

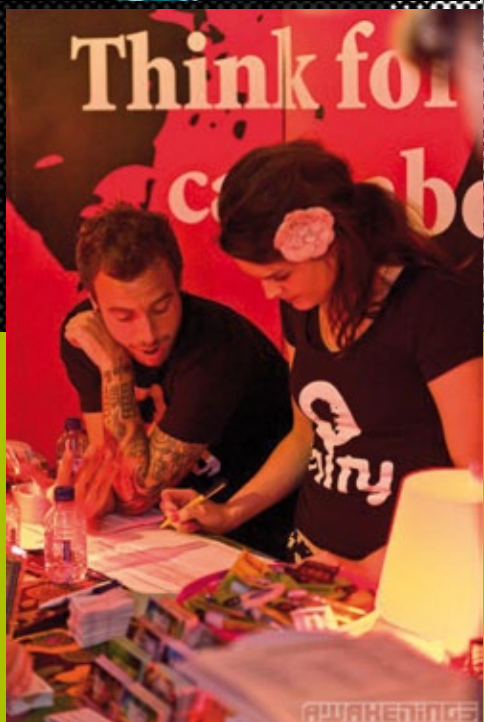
Unity Amsterdam, The Netherlands



"In the mid-1990's, it was evident that substance use among young people attending clubs and dance parties in Amsterdam, and surrounding regions was increasing.

Information collected via the ecstasy 'pill-testing service', located on site, also provided insight into new drug trends in the dance/club scene.

Most drug information for people in the dance-scene occurred via traditional health promotion methods such as posters and information brochures. The prevention department of Jellinek, (the local drugs and alcohol agency in Amsterdam), established informal relations with key informants among the clubbers which over time developed into a partnership involving participation of the target group in 1996.



Unity is a peer education intervention that is aimed at providing information to the dance going public about 'party drugs'. The project has 6 departments in different regional parts of the Netherlands and attends approximately 100 high profile festivals or dance events per year. Unity is supported by Jellinek Prevention, and 6 other institutions for mental health care. These institutions host the project and provide the administrative infrastructure and resources to implement the project.

Unity currently consists of 144 fully trained volunteers who are recruited from the dance scene. The volunteers are trained to spread objective information on various substances, potential risks that their use entails, and methods to reduce the risks to a minimum. The project utilises harm minimisation strategies to provide information to the target group with the aim of reducing drug related harm.

Think for yourself

Peer work on the dance floor

We work at festivals and dance events through a 'shop-front' or information stand. Written information is distributed and myths and risks associated with drug use are discussed. Visitors to the stand are encouraged to fill out an alcohol and drugs knowledge test. When finished, feedback is given by the peer educator who often prompts for a further conversation about drugs. Through its network, Unity is also able to disseminate 'Red Alert' information about high risk or contaminated drugs. In addition to the fieldwork Unity is very active online through her website and social media.

Since it's humble beginning in small clubs in Amsterdam, Unity as expanded and now attends 180 festivals and dance events per year, talking to almost 20.000 party goers. Excellent contacts have been made with festival and club promoters, and Unity is welcome and supported at all major events and many smaller underground parties in the Netherlands."

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yourself care about others