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Report of Rehabilitation Program for Addicts of Association for Rehabilitation of Addicts "Solidarity" for 2014 year

The services of the rehabilitation program of Association „Solidarnost" (Solidarity) include adults (people over 18 years old) addicted to drugs, alcohol, medicines or gambling, as well as their parents and relatives.

Our activities during 2014 years were:

- Telephone interviews and e-mail consultations about effects and risks of drugs, steps in rehabilitation, motivation and treatment; part of these telephone interviews lead to primary consultations.
- Primary consultations – they are conducting in the daily center, the aim is an expert evaluation of the case and also planning the rehabilitation according to the individual needs. Part of these primary consultations lead to entering the rehabilitation program and others are directed to hospitals for detoxification or other more suitable for their case professional organizations for treatment.
- There are two forms of rehabilitation in "Solidarnost": the daily rehabilitation program (group-work according to the motel of TC (Therapeutic Community Program), people are in the center from 09:00 to 17:00 h) and individual counseling for people that work. We worked with the parents and relatives of all our clients – those who are in the daily program and those who are in the process of individual counseling.
- The work with parents and relatives: there is a group for parents once a week and also once a week a group for intimate partners, also family meetings at least once a month for each of our clients. During these meetings siblings of our clients also participate.

Concerning these activities, overall in 2014 year the team of the rehabilitation program of Association Solidarity worked with 167 people overall, of which:

- 93 people in telephone interviews and email consultations, from them 65 people came for primary consultations;
- 9 people – primary consultations without telephone interviews,
- 51 – parents and relatives,

- 5 people were already in the group since 2013, and
- 9 were on individual consultations since 2013.

Of 65 people that reached primary consultation:

- New clients entered in the Treatment Program (TP) – 9;
- New clients signed a contract for individual counseling – 7;
- People who are participated in the evening group – 5;

The rest 44 people were directed to hospitals for detoxification or other more suitable for their case professional organizations.

Tendencies and Conclusions:

- The number of people who are appropriate for the rehabilitation program during 2013 year was with 1/3 higher in comparison with 2012 year and for 2014 year this number was a record-breaking if we compared it with the previous years. The tendency that was watched during the period 2010-2012 year for decreasing the number of people who were candidates for the program now is changed in a tendency towards steady increase the number of the clients.
- More people with alcohol and gambling addictions are turning for help to us. Also to them we may add a large number of people who are with misuse of cannabis.
- The average age of people who are searching our help is increased.

Subjects for improvement:

- Efficiency of the primary contacts;
- Reduction of the percentage of people with relapse;

Strengths compared with 2013 year:

- More candidates for entering the program;
- More people that entered the program;
- More people that finished successfully the program;
- A large group;
- More stable people in the group;

Aims of the Rehabilitation Program for 2015 year:

Quantitative criteria:

- People who will finish successful the program: minimum 35% of people that have entered the program;
- Drop-out: not more than 35%, whereas that same person may be dropped more than once a year, which does not apply to those that finished the program;
- 65 % of the telephone interviews to lead to a primary consultation.
- 25% of the appropriate people from the primary contacts to enter in the program or to make a contract for individual counseling.

Qualitative criteria:

- Stopping the use of drugs/alcohol or compulsive gambling;
- Progress of the people in the different program's stages according to the General Treatment Plan;
- Improvement of the family and social condition of the clients;

- Creating of a new social circle;
- Creating an operating budget and leading in a new way the free time;

Developing new activities during 2015:

In 2015 year the team of TP plans to provide the following new actions:

1. Trainings for students, parents, school psychologist and social workers. The aim in general is to raise awareness of addictions and psychological work in this field. These trainings will be led by psychologist of the TP. The themes are: risks and effects of drug use; dependence syndrome; psychological perspectives to work with addicts; opportunities for psychological work in different stages of addiction, prevention – universal and indicative; prevention of relapse; how to talk with teenagers and how to help their process of independence and maturity.

2. Creation and development of a new service – center for social services for drug addicts. The aim of this center is to support people who are in active use in social aspects and who are not part of the labor market. The plan activities will be: consultations with a psychologist, with a lawyer, with a psychiatrist and with a social worker, if is needed. This center will be a place where addicted people who are on streets could meet professionals and will be advised about the appropriate institutions and a place where they will receive support and understanding. The services will be free of charge for the users.

Project work during 2014:

1. In January 2013 year the team of National Help Line began work on project „Drug prevention and education among young people through social networking". More about it can be seen in the report of the National Drug and Alcohol Help Line.
2. In August 2013 year the Help Line was approved to take part as a partner in the project „Drug Helplines, online and interactive", funded by the program of Leonardo da Vinci "Lifelong Learning". See more about it in the report of the Help Line.
3. Project "Practices for university students" at the Ministry of Education. Through this program have been passed 28 university students. The aim of this practice is students to receive more practical experience in the field of drugs and alcohol rehabilitation. The strong point for our organization is sharing experience and more popularization of our mission.
4. Project „Stabilization and motivation for treatment", funded by the Foundation Futur 21, and aimed at stabilization of the clients in the program "Solidarity" and also at attracting new clients. There are two main activities in this project:
   - Participation of a psychiatrist in the team;
   - Creation and implementation of evening group for support of people with drug misuse;

Evaluation of the participation of a psychiatrist in the team meetings:

Main activities:

- Participation in team meetings;
- Consultations with the clients of the program;
- Detoxification and following-up the patients' condition;

Doctor George Vasilev participated in the team meetings that were conducted once a week. This was a possibility for him to be aware of what happened in the past week with the clients of the program. The main points during these meetings were: therapeutic development of the clients – involvement in the group process, stability, activity, emotional changes, and results of the given tasks for the past week. He also gave his opinion about the aims' resolution and also he informed the whole team about the

conducted by him consultations with each of the clients. Such kind of participation of medical professional, as a team member, proved to be very useful in the following aspects:

Benefits:

- Increased competence in decision-making of the team;
- Less efforts for the team members about receiving a psychiatric or medical statement for the clients;
- Higher efficiency in the cases of medical treatment within the program and better integration of the medical and therapeutic interventions.

Consultations with the clients of the program;

Participation of a psychiatrist in the team of the program gave a possibility of the clients of Solidarity for free consultation with him in the center in a familiar and secure for the clients environment. Such consultations for starting a treatment or for a treatment monitoring occurred between 2-6 times per week. Often these consultations were with the participation of the clients' referents.

Benefits:

- More clients received this service;
- More finance relief for all the people that needed this service;
- Better quality of the consultations – because of the confidence in the team and the familiar environment in the daily center;
- More complete picture of the monitoring of the cases after the team work and the work with the referent;
- Possibility for organizing in a very short time counseling meetings with a psychiatrist;

Detoxification and following-up the patients' condition

In a need of detoxification new customers received intervention in time by a psychiatrist with the necessary experience in addiction treatment. In the collaboration with the team and the client's family easily was organized a secure environment for detoxification in home conditions.

Benefits:

- A chance to be appointed and organized a detoxification in the daily center (this was a new service);
- In the process of detoxification took part also the referent of the client and the psychiatrist;
- A financial relief for the customers in the program;
- A chance the detoxification process to be monitored in a better way;
- After detoxification higher motivation and higher commitment to the program.

- **Create and implement a new evening group for support for people with problematic use (evaluation):**

First, the original idea was to create a group of methadone users only, who need psychological counseling and who are willing to work for their autonomy and their social inclusion. We contacted colleagues working in methadone clinics in order to establish some kind of cooperation. Doctor Vasilev, psychiatrist, also helps as directed people. The period for promoting this new service continued 2 months. Unfortunately, it turned out that methadone users and also colleagues were not interested. This was the reason for us to change our original idea.

So we came up with the idea clients coming in this group to share their daily difficulties and to receive feedback on topics that were important for their good emotional state and also to feel the support and acceptance by the people from the group. This is the basis of each group work. So, the

evening support group for addicts is a space for free sharing and exploring the different possibilities for solving the difficulties and problems associated with daily functioning and relations with important people and people around. The protected environment is created by the specific environment, confidentially, the concrete single aim and by the leader of the group who is professionals in mental health.

The target group is people between 18 – 65 years, who have problems with drug addiction or gambling, who were diagnosed, who had a previous therapy or are in active therapy or people who still are confronted with these problems. These are people for whom the structured treatment is inappropriate at this moment – because they work, had been finished such a treatment or their mental condition does not allow them a full-time treatment with such a daily framework.

The group rules are: participation is voluntary and free, prohibited the importation and use of psychoactive substances on the territory, which hosts the group requirement is regular and timely attendance, verbal and non-verbal aggression are forbidden to observe confidentiality themes are free, but the focus is the impact of dependent behavior and the problematic use. People who are in active treatment with methadone also are welcome. The philosophy is that "solution" for some problem can be obtained more easily in a group than to read information or listen some expert advices - especially when we have relationship and work with our emotions. In particular need specific regulatory or organizational or theoretical information about the relationship between the use of psychoactive substances and the results of this, treatment options and objective information about some "myths and facts" is also target of a group.

The main objectives are partly building structure and study of attitudes and patterns of connection with others through group participants. Sense of human relationship, respect and acceptance, regardless of the specific problems and differences.

Expectations were: regular and active participation, improving emotional intelligence, a change in designated problem areas.

The advertisements of this new service were through several channels - social networking, Internet forums for addicts, published news about announced on institutions and organizations dealing with addicts, the website of Helpline and also the website of Solidarity.

Result – we made contact with 21 people, 5 of which visited the group.

On this base we can made partial conclusion that people seeking support, share similar complaints, regardless of the type of substance they have problematic use. Namely feeling of loneliness, difficulties in everyday life, dysfunctional social networking, despair and helplessness.

Difficulties - an insufficient motivation and not very clear targets, which influenced the framework of activities and a sense of responsibility to other members of the group. A major problem appears to be the commitment of potential users of the service, as well as different expectations, needs and requests of the people, said a problem with substance use.

In the future, we will explore the possibilities for such a target group in a more structured format to give them security and affect their commitment. We want to do this with the help of partners from the professional European network ECEtt (www.ecett.eu), which have good practices in this type of service.

5. **Rehabilitation Project needy clients financed by NCA (National Center of Addiction):**

- Concluded 10 contracts for participation in the FP and individual counseling - January to March.

- Agreement to finance 5 places from November to December (a total of five months in 2014). The group became more stable and this allowed the clients to be more confident, because during their participation in the program they cannot work. Unfortunately the funding of the project lasts only 6 months.

Funding

During the past year, Solidarnost Association received financial support from the following funds and organizations:

- Fondation privée Futur 21 regarding the project "Stabilization and motivation for treatment";

- Compagnons de Trempoline which finances the rent and the everyday expenses of the place where we work;
- L'abbay de Leffe whose financial support is in the form of covering the participation fee of one client of the rehabilitation program of Solidarnost;
- Solvey Sodi which partially finances one place on the rehabilitation program;
- National Centre for Addictions (a structure of the Bulgarian Ministry of Health) partially finances 5 places on the rehabilitation program of Solidarnost;
- The King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium) facilitates tax-efficient cross-border giving from within Europe
- Union of Brewers in Bulgaria that purchased one laptop and one printer for the purposes of our work.

The Board of Directors and the team of Solidarnost would like to heartily thank all of those who are committed to our cause and work and as a result of whose help we are able to fulfill our mission.

Current status for 2015 year (30.03.2015):

Statistics for the first three months:

Group in day program – consist of 10 people, two persons in phase re-socialization and 9 persons who are in individual counseling.

Service for parents and relatives:

For the first three months the service works with: 17 people in individual consultations, parents 21 persons, partners – intimate or low - 8 persons, relatives – 4 persons, child – 1, friend – one. Each week there is a group for parents.

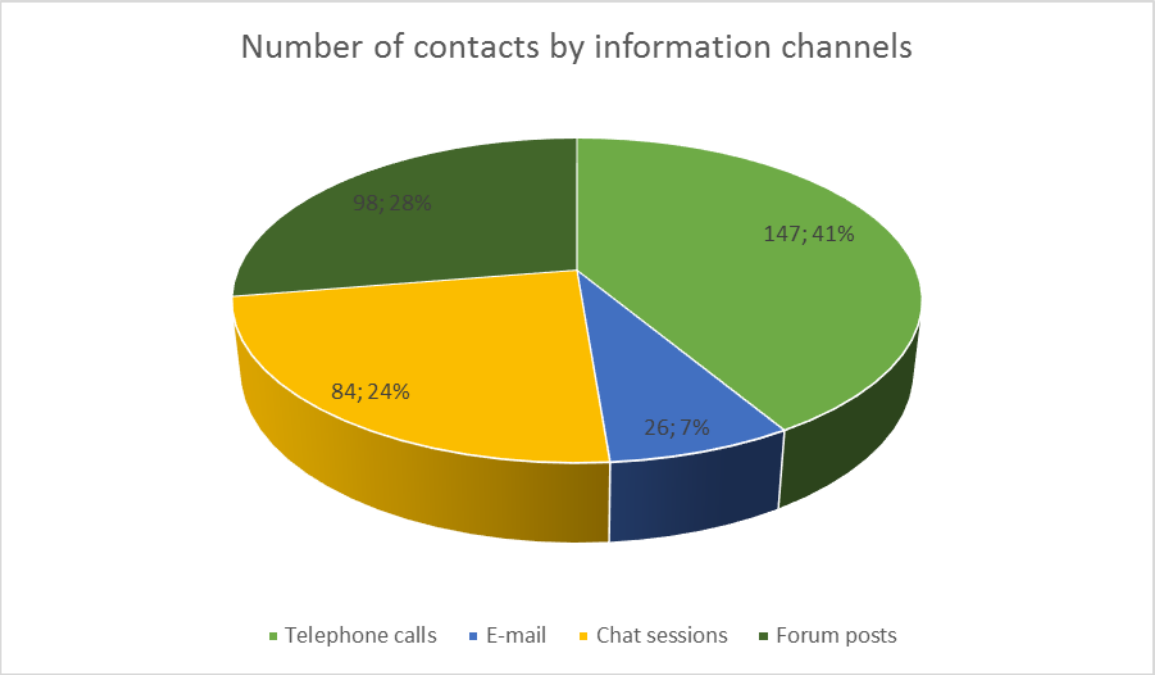
The success rate of the primary consultations is 28% of all carried out. 28% of all primary received in the daily program. (if taken individually consulted and this percentage is even more significant). This result is more than twice the total of last 2014 year and significantly higher than the average annual levels of 17-19%.

National Drugs and Alcohol Helpline – Annual report 2014

I. Statistics

1. Overall number of contacts

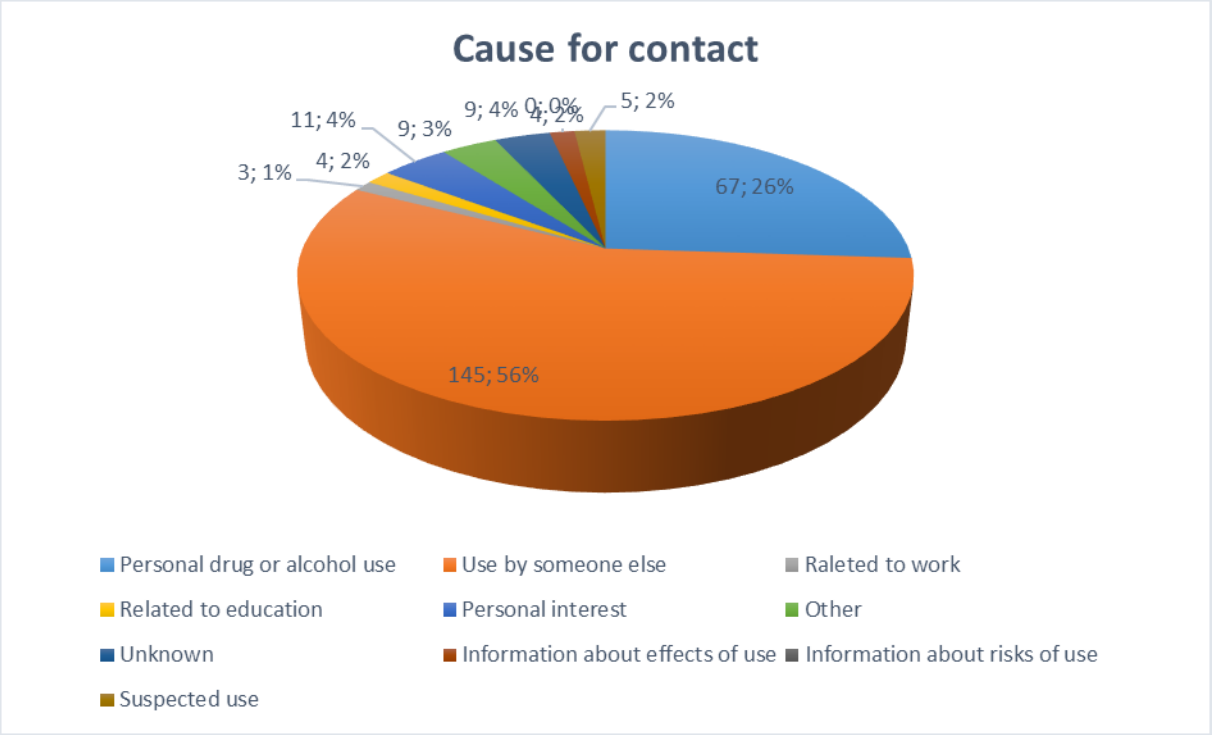
The contacts made by the National Drugs and Alcohol Helpline in 2014 amount to 355. Of them 147 (41%) were phone calls, 98 forum posts (www.stopdrug.info, www.drugsinfo-bg.org and http://forum.framar.bg/) – 28%, chats – 84 (24%) and 26 e-mails (7%).



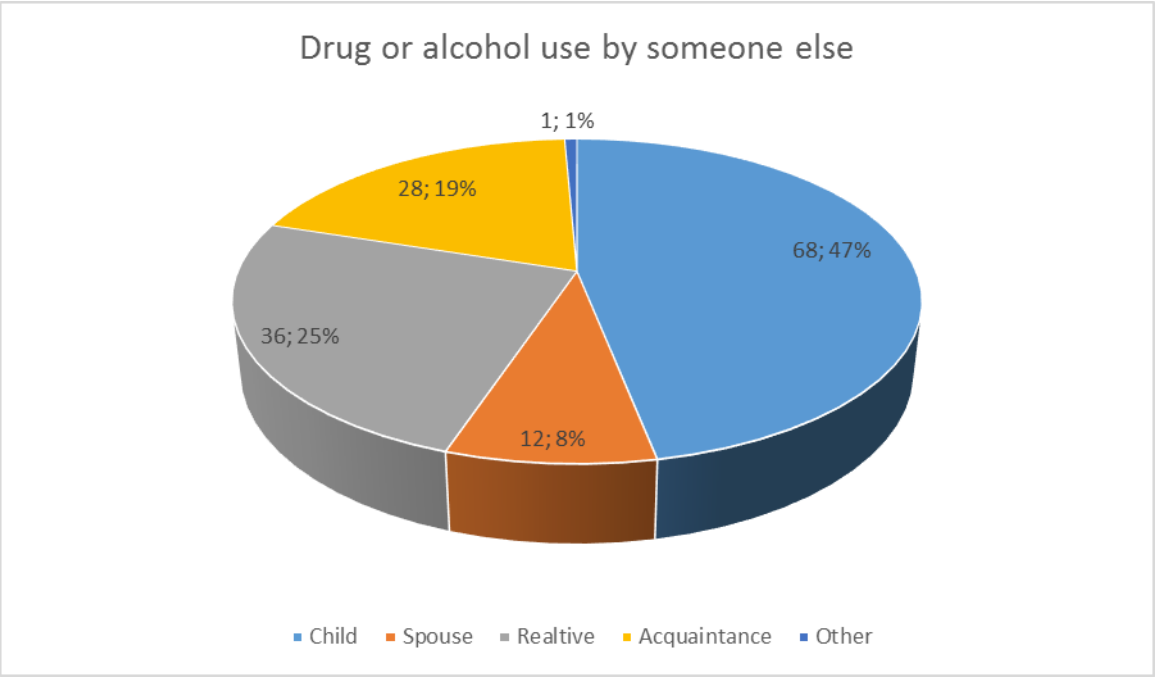
The statistics that follows does not include data about the contacts realized through the forums.

2. Cause for contact

The leading cause for contact in 2014 as well as in 2013 is "Drug use by someone else"- 56%, and 47% of the cases were about the caller's child. The second most frequent cause was "Personal use of drugs" (26%).



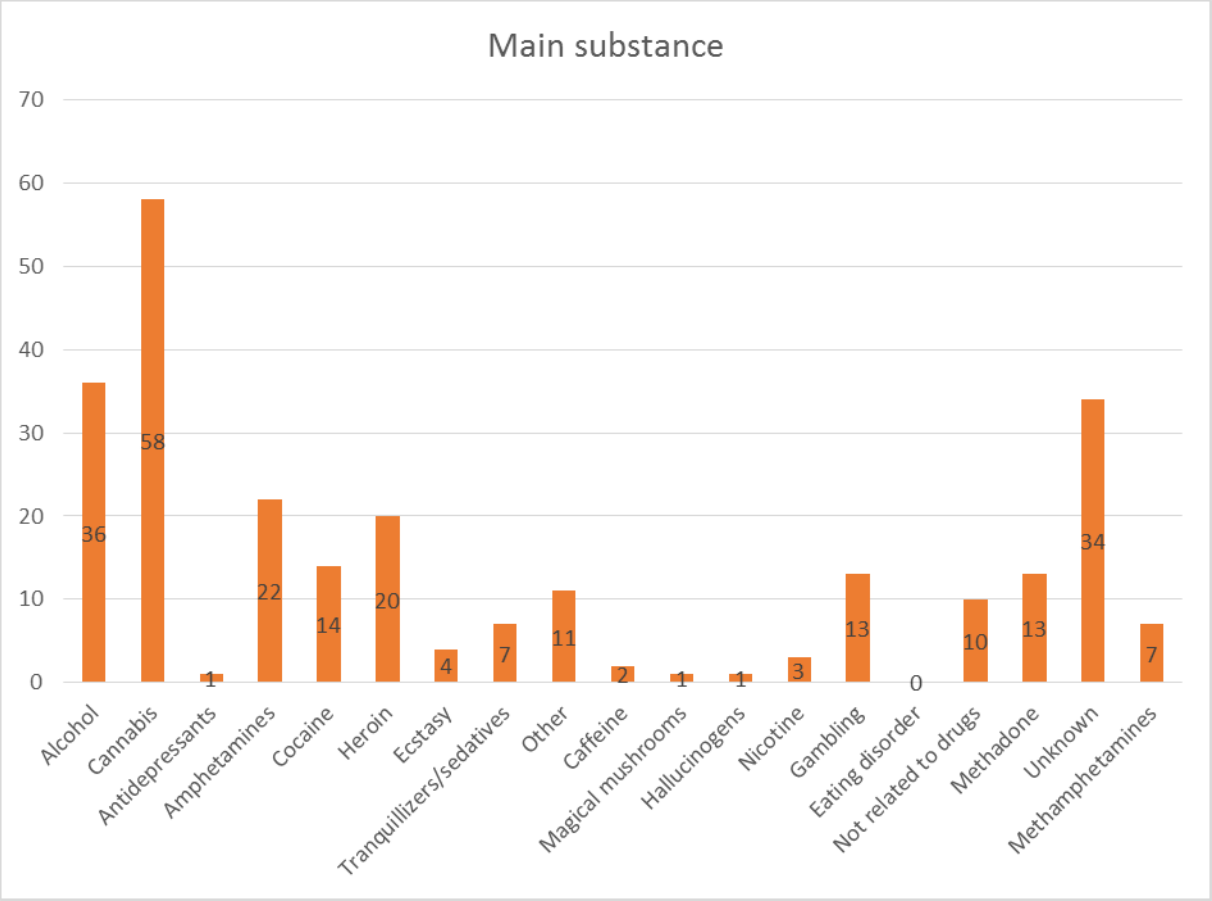
The contacts regarding drug use by someone else concerned a child of the caller in 47% of the cases. The mean age of the children is 23 years with a minimum of 14 years and a maximum of 53. The second most frequent case was a using relative (25%). The third most frequent cause was a using acquaintance (8%).



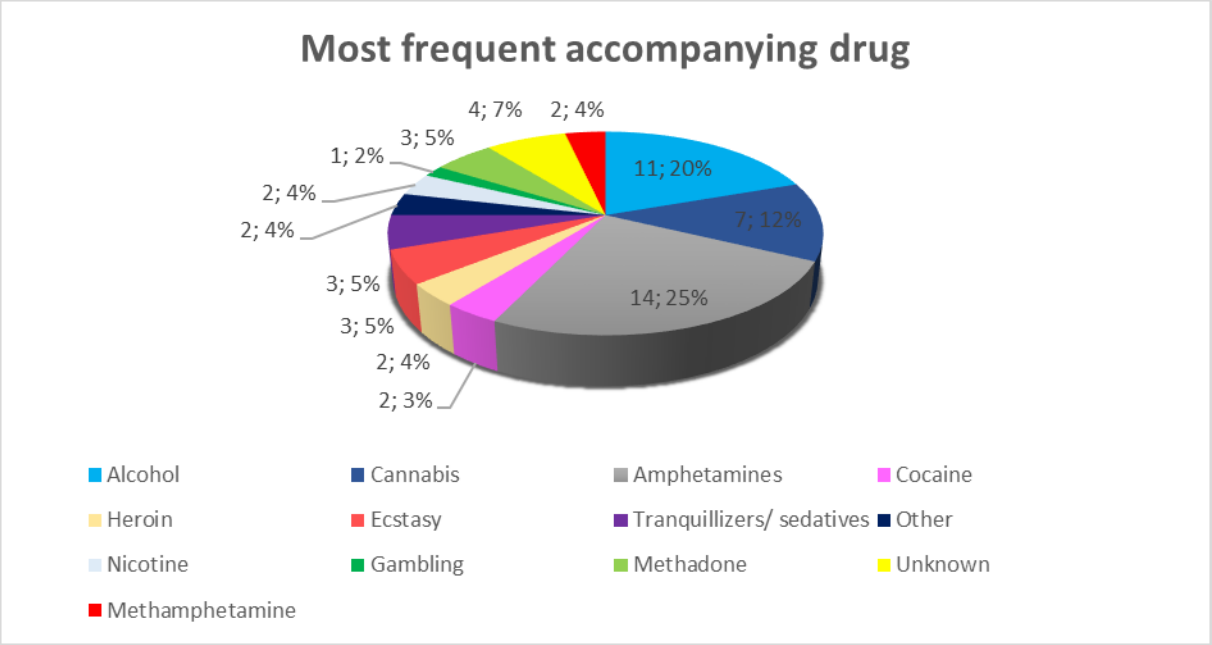
3. Substances

In 2014, the biggest amount of contacts concerned cannabis (58). Second come the contacts regarding alcohol – 36. In 34 of the cases the substance was unknown because they were about suspected drug use. The next most frequent substances were amphetamines and heroin with correspondingly 22 and 20 contacts.

There are changes in comparison to the previous year. In 2013, alcohol was 1% ahead of marijuana. In 2014, the contacts related to alcohol were 14% (25% in 2013) while those regarding cannabis – 23% (24% in 2013).



In the cases of confirmed use of a particular substance, the most frequent accompanying drugs were amphetamines (25%). The second most frequent is alcohol (20%) and third is cannabis with 12%. In 7% of the cases, the accompanying substance was unknown. In comparison to the previous year amphetamines as an accompanying drug mark an increase of 14%, alcohol dropped by 10%, cannabis also dropped by 9%.



II. Other activities

1. Organizing and participating in events

- Event on the occasion of 26th June – International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The teams of the Drug and Alcohol Helpline and Solidarnost Association organized an event outdoors that took place in "Zaimov" park in Sofia. There were sporting and creative activities in which the clients of the Rehabilitation program took part as well. Brochures and printed materials were handed out to passersby.

- Campaign for prevention of alcohol use by minors "Sports is the better way for our children to grow up", organized by the Union of Brewers in Bulgaria.

The National Drug and Alcohol Helpline was a partner in the events organized by the Union of Brewers for a successive year and helped with the dissemination of information about the project. The team participated in the press conference organized to mark the end of the campaign for that year.

2. Publications in printed and internet media

- Articles for www.puls.bg – an interview with the Helpline team on the subject of alcohol dependency was published in January 2014 in the internet portal. As a result the Helpline established a lasting cooperation with the team of the website and wrote articles on current topics every month. Ten articles by the consultants of the Helpline were published. The cooperation continues in 2015 as well.
- An article for the newspaper "Doctor" – at the end of May the Helpline team prepared an article asked for by the editor. The text was about the substances GHB and GBL.

3. Initiatives

- Contest for completion of the comic strip "Shadow world"

In the beginning of 2014 was conducted a contest with a motto "You are not alone". The initiative was aimed at children in the age group 11 to 14 years. It was realized in the form of a contest to complete the comic "Shadow World" that looks into the problem use of psychoactive substances by parents and the way their behavior influences their children. "Shadow world" is a publication of the Finnish foundation A-Clinic that gave Solidarnost Association the right to use it.

The children could complete the comic in three different ways: with a drawing, with a collage, or with an essay.
Twenty-three children participated. An elected jury assessed their works. The number of drawings and collages was too small and the jury could not choose winners in these categories. The winner of the contest had written an essay and his prize was a camera.

4. Module trainings

In 2014, the team of the Helpline continued the work with the "Academic Mihail Arnaudov" school.

The training started in January and finished in June. The contract included activities with 15 classes: five from 5th grade, five from 6th grade and five from 7th grade. The topic for the 5th and 6th graders was "Effects and risks of drug use", and for the 7th graders – "Influence of peer pressure in the use of psychoactive substances".

The new training started in October and included 15 classes - five from 5th grade, five from 6th grade and five from 7th grade. The topics remained the same following the established module program. The training ended in Mach 2015.

5. Development of Social Networks

- Facebook page: In 2014, the name was changed to a more suitable one: Drugsinfo-bg.org. During this year, a strategy for the management of the page was made. The goals, target groups, topics and the style of the publications are described. It also includes specific tasks for the accomplishment of the goals. The difficulties are also taken into account.
- Google + page: it was created in 2014 and a plan for the posts was made (frequency and type – infographics or other images, interesting YouTube++++++
- videos and posts about our blog articles)
- Twitter: in 2014, we increased our use of Twitter. We use it to follow the activities of other organizations in our domain and to find important news
- Youtube: we updated our channel in 2014. We upload clips on the subject with Bulgarian subtitles and the advertisements of the Helpline. Both Solidarnost Association and the Helpline use the profile.
- Blog: In 2014, we developed and edited the already existing concept for a blog – goals, target groups, name and domain, rubrics, popularization. One of the main goals of the blog is to create a sense of availability of the Helpline and to broaden the subjects covered by our work. The blog can be used to advertise the services of the Helpline.
- Wikipedia: we published an article about the Helpline in Wikipedia entitled "National Alcohol and Drug Helpline". We made some corrections so that it corresponds to the requirements of the encyclopedia.

6. Projects

In 2014, the team of the National Drug and Alcohol Helpline continued its work on two European projects with international partners.

- „Drug prevention and education among young people through social networking"

Five countries took part in this project: The Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Estonia and Bulgaria. The main goal is prevention of the use of psychoactive substances among young people aged 18 to 25 years during their nightlife. The goal is reached by developing a digital tool, use of social networks and the internet. A central characteristic of the finished product is that it is interactive and interesting for the young people. The focus is on three stages regarding nightlife: before, while it's happening and after.

In 2014 the team realized two mobilities for the project – to Prague in June, Czech Republic, and to Utrecht, The Netherlands in December. The project ended on 7th December. The final product of the

collaborative work between the partners is the website www.partyfriends.eu. It is available in English and in the languages of all partners as well. There is also a mobile application in English named PartyFriends and Facebook pages for every partner country.

- "Drug Helplines, online and interactive"

The project is aimed at innovative and interactive application of the social media and online tools. The goal is to improve the communication and the connection with the users of the helplines' services, to attract the interest of more people and to share good practices through mobilities. The ultimate goal is to create good practices for the use of social networks. The partners in this project are educational bodies, non-governmental organizations and institutions from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Ireland, Cyprus and Bulgaria.

There were two meetings for this project in 2014 – one in Oslo, Norway (in May) and one in Sofia, Bulgaria (in November). The final meeting for the project is scheduled for May, 2015 and it will be held in Brussels. In addition to the exchange of good practices and ideas, the final products expected are social media guidelines, a social media protocol and a social media planning template. These products are suitable for the activities of the helplines and their designation is to ease and to improve their work.

III. Difficulties

1. Financial resources – on 31 May 2014 ended the term of the contract for funding between Solidarnost Association and The National Centre for Addictions signed in 2013. It was a part of the National Strategy against drugs 2009-2013. The new Strategy for 2014-2018 did not include funding for the Helpline for 2014.

2. Human resources – the Helpline team has many and various activities and has difficulties due to the small amount of people working part-time. As a result, the team postpones some tasks and they accumulate; the performance is sometimes worsened because there is not enough time; some tasks that should be regular drop out of the daily routine; the team struggles to make time for the basic activity of the Helpline – to inform, consult and refer the consumers of the service to professionals.

3. Technical difficulties – there were many problems with our websites, the forums, the chat and the registration system. The cause for this is the outdated software and the lack of maintenance. Much time is spent in efforts to overcome the problems that occurred. This type of difficulties put a lot of pressure on the team and make the work harder.

4. Even though it does not depend on us, we have difficulties referring people to professionals for treatment and consulting. We have received information about Centers for mental health that refuse to accept people with problems due to drug use (in Sofia and Plovdiv for now, cases of stimulant-induced psychosis). Several people complained that they were not accepted in state psychiatric hospitals – "Saint Naum" and "Suhodol" in Sofia. We are concerned where we refer people to and what happens to them afterwards.

IV. Objectives for 2015

1. Revision and re-evaluation of all activities of the Helpline and development of a Yearly schedule for 2015.

2. Creating a new website for the Helpline and running an internet advertising campaign via new web-banners.

3. Development and maintenance of the Helpline social network – creating a protocol for regular tasks.

4. Coordination of the activities concerning the popularization of Solidarnost Association through regular meetings with the team of the Rehabilitation program in order to discuss ideas and distribute tasks among team members.

Svetlana Nikolova, National Drug and Alcohol Helpline
Svetoslav Kirilov, team leader
Elena Nikolova, executive director

Sofia, 2015