

## → I know What I Do!

**Country** Russia

**Project title** I Know What I Do!

**Twinning** Municipality of Groningen (The Netherlands)  
Municipality of Murmansk (Russia)

**Project period** 1 June 2009 to 30 November 2009

**Project budget** € 65.283,75

A practice to improve the service delivery of local governments

### Project objective

Development and implementation of an integral prevention programme of alcohol and drug use among youngsters in the Municipality of Murmansk involving local administration, education, and medical specialists. Setting up an effective infrastructure needed to reach the target group.

### Project summary

Socially targeted project that is aimed at the development of a broad prevention program adapted to the local situation of Murmansk Municipality. The program is based on cooperation of civil servants, education, and health care workers who will jointly implement it. A pilot is conducted at a school in Murmansk, raising awareness on the subject among youngsters and their parents and contributing to community involvement in prevention activities. An information center with a viable communication strategy has been set up to reach out and support the target group.

### Core information

Murmansk Municipality has approximately 315,000 inhabitants and is situated in the extreme Northwest of Russia, beyond the Arctic Circle. Murmansk is the capital of Murmansk District (oblast) and is the most important trade and military ice-free port of Russia.

### Problem analysis

The Municipality of Murmansk lacks the capacity to design and implement an integrated prevention programme due to the lack of knowledge, lack of interconnection between the primary health care and the prevention activities, and lack of awareness on the needs and benefits of an integral health policy, comprising schools, polyclinics, and community. A big challenge for this project was to find an approach for the program, which would be suitable and acceptable in the Russian context. Many different approaches to alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse exist, but the programme needed to fit the needs of the Murmansk case. Choices needed to be made between addressing the problems

of active abusers, which were already, yet unsuccessfully, targeted, or preventing abuse from happening. The Municipality decided to change the approach and to focus on prevention and change of the mentality of the citizens in general.

### **Project implementation**

Based on several trainings, the project group developed a broad prevention program adapted to the local situation in Murmansk and to national standards in Russia. This was rather difficult because it is not allowed to discuss drugs abuse with kids below 11 years of age without a license. This license is the competence of the Regional Authorities. In order to reach the goal of the project, the team had to ensure support of civil servants, education, and health care workers and involve all structures in the joint implementation of the programme. A pilot training for children was performed in a school in Murmansk, raising awareness among youngsters and their parents and contributing to the involvement of the community in prevention activities. An information center was set up in one of the city polyclinics in order to improve the accessibility of information and advice for citizens. The Russian version of the website 'I know what I do' was developed suiting the local environment in Murmansk.

### **Process management**

The project implementation faced several challenging obstacles. After all preparatory work on awareness raising, political support, and change of mentality within local and regional administrative structures was performed, the political level changed, resulting in a loss of support for the project at regional and municipal level. As the project targeted a very sensitive issue, promotion of the project had to be performed again. Another challenge was obtaining the special license, needed to implement prevention programmes to young children. Besides that, the team had to develop an effective communication with representatives of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to promote the project and to be able to conduct proper events at schools.

### **Recommendations: do's and don'ts**

- It is highly important in implementation of social projects of this kind to identify responsibilities within the local and regional administrative structures at an early stage, to gain political support in advance and to convince all stakeholders (Ministries, regional and municipal authorities, social, educational and healthcare specialists, citizens) of the need and benefits of the programme.
- Scrutinously monitor the activities, actions and short term results. It can make the process of implementation more transparent and will make objectives more clear to all stakeholders.