



Evaluation Report

Underage Alcohol Awareness Program in Schools

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Introduction/Background

Underage alcohol drinking is a worldwide public health concern. It is particularly a major concern given its consequences on youth health and well-being and their surrounding communities. Underage drinking has been associated with a number of adverse outcomes including physical fights, unintentional injury, risky sexual behavior, and mental health problems (WHO, 2018). In addition, early exposures to alcohol and illicit drugs have shown to increase the risk of adult substance dependence (Odgers et al, 2008).

In Lebanon, alcohol consumption in young people is on the rise. A study conducted by Ghandour, Afifi, et al. (2015) showed that in 2011, one in four middle school students (7th-9th graders) reported having had at least one alcoholic drink in the month prior to the survey, with 87% of them having their first drink before age of 14. Furthermore, the study showed increased reports in drunkenness among both young males and females. Those results were further validated in the Lebanon Health Survey, a school-based student health survey, conducted by WHO in 2017. The results showed that 17.5% of students aged 13-15 years old have had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one day during the 30 days prior to the survey. Moreover, 11.3% of the students (13-15) got drunk once or more during their lifetime (WHO, 2017).

Indeed, young people begin to develop an awareness of alcohol at an early age, which might occur through television, promotions, family, friends, and community. Specifically, peers play an important role in early introduction of alcohol, where a young person's social identity is often influenced by their social group and by the desire to fit in (Whitesell et al, 2013). Furthermore, teaching assertiveness skills, specifically learning to say "no" in the presence of pressure to say "yes", has been widely used to deal with peer pressure, including situations that involve alcohol.

In the aim to tackle this rise in underage drinking among youth in Lebanon, Skoun conducted an alcohol awareness program in seven semi-private schools in Beirut between March-May 2018. The program aimed to increase youth awareness on risks of underage alcohol intake and enhance assertiveness in peer relationships. It targeted middle-school students (6th-8th graders) aged 12-15 years. This document aims to evaluate the implemented program and provide lessons learned and recommendations for future alcohol prevention programs at Skoun.

Intervention Objective and Overview:

The program aimed to promote adolescents well-being through 1) increased awareness on risks of underage alcohol intake and 2) enhanced assertiveness in peer relationships.

The intervention comprised a complementary set of three interactive workshops focusing on risks of underage alcohol intake and assertive response to peer pressure - specifically in situations involving alcohol peer pressure.

The workshops were conducted in seven semi-private schools in Beirut between March-May 2018. School vulnerability was the main eligible criteria, in terms of academic programs, physical infrastructure, and psycho-social status of the students. Students in these schools were of diverse nationalities, religions and lived in urban poverty areas thus generally characterized by a low socio-economic status. Moreover, six of the participating schools were identified from Skoun's established network, where Skoun Prevention Program has previously conducted Life Skills (LS) sessions through partnership with World Vision Lebanon-Beirut. Only one school identified from outside the schools' network agreed to participate in the intervention. Hence, grades 6-8 in all participating schools were given the three workshops.

The workshops' objectives included:

Workshop 1: Aimed to develop understanding of risks of underage drinking. Students learned how alcohol can negatively affect a young person's growth and development and result in mental, emotional, and physical harm. The workshop also looked into reasons why young people drink.

Workshop 2: Introduced the concept of peer pressure and the importance of assertiveness as a response to peer pressure. Students learned about verbal and non-verbal assertiveness skills to resist alcohol.

Workshop 3: Building on the knowledge acquired from workshops 1 and 2, students practiced using assertiveness to stand up to the pressures (inside and outside pressures) they face in certain situations involving alcohol.

Methodology

Measuring the Intervention Effectiveness:

Change in knowledge/perception was assessed for each workshop using a short pre-post tool. An evaluation study was also conducted which relied on a baseline and end of project evaluation (pre-post tool) to look at the effectiveness of the intervention. A pre-test was administered prior to the start of the intervention in March 2018. Then a post-test was administered in September 2018, three months after the completion of the intervention thus providing adequate time to measure its effect.

Survey measures:

A self-administered questionnaire was designed to assess alcohol use among 6th-8th graders, their knowledge of alcohol risks and peer pressure, their perception regarding myths/reasons on why young people might drink alcohol, as well as their perception concerning their assertiveness skills to peer pressure in situations involving alcohol use. Demographics including gender, age, nationality, and grade level were also collected. Prior to use, the questionnaire was piloted in grades 6-9 and edited accordingly.

Data Collection:

Data Collection was carried out by the project officer. Questionnaires were self-administered, unless students asked for explanation of any particular question. Subsequently, all 7 schools filled the baseline survey, while only 4 schools filled the end of project survey.

Analysis:

Excel datasets were imported to SPSS for further cleaning and analysis. Data was analyzed looking at the difference between the baseline and post-intervention. Descriptive statistics were performed for all analyses, globally and stratified by gender, grade, school, and nationality when required. Therefore, tables were produced accordingly and variables were presented using frequencies and percentages. Whenever applicable, a level of significance alpha was used for statistical tests. Since no identifiers or numbered codes were used to mark pre and post questionnaires, comparison of scores at a student level is not statistically sound, yet general change in frequencies and percentages between pre and post intervention was noted at school and grade levels.

Limitations:

The main limitations of the study were:

- (i) A smaller number of respondents completed the post-intervention survey as compared to what was anticipated in the project proposal. This was due to the fact that three out of the seven schools refused to participate in the post test. Thus, the final sample (to test the effectiveness of the intervention) was limited to the four schools. Nonetheless, the effect of each workshop was assessed for the seven schools.
- (ii) Given that the post test was done at the beginning of the next school year, the turnover rate of students resulted in a smaller number of students participating in the post-test compared with the pre-test in the four schools.
- (iii) The absence of identifiers to link each student's pre-test to the corresponding post-test. This was agreed upon with Skoun team given the limited time for data collection during the workshops and the fact that the post test was not conducted in the same

school year. As a result, the analysis could not assess the effect of the intervention at the student level but rather a general comparison between pre and post results.

- (iv) Initially the intervention aimed to include schools that previously took Life Skills (LS) programme as part of Skoun's collaboration with World Vision and some with no previous exposure to LS. The aim was to 1) compare baseline difference in knowledge and assertiveness skills between the schools that previously took LS and those who didn't and 2) compare the effectiveness of the intervention specifically in relation to peer pressure and assertiveness among students with/without LS background. However, this was not possible as all participating schools in the end of project evaluation have previously taken LS programme.

Findings:

Overall Profile of Participants:

Originally, the baseline sample included 301 students from 7 schools. However, 3 schools did not take part in the post evaluation process. Thus, for comparative purposes, the final study sample that was included in the baseline sample was 195 students and 126 students in the end-of project evaluation.

Age and sex distribution in the post evaluation sample were similar to the baseline with a girl to boy ratio of 1.00:1.04 at baseline and 1.00:1.22 at evaluation, and a mean age distribution of 13.19 years (SD=1.35) in the baseline sample and 13.72 years (SD=1.19) at the end of the project evaluation.

In the baseline sample, 71% of the participants (n=134) had Lebanese nationality and 23% were Syrians (n=44). The remaining 6% (n=13) belonged to other nationalities with the main two nationalities being Iraqi and Egyptians. The majority of students (92%, n=177) reported living with both their parents. Sample was equally distributed among 6th, 7th, and 8th graders (33%).

In the post intervention sample, 73% of the participants (n=91) had Lebanese nationality and 22% were Syrians (n=27). The remaining 5% (n=6) belonged to other nationalities. 91% of the students (n=114) reported living with both their parents. Students were distributed among grades 7, 8, and 9 as follows: 35% from grade 7, 31% from grade 8 and 34% were in grade 9. More detailed description of the sample is presented in *Appendix 1*.

Alcohol use among adolescents:

This section looks into the characteristics of never drinkers and those who have tried alcohol before. For the purpose of assessing alcohol use among adolescents, data from the seven schools that participated in the baseline was analyzed.

Students were asked if they have ever tried any type of alcohol before. Those who said “yes” were further asked about alcohol use habits (drinking alone, with friends, and with family) and frequency of alcohol intake in the last 30 days. The results are as follow:

- 25% (n=74) of the surveyed students mentioned that they have had an alcoholic drink before. Current drinking, having at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days, was reported by 16% of the surveyed students (n= 47). Furthermore, more than half of the students (57%) who mentioned that they have tried alcohol before, have had at least one drink in the last 30 days.
- Alcohol intake was significantly higher among boys (30%) than girls (20%). Moreover, among those who tried alcohol before, 57% of the girls (n=16) and 69% of the boys (n=31) reported consuming at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days.
- More than half of the students (57%) who reported taking alcohol (n=41) were below 14 years old which was similar for both boys and girls. Looking into nationality, 26% of Lebanese students and 19% of the Syrian students said that they have drunk alcohol before.
- Among schools, alcohol intake was more prominent in CSM (36%), EEN (36%), SCS (28%) and SS (27%) than in LLS (13%), IKS (9%), and SMS (8%).
- Regarding grade distribution, 20% of grade 6 students (n=25) said that they have tried alcohol before, compared to 24% of students in grade 7 (n=19), and 32% of students in grade 8 (n=27).

Overall, not much substantial differences were observed between 6th, 7th, and 8th graders; compared to 7th and 8th graders, 6th graders reported a greater frequency of drinking (though not statistically significant) in the last 30 days.

Figure 1: Percentage of students who have tried alcohol before by gender and school

Have you ever tried alcohol before by School and Gender

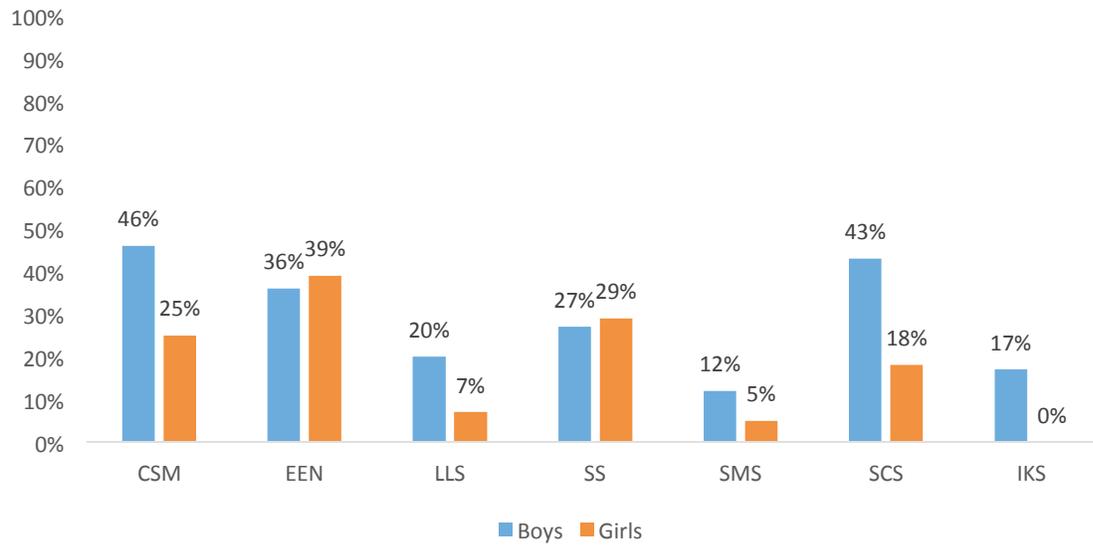


Figure 2: Percentage of students who have tried alcohol before by school and grade

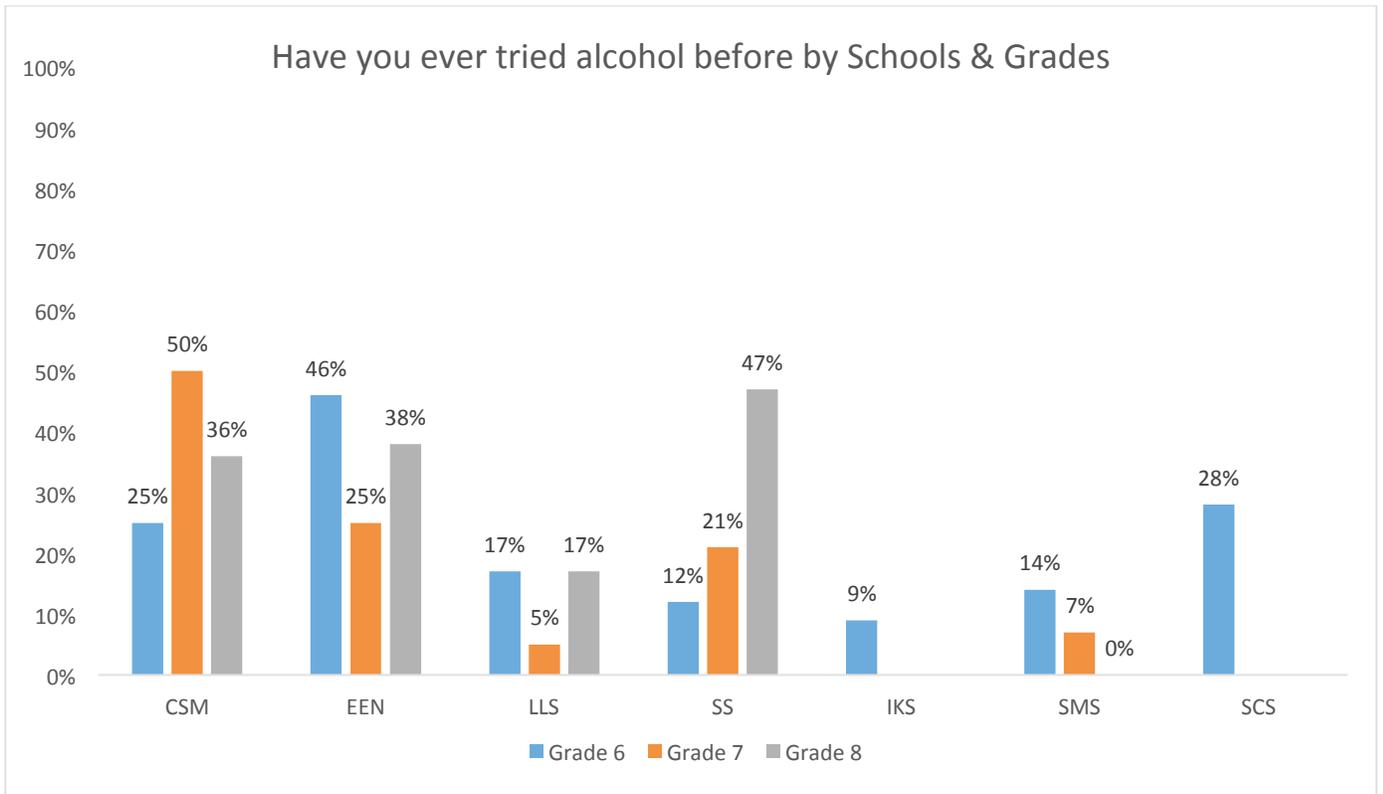


Table 1: Percentage of students who had at least one alcoholic drink at least once in the past 30 days (among students who said they have drunk before)

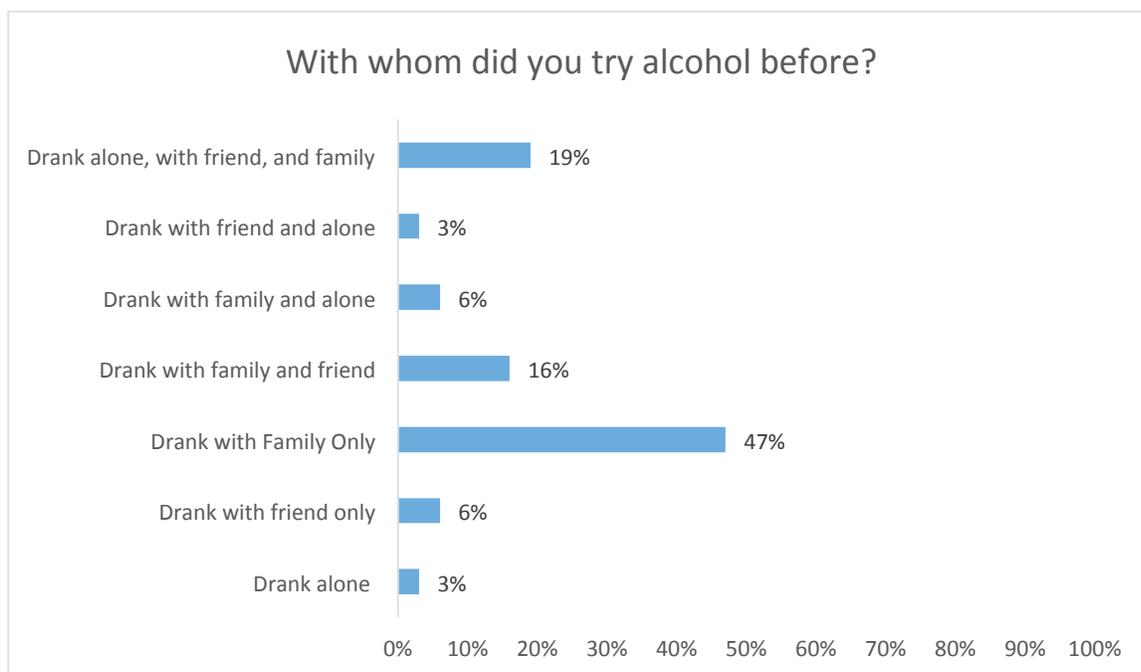
School Name	Valid Frequencies % (N)
CSM	70.3% (n=19)
EEN	57.1% (n=8)
LLS	37.5% (n=3)
SCS	60% (n=3)
SS	71.4% (n=10)
IKS	100% (n=2)
SMS	66% (n=2)

*In LLS, the majority of students who said they have drunk before (63%) did not have any drink in the last 30 days

Drinking habits were further analyzed to look into alcohol companions (family member, friend, alone). The results revealed that the majority (82%) drank alcohol with a family member, less than half of those who reported having had alcohol mentioned sharing alcohol with friends (40%), and more than one fourth, 28% (n=21) said that they drank alone.

More specifically, the results showed that 47% of the students, who mentioned drinking alcohol before, have tried it with a family member only. Another 19% (n= 13) drank alcohol before with family, friends, and alone. Similarly, 16% (n=11) drank with a family member and friends. Only 2 students mentioned that they only drank alone, and another 2 students mentioned drinking either with friends or alone. Results of schools showed that except for LLS, almost all students in the remaining schools who said they have drunk alcohol before have tried it with a family member.

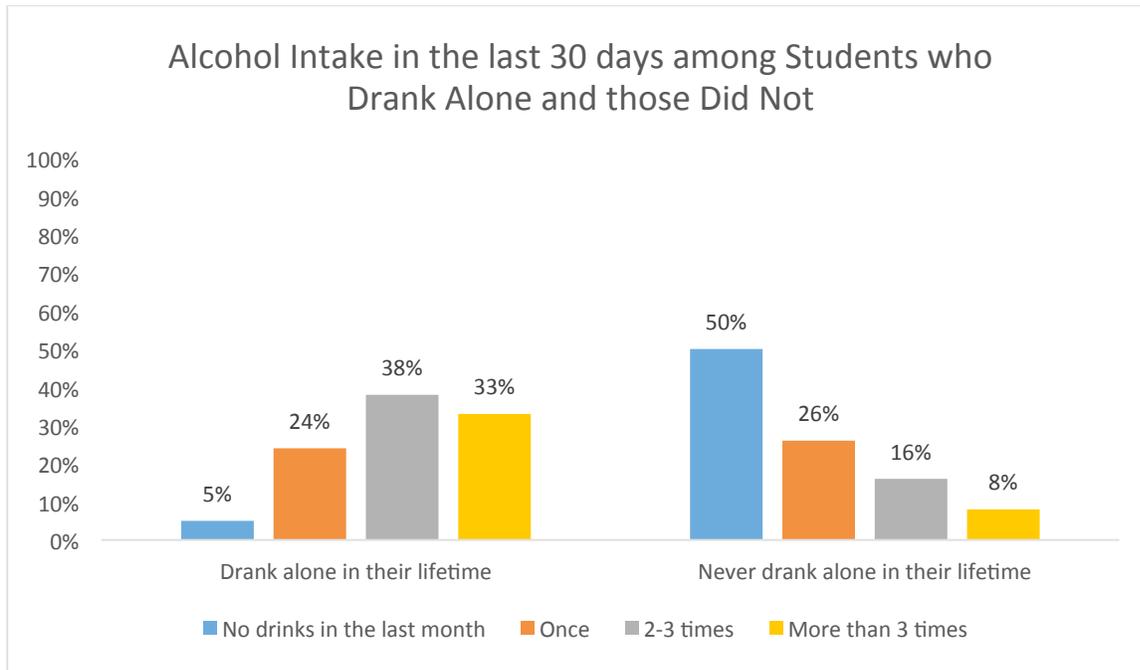
Figure 3: Alcohol companions among students who tried alcohol before



Past 30-day drinking patterns:

When asked about the frequency of alcohol intake in the last month, 36% (n=26) of the students who have had alcohol before said they did not have any drink in the last month, 27% (n=20) mentioned once, 22% (n=16) mentioned 2-3 times and the remaining 15% (n=11) said that they had at least one alcoholic drink more than 3 times in the last 30 days. Those who said they have previously drunk alone were more prone to drinking in the last 30 days. This relation was significant (p-value=0.001).

Figure 4: Frequency of alcohol intake in the last 30 days among students who drank alone and those who did not



Reasons for Not Drinking Alcohol:

Students, who said that they did not try alcohol before, were also asked about the reasons. Results showed that 1) knowing that alcohol is harmful (73%) 2) alcohol is not religiously accepted (63%) and 3) still young (48%) were the three main protective factors against initiating alcohol among 6th- 8th graders. In addition, 27% of the students mentioned they did not like its taste and 20% said they did not drink alcohol in order not to upset their parents. While only 5% of students (n=10) mentioned that they did not drink because their friends didn't either.

Top 3 reasons were further analyzed by school, grade, and gender. Results showed that avoiding alcohol due to its harmful effects was the main reason mentioned by all schools, the highest among SCS students (84%) and least among EEN students (57%). Similarly, students mentioned being young, specifically among SCS (77%) and SS (69%) and least among EEN and CSM (30% and 35% respectively). This relation was significant (p-value=0.004). School was also significantly related to avoiding alcohol for religious reasons (p-value=0.001). Discrepancies were evident among schools where 79% of never drinkers in CSM, 78% in LLS, and 75% in IKS mentioned religious reasons as compared to 35% of never drinkers in SS and 8% in SSC.

Analysis by grade showed similar results, 55% of students in grade 6 and 52% of those in grade 7 were more likely to consider being young a reason not to initiate drinking compared to 30%

among 8th graders. This relation was significant (p-value=0.001). In fact, age was also significantly related to not drinking alcohol “because I’m still young” (p-value=0.018). As age increased, percentage of students who considered “being young” a reason decreased. Thus, being young was a protective factor for those aged 11-13 as compared to those 14 years and above. 61% of never drinkers aged 11 were more likely to consider it a reason compared to 57% of those aged 12, 46% of those aged 13 and 32% of those aged 14 and above. Grade was not significantly related to alcohol being harmful or religiously unacceptable.

The 3 main reasons were also stratified by gender. More girls (78%) than boys (68%) did not drink alcohol because it was harmful. This relation was significant (p-value=0.01). Similarly, 50% of girls did not drink because they were still young compared to 44% of boys. Regarding it being religiously unacceptable, fewer girls (58%) mentioned this factor as compared to boys (70%). This relation was not significant.

Figure5: Top 3 reasons for not drinking alcohol segregated by school

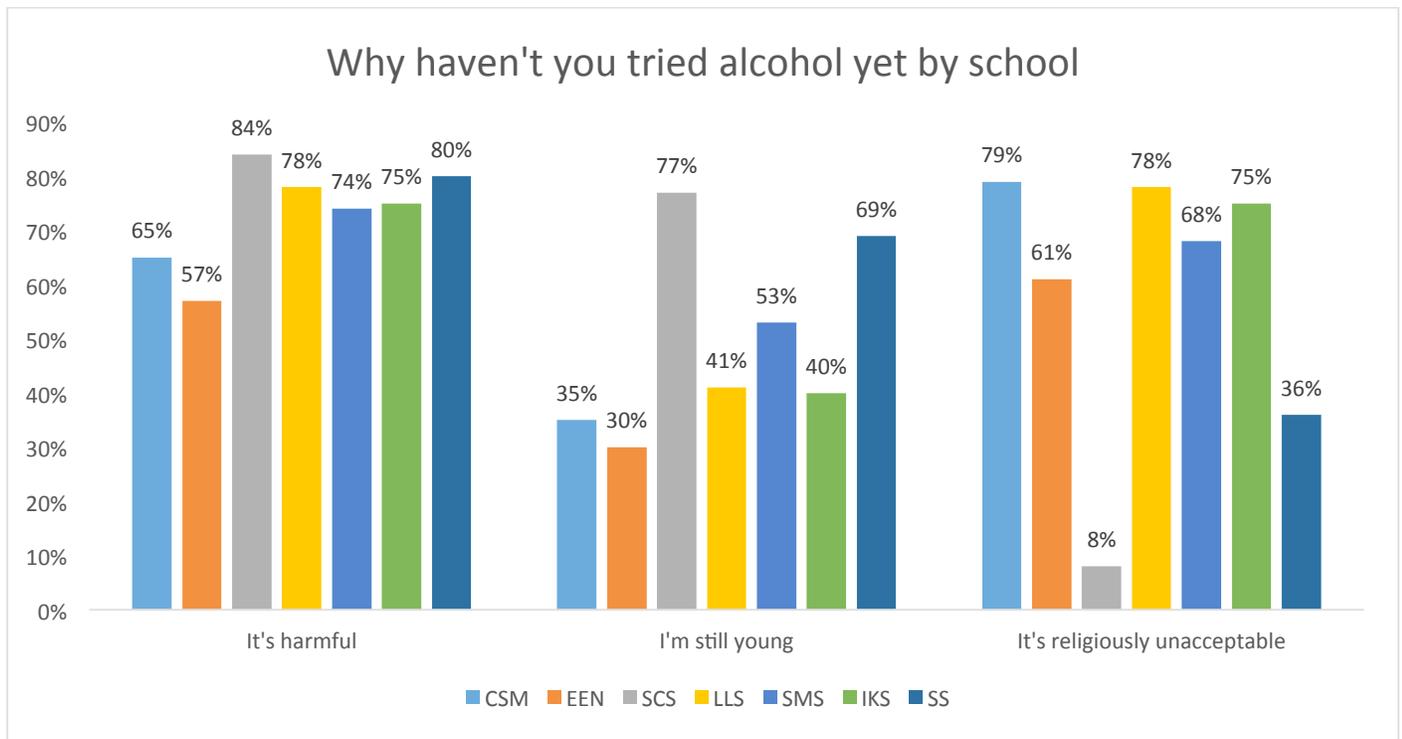


Figure 6: Top 3 reasons for not drinking alcohol by grade

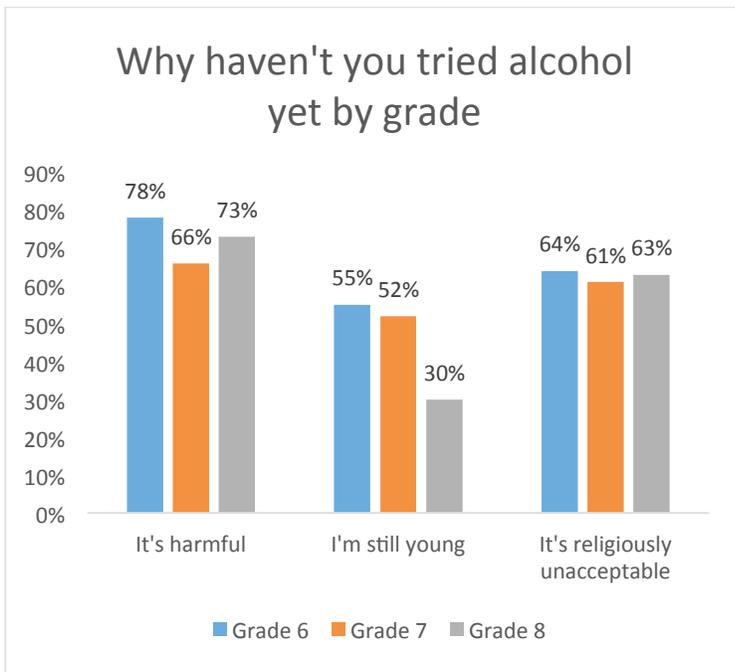
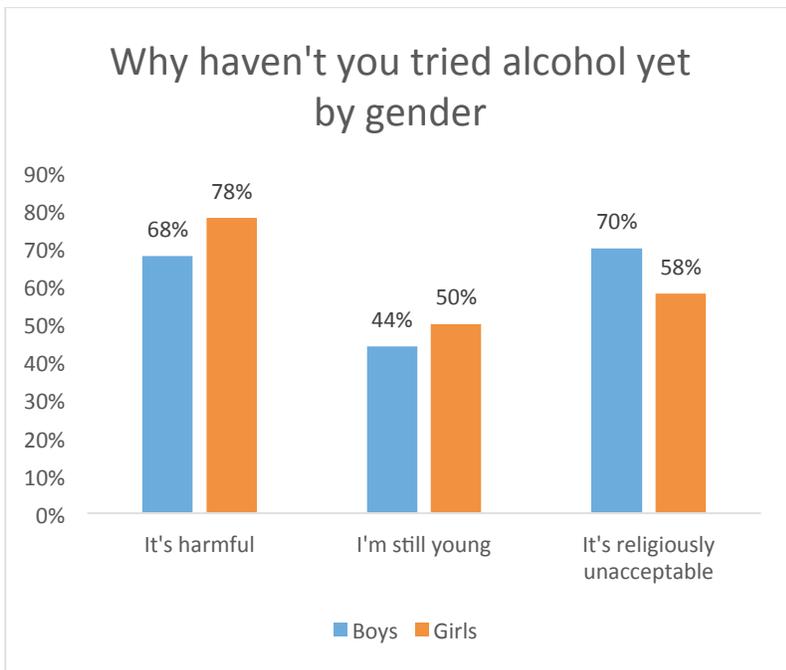


Figure 7: Top 3 reasons for not drinking alcohol by gender



Students' perception of alcohol legal status:

Students were asked about the legal age to initiate alcohol drinking and whether they thought alcohol was a drug. Almost 50% of the surveyed students knew it was illegal to drink under 18 years. The results showed a minor positive change in their knowledge following the intervention.

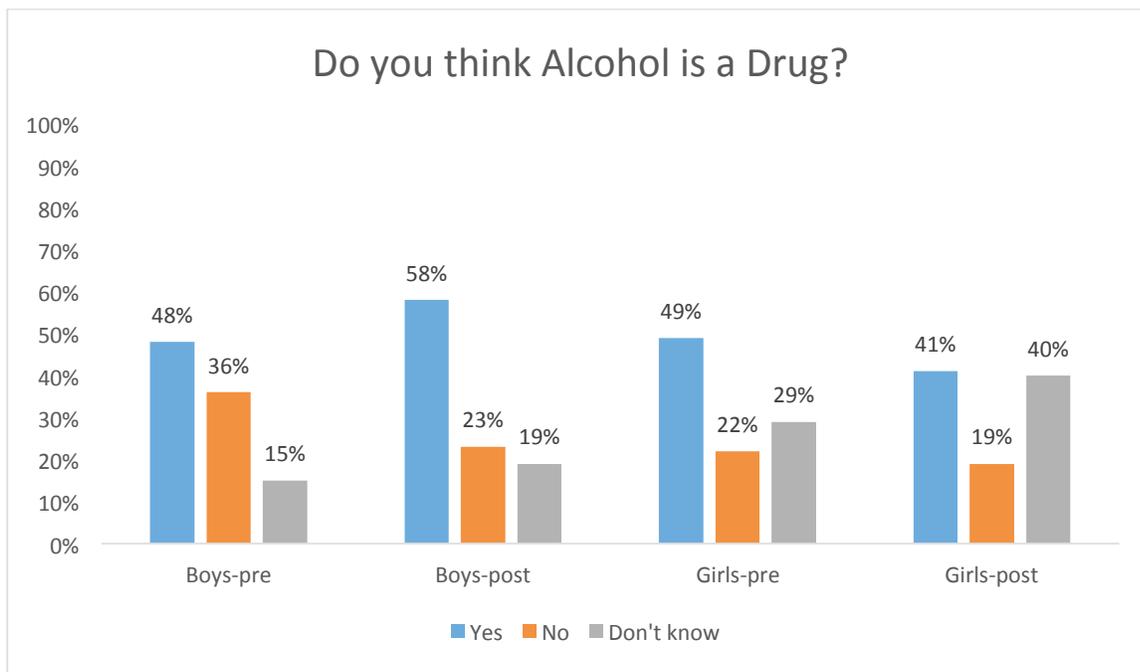
Around half of the surveyed students considered alcohol a drug. A minimal change in knowledge was noticed (baseline: 49%, post-intervention: 51%). In fact, this minimal change was noticed among all surveyed students particularly 8th graders (baseline: 48%, post-intervention: 55%), and among schools except for SMS.

This minimal change could be attributed to factors related to the intervention:

- Absence of identifiers that would help recognize change in knowledge at the student level
- Some students might have forgotten this information
- A lower number of students filled the post intervention survey due to turnover rate

It could also be attributed to factors not related to the intervention mainly that within many communities alcohol is hardly ever considered a drug especially due to its legal status, common usage, and the belief that its consequences are not as severe.

Figure8: Percentage of students who thought alcohol is a drug by gender



Baseline results on whether they thought alcohol intake under 18 years old was legal showed that 59% of surveyed students disagreed, 13% agreed that it was legal, while the remaining 27% did not know. Following the intervention, 61% of the students disagreed, 15% agreed that it was legal, while the remaining 24% of surveyed students did not know.

Results of the post-intervention also revealed that 51% of 8th graders thought alcohol was illegal under 18 compared to 62% of 7th graders and 67% of 6th graders. Among schools, more students considered alcohol illegal under the age of 18 in post-intervention in LLS and SMS compared to baseline, while this was not the case in EEN and CSM.

A minimal change was observed in students' knowledge of the legal age for alcohol intake. As for the previous question, this could be linked to factors related to the intervention and other unrelated factors.

In fact, during workshop 1, the majority did not know that alcohol consumption is illegal below 18 years old. They also did not know that it is considered a drug. Their main argument was how alcohol would be so accessible if it were illegal and a drug.

Teenagers learn about alcohol through their own experiences, and through observing their surroundings including their family, friends, and community. The legal age to consume and purchase alcohol might not be clear to youth, especially that many can easily purchase alcohol from stores and supermarkets. In addition, drinking at home or any other private premises does not specify a legal age. Indeed, 80% of the students who mentioned that alcohol intake was legal under 18 know people of their age who drink, and 50% have already drunk alcohol before with a family member and friend.

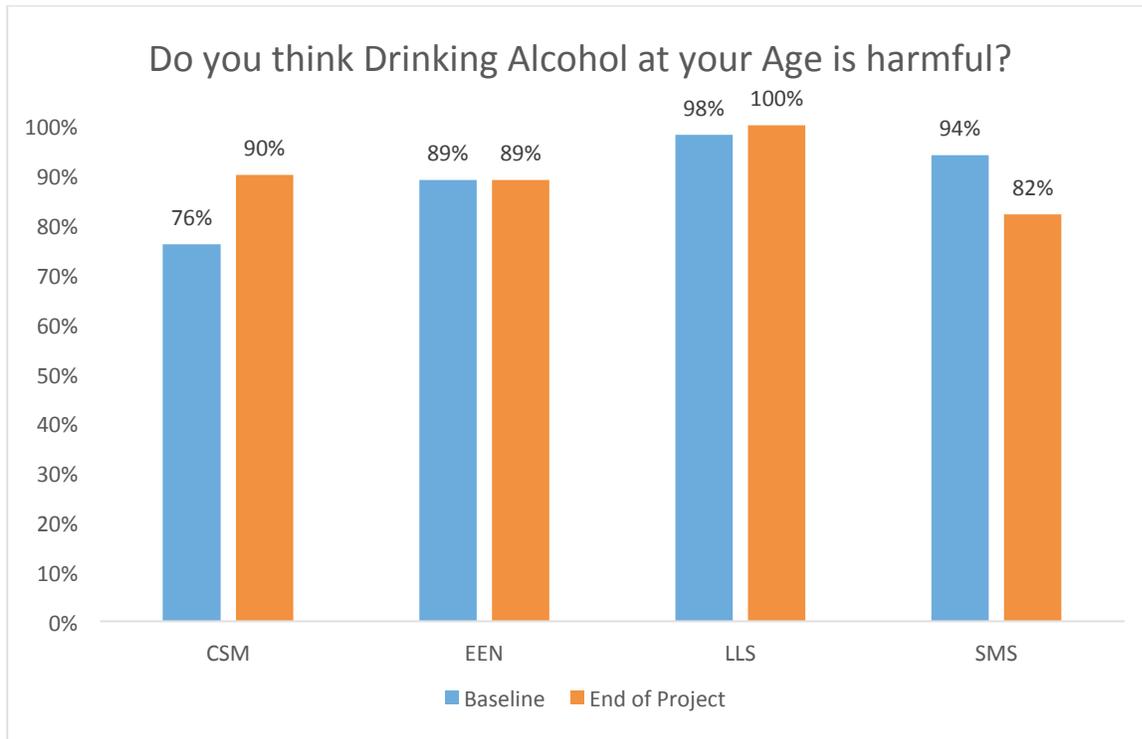
Students' knowledge of underage drinking health risks and adverse effects:

In general, students' knowledge on health risks of underage drinking was good prior to the intervention. Results of the post-intervention showed an increase in knowledge regarding different mental and physical health risks.

Baseline results showed that 87% of youth already knew that alcohol intake at their age was harmful, which aligns well with them choosing it as a main reason for not drinking. Following the intervention, the percentage of students who considered drinking alcohol at their age is harmful increased to 89%. This change was visible among schools and grades except for SMS that showed a slight decrease (baseline: 94%, post-intervention: 82%).

The increase in knowledge was evident among boys (baseline: 82%, post-intervention: 90%) but not among girls (baseline: 92%, post-intervention: 88%). The drop among girls and students in SMS could not be validated in the absence of identifiers which would have allowed comparison of knowledge at the student level.

Figure 9: Percentage of students who agreed that alcohol is harmful by school



Improvement in students' knowledge regarding alcohol health effects was evident among schools and grades for almost all questions. For questions that showed slight decrease or no change in knowledge, there was an increase in the percentage of students who chose "don't know" in the post-intervention as compared to the baseline. In fact, the post-test was conducted three months after the intervention, thus some of the delivered information might have been forgotten. Detailed results are listed under *Appendix 2*.

Students' Perception regarding reasons of underage drinking:

Research has shown that teenagers might drink alcohol for different reasons. While some might drink alcohol to belong to a group and be accepted among friends, others might drink to feel older, or they might want to rebel. To assess students' perception, they were asked to provide their level of agreement on the following phrases:

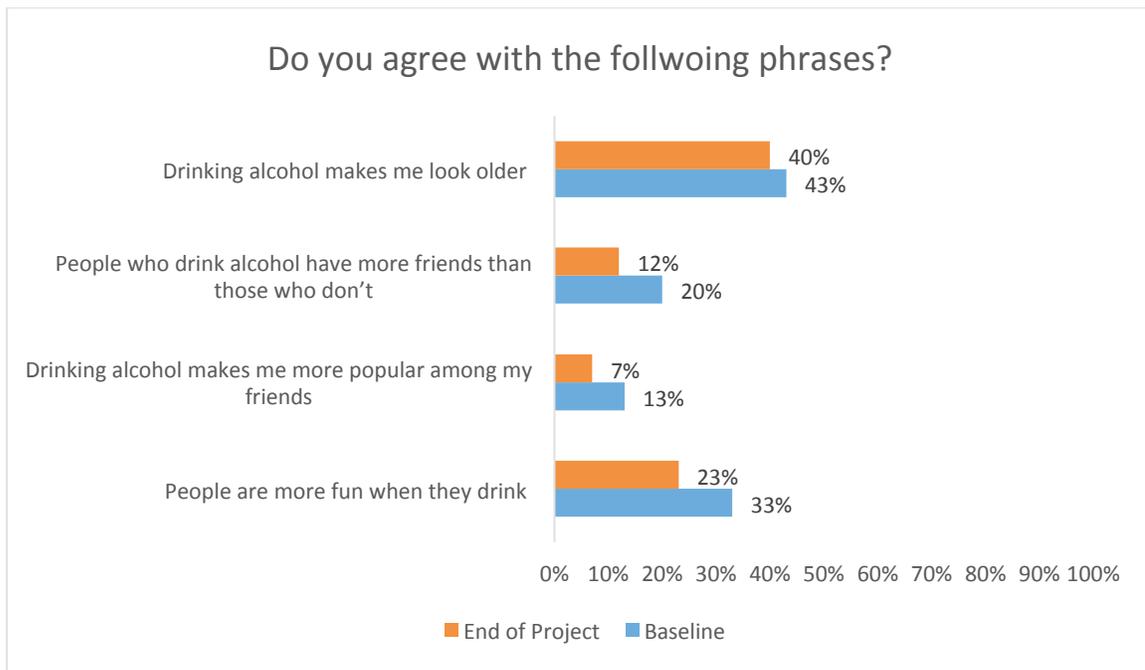
- People are more fun when they drink
- Drinking alcohol makes me more popular among my friends
- People who drink alcohol have more friends than those who don't
- Drinking alcohol makes me look older

In general, the two main reasons for underage drinking highlighted by students - both boys and girls- were to look older or more mature and to appear cool or more entertaining. This was mostly evident in the baseline among 8th graders where almost half of the surveyed students (48%) agreed that people are more fun when they drink, percentage agreement dropped to 24% after the intervention.

Similarly, the baseline results showed that among 6th- 8th graders, many students agreed that alcohol makes them look more mature (grade 6: 36%, grade 7: 53%, grade 8: 40%). Results of the post-intervention, showed decrease in the percentage of agreement (grade 6: 34%, grade 7: 41%, grade 8: 40%).

Looking into schools, almost 50% of students in the four schools agreed that alcohol makes them look more mature, the percentage of agreement slightly decreased in the post-intervention. Students in SMS and EEN were more likely to agree that alcohol makes them more entertaining as compared to LLS and CSM. Yet, all schools showed evident decrease in agreement in the post-intervention.

Figure 10: Percentage of students who agreed with reasons for underage drinking



*Agree in the above figure includes both students who agreed and strongly agreed with those phrases

Peer Pressure:

Overall, students had a good previous knowledge about peer pressure, assertiveness, and how to handle peer pressure. The results below show how knowledge of students has changed after the intervention.

More than three fourth of students (82%) in the baseline survey and 84% in the post-intervention answered “yes” to the following question “If a friend pressures me to do something I’m not convinced of, there are effective ways to say No”. In fact this question was also asked after workshop 2 and similarly 84% of students answered “yes”. Thus, 3 months post the workshop, there was no decrease in the percentage of students who believed that there are effective ways to handle peer pressure.

Table 2: Characteristics of students who answered “yes” to knowledge of effective ways to say No to peer pressure in the pre and post-intervention

If a friend pressures me to do something I’m not convinced of, there are effective ways to say No	Baseline (those who answered yes) % (N)	End of Project (those who answered yes) % (N)
School*		
<i>CSM</i>	90% (64)	91% (39)
<i>LLS</i>	70% (41)	90% (28)
<i>EEN</i>	86% (32)	67% (14)
<i>SMS</i>	86% (32)	81% (25)
Gender		
<i>Boys</i>	85% (88)	89% (58)
<i>Girls</i>	80% (83)	79% (46)
Nationality		
<i>Lebanese</i>	79%(111)	80% (74)
<i>Syrians</i>	96% (42)	96% (27)
Grade		
<i>6</i>	76% (49)	79% (34)
<i>7</i>	82% (53)	77% (30)
<i>8</i>	89% (58)	96% (42)
Age		
<i>12</i>	87% (45)	87% (20)
<i>13</i>	77% (38)	83% (24)
<i>14</i>	88% (40)	89% (32)
<i>15</i>	89% (17)	80% (20)

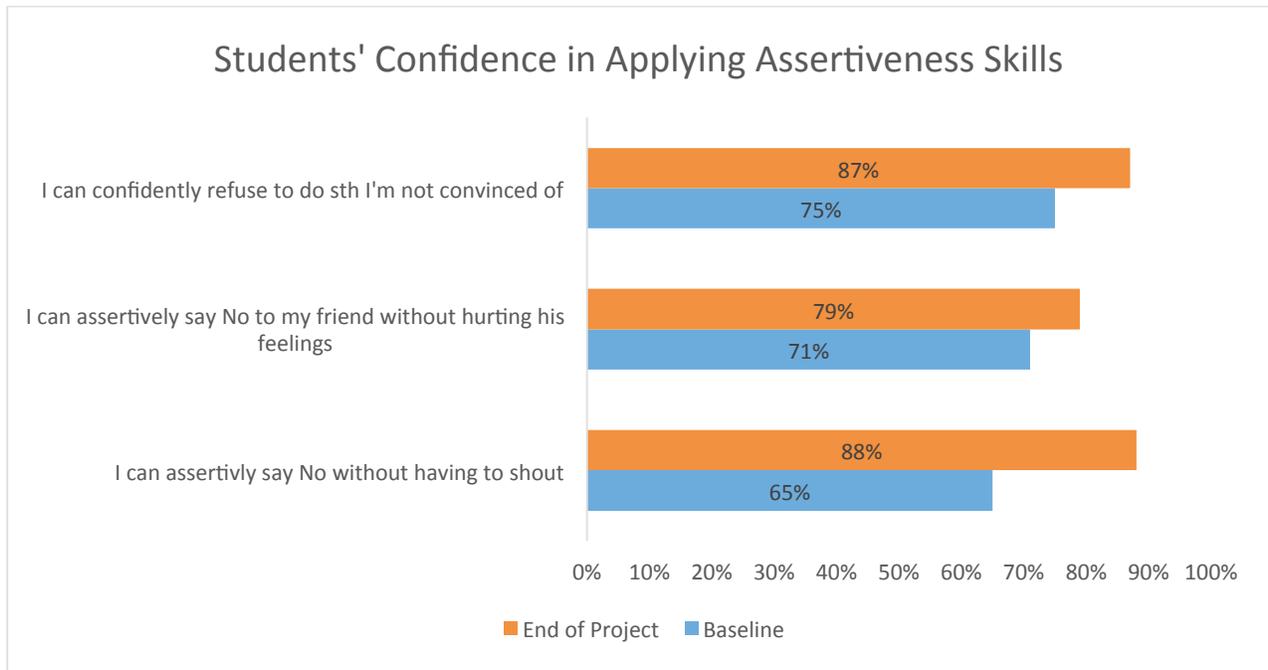
*The relation with school was significant

Looking into baseline results, almost equal percentage of students were likely to agree/strongly agree on “not saying no” to peer pressure in-order not to lose the friendship (16%) , not to look different (18%), and to avoid being made fun of (16%) . These percentages slightly decreased in the post-intervention results for not saying no to peer pressure in-order not to lose the friendship (14%), and not to look different (13%). However percentages did not change for not saying no to peer pressure to avoid being made fun of (16%). This change was more evident among 6th graders than 7th- 8th graders, as well among CSM, EEN, and SMS as compared to LLS.

Perceived positive attitude and confidence to apply assertiveness as a response to peer pressure:

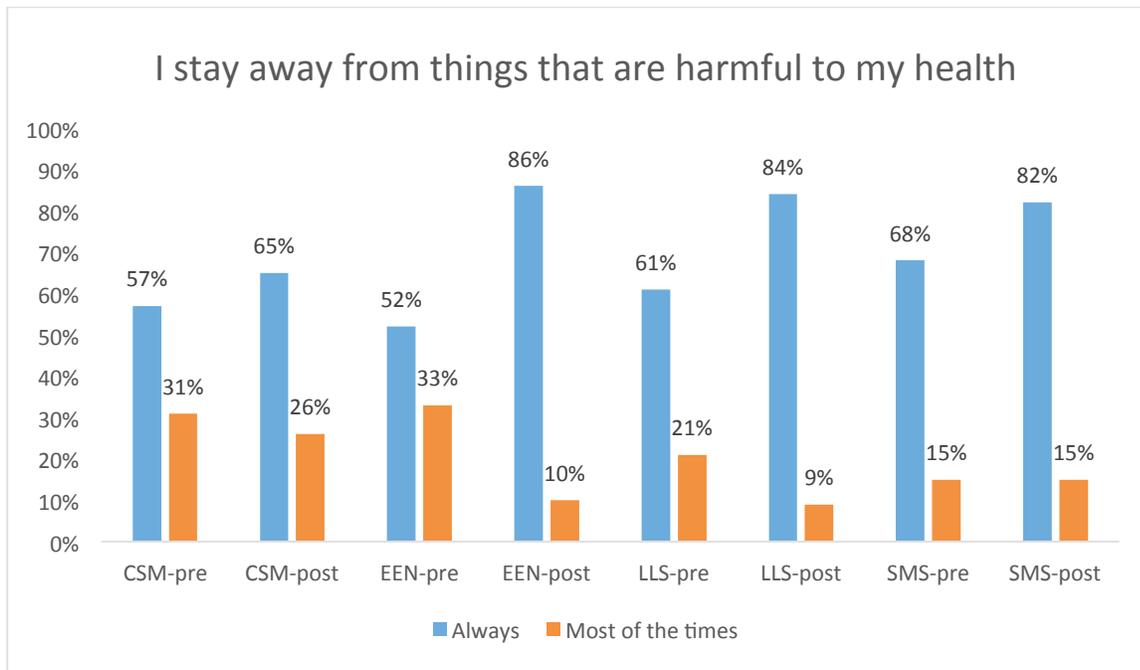
Following the intervention, students showed an increase in their confidence to apply assertiveness when dealing with peer pressure. This improvement was evident among all schools and grades.

Figure 11: Change in students’ confidence to apply assertiveness skills



This improvement was also evident when asked if they can stay away from things that affect their health. It was common among grades, schools, and for both boys and girls.

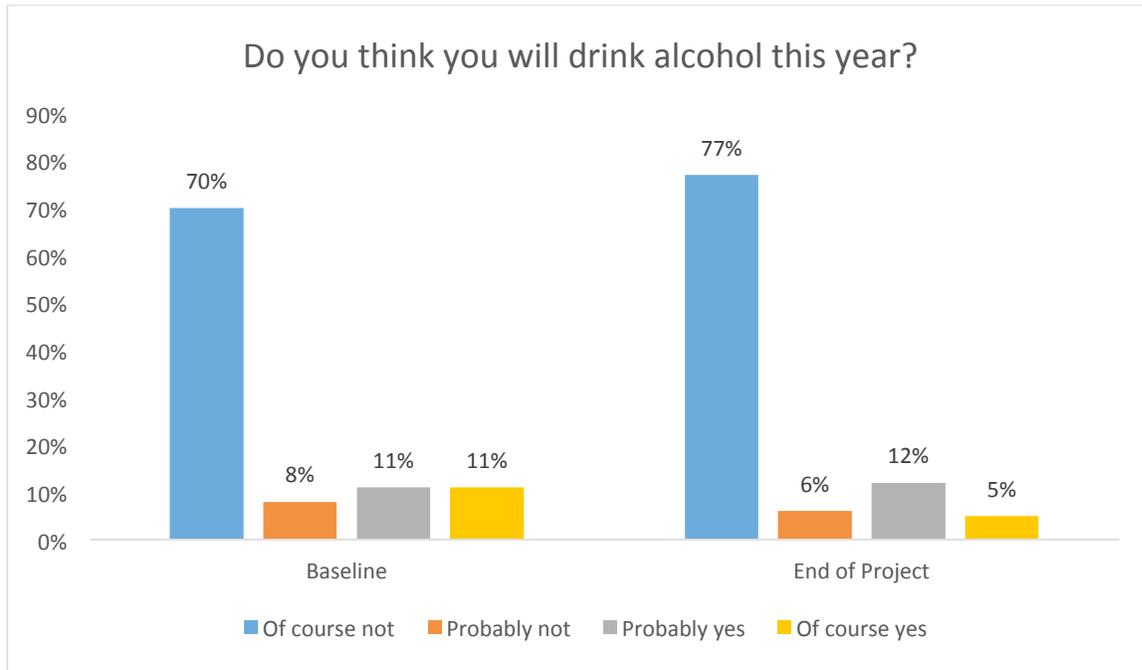
Figure 12: Percentage of students who said they can stay away from harmful things



Additionally, their ability to stay away from alcohol was also assessed. Students were asked whether they might drink to belong to a group of friends and if they might accept a drink offered by a close friend.

Prior to the intervention, 7% (n=14) of the surveyed students chose to drink in order to belong to a group, this dropped to 5% (n=6) after the intervention. The change was among all grades and schools. A higher percentage of students (15%, n=30) said they might accept a drink from a close friend, this dropped to 13% (n=19) following the intervention. This drop occurred in all schools except for SMS 8th graders. It is important to mention that all students who answered yes to those 2 questions said that they have drunk alcohol before. Almost all have drunk with a family member, except for 2 students who have drunk before with friends only. This was further assessed in the post survey where students were asked if a friend pressured them to drink alcohol during the summer vacation, 15% (n=21) said yes. Among those, 71% (n=15) said that as a result, they had a drink. Looking into their characteristics, all 15 students have already tried alcohol before, either with family member or a friend, and the majority (n=11) have had at least one alcohol drink in the last month. Interestingly, the remaining 29% (n=6) who said they did not drink when pressured by a friend, have not tried alcohol before.

Figure 13: Percentage of students who said they will drink alcohol this year



Conclusions and Recommendations:

The findings are comparable to previous research studies on prevalence of alcohol intake among youth, where 25% of the sample reported having tried alcohol before, with 84% of them below aged 11-14 years old. This early onset of alcohol intake highlights the importance of this early prevention program and the inclusion of 6th graders.

Despite the limitations of the program, the evaluation added a new evidence for the importance of tackling risks of underage alcohol drinking among 6th-8th graders, aged 12-15 years. Such programs that highlight the health hazards of alcohol intake are especially important during early adolescence, as research has shown that during late adolescence (starting 16 years of age) youth are more susceptible to drinking and alcohol use problems (Brown et al, 2008).

Students participating in this intervention had previous knowledge on alcohol health effects and peer pressure. Baseline results showed that 52% of the surveyed students have learned about the effects of alcohol in school, and similarly 46% about dealing with peer pressure. This was common among all schools and grades. End of project results, showed that the intervention improved students' knowledge of alcohol health risks, helped alter their perception regarding internal and external factors related to alcohol initiation, and enhanced their confidence to apply assertiveness skills. In fact, workshop discussions showed that students have benefitted from the intervention. Among those who admitted to having tried alcohol before, a noticeable change in

attitude towards alcohol drinking was observed after the first workshop. Additionally, few students asked for the contact of a treatment facility to help someone they love. There are multiple factors (individual, peer, social, cultural, political, etc...) that influence youth to drink early or regularly.

This program focused on the role of peer pressure in underage drinking and the importance of assertiveness in handling situations related to alcohol. Based on the survey findings, peer pressure influenced youths' decision to consume alcohol, where 15% of the surveyed students said they would accept a drink if a friend offered. Thus peer pressure is important to tackle at this age especially that 57% (n=115) of the surveyed students said they know people of their age who drink. This was also evident in discussions with students during workshop 1. There were few students (especially boys) who stated that young people drank because they had friends who drank or because they wanted to show that "they were men". Looking into observations from workshop 3, students played different scenarios related to alcohol and peer pressure. The scenario resonated the most among students was the one where friends were offering their friend a drink at a party or gathering, although many students said that the thing they are often offered is a cigarette or hookah rather than alcohol.

However, other factors also emerged from the evaluation results and discussions during the workshops. Several students during workshop 1 stated problems (within the family or with others) as the main reason behind drinking. Interestingly, many students said that the reason why young people start drinking is that their parents invite them to drink at a young age on special occasions (such as during Christmas). This finding was also highly evident in the survey results, where among students who tried alcohol before, 83% said they drank with a family member, while 40% said they drank with friends. In fact, boys mentioned drinking alcohol with friends and family, while girls with family only.

Based on the program evaluation findings and the observations gathered during the three workshops, the below recommendations are highlighted:

- Scaling up this program to other schools especially those with no previous exposure to LS. While, this might not likely affect drinking behavior on the long run, yet it would help in delaying age of initiation and enhance student awareness on underage alcohol and its related harms.
- Family was a commonly reported source for alcohol drinking among youth aged 11-15 years. Thus, the role of parents should be stressed and integrated as part of the prevention program whether through their role in making alcohol accessible or via role modeling. This could be either done through a separate program that targets parents or through involvement of parents in the current program. Parent involvement in the school-based program could be through activities on parent-child communication about

the harms associated with early alcohol drinking and parents' role in making alcohol accessible.

- Results of drinking habits showed that 28% of students (n=21) who drank alcohol said they drank alone. Those were Lebanese, majority were boys (n=16), and aged 11-14 (n=16). While this is a small percentage as compared to those who reported drinking with their family and friends, yet, such a behavior is alarming for future alcohol dependence problems. Inclusion of an exercise or discussion on drinking habits within one of the workshops would help to understand and validate those findings and consequently target them.
- Increasing the number of sessions revolving around assertiveness, especially if the program will be replicated in schools that were not exposed to LS program before. Based on workshop 2 observations, the concept of assertiveness was difficult to grasp at the beginning, especially the idea that an assertive person is someone who can keep calm although he/she is being asked to do something that can be infuriating, as drinking alcohol.
- Based on the interaction with students during the workshops, it is recommended to modify some activities to fit different grade levels. Additionally, students had a lot of interesting stories to share when discussing alcohol use and practicing assertiveness. Thus, including activities to document these stories and build upon would be of added value.
- Regarding data collection, it is advised to use identifiers (numbered codes for each student) in order to assess change at student level. While this might be time consuming, yet it will allow accurate comparison between baseline and end of project results. In regards to workshops' pre-post tools, specifically tools for workshops 2 & 3 could be substituted by an open discussion with students at the end of workshop 3. This will help to assess their satisfaction with the sessions, and uncover issues they did not like about it in general. The discussion will also help to evaluate their understanding of the new concepts (mainly assertiveness), their confidence to apply the learnt skills, as well as to look into factors that might hinder their ability to apply the new concepts.

Lessons learned

- Ensure schools' commitment from early on especially for the end of project evaluation.
- If end of project evaluation is to be conducted in the next school year, it is important to account for students' turnover rate and the use of identifiers is essential in this case.

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Appendices:

Appendix1: profile of surveyed students

Socio demographic Variables	Valid Frequencies % Baseline (N=195)	Valid Frequencies % End of Project (N=126)
Gender Boys Girls	51% (n=99) 49% (n=94)	55%(n=67) 45% (n=56)
Age	13.19 years (SD:1.35)	13.72 (SD:1.19)
Nationality Lebanese Syrian Other Nationality	71% (n=134) 23% (n=44) 6% (n=12)	73% (n=91) 22% (n=27) 5% (n=6)
Grade Grade6 Grade7 Grade8	33% (n=65) 33% (n=65) 33% (n=65)	35% (n=44) 31% (n=39) 34% (n=43)
School CSM EEN LLS SMS	37% (n=72) 19% (n=37) 25% (n=49) 19% (n=37)	32% (n=40) 17% (n=21) 25% (n=32) 26% (n=33)

Appendix 2: Comparison of students' knowledge of alcohol health risks prior to and after the intervention

	Baseline	End of Project
	% (N)	% (N)
Drinking alcohol at your age can decrease brain functioning		
<i>No</i>	9% (17)	7% (9)
Yes	70% (135)	75% (92)
<i>Don't know</i>	21% (41)	17% (21)
Drinking alcohol at your age can help improve concentration		
No	88% (169)	88% (109)
<i>Yes</i>	5% (9)	4% (5)
<i>Don't know</i>	7% (14)	8% (11)
Drinking alcohol at your age can make you lose control of your emotions		
<i>No</i>	10% (19)	8% (10)
Yes	73% (136)	76% (93)
<i>Don't know</i>	17% (32)	6% (20)
Drinking alcohol at your age can cause dehydration		
<i>No</i>	10% (19)	9% (11)
Yes	56% (108)	64% (78)
<i>Don't know</i>	34% (66)	27% (33)
Drinking alcohol at your age can cause headache		
<i>No</i>	12% (22)	9% (11)
Yes	76% (146)	71% (88)
<i>Don't know</i>	12% (23)	20% (25)
Drinking alcohol at your age can boost your energy		
No	62% (118)	72% (88)
<i>Yes</i>	16% (31)	10% (12)
<i>Don't know</i>	21% (40)	18% (22)
Alcohol intake affects youth and adults in the same way		
No	45% (87)	45% (55)
<i>Yes</i>	32% (61)	29% (36)
<i>Don't know</i>	22% (42)	26% (32)