

June 26 is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1987, this day serves as a reminder of the goal agreed to by UN Member States of creating an international society free of drug abuse.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) selects each year a theme for the International Day and launches a year-long campaign to raise awareness about the global drug problem. The theme for 2005 is "Value yourself...make healthy choices".

"Where drug abuse destroys bodies and minds, sport makes them stronger and healthier. Where drug abuse undermines incentive, sport involves striving for excellence. Where drug abuse threatens relationships, sport enables participation. And where drug abuse preys on aimlessness, sport offers young people focus and structure."

Kofi Annan
UN Secretary-General

26 June

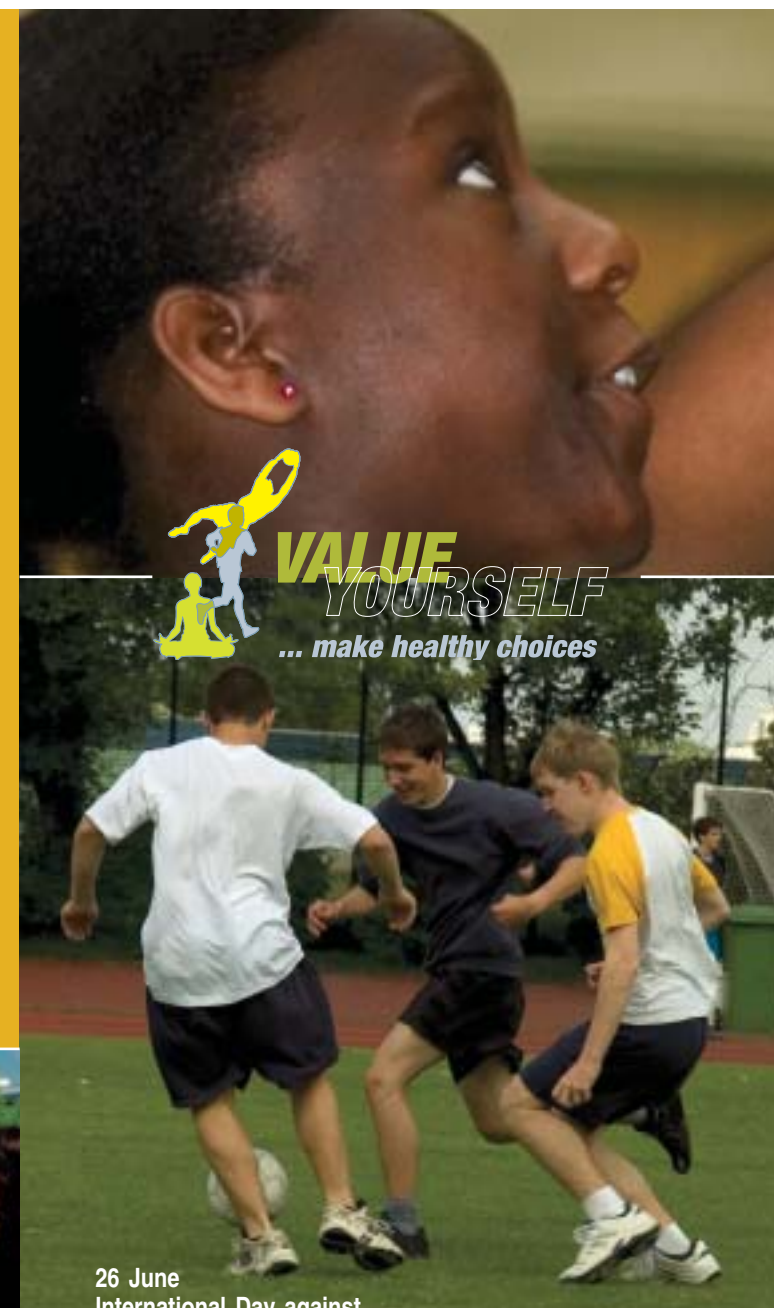
UNODC campaign themes since 2000

- 2004 "Drugs: treatment works"
- 2003 "Let's talk about drugs"
- 2002 "Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS"
- 2001 "Sports against drugs"
- 2000 "Facing reality: denial, corruption and violence"

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26 June
International Day against
Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Value yourself ...

... make healthy choices

The 2005 anti-drugs campaign targets teenagers and young adults, a group that is particularly vulnerable to drug abuse. At this age, peer pressure to try illicit drugs can be strong and self-esteem is often low. Moreover, those who take drugs tend to be either misinformed or insufficiently aware of the health risks involved.

While young people talk a lot about the “highs” induced by illegal drugs, they may not be aware of the many “lows”. Negative effects vary depending on the type of drug consumed, the doses taken and the frequency of use. In some cases, drug abuse can cause serious depression, panic, irregular heartbeat, respiratory problems, and even sudden death. Furthermore, while under the influence of drugs, users may wrongly decide to have unprotected sex or share needles, thus increasing their chances of contracting HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

“There is nothing more tragic than a young person who has lost his or her life to drugs. Young people in pursuit of excellence in any field offer us an alternative vision of the world, one that tells us that there is light as well as darkness, angels as well as lost souls. Our job is to create places where light can shine, and clearly, the world of sports is one of those bright havens.”

Antonio Maria Costa
UNODC Executive Director

Leading a healthy lifestyle requires making choices that are respectful of body and mind. To make these choices, youth need guidance from parents, teachers, and other role models who should not only persuade them to stay away from illegal drugs, but also encourage them to engage in healthy activities. Sports are a good example.

Young girls and boys who practice sports learn skills and values that will stay with them for a lifetime: self-confidence, discipline, teamwork and fair play. Through sports, participants are confronted with ethical questions that can guide them in finding the right answers on and off the playing field. Sports also improves their physical health and psychological well-being.

... make healthy choices

“Drugs are only needed if you have no joy in life. Basketball is my joy.”



“Train, get better, be the best! - Drugs are not the way to the top!”



“Do you want to be a homerunner? Then drugs are not your way.”

