

PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF B.A.O.N.P.S. PROJECT.

14.30 – 19.00

December, 3rd

Alba

During the second day of the kick off meeting, Cooperativa Alice organized a seminar to present BAONPS project to local/national authorities, institutions and service providers.

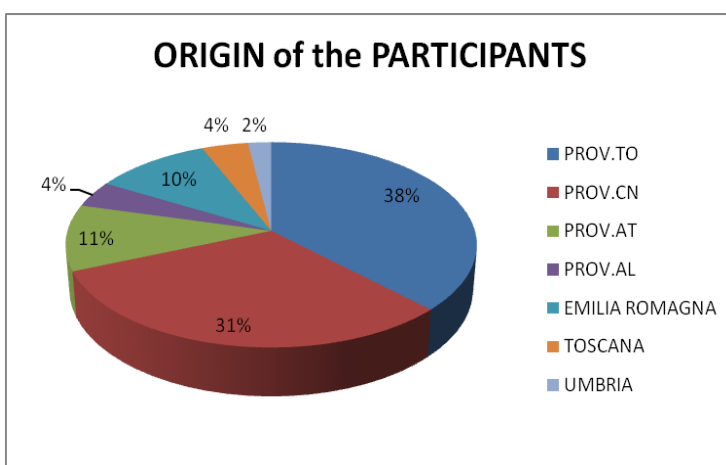
The seminar was organized in the municipality room dedicated to Beppe Fenoglio¹ and was addressed to professionals, policy makers and journalists.

The invitation to the seminar was spread among Italian Partner's networks and particularly it was spread using Cooperativa Alice's local and national network. Participants had to register in an on line form, set up using the free on line application "Google Form".

The Public Presentation was organized in cooperation with a local journalist, Isotta Carosso, whose role was to spread information and articles about BAONPS project in local printed and on line newspapers.

The on line form was filled in from 55 persons but 14 didn't attend the seminar; 7 persons registered themselves directly to the seminar. At the end, participants were 48 plus about 10 journalists (they were not registered in any form).

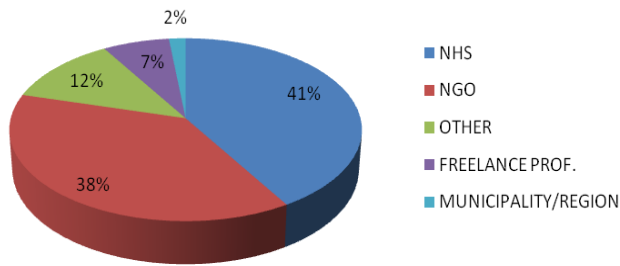
THE PARTICIPANTS



Mainly participants came from Piedmont Region, the majority were from the Turin district (8 persons from the country side and 8 from the city of Turin) and from Cuneo District (11 persons were from Alba and 4 from other towns). Furthermore there were people from Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Umbria.

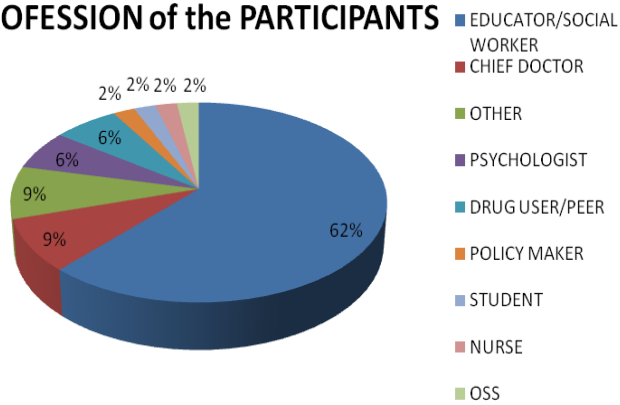
¹ A famous partisan that wrote many books about the Italian Resistance against Nazism and Fascism.

ORGANISATION of the PARTICIPANTS



The majority of participants were from NHS local addiction service providers (ASL – Ser.T.) and from NGO. There were also policy makers, both involved as speakers in the seminar and as participants.

PROFESSION of the PARTICIPANTS



The biggest part of participants was composed of educators (or social workers). Furthermore there were NHS chief doctors, especially those from local addiction service providers. The 6% of the public were drug users or peers.

After institutional greetings from the Director of the local addiction service provider, at first were presented organizations cooperating in BAONPS, the aims and objectives of the project. Specific attention was paid to drug checking activity and the research, strictly connected to outreach work.

Partners from Slovenia, Portugal and Germany presented their organizations and the work they daily make in their countries. Participants were provided with a translation from English to Italian.

The second part of the seminar was a round table in which were involved different kind of stakeholders: local and regional policy makers and authorities, representatives from other Italian organizations and networks involved in outreach work and interested in drug checking activities, local experts in public policies.

The round table speeches were centered on BAONPS Project. Leopoldo Grosso, from Gruppo Abele², had the role of mediator. He introduced the round table highlighting the added value of involving youth in European project, as BAONPS do; in fact youth are those that are building Europe because they are the most available in mobility: they move for working reasons, to know different people and cultures and furthermore they move to party. This is the reason because social operators have to secure party setting.

² An important NGO founded from Don Luigi Ciotti and operating in social disease and addictions since 1965.

BAONPS Project will implement the fourth pillar of European Drug Policy: harm reduction. Actually there is a big need to uniform EU countries in implementing the fourth pillar of harm reduction.

The mayor of the town of Alba, Maurizio Marengo, highlighted the importance to address problems and phenomena, such as the use/abuse of drugs, in an European view because of nowadays lifestyles and mobility; it is necessary to go beyond a local dimension in managing social problems, connecting with other European countries: Europe should become at first a solidarity network. BAONPS is a “bottom-up attempt” to manage drug related problems using harm reduction strategies.

Marina Marchisio, from APICE³, pinpointed a problem: the management of health and social themes is demanded to every single country partner and Europe has got a coordination role. BAONPS project can be considered an exercise of citizenship and it is an important experience for those organisations and associations that are promoting the European citizenship rights and the return to an European solidarity view. At the end, Europe born with solidarity aims, beyond the economical ones: the citizenship solidarity, the cooperation among countries in the problems management can give an help to afford and pass the economic crisis.

Leopoldo Grosso summarized these first speeches: by implementing concrete actions, innovations, experimentations, European cities and countries connect and try to make their voice loud in front of EU institutions.

Gaetano Manna, the regional (Piedmont) and national technical coordinator of the interventions on addictions, highlighted that BAONPS Project shows the winning part of the management of drug related problems: the way on drug failed because it is not possible to treat a social/health problem with law enforcement agencies and military problem. Harm reduction can be one of the strategic measures to manage drug related problems. In Italy, in the last years, policy just worked on emergencies and lost the programmatic aspects; there is a lack of integration between local and regional institutions and these bring to a splitting of resources: we should change this modality and go towards more cooperation, connection and integration among different institutions, stakeholders, public and private sectors. We should learn to join efforts, defining “who do what, when and how”, to better deal with problems. In Italy it is necessary to go beyond the current paradigm/standard of service providers (the clients go ask/present a problem in specific offices and the service answers): especially in drug use the scenario is changing and services must go out from their wall and reach the needs where they rise, connecting with different stakeholders to manage problems and phenomena.

Carlo Zarmati, manager of the ASL TO4 Local Addiction Department, told that harm reduction was under attack in the last years in Italy. Harm reduction actions were implemented, because of their evidence based results, but they had to be performed without saying it too loud because of the repressive policies from the National Department against drug. Harm reduction strategies were seen as antagonist to care/treatment strategies; it is possible to affirm that there was an

³ Association to promote the culture meeting in Europe. The aim of the organization is to promote discussion among civil society about European policies and culture, with a focus in the involvement of youth.

ideological war against harm reduction during the last years in Italy. Connecting to Manna's speech, Zarmati told that addiction service providers have to afford the challenge of the new drug consumption patterns and they have to find a way to adapt their facilities, by exploring the new reality and by creating new instruments of intervention. Italy can't be anchored to the paradigm of care/treatment and to the aim of the drug free because doing so a lot of client are excluded from services and facilities. Every drug user had health rights and they have to be considered and maintained also without a drug free choice of the person; talking with people about their drug use patterns it is possible to help people to manage their uses. Research (to know the reality) and drug checking (as BAONPS Project will perform) are important from a health-centred point of view because they are elements of a service, they are useful to create alerts and produce knowledge for users and professionals.

Zarmati concluded his speech giving some data about the cost-effective action of harm reduction. From 1998 to 2010 Australia invested 122.000.000 of dollars in needle exchange programmes; it is estimated that Australia saved 4.500 deaths and prevented 25.000 HIV infections. At the end Australia saved 2.4 billion of dollars from the public health expenditure. So harm reduction gives evidence-based results but it is also cost-effective.

Before BAONPS project, drug checking was not implemented in a formal way in Italy because of the concern it could be forbidden by law: this concern was brought from a cultural climate in public services because actually there are no laws that doesn't allow this practice (drug consumption rooms are forbidden by the law because it is not allowed to set a public or private space in which drugs are consumed. It is a criminal offence). Summarizing, drug checking is a legal and evidence-based practice.

Riccardo de Facci, the vice-president of CNCA, highlighted that the Italian law on drug and drug addiction was made 25 years ago and never change. Drugs and consumptions are changing and the system is not adequate to afford the new challenges; BAONPS project can be an opportunity to propose a change in the law on drugs and drug addictions and help people to go beyond the moral paradigm that rules on drug phenomena and on health related concepts in Italy.

CNCA will spread the BAONPS intervention model in Italian regions in which there are its members and outreach/mobile/street units.

Pino Faro, as FEDERSERD representative, is an Associated Partner in BAONPS project with tasks of dissemination. He agreed with the speech of Riccardo De Facci and highlighted that harm reduction is implemented since 20 years in Italy and so have to be formally recognised as a pillar in drug policy. Public services and NGO have to cooperate because health policies can't be an exclusive sector of intervention of the public system: it must be integrated with private sectors, especially with NGOs, both in the building and in the implementation of drug policies. Furthermore it is since 2009 that there is not a national conference on drug in Italy; politicians say that there are no resources to organize the conference but actually it is that the drug theme is quite sensitive for citizenship consensus.

The last speech of the round table and of the seminar was kept from Franco D'Agata, as a representative of ITARDD⁴ and of autonomous outreach projects (Infoshock and LAB57) that informally implemented drug checking during the last years. They started with an observation of some party settings (illegal rave parties) and then begun to perform drug checking using reagents; they don't have evaluation procedures but they noticed that analysing substances people were more available to talk about themselves, their drug consumption patterns and negative/adverse effects of drug use. D'Agata highlighted that the concerns about the fact that drug checking could be not allowed in Italy are not founded: there are many legal advices that confirm the total legality of the practice. D'Agata proposed a new challenge: to ask Italian institutions for drug checking accreditation as an important facility for drug user.

⁴ Italian Harm Reduction Network