

## **Research on Youth Attitude to Police Prevention Programmes in Iceland and Youth's Access to drugs**

### **EXTRACT**

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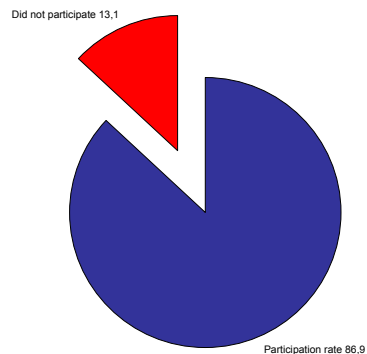
During the autumn of 2004 the Hugheimar Research Company in Social Science undertook work on researching the attitude of young people to police prevention programmes for the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police. The aim of the research was to evaluate the number of youths, age 18-20 years, who have participated in prevention programmes offered by the police and their attitude to the prevention programmes. They were also asked if they had been offered drugs (narcotics) and where. Hereinafter follows a survey of the principal conclusions. This deals with the attitude of young people to police prevention programmes, their attitude to the police in general and their access to drugs.

Research of police precautionary work forms part of a more extensive research entitled *Youths' attitude to prevention programmes in Iceland*. In 2005 the overall results will be published. The research is supported by the Precautionary Fund, the Reykjavik Social Service, the Reykjavik Precautionary Committee, Oliufelagid ehf. (Esso) and IcelandExpress. The aim of the research is that of establishing how high a proportion of young people aged 18-20 have obtained education about the dangers of smoking and the consumption of alcoholic beverages and drug use in Iceland, to investigate their attitude to the education they have obtained and the type of education they consider likely to reap results against substance use by youths.

The research is based on a national telephone survey conducted in October 2004 by IMG Gallup. In order to encourage positive replies a lottery was embarked upon with support from IcelandExpress. One replying party could win a trip to London or Copenhagen for two persons flying with IcelandExpress. A random sample of 1200 individuals born in 1984 to 1986 was selected from the National Census in Iceland. The original selection was reduced by those resident abroad (76) or indisposed (2) leaving 1122. A total of 822 participated in the survey, 153 refusing to reply and 147 could not be contacted. The respond rate is 68.5%, but net responde rate, i.e. after deducting those resident abroad or indisposed, constituted 73.3%.

- **A great number of young people have obtained education from the police**

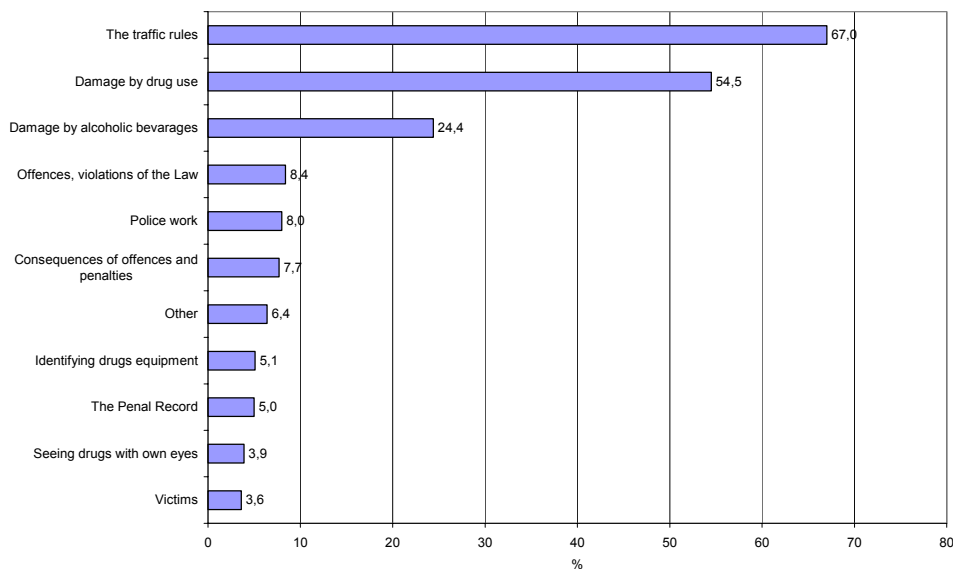
The participants in the survey were asked if they had received any education from the police. Some 87% of young people aged 18-20 years throughout the country have obtained education from the police, but about 13% have had none. Most of those not educated said that this had not been available, but fewer that they had not attended due to lack of interest, illness or having been on vacation.



**Fig. 1. Participation in Police Prevention Programmes**

- **Most recall education on traffic rules and drugs**

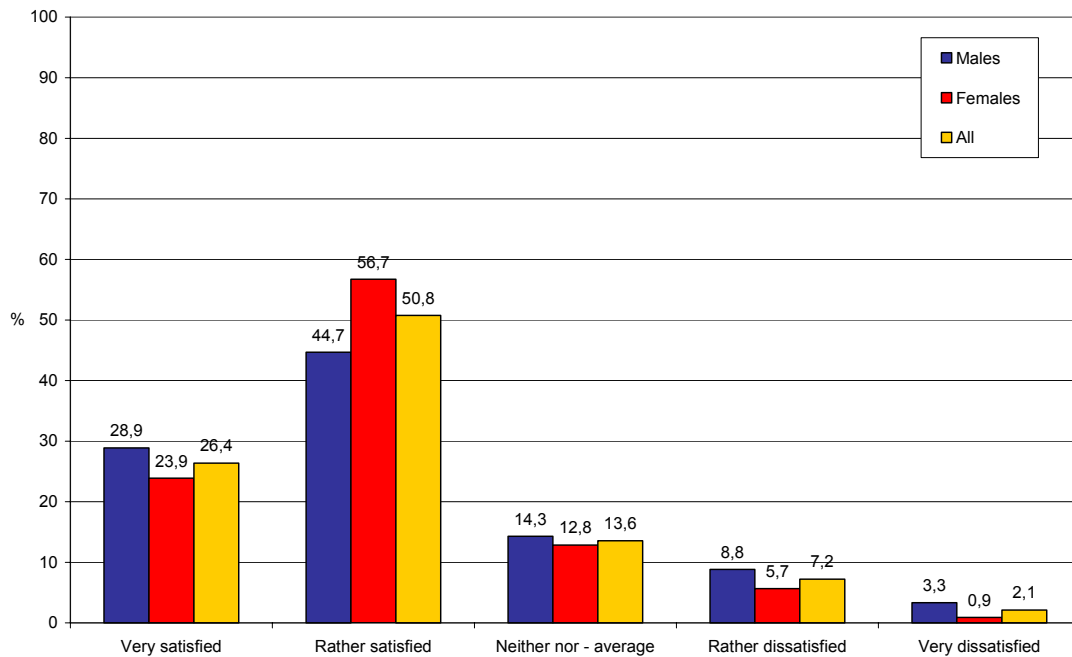
Those participants who had received education from the police were asked what kind of education they had received. Most of the participants remember having had education about the traffic rules, the proportion being highest in South-West Iceland (83%) but lowest on the East coast (57%). Among those having had education from the police over half of them said that this had dealt with the damaging effect of narcotics. In more rare cases they recall information on the penal record, victims or the consequences of violations and penalties.



**Fig. 2. Education which young people recall having obtained from the police**

- General Pleasure over Police Prevention Programmes**

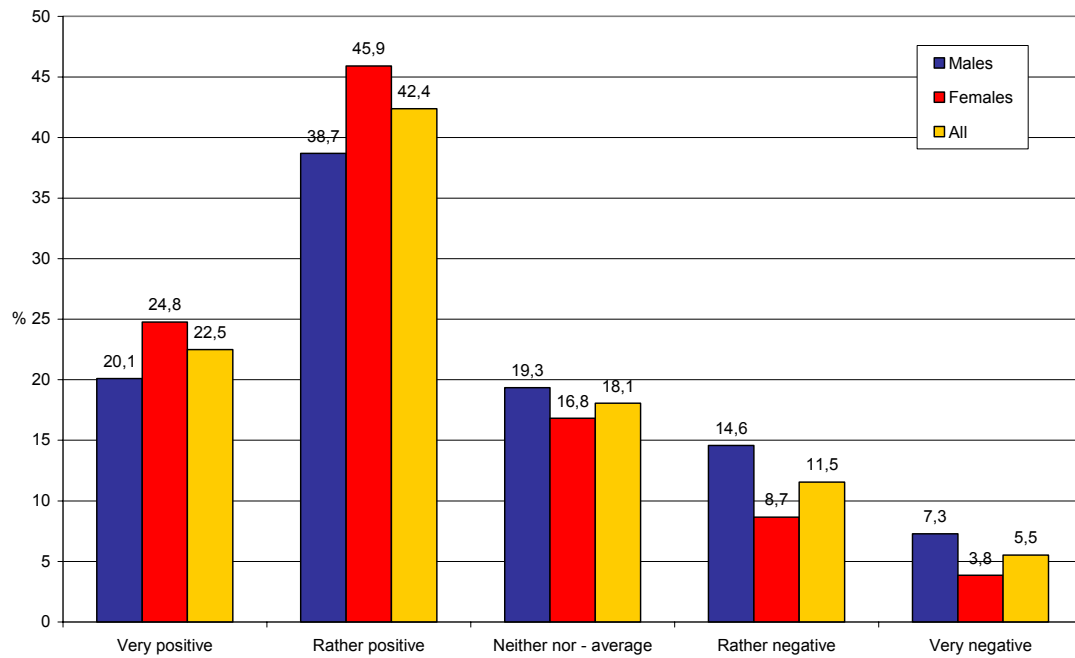
Those participants who had received education from the police were asked if they were satisfied or not satisfied with the education. Most people are pleased with the education they have obtained from the police. About 77% are very or rather satisfied, but about 9% are very or rather dissatisfied. Females are generally considered more pleased with the education than males.



**Fig. 3. Participants' Attitude to Police Prevention Programmes by Gender**

- Attitude to Police is Positive**

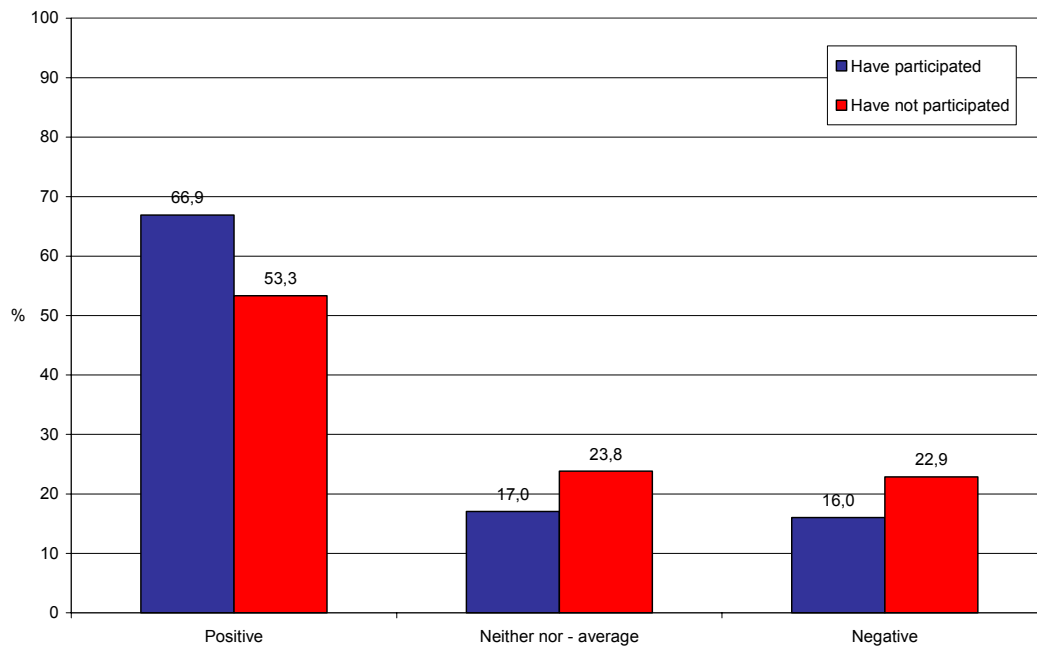
The participants of the survey were asked if they were positive or negative to the police. About 23% of repliers said they were very positive vis-à-vis the police, about 42% rather positive, about 18% were neither positive nor negative, some 12% said they were rather negative and about 6% very negative vis-à-vis the police. Females have a more positive attitude to the police than men.



**Fig. 4. Participants' Attitude to Police by Gender**

- **Participation in Prevention Programmes Offered by the Police Encourages more Positive Attitude to Police**

Conclusions indicate that by telling children forthwith at an early age about the police there is in progress a build-up of a positive attitude to the police in general. Thus it may be seen that those having a positive attitude to education they have obtained from the police are also more positive toward the police. Those having participated in the police prevention programmes are also more positive vis-à-vis the police than those who have not participated in the prevention programmes.



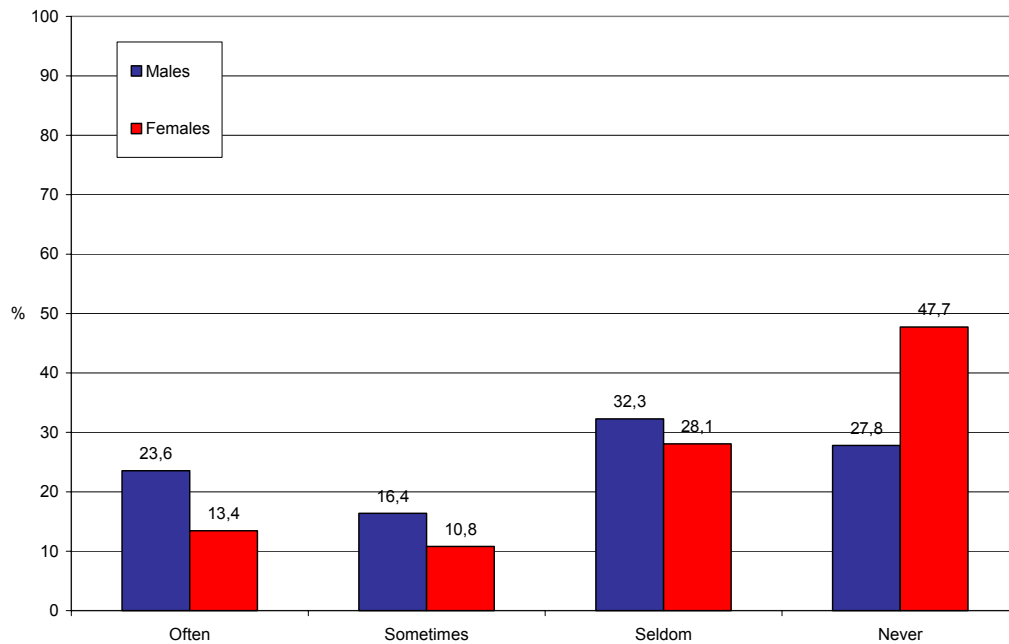
**Fig. 5. Participants' Attitude toward the Police following upon Participation in Prevention Programmes offered by the Police**

- **Drug use and attitude to the police**

About 13% of the participants in the survey have used drugs during the immediate past 12 months. There seems to be a relation between the drug use and participants' attitude to the police. Those having used drugs have a more negative attitude to the police than those not having used drugs during the past 12 months.

- **Majority of young people have been offered drugs**

The participants of the survey were asked if they had often, sometimes, seldom or never been offered drugs. About 62% of young people aged 18-20 years have been offered drugs compared with 38% never having been offered drugs. About 72% of men have been offered drugs, but about 52% of women.



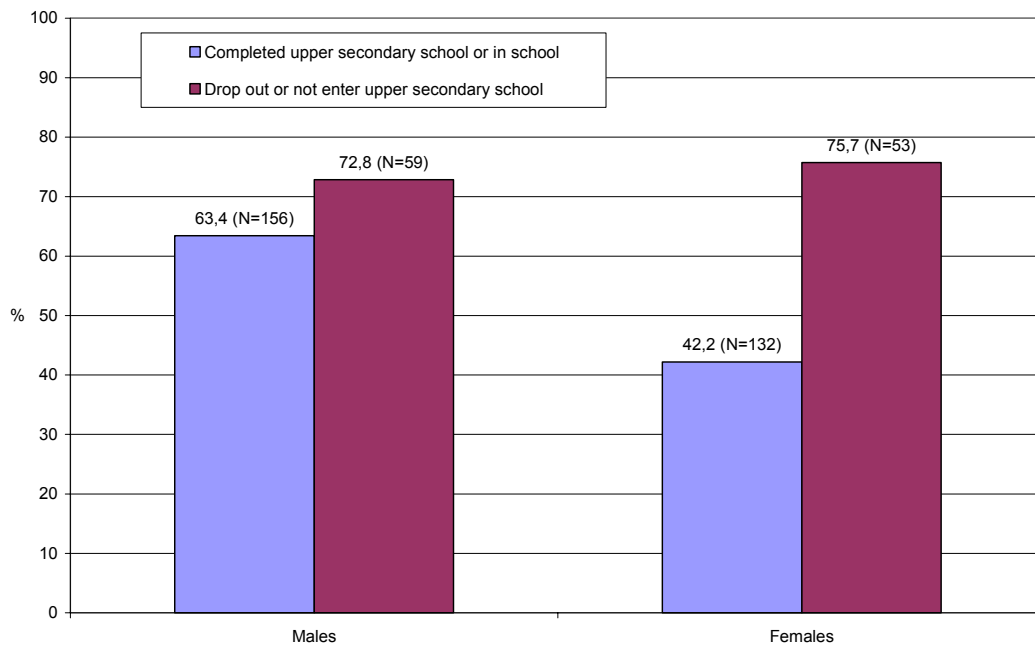
**Fig. 6. Access to drugs by Gender**

- **School attendance can serve as a protective factor**

Participants of the survey were asked about their schooling. About 14% of the participants had completed upper secondary school, about 21% had drop out-of upper secondary school, about 2% had not attended upper secondary school, about 62% were in upper secondary school and about 1% in other schools.

Results from this research indicate that young people attending school are less subject to being offered drugs than young people not attending school. It may, however, be seen more likely that they be offered drugs abroad than young people engaged in work. Thus attendance at school as such seems to serve as a protective factor against involvement in problematic behaviour and to reduce the probability of young people being offered drugs in Iceland.

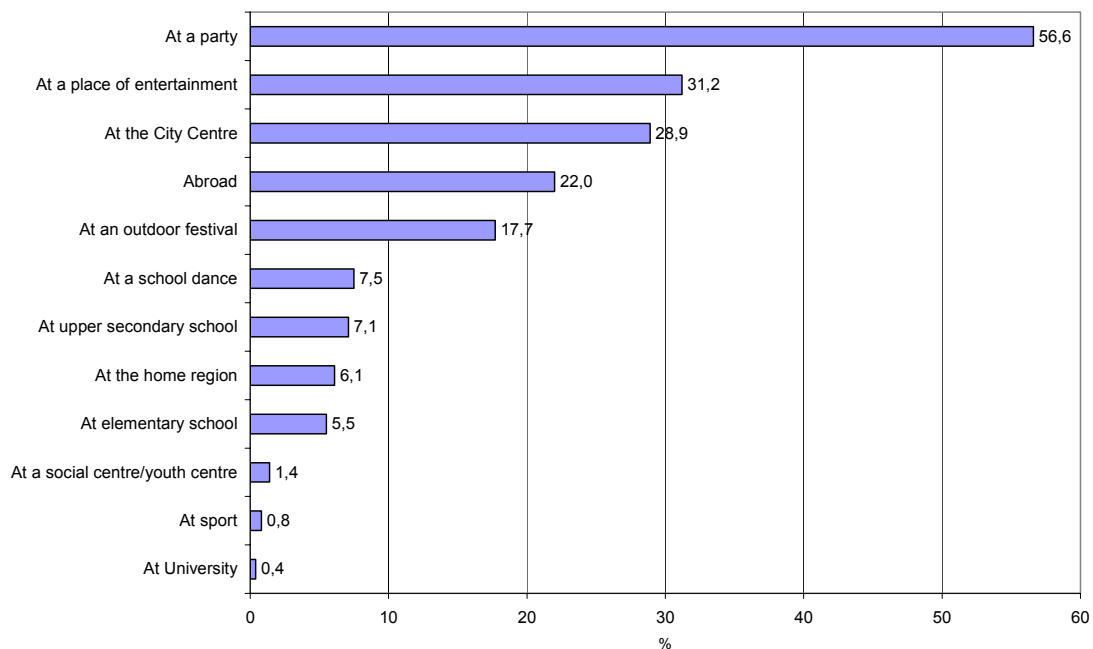
Upon inspecting the participants' access to drugs among those not having used drugs during the immediate past 12 months it is seen that about 63% of men having completed upper secondary school or attending school have been offered drugs, this proportion being 42% among females. About 73% of men having drop-out of upper secondary school or not having attended upper secondary school have been offered drugs, but this proportion is 76% among females.



**Fig. 7. Percentage of non drug users, 18-20 years old, who have been offered drugs by Gender and Schooling**

- **It is most common that drugs be offered at parties, places of entertainment or in the City Centre**

Parties, places of entertainment (Disco, bars) and the City Centre are the locations at which young people are mostly offered drugs. It is more common for men than women to be offered drugs in the City Centre and at outdoor festivals (camping). About 6% of participants have been offered drugs at elementary schools and 7% at upper secondary schools.



**Fig. 8. Locations where young people are offered drugs**

- **Leisure hours are of importance**

About 89% of the youth had participated in some kind of education or training during the past 12 months (in school, had attended hobby-related courses, job-related courses or on-the job training). A proportionately larger number of participants attending some kind of education or training (40%) said they had never been offered drugs as compared with those not attending any education or training (21%). It may also be seen that those who attended some education or training during the immediate past 12 months were less being offered drugs at a place of entertainment (30%) than participants who had not attended some education or training (41%). It gives rise to hope to the effect that by offering young people to get to grips with interesting tasks during their leisure hours this may also reduce the likelihood of their being offered drugs.