

The Irish Cancer Society X-HALE Programme

1.0 Introduction

The Cancer Prevention department has devised this paper to provide an overview of the Irish Cancer Society's youth advocacy, smoking prevention and education programme, X-HALE.

This paper will outline the aims of X-HALE and the context for the initiative within the current strategic goals and policy context. It will outline the partnerships that have been developed, the reach and contribution of X-HALE and how it addresses health inequalities.

1.1 Programme Overview and Aims

Since 2011, 270 youth groups from across the country, the majority from disadvantaged communities, have been collectively awarded approximately €150,000 in grants to support their participation in the X-HALE Short Film Competition. Young people and youth workers are provided with smoking prevention training, resources, film making workshops and project planning sessions across a 6 month period to support them in creating a youth led smoking prevention film that encourages young people to be smoke free or an action project that tackles local issues around smoking. In 2015, The X-HALE model was extended to include training delivery to school teachers through the Professional Development Service for Teachers Substance Misuse module. Please see Appendix 1 for details of the evolution and development of the programme from 2011-2018.

X-HALE is led by the Cancer Prevention team with key support from Advocacy, Communications and Web Services teams.

The aims of X-HALE are:

- To educate young people, youth workers and educators about the personal, social and environmental impact of smoking and increase their capacity to address and share smoking prevention messages.
- To raise awareness among young people, youth workers and educators of the factors that can influence young people's choices around smoking.
- To empower young people and youth organisations to actively promote important messages about smoking to other young people and to take ownership of smoking prevention by developing a wide range of skills and competencies.

1.2 Policy Context and Background

X-HALE was first rolled out in 2011 and is now in its eighth year. It was informed by the 2006 Office of Tobacco Control report which revealed that 78% of smokers surveyed started smoking before the age of 18 and 53% before the age of 15 (1). These findings showed that smoking initiation was largely occurring among teenagers and highlighted the need for a youth smoking prevention programme. X-HALE was developed to meet the objectives of the Society's 2008-2013 Strategy which aimed to contribute to bringing youth smoking rates down to 10%. Currently X-HALE fits within the current 2013-2017 Strategy which set a target to reduce smoking prevalence among young people from 12% to 7% by 2017 (2). Latest research collected in 2014 indicate that Ireland is

on track to achieve this objective, with 8% of 10-17 year now reporting that they currently smoke (3), a 4% drop since 2010.

The Irish Examiner recently wrote: *“The Irish Cancer Society deserves much of the credit for this promising downward trend which, if maintained, could eventually make Ireland a tobacco –free zone as children are increasingly turned off smoking”* (4)

In addition to working towards Irish Cancer Society targets, X-HALE aims to contribute to the Department of Health goal of a tobacco free Ireland with less than 5% of Irish people smoking by 2025 (5). Speaking at the X-HALE Youth Awards 2016, Minister for Health Promotion Marcella Corcoran Kennedy said “This initiative complements the objectives of my Department's Tobacco Free Ireland strategy, which are to denormalise smoking and protect young people from the hazards of smoking.” (6)

The X-HALE approach is also in line with Healthy Ireland, which advocates for partnership working to improve health and wellbeing and interventions that address health inequalities (7). The initiative aims are grounded within the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and Tobacco Free Ireland priorities which recommend a strategic focus on denormalising smoking and protecting young people (8). Within the school setting and Department of Education goals, the X-HALE model and training resource fit within the objectives and learning outcomes of the Health Promoting Schools Framework (9) which advocates a focus on environment, curriculum and learning, policy and planning and partnerships. The initiative is also in line with the recommended Wellbeing Curriculum (under consultation) which encompasses a holistic approach to health and wellbeing through SPHE, PE and CSPE (9).

2.0 Methodology

Since 2011 [X-HALE](#) has worked in partnership with youth organisations, particularly those serving disadvantaged communities, to harness the potential for young people and their supporters to drive the movement towards a tobacco-free generation among their friends, families, organisations, communities and wider networks. X-HALE is the only nationwide youth smoking prevention programme of its kind in Ireland.

[X-HALE Training](#)

- A one day smoking prevention and education training and accompanying resource manual for youth workers. Delivered regionally each year since 2015 (180 Youth workers trained to date) in January/February by the Irish Cancer Society (Sarah Chadwick, CP Officer).
- A trainer the trainer approach is used to build the capacity for youth organisations to address tobacco in their settings and communities by providing youth workers with the skills, framework and supports they need to:
 - Implement a whole organisational health promoting approach to smoke free policy development
 - Support young people to be smoke free through engaging and youth friendly sessions that encourage them to explore the personal, social and environmental impact of tobacco and the factors that influence their decisions.

- Empower young people to become tobacco free advocates by sharing what they have learned with others and by taking action on tobacco issues that affect them and their communities.
- In 2015, The X-HALE model was extended to include [training delivery and resource provision to school teachers](#) through the Professional Development Service for Teachers Substance Misuse module, 102 teachers trained through this pathway.

X-HALE Short Film Competition

- Young people are given the opportunity to share what they learn about smoking by making and promoting a short film with their youth group that encourages their peers to be smoke free.
- Youth groups can apply for a small grant in February of each year (€250-350) to support their participation. Over €140,000 has been awarded since 2011.
- A number of young people and youth workers from each participating group are invited to attend a 1 day regional X-HALE Film Making and Sharing Workshop over the Easter Break provided by the Irish Cancer Society and the Digital Film School.
- Young people have the opportunity to develop new skills, express their creativity, work with their peers and to maximise the impact of the smoke free messages in their film by rolling out an online and community campaign throughout the month of June
- In total, there are now 225 X-HALE entries across the 2011-2017 playlists on the [X-HALE webpage](#) and Irish Cancer Society YouTube channel that are available to use as smoking prevention resources made by young people for young people. They have received over 300,000 views to date with several films going viral and receiving international media coverage.

X-HALE Youth Awards

- The culmination of the programme is the X-HALE youth Awards- a yearly event in Dublin in July that brings together all participating youth groups to:
 - Showcase the films made by young people on the big screen among an audience of their peers, youth workers, tobacco control specialists and health promotion professionals.
 - Recognise and celebrate the contribution that participating young people and their youth organisations have made to a tobacco free generation with an awards ceremony, prizes and media coverage.

2.1 Delivery Model Rationale

X-HALE has been rolled out by the Irish Cancer Society each year since 2011 in partnership with youth and community organisations as part of our ongoing commitment and contribution towards decreasing the number of young people smoking and reducing health inequalities.

The X-HALE structure (as outlined in Appendix 1) was designed to complement and enhance the values of youth work including empowerment, involvement and respect of young people, equality and inclusion, partnership and voluntary participation. It aims to tie in whole organisational approach for promoting health as recommended by the National Youth Council of Ireland's Health Quality Framework (10). This model echoes the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion in advocating that promotion of health in youth organisations can be achieved at four different levels by developing personal skills, creating supportive environments, policy development and partnership working.

Within development of **personal skills**, X-HALE has a strong health education focus that allows thorough exploration of smoking topics. With regards to youth workers, The X-HALE Training session and resource manual offer the opportunity and framework for youth workers to enhance their capacity to address smoking topics with young people. Among young people themselves, the film making, training sessions and development process offer chance to develop a range of skills in film-making, goal setting, presentation skills, media use, research, evaluation, teamwork and advocacy. This approach also aims to encourage reflection, creativity and community engagement. The opportunity for skill development resonates well in services working in disadvantaged communities where building the confidence of young people and improving their self-esteem is a key component within educational and welfare objectives.

The X-HALE approach aims to support youth organisations to **create supportive environments** and **develop health promoting policies** by encouraging implementation of a smoke free policy. With regards to creating partnerships, X-HALE offers an opportunity for youth organisations to work in **partnership** with the Irish Cancer Society to empower young people to take ownership of smoking prevention. The X-HALE model also provides a novel opportunity for young people to work with their youth workers and other stakeholders to plan implement and evaluate the work they do as part of X-HALE. This fosters greater investment in the activities undertaken and reinforces active participation among participating young people which has repeatedly been found to be a crucial component of effective smoking prevention programmes (11).

Within the school setting, the X-HALE Training resource has provided SPHE teachers with a framework to address smoking prevention under the substance misuse strand of the curriculum.

2.1 Funding Model

In 2010, the Society developed the X-HALE model on the basis that we would provide community grants to youth organisations, working in areas of urban or rural socio economic disadvantage, to progress our smoking prevention work. The grant acted as a “carrot” to encourage engagement of a youth sector that cared about the health of young people but did not see smoking as a priority issue. In 2011, we received in kind support from HSE and NYCI in setting out the training framework for this youth based smoking prevention programme. In 2012, X-HALE received in kind support from NYCI once again and a once off financial contribution (under 4K) towards the hosting of the X-HALE Youth Awards.

From 2013-16, the programme was solely funded by the Society through its general fundraising activities, with the exception of a corporate contribution in 2015 of €20,000 from Goldman Sachs.

In 2016, the programme received small scale funding from the Health Service Executive to progress programme development work (under 5K). And in 2017 we received a donation from a supporter of €15K.

Grants to youth organisations have ranged in value from €200 to €1000 and have been awarded to cover the costs of taking part, including equipment and travel. In 2016, 100% of the 41 youth workers that received a grant reported that the grant was important in allowing their group to

participate. Grants are awarded based on application shortlisting which seeks to determine level of commitment to participation and need for youth smoking prevention work.

2.2 Communicating the Message

Over the past six years, X-HALE has received significant support and coverage from the media to communicate the work that is done each year by the Society and participating youth groups to the people of Ireland. From 2011-2015, there have been 319 regional print articles, 14 national print articles, 3 national broadcasts, 76 regional broadcasts and 7 online articles published and broadcasted in the media about X-HALE (see Appendix 2 for full media coverage breakdown). In a review of the value of the programme to the Society conducted by the Communications department in 2016, it was estimated that X-HALE generates almost **€100,000 worth of PR annually** for the Society and the issue of tobacco among young people (12).

The use of film and digital/social media throughout the programme is a unique and innovative component that aims to allow young people to communicate health messages to their peers in a subtle and youth friendly way. Research has found that efforts to engage young people in health messaging are more likely to be successful if they involve digital media platforms (13). Each year, X-HALE films and projects uploaded to YouTube and groups are encouraged to share their work on social media to expand the reach of their smoking prevention messages among their peers. This youth advocacy approach aims to encourage by gives young people a platform to have their say and share important smoking prevention messages with other young people through a familiar and socially acceptable medium.

The 270 X-HALE films and projects created by young people over the last 6 years, have received over **300,000 views** on YouTube to date with several films going viral and receiving international media coverage. In addition, The X-HALE webpage has received **348,257** sessions to date with educational pages for young people about the impact of the tobacco industry and the health effects of smoking seeing the most views (12). In 2014, X-HALE received an award for **“Best Use of Social Media”** at the Irish Healthcare Awards, further highlighting the strength and the innovation of the programme in the digital space.

2.3 Addressing Health Inequalities

As outlined in the Society’s 2013-2017 strategy, Towards a Future without Cancer, people in marginalised communities have a far greater risk of getting cancer and dying young (2). Cancer rates in the lowest occupational classes are double those in the highest occupational class. Lung, stomach, head and neck and cervical cancers are all more common in areas of unemployment and deprivation. It is estimated that smoking accounts for up to half of this difference in life expectancy between the richest and the poorest groups in Ireland. Furthermore, smoking and tobacco related illness, premature death and disability are interlinked with intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage (14).

Although smoking rates among young people are steadily declining overall, social class differences are still evident. Seventeen percent of 15-17 year old girls from lower social class backgrounds report that they currently smoke in comparison to 10% of girls the same age in the highest social class (3). Social disadvantage has also been found to be associated with children trying smoking at a

younger age. The Cancer Prevention department is acutely aware of the need for community based smoking prevention efforts among young people in disadvantaged areas to address these disparities and ensure prevalence rates continue to drop across all levels of society.

This need for action in relation to social inequities is recognised within The *“Tobacco Free Future- All Island report of Tobacco Inequalities in Childhood”* (14). This report states that protecting disadvantaged children from the additional burden of tobacco related harm from smoking is a priority to achieve better child health, to reduce inequalities in population health and to address child poverty and deprivation. The X-HALE initiative aims to address tobacco related health inequalities using the “cancer action community” approach outlined within the Society’s strategy. X-HALE provides a suitable platform to work in a targeted way with organisations such as Youthreach and Community Training Centres in disadvantaged communities. These organisations cater for early school leavers, who are 1.5 and 2.5 times more likely to smoke cigarettes (over the course of their lives and in the past month respectively) than their school attending counterparts (15). As detailed above the X-HALE approach fits with the ethos in these settings, which aim to support young people in overcoming social and personal barriers to life opportunities by promoting holistic wellbeing, skill development, self-efficacy and active citizenship.

2.4 Partnerships and Commonalities with Other agencies

Within the Healthy Ireland framework, the Department of Health highlighted that there is a need for collaborative and inclusive approaches to improve health and wellbeing that involves multiple sectors of society and people themselves (7).

The Irish Cancer Society has developed and built up very strong relationships with the youth sector since the inception of X-HALE. The National Youth Council of Ireland were instrumental in opening the door to youth organisations across Ireland. Over the last six years the initiative has been supported and promoted by a wide range of youth organisations including Foroige, Youthreach, YMCA Ireland, Youth Work Ireland, Education and Training Boards Ireland, Crosscare, Comhairle na nÓg, Tusla, the City of Dublin Youth Services Board and the Irish Girl Guides.

The X-HALE Training resource was developed in partnership with the National Youth Council of Ireland and materials in the resource were designed in consultation with ECO UNESCO, Tipperary Regional Youth Service, Youth Work Ireland Monaghan and Limerick City DEPS. This has ensured that the topics covered represent the needs of youth organisations across the country.

The Cancer Prevention department has developed a longstanding relationship with the HSE Health Promotion and Improvement team and the Tobacco Free Ireland Team. In 2018, X-HALE was recommended by the HSE as an ideal method to address youth smoking prevention to Local Development Companies that received Healthy Ireland Funding. This resulted in two of these organisations, supported by regional Health Promotion teams, commissioning X-HALE to run a total of 4 x-HALE Training sessions for youth workers and film making workshops for groups that went on to participate in the X-HALE Short Film Competition. In one area, representatives from these participating youth organisations went on to join a regional tobacco action group and to organise community action on tobacco events in addition to their X-HALE participation. This fund is being

continued for a second phase and we have already been booked in for training provision in one area in 2019.

In 2015, a partnership with the Professional Development Service for teachers was formed. Throughout that year, 80 SPHE teachers received training in using the X-HALE Training resource in the school setting through the substance misuse module. This training is delivered by the SPHE coordinators around the country each year.

Within the film and entertainment industry, the X-HALE initiative has led to a relationship being developed with the Tailored Films Digital Film School. This organisation places a strong emphasis on encouraging young people to develop skills and to tell stories through film. As such they have been the ideal partner for X-HALE since 2012.

SpunOut.ie, the national youth health information site are strong supporters of X-HALE. They have played an important role in advertising X-HALE opportunities and sharing successes with their many young followers across Ireland.

2.5 Evaluation and Impact

The overall value and effectiveness of X-HALE within the youth setting was investigated by an independent evaluation published in 2014 by Professor Mark Morgan (16). Post participation data collected at the X-HALE Youth Awards 2013 event was compared to responses from the European Schools Project on Alcohol and other Drugs to measure differences in smoking opinions, behaviour and intentions. The review found that young people involved in the programme were more aware of the dangers of smoking and external influences on young people's health choices when compared to a national sample. Young people that took part in X-HALE also perceived significantly lower likelihood of positive outcomes as a result of smoking and a higher likelihood of negative consequences if they started smoking. Please see Appendix 3 for further discussion of findings.

In 2015, a number of constraints were identified around collecting data pre and post programme including getting surveys back from youth workers and matching of responses without collection of personal data from young people. As such, a smaller scale evaluation was conducted at the X-HALE Youth Awards by Irish Cancer Society staff. Analysis of responses revealed that:

- 88% of participants agreed that they know more about the dangers of smoking
- 86% agreed that they were now more likely to encourage other young people not to start or to quit
- Educating young people about the dangers and empowering them to help other young people to stay smoke free are core objectives of the programme, so these findings are encouraging in that respect.
- 81% reported they were less likely to smoke in the future as a result of participation with this intention more prevalent among non-smokers.
- This suggests the goal of prevention is being addressed in establishing a strong intention not to smoke in non-smokers, but it also indicates that participation could affect the future intentions of a smaller proportion of smokers.

Please see appendix 4 for some of the qualitative findings from the 2015 evaluation that provide contextualisation for quantitative findings.

In 2016 and 2017, the Community team collaborated with the Information Development team to carry out impact monitoring of X-HALE. Due to the constraints identified in previous years, it was acknowledged that a pre and post evaluation design could not be implemented effectively with current programme format and resources available. As such, a post participation survey was compiled and administered to all young people attending the X-HALE Youth Awards in July 2016. In addition, The Cancer Prevention Department administered an evaluation survey to all youth workers that attended the event. Results of these surveys are included in the overview document attached separately

In 2017, The Irish Cancer Society created a documentary, [*X-HALE...A Tobacco Free Generation in the making*](#) to communicate the impact of the programme from the perspective of participants and supporters.

2.6 Summary

The X-HALE initiative has proven to be an acceptable and inclusive model for reaching out to young people living in low income communities, who are at risk of poverty, low educational attainment and lack of opportunity. The Irish Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Department has used best practice health promotion principles, PR and digital technologies to target communities with a high prevalence smoking. The development of the programme since its inception and the growing numbers of hard to reach groups applying to take part each year indicates that the X-HALE brand is firmly established within the youth setting. We have worked in partnership with young people and their leaders in a culturally acceptable way to address smoking. X-HALE has provided young people with a platform through the medium of film, community action and social media to make their voices heard on the issues of smoking, tobacco control, peer pressure, health and life opportunities. With increased community level funding for health promotion since 2018, new opportunities and training funding streams are emerging for the programme that look set to continue in 2019.

3.0 The Value of X-HALE for the Irish Cancer Society and External Agencies and Sectors

3.1 The Value of X-HALE to the Cancer Prevention Community

The incidence of cancer is expected to rise from its current rate of 1 in 3 people in Ireland, to 1 in 2 people (17), therefore there is an urgent need to develop and resource comprehensive public prevention and risk reduction strategies. Up to 4 in 10 cancers can be prevented through lifestyle and environment factors, as promoted in the European Code Against Cancer (18). Engaging young people and young adults in behaviour change and lifestyle modification activities will have the greatest impact on reducing their long term personal risk of developing a preventable cancer. Prevention has been identified as the cornerstone of the latest National Cancer Strategy for Ireland and smoking has been highlighted as the lifestyle factor that can have the biggest impact on reducing the cancer burden.

3.2 The Value of X-HALE to the Irish Cancer Society

X-HALE has provided a useful vehicle for the Society at both policy and public level to discuss our strategic goal to bring down adult and youth smoking prevalence rates.

The X-HALE programme has contributed to the repositioning of the Society's brand by engaging a new younger audience, strengthening the brand ideal as an Inspiring, Vital Leader.

The Society has built up extremely useful relationships with the youth sector through X-HALE. The capacity of youth leaders nationally to engage on tobacco and health with their young people has been significantly raised. In turn, youth workers have tapped into their resources and have given us innovation and access to young leaders. This partnership has enhanced our ability to communicate our messages and brand to youth and low income audiences that we have previously not been able to reach. As outlined in 3.1, young people are a key target group for cancer prevention activities and they are an essential audience in the context of the new strategy.

3.3 Value of X-HALE to Tobacco Control Policy initiatives

X-HALE youth advocates have contributed to a number of important national tobacco policy initiatives. Over the last 5 years, X-HALE participants presented on issues concerning youth smoking and tobacco control. They have represented the Society at the HSE Tobacco Partners Conference (World No Tobacco day, 2018), ASH conferences (2011, 2012); they supported the Minister for Health at the launch of the Tobacco Free Ireland Strategy (October, 2013); they spoke at the hearings of the Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children on plain packaging and the issues for young people in accessing tobacco (2014). They have also engaged in numerous regional initiatives with the HSE, the local government authorities, Relay for Life, Dáil na nÓg and the Fresh Film festival. Their presence and testimony have added value to these important policy initiatives. This youth and community engagement has been identified as a unique and valuable element of the programme by tobacco control colleagues that have invited us to share insights and findings at National (Institute of Public Health Conference 2015) and at European level (European Cancer League 2012, 2013 and 2015).

X-HALE's content on smoking prevention and tobacco related health inequalities, created as part of the programme delivery by young people, is very relevant for the Irish context. Our training resource, created by youth organisations and X-HALE films created by young people for young people have been utilized in the school setting and by the HSE in its smoking cessation training. They have been shared in the USA and Australia.

The Irish Cancer Society's work on youth smoking prevention flourished during a recession that delivered harsh funding cuts to the HSE and the wider youth voluntary and community sector.. Without this sustained investment, our current national youth smoking rates may not have been so impressive or as evenly spread across all social groups.

3.4 The Value and relevance of X-HALE to the Youth Sector

The external evaluation (16) highlighted the value and acceptability of X-HALE within the youth sector. The Society has worked with youth and community organisations based in areas of social and economic disadvantage (please see Appendix 4). The programme has focused on the common priorities of health and youth participation, to build a mutually beneficial collaboration between this national health charity and the youth sector.

3.41 Promoting Equality and Inclusion

The Society has continued to support learning and development activities of youth organisations by offering the opportunity to take part in practical, relevant and confidence boosting health education programme. It has also become clear that the X-HALE is seen as an inclusive youth programme, yet it provides a safe platform for youth workers and Youthreach co-ordinators to **explore and address tobacco related health inequalities** with disadvantaged or vulnerable youths, who are either at risk of or who are currently smoking, without fear of judgement or stigma.

The creative element of X-HALE appeals to both girls and boys and we reach out to 60% of girls and 40% of boys, annually. Addressing gender equality is a key policy priority, for all public policies, particularly in relation to health and young people's development and wellbeing (19). Gender mainstreaming in health service planning and delivery is also a key consideration for the way the Society operates its programmes.

3.5 Measuring the Impact

As stated in 2.5, we have attempted to build new evidence of what works in supporting behaviour and attitudinal change at individual and community level. We have used participatory research methods to inform the development of X-HALE. However, this approach is not well regarded or understood in the public health community. It has also proven difficult to measure each of the core elements of the programme, because it is not delivered under research study conditions. We have had to strike the balance between good practice research and what is practicable with the resources available.

An evaluation of the implementation of the X-HALE training resource is planned for final quarter 2018 to evaluate the implementation of the XALE Training resource in partnership with Waterford Insititue of Technology. Details of this are outlined in the evaluation section of the application.

3.6 Future Opportunities for increased Sustainability, Funding and Programme Development

- It is evident that the current policy environment of Healthy Ireland is opening up new opportunities for partnership, funding and sustainability as outlined above.

Consultation and Development

- In 2017, the Cancer Prevention team began a consultation process to explore opportunities for youth participaton development within the programme; and for programme delivery, partnership working and service provision improvement within the broad realm of youth smoking prevention and cessation. The stages of the consultation are as follows:
 - Stakeholder consultation with practitioners, researchers and policy shapers from organisations that have an interest in tackling youth smoking- held January 2017
 - Youth Worker Survey and Consultation- Survey in November 2016 and Forum event in November 2017 with youth organisations to hear views on how we can build on progress made to date and build structures to support the continuous involvement of youth organisations and young people in tobacco advocacy.
 - Youth Advocacy Exploration Day May 2018 (see below 2018 plans)

Erasmus+ Smoke Free Youth Network Project

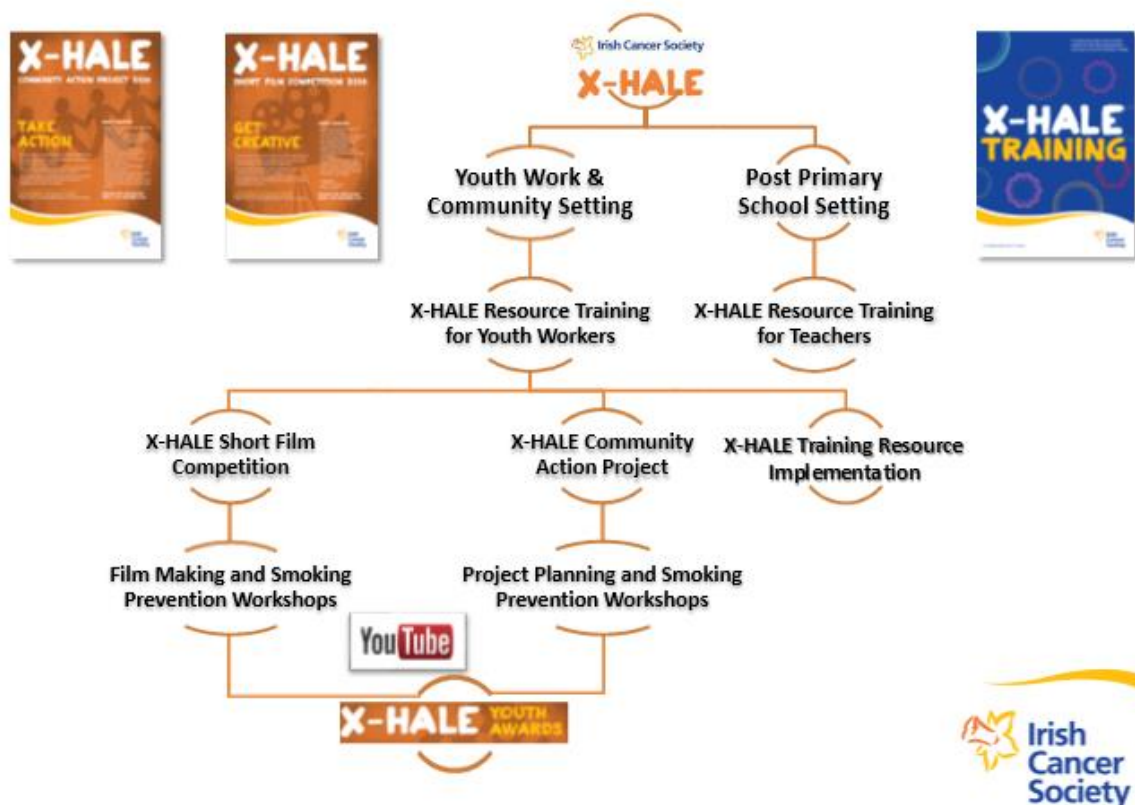
- X-HALE is planning to submit an Erasmus+ application for a youth exchange project in partnership with Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation Cut Films UK (lead organisation) and Smart Youth Sweden (partner).
- This will opportunity would be a progression for young people and organisations that have participated in X-HALE to get involved in action on tobacco at European level.
- In future years, we would hope to be the lead applicant on a project centred around the World Tobacco Conference which will be hosted in Dublin in 2021

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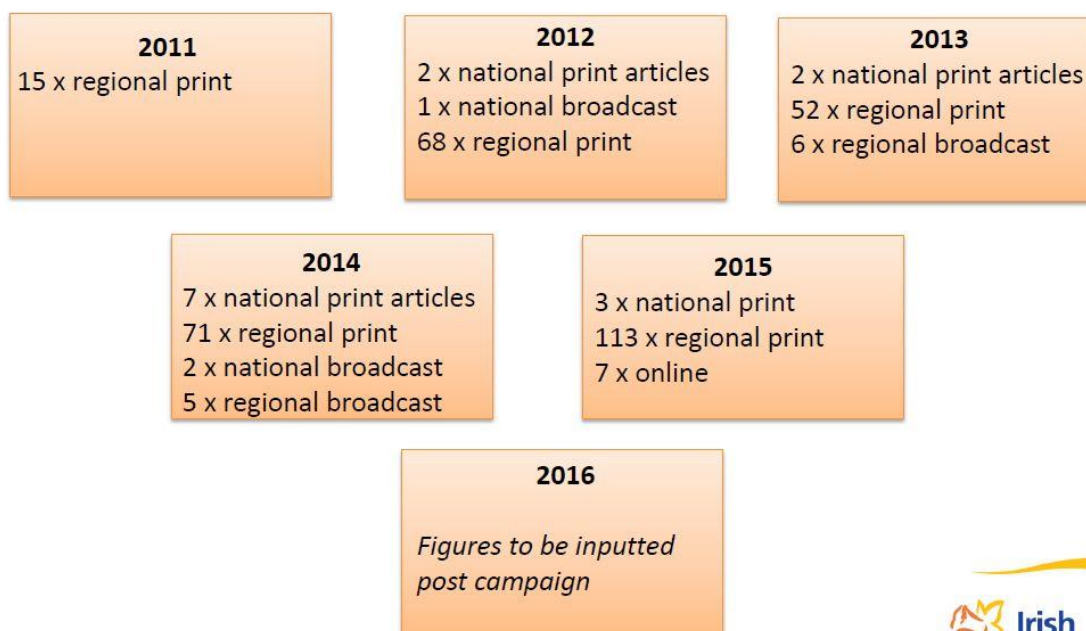
Appendix 1 - Structure of X-HALE



More information available at cancer.ie/xhale

Appendix 2: X-HALE Media Coverage

X-HALE Youth Awards Coverage Results



Appendix 3: X-HALE Evaluation 2013 Findings and Discussion

- The overall value and effectiveness of X-HALE within the youth setting was investigated by an independent evaluation published in 2014 by Professor Mark Morgan.
- Post participation data collected at the X-HALE Youth Awards 2013 event was compared to responses from the European Schools Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (2013) to measure differences in smoking opinions, behaviour and intentions.
- X-HALE participants were found to be almost twice as likely to be of the opinion that there is a great risk with occasional smoking. A content analysis of all of the films revealed a recurring theme of occasional smoking being a pathway to long term addiction which suggests that there was a filtering through of important messages from the training and films to participant's opinions. These results are also noteworthy given the findings of the Healthy Ireland Survey which found that occasional smoking is most prevalent among 15-34 year olds. Changing attitudes in relation to this behaviour could be important for influencing future smoking rates given the normal transition from occasional to regular smoking.
- Young people that took part in X-HALE were found to perceive a significantly lower likelihood of positive outcomes as a result of smoking and a higher likelihood of negative consequences if they started smoking. This finding is notable as the consequences of smoking were featured very heavily in training and films, again suggesting an assimilation of messages.
- X-HALE participants were more likely to view advertising as significant influence on young people's smoking behaviour. Furthermore, participants that were involved in the training or in making the film reported higher levels of knowledge about the power of the tobacco industry than those that only attended the Youth Awards. These findings and the content analysis of films suggest that the programme is successfully raising awareness of the influence of the media, the tobacco industry and the entertainment business and that there is a possible dose response effect with higher involvement resulting in greater knowledge post participation.

Appendix 4: Quantitative X-HALE 2015 Findings

X-HALE 2015 Comments from Young People and Youth Leaders

"I always thought I would never smoke but this project made me 100% sure I won't"

"Now I feel that non-smoking young people should put more efforts in helping their smoking friends to quit"

"Yes, I don't think I will smoke, I now know the dangers!!"

"Yes, it made me realize how big of a problem smoking is in my community"

"The X-HALE project made it clearer than ever that smoking isn't as cool or glamorous as it is made out to be in the media"

Has taking part in X-HALE changed how you/your group feel about smoking?....

"They were not pro smoking before but are more anti now. The now feel part of something bigger and very important."

"Yes as it allowed them look at the negative impact of peer pressure."

"Excitement about the project somewhat replaced the thrill in smoking"

"Yes, our group are quite young and I think it makes a huge difference that their views and opinions count and its not just adults preaching"

"Yes, they felt quite strongly about the effects of smoking on friendships and activity. This feeling grew stronger as film was developed."

"Yes. After evaluation of overall project all cited that they would not start smoking and encourage others to do the same."