prevention	.exe file	Bulgarian	used actively in the club
Letter of reference	.doc	<i>English</i>	<i>Support of The Club of Knowledge Varna</i>
2 letters of reference	.doc	English	support of the two mayors of the suburbs in which the project is functioning
brochure	.exe file	Bulgarian	promotional leaflet
List of used online drug prevention sites	.doc	English	used in project activity
Letter of reference	.doc	English	support of the SOS Families in Risk Foundation

You can send them by post or e-mail but e-mail attachments must be less than five megabytes in size.