

THE IMPACT OF THE "CHOOSE LIFE, CHOOSE SPORTS" SOCIAL CAMPAIGN OF THE AGENCY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS ON THE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION

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Abstract

Social campaigns have a major impact on everyday life, especially when young people are concerned. They affect the decision making process within a certain social group. The goal of the social campaigns is to convey ideas that would have a positive influence on the society. In this case, the social campaign Choose Life, Choose Sports brings closer the image of vices such as alcohol, drugs or cigarettes addictions to young persons and conveys a clear and precise message that through sports and exercising they can find their place in the society and fulfil their future plans through sports.

Keywords: youth and sports, students, society, alcohol, drugs, cigarettes

Sports and youth have a dominant position in the interests of the states and they have a major effect on the everyday life of the citizens. This responsible role in the Republic of Macedonia belongs to the Agency of Youth and Sports that as a government institution has the main goal to give support and participate in the development of Macedonian sports, in their segments, both in the quantitative and qualitative aspect, with inclusion of a large number of children, young people and citizens, as well as with the achievement of high sport results in major international competitions. The promotion of sports in our country provides young people with a possibility to get familiar with sports values, make decisions and finally choose one of the sports they would practice in the future. Good choice of sports and proper orientation of young people, is a confirmation of the concern for the young people's status, promotion of healthy lifestyles and orientation towards true values and, primarily, concern for the psychological and physical development of young people, their protection from addictions, prostitution, crime and other socio-pathological phenomena.

The Agency of Youth and Sports was the main initiator for implementation of the social campaign *CHOOSE LIFE CHOOSE SPORTS* based on the preparations for realization of the ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA in the segment – health and prevention, that proposes promotion of healthy lifestyles for young people in their spare time. In addition, the inter-institutional cooperation with the State Healthcare Institute of Macedonia, presently the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia, that worked at

that time on the implementation of the *Information on the condition of dependency illnesses in the period 2004 – 2009 in the Republic of Macedonia* (drug use starts before the age of eighteen (94%) usually with drugs such as marijuana or benzodiazepines, later it continues with opiates and opioids, but some individuals immediately start with heroin injections, most of the people surveyed (72%) began injecting drugs before the age of 18, while children have first contact with alcohol at a very early age, i.e. 9% of the participants under 6 had already had their first contact with alcohol in the family, fifty-eight percent of the adolescents in the Republic of Macedonia smoke cigarettes).

In addition, the Agency of Youth and Sports participated and financially assisted the ESPAD research in the Republic of Macedonia and the research arrived to the following results:

- Taking into consideration the fact that first experiences with drugs usually occur at the ages of 14 and 15, the preventive activities should be implemented in elementary schools.
- Important elements in the prevention programmes should be the strengthening of self-respect; development of life skills, communication skills and refusal skills. The pupils should be actively involved in the planning, creation and implementation of the prevention programmes.
- The drug prevention programmes should be comprehensive, in line with the needs of the pupils, culturally sensitive and sustainable.

In addition, the Agency of Youth and Sports, motivated by the growing effects of vices, vices that are gaining ground among the young people of Macedonia

which can be seen from the frightening results of the researches conducted on this topic, started with the implementation of the social campaign *CHOOSE LIFE CHOOSE SPORTS* – a campaign directed towards vices – cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, and for the purpose of promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The essence of this social campaign is to bring out the bright side of young people who choose sports compared to the dark side that young people would have if they chose one of the vices – cigarettes, alcohol or drugs, i.e. to depict the correct choice that youths have, the option to CHOOSE LIFE and to CHOOSE SPORTS. This is the main message in the campaign CHOOSE



Picture 1: Kiril Lazarov



Picture 2: Indira Kastratovik



Picture 3: Darko Pancev

LIFE CHOOSE SPORTS!

As the main actors in the first part of the campaign who were to convey the message, we selected our most popular Macedonian athletes - Indira Kastratovik, Kiril Lazarov and Darko Pancev, athletes who have proven themselves on the European and worldwide stage.

- Darko Pancev – football player (top goal scorer in Europe – winner of GOLDEN BOOT 90/91)
- Indira Kastratovik – handball player – (top goal scorer at the World Championship with the Macedonian national team and winner of European Champions League with Kometal Gjorce Petrov)
- Kiril Lazarov – handball player – (top goal scorer at the World Championship with the Macedonian national team)

For the purpose of continuing communication and a broad introduction of this campaign, in addition to the television ads and printed flyers, as web portal has been opened, where the citizens can use the forum to have mutual discussion on the topic of this campaign.

The evaluation of the campaign effectiveness confirmed its success because after the implementation of this project the enrolment of children in sport academies has increased, state school leagues have higher numbers of pupil athletes, and at the request of the pupils the state school leagues have added new contents (summer camp with sport stars, full-size pitch football, etc.).

Following the completion of the first part of this campaign and the achievement of excellent effects with it, we proceeded with the second part of this campaign for which we invited other popular Macedonian athletes to participate – Veli Mumin (boxing), Vrbica Stefanov (basketball), Natalija Todorovska (handball), Tomi Stefanovski (marathon swimming), Artim Shaqiri (football).

Macedonian swimmer Tomi Stefanovski, during the promotion of the second part of the campaign, will point out that as an athlete and as a person he would be a good role model and steer at least some young people away from the wrong path and onto the right path. He is going to add that this campaign is a wonderful idea initiated at the right time. In his presentation, Artim Shaqiri will express satisfaction to be a part of this project and will add that he is happy to be able to send a message to youth to choose the right path. According to Vrbica Stefanov, young people should direct their energy towards sports, and for that to happen, there will be help from videos starring Macedonian national athletes.

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ВЛИЈАНИЕТО НА ОПШТЕСТВЕНАТА КАМПАЊА НА АГЕНЦИЈАТА ЗА МЛАДИ И СПОРТ “ИЗБЕРИ ЖИВОТ, ИЗБЕРИ СПОРТ” ВО ПРОМОВИРАЊЕТО ЗДРАВИ ЖИВОТНИ СТИЛОВИ

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Апстракт

Општествените кампањи имаат големо влијание во секојдневниот живот, поготово кај младиот човек. Тие влијаат врз процесот на донесување одлуки во рамките на одредена група во општеството. Општествените кампањи имаат за цел да пренесат идеи кои ќе влијаат позитивно на општеството. Во овој случај општествената кампања “Избери живот избери спорт” на младиот човек му ја доближува сликата од користење на порочите како алкохол дрога цигари и му пренесува јасна и прецизна порака дека преку спортот и спортувањето младиот човек може да го пронајде местото во општеството и преку спортот да ја реализира својата иднина

Клучни зборови: млади и спорт, ученици, општество, алкохол, дрога, цигари

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