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THE SLOVENE CHALLENGES OF THE PROJECT SAVING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG LIVES IN EUROPE (SEYLE)

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Despite the high suicide rate (22,5 for 2009), Slovenia doesn't have systematic mental health prevention programmes implemented in the educational system. Project SEYLE is that kind of programme and aims to improve health through decreased risk-taking and suicidal behaviours, to evaluate outcomes of different preventive intervention programs (education of gatekeepers - QPR approach, awareness workshops, screening, and a minimal intervention) and to recommend effective culturally adjusted models for promoting health of adolescents in different European countries.

Minimum 1.000 students were recruited in each involved country and the evaluation of the interventions consisted of the baseline testing (set of mental health related instruments) and two follow-ups in the period of three and twelve months after the interventions.

The results show that a country like Slovenia is facing specific challenges in the implementation of this kind of project due to a small population, specific attitudes (and myths) toward suicide and mental health, and the priorities of the education system. In our case, the school-response and regional suicide rate were in inversely proportional relationships: schools from the regions with higher suicide rate were more reluctant to participate in our study and reported more fear of addressing the issues like suicide, depression or mental health to students than schools from the areas with the lower suicide rate. Anyhow, the schools participating in SEYLE despite many logistical problems report a positive feedback and see a great value in the initiative to promote healthy lifestyle and positive mental health among youth.