Communities that Care: Strategy for community prevention in Croatia

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BEGINNING OF CTC IN CROATIA

- Government Committee for Prevention of Children and Youth Behavioral Disorders (head: prof. dr.sc. Josipa Basic)
- University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences
- During 2001: several meetings with experts from institutions and NGO’s involved in prevention of behavioral disorders on regional levels – the Region of Istria was chosen as a real life laboratory for CTC research
BEGINNING OF CTC IN CROATIA

- Implementation of CTC strategy started in Croatia from the year 2002 with the scientific projects in the Region of Istria
- Communities that Care as a model of prevention of behavioural disorders (2002-2006)
- Communities that Care: development, implementation and evaluation of prevention (2007-2011)
- Supported by Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and Region of Istria’s Department of Health and Social Welfare
WIDER CTC IMPLEMENTATION

- During 2010 and 2011 all learned lessons from Istria have been transferred to other two communities

- City of Split and city of Cakovec

- Joint project of UNDP and Croatian Ministry of Interior aiming at the development of Councils for prevention
ORIGINAL CTC MODEL

1. GET STARTED
2. GET ORGANIZED
3. DEVELOP A PROFILE
4. CREATE A PLAN
5. IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE
CROATIAN CTC MODEL

Community readiness and mobilization (1)
Need assessment (2)
Programs Implementation (5)
Priorities (4)
Resources assessment (3)
Evaluation (6)
COMPARISON OF TWO MODELS

GET STARTED (1)

GET ORGANIZED (2)

CREATE A PLAN (4)

DEVELOP A PROFILE (3)

IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE (5)

Evaluation

Program Implementation

Priorities

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization

Evaluation

Evaluation

Program Implementation

Priorities

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization

Need assessment

Community readiness and mobilization
COMPARISON OF TWO MODELS

• **Original CTC model**
  - Powerful role of stakeholders boards
  - 2 days of training in original CTC model
  - Validated CTC youth survey
  - Lots of evidence-based programs available
  - Evaluation of the model

• **Croatian CTC model**
  - Forming of the boards in the beginning was nominal but it didn’t have enough strength
  - A lot more training needed
  - Level of knowledge regarding prevention was low
  - Measures for research were adopted from USA, not validated
  - Croatia at that moment didn’t have evidence-based preventive programs = PATHS was adopted and lots of work invested in existing local interventions
  - Conducted evaluation: as it was possible
EVALUATION OF CROATIAN CTC MODEL IN ISTRIA

3 levels of model evaluation:

1. Research and action level

- 12 surveys and several focus groups were conducted during the whole project - questionnaires for risk and protective factors assessment (children, youth, adults) and questionnaires assessing the conditions for prevention and the level of community readiness

- 5 community priorities for investment:
  - parent programs,
  - socio-emotional competencies,
  - programs and initiatives for alcohol abuse prevention
  - collaboration of kindergardens, schools, parents
  - community and development of counselling service in community
EVALUATION OF CROATIAN CTC MODEL IN ISTRIA

3 levels of model evaluation:

2. Phases of the community prevention model
   - Support from key people and leaders from communities
   - Teams formed for each priority area
   - Community coalition comprised from different stakeholders organized
   - Education and training for the experts from the community
   - Inventory of existing interventions and resources
   - Need assessment (risk and protective factors assessment, level of community readiness and prevention capacities)
   - Research conducted
   - New interventions implemented and researched
   - Intense collaboration with international researchers from prevention field
EVALUATION OF CROATIAN CTC MODEL IN ISTRIA

3 levels of model evaluation:

3. Programs implemented in community
   • Community parent training programs
   • School preventive intervention: PATHS curriculum (4 years of implementation in 2 experimental schools)
   • Research of the alcohol abuse of children and youth in the Region of Istria
   • Flowchart of collaboration between community members and institutions
   • Described counselling services in the community
RESEARCH OF CTC MODEL

- **Community members** perceive CTC model as significant contributor in the development of prevention strategy and mobilization of community as well as prevention of risk behaviours.
- **Stakeholders and key leaders in CTC communities** reported a higher stage of adoption of science-based prevention and were more willing to provide greater funding for prevention.
- After 9 years of CTC model implementation, both perceive **better care for children and youth development**.
LEARNED LESSONS OF CTC MODEL

- Assessment of readiness for prevention has to be first step – before any intervention is implemented
- Key stakeholders have to be recognized and included before and their support has to be continuous
- Better coordination of institutions and their collaboration is needed
- Public media campaigns have to follow the whole model to include all community members
- Need for further research – experimental CTC communities + control communities
**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

**CTC Youth survey implementation**
- Fundamental research of Croatian children and youth’s risk and protective factors
- Continuation with adaptation of Croatian CTC Youth survey
- Development of Croatian criteria for risk and protective factors
- Comparison of CTC Youth survey results within EU CTC Network

**Community readiness assessment**
- Assessment of the level of community readiness in several cities
- Enhancement of the community readiness level

**Development and adoption of evidence-based programs**
- Development of programs for the prevention of internalized problems
- PATHS curriculum
- Strengthening American Families
Thank you for your attention!

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