Social Impact Initiative

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Abstract

The Social Impact Initiative is the newest EFPSA team and the only team representing one of the main goals of EFPSA—using psychology knowledge to make a positive impact on society. The first project chosen to be the representative of this team and its vision is the ‘Mind the Mind’—to Combat the Stigma of Mental Disorders’ campaign. After thorough research about this topic, it was decided to make an educational workshop for high school students and make a positive impact on society by changing the way they perceive mental disorders and the associated stigma.

The first wave of the campaign started in October 2014 and will finish in June 2015. The campaign was carried out in 19 European countries/regions. In each country there were between one and three Local Coordinators, one trainer, approximately 20 volunteers and between 300 and 1500 participants that were high school students involved. Both the Local Coordinators and the volunteers provided feedback and an analysis of this showed great results. The volunteers’ experience in both training and workshop delivery was very positive, the overall impression of students’ interest and engagement was very high and the workshops were mainly estimated as successful. The most difficult challenges volunteers faced were time management and keeping participants focused throughout the workshop.

The next steps in the campaign are: revision of all the materials according to the feedback analysis, the experts’ check of the workshop, ensuring some sort of professional support for the project and development of the questionnaire measuring the campaign’s impact. The second wave of the campaign will start in September 2015 with a great potential of having an even bigger impact on society. The future plans for Social Impact Initiative are finalising the ‘Mind the Mind’ package and producing a report on all of this work, reestablishing the partnership with IFMSA on the topic of Mental Health and approaching other similar organisations to initiate new partnerships, as well as starting new campaigns on other sensitive and highly relevant topics for society.