

FINAL REPORT OM PILOT PROJECT ON
TOBACCO. ALCOHOL & DRUG EDUCATION
FOR PERIOD ENDING 31/12/92

Name of Author:	Fiona Devlin, Project Officer
Name of Organisation:	Health Promotion Unit
Year(s) of Project:	Second Year
Title of Project/Action:	Pilot Project on Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Education for Parents

SUMMARY

The Health Promotion Unit and the Southern Health Board through its Cork Social and Health Education Project agreed to develop a project for parents to help them to help their children to avoid the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. The project received a financial contribution of 32,500 ECU to support the pilot phase. The programme which was developed relies on the parent as the primary educator and seeks to make explicit the connection between prevention of drug abuse and family communication.

In autumn 1992 pilot courses were carried out with 10 groups of parents in Cork city and County.

The aims of these courses were to help parents to:

- **Strengthen Family Communication and self-esteem.**
- **Develop greater responsibility for their families health.**
- **Raise awareness about drugs in general.**
- **Give information about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.**

The courses were carried out by people who already had undertaken group work training. The Pilot Project Officer gave additional training to these group leaders (Tutors). A 50 hour course during the Autumn of 1992. This included the provision of specially designed materials, support and ongoing supervision.

A qualitative evaluation was carried out with seven groups of parents and their tutors to establish how close to its objectives the pilot course was. Results indicate that the pilot is on target, and that parents are making the connection between parenting and prevention.

BACKGROUND

The pilot project reviewed here has been established for over one year now. Over the last few years various aspects of health education emphasised the importance of parent's role in the prevention of drug abuse in general. This is accepted in many studies and projects including the European Code Against Cancer, the Arbour House Addiction Treatment Centre, Cork and the Cork Social and Health Education Project (C.S.H.E.P.). The picture emerging is that the parent is a key person, that he or she has a difficult task of raising healthy children in today's world, and specific programmes available to help them in this task have been in short supply.

OBJECTIVES

The pilot project was designed with the objective of reaching parents, to help them in their task of raising responsible healthy children and to highlight for them their potential as 'health educators' with their own children, particularly in relation to tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

The pilot programme comprised two major components:

- A training course for selected, previously experienced group leaders to enable them to facilitate parents in the drug abuse prevention programme.
- The development and implementation of a drug abuse prevention programme with targeted groups of parents

It was designed to be carried out in four phases. Phases one and two are reported here.

Phase 1 A review of current national and international drug prevention programmes, 'parenting' programmes, liaison with relevant agencies and the testing of prepilot courses.

Phase 2 The implementation and evaluation of the draft course. This involved the selection and training of a core group of tutors from the Cork Social and Health Education Project, the production of a pilot set of materials and the implementation and evaluation of a number of courses with parents.

METHODOLOGY

The course entitled Strengthening Family Communication in Order to Prevent Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Abuse included information, clarifying attitudes and skills. Parents were given opportunities to explore their attitudes towards and learn about drug use and abuse. They also had opportunities to learn and practice skills to help improve their communication with their family.

Each session of this 10 session programme was designed to incorporate elements of:

- Information giving related to drug education.
- Practice of communication skills.
- Exploration of attitudes towards parenting and drug related issues.

The content covered the following areas:

- How Prevention and Family Communication are connected.
- Drugs in the home, over the counter and illegal drugs.
- Children's needs, parenting and communication skills.
- Self-Esteem, building relationships and conflict management.

The approach taken was one of active participation with didactic inputs where appropriate. Parents were given opportunities to share experiences with one another, to actively practice listening and other communication skills and to gain information through the use of handouts and charts.

EVALUATION

A qualitative evaluation which included written and verbal feedback was carried out with seven groups of parents. The groups varied greatly in terms of general socio-economic background. The size of the groups varied from 11 -16, and 77% of participants were women. Sixty percent of the children of the participants were 12 years or younger. Parents' perceptions of their key learning emphasised listening skills. Other learnings included communication, assertiveness and parenting skills. There were also reports of an increase in confidence and self-worth, handling conflict and information on drugs. See Enclosure 1 (Executive Summary of Evaluation Study).

FUTURE ACTION

Phases 3 and 4 of the pilot involve the design of a training course for further groups of parent educators, implementation and further evaluation of the programme. The final phase will involve the production of a handbook for tutors and the formulation of recommendations regarding the training required of tutors and the dissemination of the learnings to other regions in Ireland.

The goals of the remaining phases three and four of the pilot project are:-

- To simplify and prepare the course materials for publication as a tutors handbook.
- To examine ways of recruiting more parents for courses.
- To further develop the training approaches for tutors and to establish a panel of parent educators.
- To make recommendations regarding dissemination of the learnings.

Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Education for Parents
Breakdown of Final Expenditure for Phase I

Title of the Proposal:	Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Education for Parents.
Organisation:	Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health, Hawkins House, Dublin 2.
Person Responsible:	Owen Metcalfe, Chief Education Officer
Bank Account:	Department of Health Account, Central Bank, Dame Street, Dublin 2.
Start Date of Study:	January 1st 1992.
End Date of Study:	December 31st, 1992

EXPENDITURE

	£	ECU
Chapter I Expenditure		
(a) Printing and Purchase of Materials	4,000	5,200
(b) Training Course Expenses	500	650
(c) Evaluation	5,000	6,500
(d) Administration Expenses	2,000	2,600
Chapter II Expenditure		
(e) Project Officer Salary and Expenses	22,000	28,600
(f) Core Group Fees and Expenses	8,000	10,400
(g) Secretarial Assistance	3,000	3,900
(h) Expert Consultancy - Meetings and Expenses	4,000	5,200
Chapter III Expenditure		
(i) Running Costs of Project Office	1,500	1,950
	<u>50,000</u>	<u>65,000</u>