



Connekt

The newsletter of the Youth Network for Drug Abuse Prevention

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What happened last year... a review of 2005

It has been some time since we published Connekt and this issue is a bit of an update about what has been going on with the Regional Networks and with our work here in Vienna. The last year has been a transformative one for the process of creating a self sustaining network.

The Global Youth Network Project wound down here at Vienna and six new regional networks were formed in East Africa, Russia and Belarus, South Asia, Southeast Asia, South America and Central America and Mexico. Representatives of six regional youth networks met in New Delhi in July 2005, they exchanged experiences on their work so far, discussed their future plans and challenges, and identified support required from UNODC Headquarters and Field Offices.



The networks also presented a proposed framework for collective action independent of but in close consultation with the UNODC. This outcome is a significant one in terms of the immediate objective of the Global Youth Network Project (AD/GLO/C54) which is "By the end of the project, to establish a self-sustained network of youth programmes for drug abuse prevention whose participants are trained and equipped to identify innovative approaches to drug abuse prevention among young people and take preventive action within their own region/constituency."



NACIONES UNIDAS
Oficina contra la Droga y el Delito



Mentor

Since each of the regional NGOs works in close coordination with particular field offices, they will also discuss their plans independently with responsible staff. They also decided to set up a mechanism for joint action or projects. It was further proposed that the first joint project would be to collect information about factors that put youth at risk of drug abuse and crime globally and to publish a Global Youth Profile as an programmatic guide and advocacy document. The aim would be to provide guidance to youth prevention programmes on what the key risk factors are and how they may be translated into effective interventions. Also, it is envis-

This is your newsletter. Tell us how we can improve it and what you would like to read about. Do send us your comments and suggestions at youthmail@unodc.org—The Global Youth network Team; Gautam Babbar, Giovanna Campello

OUR REGIONAL NETWORKS!

We have six regional networks in six different regions! If you live and work in one of these regions, why not contact them? You might be able to participate in one of their regional initiatives!



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aged that this joint product would provide visibility to the Network and help raise resources for future joint undertakings. Representatives of six regional youth networks were trained on sustainability, fundraising, monitoring and evaluation. The modules developed will be shared across the network and possibly refined for use on the internet. Representatives of six regional



youth networks also proposed some strategies to integrate drug abuse prevention with a) HIV/AIDS prevention and b) crime prevention. The members of the Global Youth Network were very enthusiastic about the idea of addressing issues relating to HIV/AIDS and crime prevention by explicitly talking about the issues as part of their ongoing youth capacity building activities. Participants also raised the possibility of being involved with the 10 year review of the 1998 Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Drug Abuse and Trafficking during which National Governments made a series of promises. The idea is to involve youth in monitoring the performance of their own countries in living up to their promises. We would very much welcome any suggestions you may have about this. Participants expressed the wish to be involved with the process of selecting a theme for the International Day Against Drug Abuse and wanted to play a more active role in the annual campaigns. We have discussed this with our colleagues responsible for the 26th of June activities and we hope that we can involve the networks more actively starting this year.

Gautam Babbar, UNODC, Vienna

ABUSE OF AMPHETAMINE TYPE STIMULANTS

Concern over the rates of amphetamine use and the harms linked to this use is widespread. Current use affects a wide range of developing and developed countries particularly in North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Of an estimated 180 million people who use drugs worldwide, 29 million use amphetamine-type-stimulants (ATS), more than use cocaine and heroin combined. In response, the UNODC was mandated at a special session of the United Nations' General Assembly to identify, document and disseminate good practices in the prevention of ATS abuse.



ATS abuse in SE Asia is especially worrying, it is sold as Yaba (mad drug in Thai)

To this end we have started a Global project to tap the expertise of academic experts and grassroots practitioners to create a "how to guide" for community based prevention practitioners, along with a companion manual for policy-makers.

Our response!

A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO PREVENTION

Observers now refer to two worlds of substance abuse: substance use among marginalized youth (e.g., street, indigenous youth) in both developed and developing regions often has a predominantly functional element, helping these youth deal with difficult circumstances (e.g. to reduce effects of hunger, cold, mental health issues, to work longer hours); whereas among mainstream youth, drugs are used for enjoyment, in association with parties and other social gatherings. ATS are used in both contexts, nevertheless, because the risk factors and responses differ so greatly between these two populations, this guide will not consider functional use by marginalized youth.

This is in line with the second of three kinds of amphetamine use identified by the World Health Organization (2001):

- [1] Instrumental use: amphetamines are used to achieve desired goals, such as improved concentration and to ward off fatigue;
- [2] Sub-cultural/recreational use: amphetamine stimulant properties are used to allow for activity over longer periods in recreational/social settings, such as at music and dance events;
- [3] Chronic use: for several reasons, such as craving, tolerance and withdrawal, some am-

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phetamine users become chronic users to relieve unwanted effects of abstinence. Some use of ATS by mainstream youth has moderate functional value: reducing weight or increasing wakefulness for studying. These aspects of ATS use will be addressed. The manual will focus on measures that aim to prevent or delay use of ATS among young people.

In order to kick off this process we convened a meeting of experts comprising researchers, practitioners, youth and representatives of other national and international agencies, in Bangkok in November 2005.

Our consultant for this project and an old friend of the Global Youth Network, Gary Roberts from Canada developed a review of the academic literature and provided a draft document for the participants to work on. The meeting was organized in Bangkok in order to both better coordinate operations with ongoing work in the field and capitalise on local expertise in the area.

The Expert Group Meeting went as planned and the Global Youth Network team would like to gratefully acknowledge the administrative support provided by the UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, particularly the Representative, M/s. Akira Fujino, Gerson Bergeth Inter-agency and NGO Cooperation Officer, Partnerships Expert, Ms Jamnan Panpatama, and Ms Kanyaporn Thitithamakun, project assistant. The methodology of the meeting involved the participants discussing the draft good practice document section by section and providing their inputs and rewriting portions as deemed necessary. The extensive discussions were particularly useful in clarifying the scope of the document, distinguishing it from a Harm Reduction approach to ATS and spelling out the contents of a comprehensive community wide approach to preven-



tion that works at multiple levels and also provides for access to health and social support services according to individual needs.

On the basis of the discussions the consultant will provide a second draft of the document which will also be circulated for comments among the meeting participants.

We hope to have the document ready and published in the first half of 2006 and we will develop training modules based on the guide. Finally, if we manage to raise enough money to continue with the Global ATS project, we would like to conduct training sessions in partnership with our field offices and other local partners as needed.



Sport and prevention

A New Global Fund

In the past we have put out special editions of Connekt focusing on sport as a tool for drug abuse prevention and as some of you know we have also produced a Handbook for civil society organizations to use sport for prevention.

Two years ago we also helped organize a football without borders camp for young people from Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar. The idea was to promote a certain sense of respect for the game, for the rules, the body and the opponent amongst the young footballers.

From the evaluation questionnaires we seemed to be headed in the right direction with that particular module which was subsequently published and is available online at http://www.unodc.org/youthnet/youthnet_action_alternative_activities.html in Russian, English, French, Spanish, Arabic and German.

Recently the Government of Qatar, encouraged by the success of the Football without Borders initiative, and to coincide with the games of the 15th Asiad, pledged to contribute US\$2.5 million to the UNODC for the establishment of a Global Sport Fund to help prevent vulnerable young people from being sucked into crime and drug abuse.

The agreement, the first of its kind, follows consultations held in 2003 between UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa, and His Highness Heir Apparent, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani. "It is a great honour for Qatar to host the Global Sport Fund established by UNODC. This

is an opportunity to team up and to help young people around the world learn the benefits of a healthy life style," Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani said .

We hope that the Global Youth Network and the Regional networks will be able to participate actively in the fund and we will keep you informed about the progress on that front.



sports
not drugs

Sport & prevention

It does work!

One of our Regional Successor groups, Dinamismo Juvenil which coordinates the network for Central America and Mexico, has done significant work with young people on general issues of youth development and sport. We thought it might be a good idea to kick off the process of creating this new global fund by sharing with you first hand accounts of the benefits that sport can bring...we thank Nick Wright (Dinamismo Juvenil) and Celina Valadez (ex-Chief of DJ and currently a part time volunteer with the UNODC in Mexico) for collating these stories.



Dinamismo Juvenil held basketball one-on-one competitions on Saturdays called "las Cascaritas." About 16 people between 15 and 32 showed up for this activity. About 90% of them were drug users. Because the games were held on Saturday mornings, they realized themselves that their performance was affected by all their drug use on Fridays. Thus there were two days a week in which they stopped using drugs. As the games and the projects advanced, many quit using drugs on other days as well, further reducing their overall consumption. It was proposed that they make a video showing who they were, what they did and their hopes and expectations in life. They did, and showed the video to the community. Their effort received

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huge applause. As a result there was a reconciliation between this group and their community. They had been labeled as good-for-nothing drug addicts, and had made themselves be seen as human beings with names and aspirations. In feeling accepted by their community, these youths then felt inspired to act in favor of their community.



Jonathan, a 12 year-old, smoked, drank, and inhaled PVC, as ways to make himself known and taken seriously in his barrio. Then he became involved in Dinamismo Juvenil's basketball program. At first he showed "negative leadership;" refusing to join with the other players and trying to intimidate them--he always wanted his side to win and when they lost he became very aggressive. Little by little, through the program and an educational process, Jonathan's attitude changed. Bit by bit he got rid of his addictions, once he realized how much they lowered his standing with the rest.

In a group setting he thought through his attitude and made a personal inventory. He took steps to change himself and transformed his leadership skills in a positive way. After a while, Jonathan supported and motivated the other members of the program. In fact he took the decision to work with the other weakest members of the group.

Fifteen year old **Ismael**, suffering from Leukaemia, came to Dinamismo Juvenil very unhealthy and already consuming a lot of drugs. He came looking for help and support, to find a way to live differently from the way he knew.

He entered into a training program for "minipromoters." These had to promote and participate in Dinamismo's sports, arts and culture programs, with the requirement that they had to make and maintain close contact and real communication with their parents and their families.

Because of his participation in this project, Ismael began to move away from his friends who were into drugs. He was in our program for two and a half years. Ismael died from Leukaemia at age 28, but his last three years were lived with power and intensity, in a form very different from

One of the stories that affected me most was that of

Balderas Muñeton Daniel, a 21 year-old who was about to drop out of school. He was very overweight and had started to drink and smoke.

He became involved with our basketball program, and the power he found to develop his physical abilities was a huge motivation for him to lose weight and return to his schoolwork. He gained self esteem, and it developed in a very complete way. He advanced in his formal studies with great success, and quit smoking and drinking completely. To this day he leads a healthy life. He participated in the entire process of a program we implemented to get young people away from addictions through sports.

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