Mapping Prevention Science Workforce Education and Training Needs In Europe

Work Package objective:
The objective of this work package was to develop a robust understanding of the workforce skills needs of current employers of prevention workers across Europe (including scientists, researchers, practitioners etc.). This research surveyed the needs of a range of Prevention Science policy specialists, research organisations and organisations delivering prevention support programmes, to identify any particular areas of course delivery that need to be developed in order to address the current needs of employers.

Preliminary results:
There were 156 respondents from 26 countries, with the top five responses from Croatia (12.8 %), Italy (10.9 %), Spain (7.7 %), Finland (7.1 %), Poland (7.1 %) etc.

Section 3. G5. How important should the following knowledge/skills be for prevention workers in your organisation, in the future?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of knowledge/skills</th>
<th>N=114</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of knowledge/skills for prevention workers in respondent organisation</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Approximately 68% of the total sample (N=176) responded to this question.
• Knowledge and skills relating to theoretical background and research findings were reported as the most important knowledge/skills for prevention workers (almost 77% participants find it VERY important).
• 60% of participants perceived very important knowledge/skills regarding program implementation quality, funding and ethics in prevention.
• More than 50% of participants find management skills, soft skills, program analysis and needs/resources assessment and development of prevention program logic model very important.
• Knowledge/skills relating to advocacy of prevention ranked the lowest, although 47.9 % of participants still reported it as very important.
• In conclusion, between 50-75% of participants find all mentioned fields of prevention very important.

Importance of knowledge/skills (N=114)

Key findings:
• Importance of knowledge/skills for prevention workers: About 80% and more respondents think all mentioned fields of prevention knowledge/skills are moderately and very important for prevention workers in their organisations.
• Preparedness for prevention in participants’ organisations: There is a need to invest in education/training, mostly in the field of advocacy for prevention, funding and management skills, then in knowledge/skills related to prevention development, problem analysis and needs/resources assessment, program implementation quality and program evaluation.
• Most of the respondents (57.0 %) report that their institutions have links with higher education institutions, such as universities, academies and colleges.
• Respondents perceive that there is a need to improve knowledge/skills of prevention workers in all areas of prevention science (the “biggest” gap between gained and needed knowledge/skills of prevention is in the area of Funding, Advocacy for prevention and Development of prevention program logic model).
• Value given to prevention science and prevention work in respondent organisations is perceived as high or very high in 66.1 %, to prevention workforce education and training in 57.4 % and to stability of prevention work and funding in 62.0 %.

Respondents perceived that there is a need to improve knowledge/skills of prevention workers in all areas (differences between “important knowledge/skills in the future” and “prevention workers currently prepared”).

The “biggest” gap is in the area of Funding (Knowing opportunities for funding at national, local, EU level), development of project proposal for funding/grants and program evaluation.

Interpretations:

The Science for Prevention Academic Network (SPAN) has been awarded a large grant to support the establishment of a network of prevention scientists and educators across Europe. The project will (1) develop and share best practice in the prevention science education training and workforce and (2) support the development of innovative ICT based content for prevention science education training and workforce.

SPAN will achieve this by bringing together experts from 32 European institutions across 25 countries to map the prevention science sector, improve education and training, build networks and run workshops with researchers, with a particular focus upon young researchers. In addition the project will develop a quality plan designed to improve the integration of prevention science in higher education across Europe and will provide recommendations on how best to align prevention science with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Project work is organised in nine work packages. Presented results are part of work done within Work Package 4 – European Prevention Workforce Needs Analysis.