

# Planet Youth and the Icelandic Prevention Model

Discover an approach that helps communities come together to foster healthier, more resilient youth by transforming social environments and delaying the onset of substance use.

## What is Planet Youth?

Planet Youth is an international organization based in Iceland, dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of young people. Through a collaborative, data-driven approach known as *The Icelandic Prevention Model*, Planet Youth partners with communities around the world to help them create safer, healthier environments where children and adolescents can flourish.

**Our mission** is simple but impactful: to empower communities to come together, understand the needs of their young people, and implement strategies that prevent substance use before it starts. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and long-term commitment, we help build environments where youth can thrive—free from the risks associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.



**The Icelandic Prevention Model (IPM)** is a data-driven, population-wide model developed and applied in Iceland since the early 1990s. It focuses on identifying community-level *risk factors* and strengthening *protective factors* to reduce youth substance use and other negative social outcomes among children and young people. The IPM emphasizes delaying the onset of substance use to reduce long-term health and social implications. The IPM has been documented and described in numerous peer-reviewed academic publications.

The **Guidance Program** is Planet Youth's structured, supportive framework that helps communities around the world implement the Icelandic Prevention Model. Through training, resources, and ongoing collaboration, it empowers local leaders to create data-driven strategies that strengthen protective factors, reduce risks, and delay the onset of substance use among youth.

From building strong community coalitions to analyzing local data and supporting communities in designing tailored interventions, the Guidance Program offers a clear pathway for long-term, sustainable change. With a focus on flexibility and local adaptation, it ensures that every participating community can craft prevention efforts that reflect their unique culture, needs, and strengths—creating healthier environments where young people can thrive.



# The Guiding Principles

Are underlying the Planet Youth method and give directions on how each step in the community intervention process ideally should be implemented



## Society is the patient

Applies a primary prevention approach that focuses on developing an organized system to enhance the social environment in communities over time. Youth outcomes are a direct reflection of the environments they live and grow in.



## Meaningful connection is a treatment

Enhances connection between children and their families, peers, schools, communities, and adults by creating teams of adults who are invested in and working together to support the success of young people in the community. Schools are embraced as the natural hub of neighborhood efforts to support child and adolescent health, learning, and life success.

## Sustained attention as a treatment

Engages and empowers community members to make practical decisions using local, high-quality, accessible data and diagnostics. Data-driven decision-making, community-wide communications, and long-term repetition with relevant data over time keeps community-level attention focused on building healthy environments for young people.



## Integrate Researchers, Policy Makers, Practitioners, and Community Members Into a Unified Team Dedicated to Solving Complex, Real-World Problems

In many public and community health interventions, the connections between researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and community members are more theoretical than functional and practical. Although they may share the same goal, each group tends to function in isolation from the others and at varying proximity from the problem itself.

## The scope of the solution matches the scope of the problem

Encourages authentic assessment of the problem and the solution. It's important that participating communities remember this effort calls for realistic timeframes. This work calls for a long-term commitment and funding.

