



FOCUS ON YOUTH  
FOOTBALL & ALCOHOL

Work Package 4



Co-funded by  
the Health Programme  
of the European Union



# Objectives

- To review international policies and practices related to young people, alcohol, marketing and sport at an international level.
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- To capture evidence about effective practice in reducing harms.
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- Interviews relevant stakeholders.



# Methodology

- Literature Review through ProQuest platform, Google Scholar and HealthyStadia.
- Analysis of 135 International Sporting Bodies Websites.
- In-depth search of 36 International Federations.
- Interviews and questionnaires with 10 International Bodies.
- Thematic Analysis.



# Limitations

- Analysis of websites means that not all information is available.
- Research reliant on participants taking time, convenience sampling.



# Findings: Literature Review

- Higher levels of risky consumption of alcohol in student athletes in comparison to the general student population (Kingsland et al. 2016).
- Higher levels of alcohol consumption = higher odds of aggressive and anti-social behaviour (O'Briena et al. 2018).
- However, **sport has a positive influence on young people's health** and can be a way of achieving social inclusion (Morgan and Parker, 2017; Lubens et al. 2016).



# Findings: Literature Review

- Global alcohol sponsorship \$6 billion (Fenton, 2018). FIFA brought in \$1.45bn from sponsors for the Russia World Cup (Wilson, 2018).
- Budweiser and AB InBev reported highest sales of beer in stadiums in this World Cup.
- Regulation of alcohol sponsorship is inconsistent and bans are circumvented by the alcohol industry (Alcohol Concern and Alcohol Research UK, 2018; Purves et al. 2017; Eurocare, Institute of Alcohol Studies and University of Monash, 2015).



# Findings: International Sporting Bodies

- Of 36 federations, 13 had 'no policy', 21 either lax (unclear) or 'situational' on young people and alcohol, but doesn't necessarily mean no affiliation e.g. rugby and Heineken.
- Aquatics and the Luge, only federations where alcohol advertising is prohibited.
- FIFA, World Rugby and UEFA – key message is that alcohol use should be moderate and is a personal choice.
- Positive developments by FIFA, UEFA, SportandDev, Olympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Federation. Sport as a means to further education, health, development and even peace. E.g. Homeless World Cup



# Interviews with International Stakeholders

**Is reducing alcohol related harm to youths a priority of international sporting bodies?**

*Alcohol is a sub sub sub subject in all this, activities are not focused on the subject since we work on other issues at the moment, such as: match fixing anti-corruption violence or promotion of physical activities.*



# Interviews with International Stakeholders

**Are there any specific policies or programmes, which aim to tackle alcohol use, and alcohol related harm for children and young people?**

- Alcohol is illegal until 16 or 18 depending on the country.
- UEFA's change in 'Rule 36' and Healthy Stadia's concerns, but also two-tiered system at any rate.
- Good practice is patchy e.g. 'Side Step' in UK and 'Trainer Plus' in Berlin.



# Interviews with International Stakeholders

**What do you think are the biggest challenges to implementing policies and programmes to reduce underage drinking and/or alcohol related harms to youths at an international level?**

- Money

*I think it is a difficult topic because the main sponsors are alcohol and this makes it difficult to focus on policies that tackle alcohol problems. It is difficult to balance the needs... professional games rely on revenue from alcohol marketing, sponsorship, and sales of alcohol products in the grounds. (P1)*

- Macho Culture



# Interviews with International Stakeholders

**What would help support the implementation of policies and programmes that aim to reduce underage drinking and/or alcohol related harms to youths at an international level?**

- Campaigns educating about the dangers of alcohol
- Responsible partnerships? E.g. Scotland's Women's Football Team
- Education and making everyone aware of the role they play
- Regulating the sale of alcohol.
- Make non-alcohol drinks more attractive.
- Serve low strength alcohol



# Sport and Alcohol- a natural affinity?

- Alcohol and football are like two peas in a pod for many fans, who seemingly cannot imagine attending a match without a beer in hand Dun (2014: 186).
- Despite the research about the negative impact links between alcohol and football strengthened. E.g. Russia and Qatar lifting bans for the World Cup, UEFA's change in stance.



## Need for firm resolve...

- WHO (2018):  
'Marketing and sponsorship of health-harming products has no place in sport.'
- Yet, video campaign targeting World Cup football fans produced by WHO, Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation and the 2018 World Cup Russia Local Organising Committee did not mention alcohol at all.



# Conclusion

- Under-researched area and this review provides unique insights.
- Of 36 sports federations, only Aquatics and the Luge have prohibited alcohol advertising.
- Regulation of alcohol marketing and sponsorship within football is really reliant on industry self-regulation, with bans circumvented by the alcohol industry.
- Alcohol and sport – financial partnership.
- Sport can be a hook for change and has a positive impact, but this is compromised by this partnership.



# Conclusion

- There is a need for the evidence base on this area to grow and for countries where there are bans in place to enforce them fully.
- This is about more than finances, this is about appealing to Governments to enforce bans and to international sporting bodies to be more responsible, and recognise the influence they have on young people.
- **Sport can be a powerful tool for the positive and that includes the messages it decides to promote.**



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Polish State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol-related Problems (PARPA), Poland



Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS), Italy



Ehkäisevä päihdetyö (EHYT), Finland



Vereniging voor Alcohol en andere Drugproblemen vzw (VAD), Belgium

# Thank you!

To find out more about the FYFA website visit:  
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