

Presentation of the NGO – Z GLAVO NA ZABAVO (“You can choose, win or lose”) Foundation

First of all, I would like to introduce myself: My name is Saš Kravos, and I am initiator, co-founder and president of the Z GLAVO NA ZABAVO Foundation Programme Council. The non profit organization name of Z GLAVO NA ZABAVO, which could be directly translated into “You Have to Use Your Head When You Go to the Party”, was later translated in English for promotional means into “You Can Choose, Win or Lose”. This successful non-profit organization was established on my initiative in May, 2000, by numerous well known Slovene experts from different fields of activity. From the very beginning of our primary-preventive work, our most active members have been, for example, Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia, dr. Zdenka Čebašek-Travnik, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Slovenia on Health, Social Care and Humanitarian Issues, mag. Franc Hočevar, Head of the Slovene Road Safety Council, mag. Bojan Žlender and many others.

I have to emphasise here, that “in my previous life”, I was professionally involved in tobacco and alcohol industry. From 1989 to 1998 I was directly responsible for planning and executing of various promotional activities for a great number of brands popular worldwide, i.e Marlboro, L&M, Jack Daniel’s or Stock. There is no doubt that these companies have established the most effective tools and are prepared to do everything they can, to optimize their profit. The brutal fact is that they are just trying at all times to find the best ways of how to get always new young smokers and drinkers, as many as possible, and retain them as their consumers for as long as possible.

From my long-year experience I was gaining “at the opposite side” I am well aware of the huge amounts of money that they are investing directly into creating of an unhealthy life-style among the new generations. Most of their promotional activities are related to different fields of fun industry, T.G.M.P.’s (Target Group Meeting Points, such as popular bars, shopping centres, big public events, rock concerts, traditional school events,...), where they also make most of their sales. All of their promotional activities at those P.O.S.’s (Points of Sales) are always closely linked with the mass media. Of course, their approach in mass media is always adapted to the legal standards in a particular country. The range of different means can vary, from direct advertising of their products to utterly indirect one, however regularly promoting an unhealthy life-style finally resulting in sales increase of their products too.

When we started with our primary-preventive activities in the “You Can Choose, Win or Lose” organization, our first goal was to develop and regularly run alternative events in the same T.G.M.P.’s, which were heavily targeted by tobacco, alcohol and other elements of fun industry as well. With various mechanisms, numerous events we organised within the period of the last eight years as well as with a successful media coverage, we managed to establish Z GLAVO NA ZABAVO as a popular brand name, promoting healthy life-style and well-accepted events for the young people, where the visitors don’t need cigarettes, alcohol or forbidden drugs to actually feel good. The events that we prepare for university and high school students are not restrictive, which means that visitors can freely decide on their own whether they are going to drink alcohol or not, however the numerous attractive prizes are reserved only for those who decide to remain sober.

As years passed by, we spread our activities to other locations in order to involve some other important target groups in this project as well. First we developed events for families in big shopping centres all around Slovenia and most recently we launched a regular series of special events for primary school children. In recent years, this target group became one of the most vulnerable ones, therefore the programmes that we have developed for them and have been organising now in cooperation with local communities and school-masters include wide range of activities, promoting healthy life-style. Therefore we, the members of our Programme Council, decided that within our activities we should not concentrate only on how to party without alcohol and on promoting the fact that “you can not drink and drive at the same time”. That is because we became aware we can be successful only through active promotion of all means of healthy life-style through our events, prepared for various target groups and even more important, through regular coverage in all important electronic and printed media.

Our own television studio, where we regularly produce various programmes for the Slovenian National Television is also of great help in terms of achieving of our goals. Our continuous activities are wide spread as well through some most important Slovenian printed and electronic media.

In spite of all stated above, our reach among our audiences is still very limited. It is possible to show the alternative, of course, but we are by far weaker or not strong enough to change the profit-orientated course of the unhealthy life-style promotion, successfully made by tobacco, alcohol and similar harmful industry, primarily targeting the fun industry and consequently the young people.

Therefore we are confident, that we should discuss on how to get into the position to ensure much more regular funds all around Europe, supporting the similarly orientated concrete programmes. It would be also necessary, of course, to regularly share the experiences among various institutions in different countries around the European Union. If such programmes could compete on more equal turns with the alcohol, tobacco and similar industries as in mass media as well as in various T.G.M.P.'s, we strongly believe that there would be a way out of the present situation in the near future. But we have to act right now, otherwise it could be too late...

And let me give you one more suggestion. I strongly believe that any discussion on how to battle against the present situation in the field of alcohol abuse with the alcohol industry is a waste of time. Even more, it could be really harmful, because they will know precisely what we are going to do and so they will have the chance to adopt their marketing strategies to our planned actions. They are so strong, that they will always be one step ahead of us, especially if we agree to play their way. I definitely do not believe in their approach of "harm reduction", they are trying to impose on public time after time. Their only interest has always been and will remain in future to increase sales and profit, which has nothing to do with their contribution to as they say "harm reduction"...

To end this presentation and give you some idea of how difficult it is to ensure the funds required to run such a project as ours smoothly, I would like to explain it to you by means of the following facts:

The estimated yearly value of the "You Can Chose, Win or Lose" project, including the organization and execution of at least 70 events for various target groups, production and broadcast of the "Z GLAVO NA ZABAVO" TV series for the National Television (20 sequels, duration 30 minutes each), planned production for radio, adds for printed media and internet, fees for all the work carried out by the foundation staff and experts, is about 500.000,00 Euros. According to our estimations we are able to cover only 25% of the required amount through the involved state institutions, i.e. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport – The Slovene Road Safety Council, Ministry of Education and Sport – The Office of Youth and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The next 10% are added through the cooperation with local communities and student organizations in Ljubljana and Maribor. Approximately 30% have to be regularly ensured through our sponsors. The rest 35% of the project value has to be ensured through the contracts, signed with the most important Slovene media (Slovenian National Radio and Television, Newspaper House - Delo and Internet browser Najdi.si), supporting our project during all these years as well.

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