

# NUTRITIONAL AWARENESS OF TODAY'S YOUTH

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Since 1950 the share of overweight and obese people has grown enormously among the population of industrialized countries. During the last decades, it has reached alarming dimensions, especially among the younger generation. One of the main reasons behind this development is the combined interaction of lack of physical exercise and wrong and / or excessive nutrition. It is therefore of primary importance, to enhance the nutritional awareness among this population. Although being equally important and urgent, corresponding measures are difficult to be realized, especially among children and adolescents. One of the keys to enhance the nutritional awareness is adequate information, targeting this population segment.

The following preatise is intended as a contribution to this generation specific information. For that purpose, it was investigated, how such information and corresponding campaigns should be composed to provide the most long lasting and reaching effects. To this goal, I have worked out on my own such an experimental campaign. This campaign was presented to three classes at the cantonal high school in Chur (Switzerland) and evaluated by them. Based on their evaluations and on my own reflections I arrived to the following five conclusions:

1. Irrespectively of its content, such an information campaign has to be tailored precisely to the information needs and interests of the intended target group. Therefore, their interests must be analyzed as precisely as possible.
2. Different levels of content and design may reach the different subgroups with specific interest- and comprehension levels.
3. The nutritional interest among younger people could be enhanced by issues related to sports, fitness, good looking and performances at school.
4. The transmitted information has to be clear, compact and comprehensive. Further on, although not being too theoretical, it must not sacrifice accuracy.
5. The design of the information display should be as trendy and exclusive as possible without being too abstract.

The consideration of all these requirements necessitates some compromises, yet it can still significantly contribute to the nutritional awareness of the targeted young people. But the control of the pandemy of obesity demands more than that. It requires a permanent investment in, and a consequent commitment to a fundamental health education. The enhancement of the nutritional awareness can only be a part of this education although an important one. In addition, the efforts and the capital to control the pandemy of obesity has to be raised urgently because the situation becomes worse and worse and the way out of the pandemy will cost more and more with every day continuing economizing on capital and effort.