



perspectives



Children and drugs

- + Why cannabis matters
- + Children exploited by fishermen
- + Interview with UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa

perspectives

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Cover:

Peruvian children come together to participate in a street football festival organized by the Sport and Life programme.



Perspectives, the new UNODC magazine, aims to bring its readers closer to the people behind the broad issues of drugs, crime and terrorism. The drug and crime industries are worth billions of dollars and have the power to erode the

rule of law in the hardest-hit countries. Both fuel terrorism. Besides providing in-depth coverage of these overarching themes, *Perspectives* will talk to farmers striving to make a living away from drugs, to addicts and former criminals who want to make a fresh start, and to families and communities that are making a difference around the world.

In this first issue, UNODC *Perspectives* interviews **Antonio Maria Costa** as he begins his second term as UNODC Executive Director, a position he finds both challenging and rewarding. The magazine also accompanies Goodwill Ambassador **Julia Ormond** on her mission to Ghana, where she witnessed the situation of trafficked children and learned about local and international responses to this crime.

We present the findings of the **2006 World Drug Report**, UNODC's flagship publication. This year's Report highlights recent research on **cannabis**, whose popularity among adults and young people alike makes it the world's most abused illicit drug. The Report, relied on by Governments and experts throughout the world as the most authoritative source of data on illicit drugs, estimates that 200 million people aged 15 to 64 consumed drugs that are under international control at least once in the previous 12 months. Cannabis, methamphetamines, cocaine and heroin top the list of drugs of choice.

This year's **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking** on 26 June focused on the risks to children under 15, seldom the object of national and international studies.

A special feature in *Perspectives* sheds light on the various ways in which **children and drugs** are linked. Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America illustrate the different facets of a problem that concerns everyone, everywhere. It is our responsibility, as individuals and communities, to do our part to break these links and keep children and drugs apart.

We hope you enjoy our new magazine and find it useful and informative. Your suggestions and ideas are welcome—please contact us at perspectives@unodc.org.

Norha Restrepo
Editor

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Young boys pull in heavy fishing nets with the day's catch.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Child trafficking in Ghana

By Raggie Johansen

Human trafficking is an international problem affecting millions of people and many countries around the world. In Ghana, West Africa, the internal trafficking of children is one of the biggest challenges.

Many Ghanaian children are trafficked from their home villages to work in the fishing industry. Living in tough conditions and working long hours every day, they are exploited by fishermen desperate to feed their families and eke out a living along the banks of Lake Volta.

Created by the construction of the Akosombo dam in the early 1960s, Lake Volta is one of the world's largest artificial lakes. A number of

fishermen who have depended on the bounties of the lake for many years report that fish stocks are decreasing, making it difficult to survive on fishing alone. Other work is scarce in a country where unemployment is widespread and approximately 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line.

The depletion of stocks is one of the key reasons why children are needed as workers in the fishing industry.

Children represent cheap labour, and their small, nimble fingers are useful in releasing the fish from the ever smaller nets.

“The Government should ban the use of nets with tiny holes,” says Jack Dawson, Executive Director of APPLE (Association of People for Practical Life Education), a local NGO that works in several fishing villages. “Doing so would allow fish stocks to improve and discourage the use of kids because there would be no need for such small hands.”

Another task that trafficked children frequently perform is diving to disentangle the fish nets from the numerous tree stumps that are scattered throughout the lake. As nets are often dragged along the bottom of the lake, they tend to get stuck. Diving is a dangerous job that can have dire consequences for the children, from catching water-based diseases such as bilharzia and guinea worm to death from drowning.

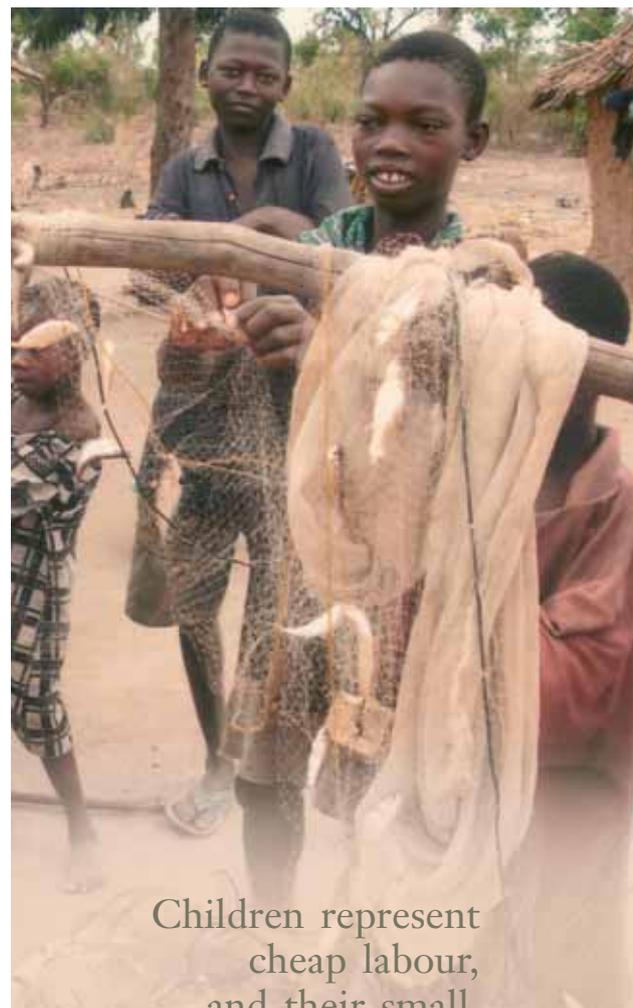
On a recent mission to Ghana, UNODC Goodwill Ambassador on Human Trafficking Julia Ormond visited a number of villages. Accompanied by a local team, Ormond spoke to child traffickers, trafficking victims and their parents, and people working to combat this crime. In one fishing village, Ormond ob-

served several boats and their crews. Spotting the young victims of trafficking was relatively easy—they were less playful and more reserved than children still living with their parents.

“There was this young boy who came off the lake,” she says. “He simply froze when he saw us! Carrying his paddles, his jeans falling off him—he wanted the attention of the camera, and gave a little smile, but it was so diffident, so broken.”

The driving forces behind child trafficking extend beyond fish scarcity. Deep-rooted traditions can also help explain the prevalence of this crime. For example, it is common in Ghana for children to participate in apprentice work with a relative or family friend. Many children, and their parents, believe that going away to work is a route to a better life.

“Child trafficking is actually a distortion of the old cultural practice of placement with relatives or townspeople,” says Joe Rispoli, Head of the Counter-Trafficking Department of



Children represent cheap labour, and their small, nimble fingers are useful in releasing the fish from the ever smaller nets.

ESI'S STORY

After her parents died, Esi went to live with her grandmother. But instead of caring for her, Esi's grandmother and aunts, all 75 or older, decided to “rent” her into bonded labour for a small advance.

Esi was 12 years old when she was sent to a fishing village at Yeji. There, she worked long hours for the fisherman's wife. Her chores included washing the family's clothes and fetching water from the lake, which is far from the house. She also prepared food and sold the fish caught by the fisherman and his other trafficked children.

Seven years into her ordeal, the International Organization for Migration rescued Esi.

In accordance with her wishes, IOM helped the young girl into an apprenticeship. Although she was illiterate, Esi preferred vocational training over school. “Please try to put me in hairdressing so that I can earn a living in the future,” she said. Once she completes her three-year apprenticeship at a hairdressing salon at Mankessim, a town in Ghana's Central Region, she hopes to open a salon in her community.



GHANA

Capital: Accra

Government: Constitutional democracy

Official language: English

Adult literacy rate: 54.1%

Life expectancy: 56.8 years

GDP per capita: US\$ 2,238

Source:
UNDP Human Development Report (2005)

the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ghana. “And many parents don’t know the value of education; for them, it’s more immediately valuable for their children to learn how to fish.”

Child labour and even trafficking are deeply ingrained in the fishing industry in Ghana. Through conversations with child traffickers, it becomes clear that many of them simply do not realize that it is wrong

traffickers realize that children should not be made to work like adults. “We have understood that it is wrong, and that kids should be with their parents and in school,” Tornye says. Now, he is working as a community coordinator for APPLE, taking great pride in his work to stop child trafficking in Ghana.

Emmanuel Agyapong also works with APPLE, educating both traf-

“ Many parents don’t know the value of education; for them, it’s more immediately valuable for their children to learn how to fish.”

Joe Rispoli, Head of the IOM Counter-Trafficking Department in Ghana

for children to be away from their parents, missing school and performing hard physical work for long hours.

For example, Benjamin Tornye, a fisherman for 15 years, used to visit parents and ask if their children could help him with his work. As he said, “children are good fishers.” He taught them how to handle a boat, swim and dive, and he believed he was doing the right thing.

However, a few years ago, an IOM intervention made Tornye and other

fickers and parents about the perils of child trafficking. He says that reducing trafficking is a process that requires patience.

“We need to build trust, to win the parents’ hearts and souls,” he says. “If they open up to us, we can make them understand. Therefore, we don’t use legal arguments, as that frightens them.”

The legal framework on trafficking in Ghana was strengthened in December 2005, when the Govern-



Left: Overfishing in Lake Volta causes reliance on very small fish like these.

Centre: Children repair nets damaged by tree stumps in the lake.

Right: UNODC Goodwill Ambassador Julia Ormond speaks to a Government official about Ghana's response to child trafficking.

ment passed a comprehensive anti-trafficking bill, with assistance from a variety of international organizations. And while Ghana has not ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, there is optimism that it will do so in the near future.

“We are definitely going to ratify the UN Convention,” says Marilyn Amponsah, Director of the International Children’s Desk in the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs. “We have participated in ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) regional cooperation for many years, and we are now ready for the UN.”

However, Amponsah stresses that the Ghanaian Government will need help to effectively implement the Convention. The international community could, for example, help build local capacity on human trafficking, finance micro-credit schemes to prevent trafficking, and provide equipment for day-to-day administrative tasks.

IOM has provided micro-credit assistance to some traffickers who have released children and returned them to parents and guardians. Conditions are attached to the loans, such as the development of a viable business plan.

“While there is a need for a certain grace period to establish their business,” Rispoli says, “we don’t want to be seen as Father Christmas. This way, we’re not encouraging dependency.”

Children rescued by IOM and APPLE are first taken to a government-run shelter for up to three months before they are reunited

with their parents. At the shelter, they receive medical care, psychological counselling and basic education, preparing them to attend school back home. However, lack of resources is a major impediment.

“Our biggest challenge is lack of transportation,” says Sharon Abbey, who runs the shelter. “And we can’t offer the children as much counselling as we would like. Their experiences can make them a bit difficult to deal with, but we would like to teach them responsible behaviour.”

Julia Ormond says that in spite of the problems and the horrendous conditions facing many children, she is encouraged by the efforts and the commitment to fight child trafficking she witnessed during her stay in Ghana.

“I am touched by the work done by people on the ground here,” she says. “It’s effective. The villagers are responding as are the traffickers and children—it’s fabulous to see!”

YAOVI’S STORY

When Yaovi’s father got ill and died, his stepmother, who never liked him, decided to send him away. One of the villagers invited the 10-year-old to stay with him and attend school in a big city, an exciting opportunity he decided to accept.

However, his dreams were soon shattered. Instead of attending school, Yaovi reared cattle for his master, a man he had to call “father.” After two years of hard work he was sent to a new “father” in the fishing industry. He had to do heavy physical labour, like pulling large fishing nets and carrying fish and equipment.

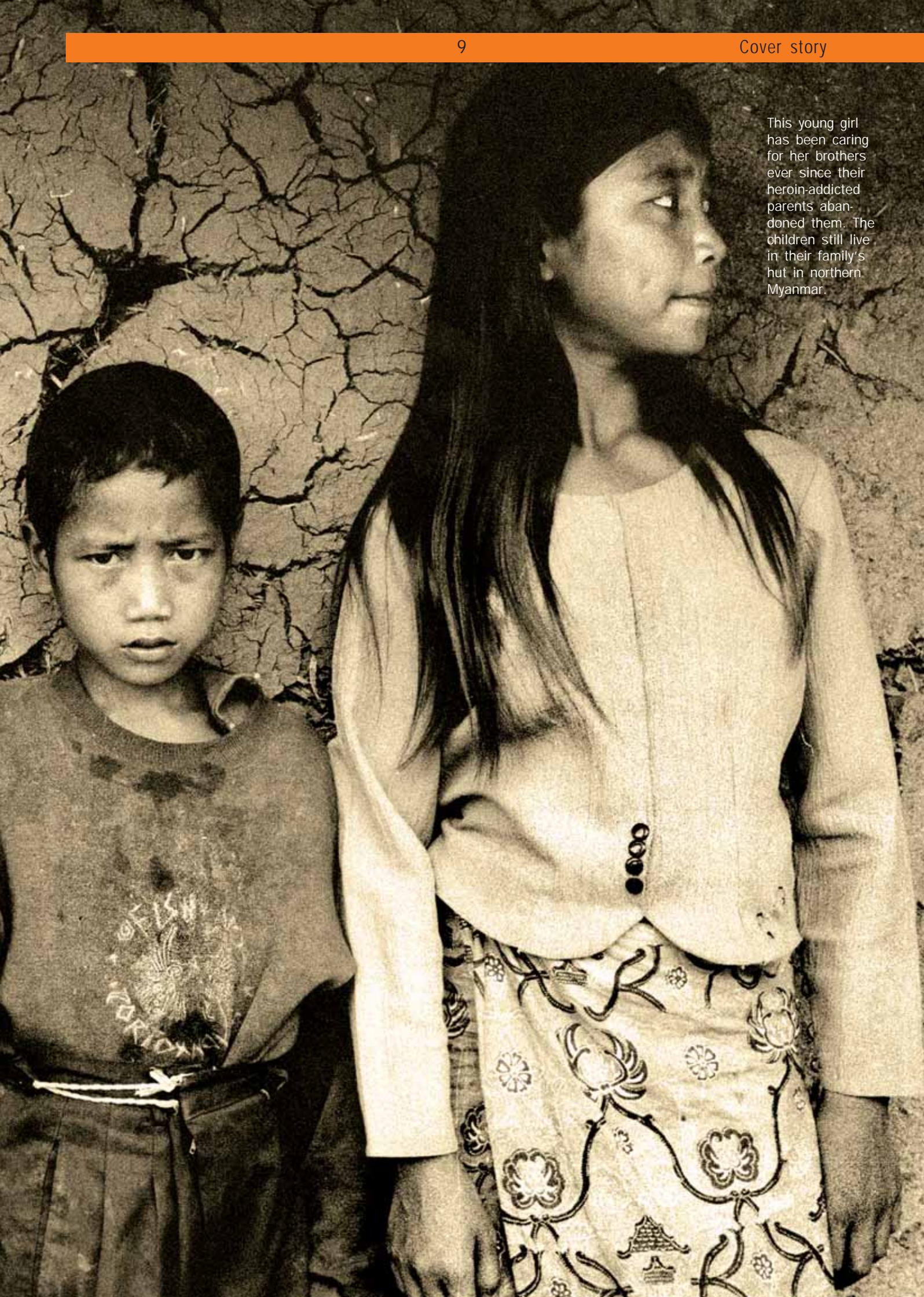
Yaovi lived under difficult conditions, as is common among trafficked children. He usually got only one or two small dishes of corn with fish per day. He also suffered from heart problems due to overwork. But his master would beat him if he was struggling to perform his work.

Those years of forced labour are behind him now. Yaovi, who was rescued by the Ghanaian NGO APPLE (Association of People for Practical Life Education), will soon be sent back to his village. At 17, he will start attending school again. His plan is to get an education and learn a trade “to become a respectable man in the future.”

Drugs affect everyone everywhere, either directly or indirectly, and children are no exception. Some kids start using marijuana, amphetamines and inhalants at an early age to fit in or deal with stress. Harder drugs may follow. Other kids are paying the price for their parents' drug addiction or involvement in trafficking. This special feature explores the links between children and drugs.

Children and drugs

SPECIAL FEATURE



This young girl has been caring for her brothers ever since their heroin-addicted parents abandoned them. The children still live in their family's hut in northern Myanmar.

MYANMAR

Communities face their challenges together

Although Myanmar is the world's second largest producer of opium poppy, production is declining. Many farmers have left their poppy fields and returned to their villages. The residents of northern Shan State, struggling with endemic poverty and drug addiction, have united in their efforts to improve their quality of life and to assist families with special needs.

Nearly 130 children—mostly orphans—get schooling, clothing, food and health care from their communities in northern Shan State, on the border with China. Many of these children, such as 5-year-old Baem Yain, have personal stories that illustrate just how devastating drugs can be and how collective efforts can make a big difference.

Like many other children in his village, Baem Yain is growing up without parents because of their involvement in drugs. His grandparents care for him with the community's help.



GYAW SAING MAING'S STORY

Gyaw Saing Maing lives with her grandmother and two older siblings. Her mother is serving a 15-year prison sentence for selling drugs and her father died when she was a baby. While her grandmother owns a small shop, the income is not sufficient to support the education of all three children. But thanks to her community's assistance, Gyaw Saing Maing, who is now 4, has recently joined her brother and sister at school.



Baem Yain's mother is in prison for peddling drugs and his father, a drug addict, has abandoned him. The boy is currently living with his grandparents and is able to attend primary school with his village's assistance. Baem Yain's grandfather, aged 70, has left his work in the poppy fields and is now a watchman at the Namtaung Village Community Centre.

The region has been hard-hit by drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse.

UNODC is supporting 30 northern Shan State villages in their efforts to prevent drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, as well as increase their access to drug treatment and rehabilitation.

Although Myanmar is still a major producer of illicit opium, northern Shan State has registered a downward trend in production since 2002, with some areas declaring themselves poppy-free. But according to Shariq Bin Raza, UNODC Representative in Myanmar, the reduction in poppy production does not amount to a solution: "More important is the sustainability of this reduction, which can only come when the ex-growers' families and communities can sustain their livelihoods without depending on illicit crops."

People struggling to feed their families and make a living sometimes resort to dealing in drugs or using drugs themselves. Some may even go back to cultivating opium poppy because they have not found viable alternatives to survive.

Despite the many difficulties, communities are not giving up hope. They are coming together to help families like Baem Yain's. UNODC is supporting 30 northern Shan State villages in their efforts to prevent drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, as well as increase their access to drug treatment and rehabilitation.

Villages in the Lashio, Kutkai and Muse townships are responsible for planning and carrying out community-based activities such as awareness-raising sessions on HIV/AIDS, trafficking in persons, gender issues, literacy and income-generation with the assistance of local and international experts. Some villagers have also been trained as voluntary social workers to provide drug treatment and after-care services.

Communities also support addicts and their families throughout the difficult period of treatment and rehabilitation, recognizing that drug abuse is a social problem. Drug users are more likely to have unprotected sex and share needles, thus exposing themselves and those close to them to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other infectious diseases, and many addicts cannot contribute to the family income. Those who are ready to stop using opium and heroin, the two main drugs in the region, are referred to either a hospital or a traditional medicine man. Once they finish treatment, recovering addicts are given the chance to become productive members of society.

Community leaders and action groups are working hard to improve living conditions in northern Shan State.

Villages invest the loans they receive on anti-drugs and development programmes. They have also established self-financing farms, commodity shops and rice banks. Elders, women and young people are all involved.

Khyn Hla Munn of UNODC Myanmar contributed to this report.

LU MAING'S STORY



Sixteen-year-old Lu Maing (rear) is the primary caregiver for her three younger sisters. In 2004, after their father's death, she dropped out of school so that her sisters Mar Pan (14), Htu Saing (12) and Mar Kaing (7) could get an education. Their mother is in prison for selling opium and heroin. Mar Kaing, who was an infant at the time of the arrest, was initially in jail with her mother so she could be breastfed. Later on, the child was sent back home to Lu Maing, who has had to provide for her sisters since then. She works in the village as a daily wage labourer, sometimes in the cornfields and the orchards. The family also has a small plot of land where they grow sugar cane.

PERU

Reclaiming the streets

Peru's Sport and Life (Deporte y Vida) schools are helping to prevent drug abuse and delinquency among disadvantaged children and adolescents through a programme of cultural, educational and sporting activities, including street football.

Street football is an important strategy in the fight against drugs thanks to "its great character-building, educational and life-changing potential," says Sara Diestro, the Director of Sport and Life. Children learn self-confidence, discipline, teamwork and fair play. Sport also helps to "reclaim the street so that people can join forces to prevent and combat violence, gang activities and drug use."

Apart from promoting street football, Sport and Life organizes cultural activities like dance, theatre, musical performances, juggling and other circus acts. It also assists children with their homework, thus reducing absenteeism and drop-out rates.

Rubén, 17, for example, began to take an interest in school when he joined the Sport and Life programme and was told that he could only play football if he performed well in his studies. He has been playing and learning under the programme for three years. Others his age are not as fortunate. Rubén says that many boys from his neighbourhood use drugs and join gangs. "But I'm doing well thanks to football; I feel good physically and I've got more friends."

With support from UNODC and the Drug Abuse Prevention Centre of Japan, Sport and Life is running a drug prevention programme for approximately 1,500 people in Villa El Salvador, Lima. The aim is to mobilize adults and children, families and neighbourhood leaders. Children, adolescents and those close to them participate in street football festivals, anti-drug cultural evenings and drug abuse prevention workshops. Information pamphlets are also distributed.



Karen practises to represent her country in the world festival of street football in Germany.

Street Football World Festival

Street football matches are played with such themes as “Play for fun,” “Friends forever,” “No to drugs, yes to life.” Participants agree to abide by three or four rules for playing together, such as “Goals by girls are worth double,” “No physical or verbal attacks on other players” and “The whole team should celebrate the goals.”

The rules of the game foster inclusion since all members of the team take part: starters, substitutes, boys and girls. Fans can also score from the stands and influence the result of the match, as they get points for supporting their team. This is done to create a festive atmosphere.

The global street football network promotes peace and tolerance and rejects drugs, racism and all forms of violence.

In 2005, the Sport and Life schools were among 240 projects chosen to be part of the global network. Their team also qualified to play in the first world festival, which took place in Berlin, Germany, in July 2006. The Peruvian team came fifth. In total, 200 young people from five continents participated in the festival that was held at the same time as the World Cup. Each street team consisted of eight footballers of both sexes, aged between 16 and 21.

Karen, one of two girls on the Peruvian team, has been participating in the Sport and Life programme for three years.



Youngsters play in the streets of Villa El Salvador as friends, relatives and neighbours watch and cheer.

the dangerous neighbourhood where they live because he feared for her safety. Today, she is more communicative and cheerful. And she is happy to have represented her country in Germany.

This feeling is shared by Edson, 17, who was selected for the street football world festival because he is a good player and a leader in his neighbourhood. A native of Piura State, Edson has been participating in the Sport and Life programme for two years. He wishes that more young people had the opportunity to take part in sports because physical activity “keeps you away from drugs and

The global street football network promotes peace and tolerance and rejects drugs, racism and all forms of violence.

A resident of Villa El Salvador, now aged 17, she joined because she saw that youngsters were helped with their homework and given books to read—and because football has always been her great passion. Playing football has taught her to respect her teammates, to work in a group and to help others in difficult times. Before joining the programme Karen never used to leave the house or talk to anyone. Her father did not let her go out in

bad habits” and “leads you to a healthy lifestyle.” Edson thinks that playing football has had a positive influence on his life: it has helped him to be more communicative and tolerant. As an adult, he wants to be a policeman to help people change their lives for the better.

▶ *The demand reduction team in UNODC Peru contributed to this report.*

EGYPT

Street children and substance abuse

Children living and working on the streets are vulnerable to violence, exploitation and substance abuse. Many turn to drugs to cope with their stressful and precarious lives.

Egyptian law defines them as “children exposed to delinquency.” Many people, including police officers, simply see them as criminals.

To NGOs and researchers, however, street children are victims rather than criminals. In contrast to the definition provided in Egypt’s 1996 Child Law, they consider street children to be minors who spend most of their time on the street without protection or guidance.



FACTS

WHO ARE STREET CHILDREN?

In developed countries, street children are as young as 8 years old and girls are a minority. In developing countries, street children are usually teenagers and half of them are girls.

- A **‘child of the streets’** has no home but the streets. Without family members to turn to, this child struggles for survival and might rely on friends or abandoned buildings for shelter.
- A **child ‘on the street’** visits his or her family regularly. The child may even sleep at home every night, but spends most days and some nights on the street because of poverty, overcrowding, and sexual or physical abuse at home.
- A **child who is part of a street family** is forced by poverty, natural disasters or wars to live and work on the streets. The child must move his or her possessions from place to place when necessary.
- A **child in institutional care** has been homeless and is at risk of returning to the streets.

Source: World Health Organization

Generally, they have little or no contact with their families.

Despite the difficulties in identifying street children, enough information is available to help us understand what forced them onto the streets. Poverty, unemployment, family breakdown, child abuse and neglect are the main factors that cause minors to roam the streets of Cairo, Giza and other Egyptian cities. Precise numbers are not available but Egyptian experts estimate that between 200,000 and one million children are on the streets, often doing whatever it takes to survive.

To cope with their day-to-day problems, some street children resort to substance abuse. Studies carried out in Egypt indicate that inhalants top the list of drugs consumed. Children sniff glue to deal with the hunger, pain and violence they are exposed to on the streets. Glue is preferred because it is cheap, its effects are long-lasting and its withdrawal symptoms are mild. Glue is usually consumed in groups. Many youngsters also consume tobacco, cannabis and over-the-counter drugs. They are generally unaware of or indifferent to the numerous risks connected to substance abuse.

Dealing with street children requires efforts from Government, civil society and the children themselves. Clear and comprehensive policies are needed. With this in mind, in 2004 the Egyptian Government launched its National Strategy to Protect and Rehabilitate Street Children. The strategy is based on the principle that these children are victims who need support to be reintegrated into society. Government institutions, NGOs, UNODC and others have come together to make this happen. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood coordinates joint efforts throughout Egypt. Reception centres have been established to protect and rehabilitate street children, as well as a hotline for children at risk and on the streets, and a database to compile reliable data.

UNODC pays special attention to protecting street children from drugs. The Office has trained social workers in the treatment and rehabilitation of children abusing drugs. Workshops have also been organized to improve police officers’ understanding of the problem and to change the image they have of these vulnerable young people. The goal is to give Egyptian street children the chance of a better future.

► *Faisal Hegazy and Noha Chakkal from the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa and Nashaat Hussein contributed to this report.*



Photo: UNICEF/KENYA00766/ GUILLAUME BONN

“The first temptations to use drugs may come in the form of pressure to act grown up.”

Florence Mueni,
National Secretary of KNAPO

Kenyan children—aged 6 to 14—orphanded by AIDS. Some of their peers are drawn into drugs and crime.

KENYA

Drugs, crime and the law

In Kenya, there are children who consume and traffic drugs, are victims of drug-abusing families and live in drug-infested communities. Some of these kids have run-ins with the law.

The Kenya National Association of Probation Officers (KNAPO) reports that children start using drugs due to peer pressure and curiosity. “The first temptations to use drugs may come in the form of pressure to act grown up,” says Florence Mueni, KNAPO’s National Secretary.

Probation officers tell stories of children as young as 8 years old who started consuming drugs to “fit in” and “feel older.” Others try drugs to experience new sensations and are oblivious or indifferent to the risks. “They may not believe anything disastrous will happen to them,” Mueni says.

But drug use poses a serious health risk. The side effects depend on the type of drug, the quantity and the frequency of use. However, addiction may be only one puff, one high, away.

It is particularly easy for street children to become drug-dependent because they can be forced by older youngsters to buy inhalants and other drugs. If they refuse, they can be beaten up or ostracized.

Although middle-class and wealthier children may also experiment with drugs, they are less likely to get into trouble with the law than children from the slums. Slum-dwellers are more likely to come into contact with seasoned drug-users who convince them that drugs will help them cope with their tough lives.

Rehabilitation programmes

The Kenyan Government has acknowledged that very young children are sometimes responsible for offences such as drug possession, assault, theft and prostitution. All minors who come into conflict with the law are assigned to a probation officer who conducts an in-depth investigation into each offender, taking into consideration age, behaviour, family background and schooling. The probation officer then recommends appropriate actions.



Kenyan children playing football.

Several options are available to minors with drug-related problems, including non-custodial sentences and community service.

One variety of non-custodial sentence allows child offenders to stay in their communities under a probation officer's supervision. In this way, children can continue with school and avoid exposure to hardened criminals. The probation officer visits the child's home or school periodically and assesses progress together with his or her guardians, explains Christine Ochieng, Deputy District Probation Officer in the Kibera Law Courts. "If a child is expelled from school, the officer gets him or her admitted to another school. If the child comes from a poor background, the Probation Department will assist in paying school fees and, possibly, other financial needs," she says.

Child offenders who are removed from a hostile home environment are taken to a probation hostel, which serves as a temporary residence and training centre. There, they receive vocational training and drug counselling, participate in recreational activities and learn how to build healthy relationships. Offenders can stay at a hostel for up to one year while the probation officer tries to reunite them with their families.

The courts might order child offenders to perform community service for a limited period. Alternatively, they may be referred to the Children Services' rehabilitation schools or the Prisons Department's penal institutions. Probation officers also work with UNODC and NGOs

on drug abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Their common experience shows that troubled children need good role models who can help them make the right choices.

Children extend a helping hand to their peers

Peer pressure is one of the main factors prompting children to try illegal drugs. Although it is not common, some children start consuming cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana as early as 8 or 9 years of age. Harder drugs may follow.

But as John Mwai's story illustrates, children can also have a positive influence on their peers.

After his parents separated, John was sent to boarding school, where he was introduced to cigarettes, alcohol and bhang (a cannabis derivative), to which he became addicted. He was 7 years old. As a result of his addiction, John left school and started living on the streets in 2004.

The Government's free primary school initiative brought John back to school in early 2005. At Mashimoni primary school in Kibera, a slum on the outskirts of Nairobi, he learned about the dangers of drug abuse and received advice from the Peers Against Drugs Club.

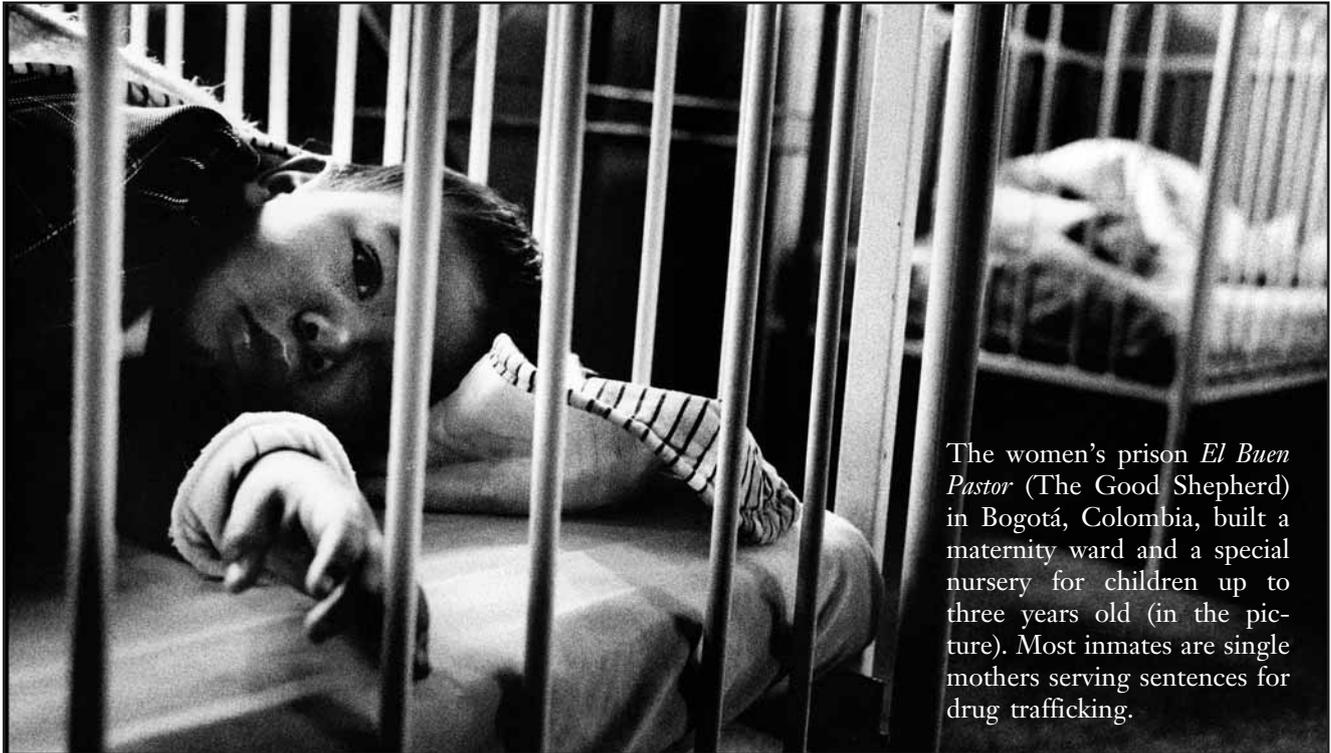
John was suffering from drug withdrawal symptoms, including depression. He was first referred to a professional counsellor and then to the Eastern Africa Regional Youth Network, an NGO alliance which UNODC supports. At one of the Network's peer training camps, John was introduced to a support group. Aside from playing together, these children helped each other recover from substance abuse.

At 10, John is concentrating on his studies and nurturing his football talent. He has enrolled in a peer-to-peer counselling programme to help spread information to youth clubs and to children with backgrounds similar to his own.

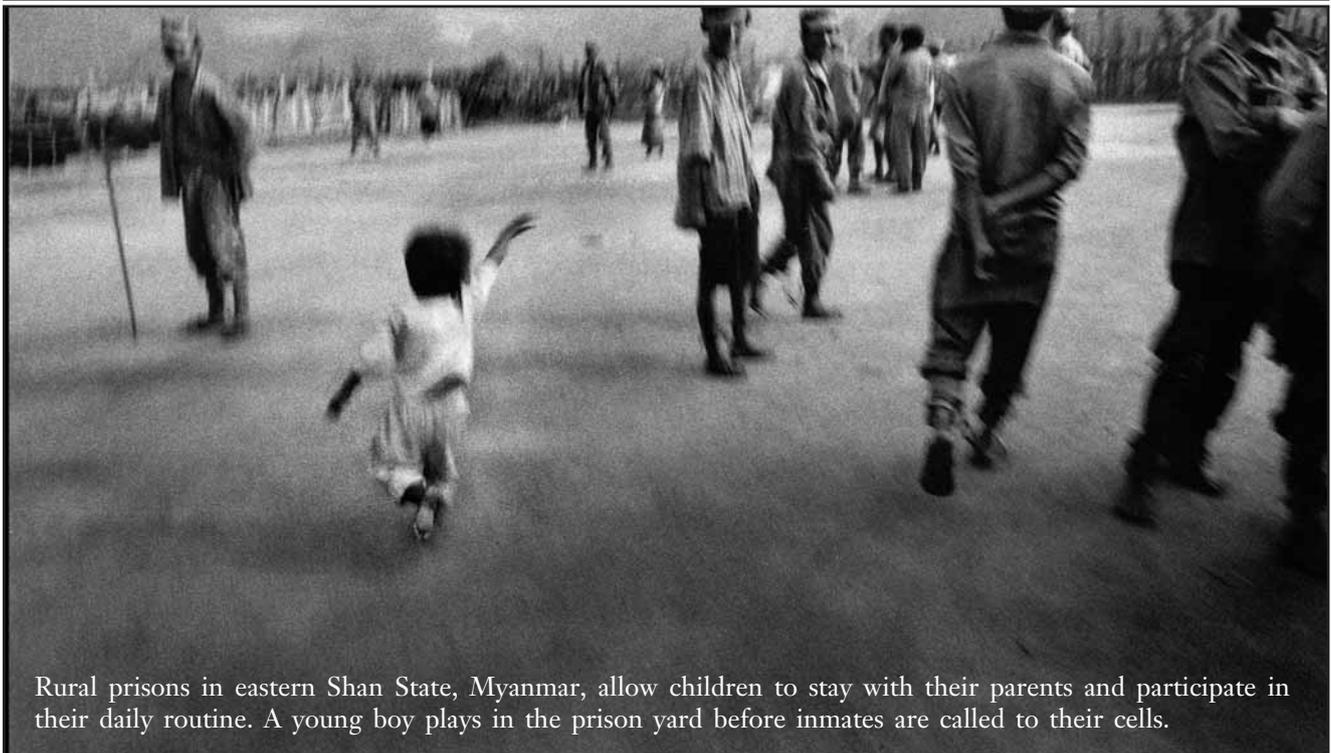
Reychad Abdool, John Gathecha and Jane-Marie Ongolo from the UNODC Regional Office in East Africa contributed to this report.

Behind bars

While working on a trilogy of books documenting the global drugs trade—*De Narcoticis*—UNODC Goodwill Ambassador Alessandro Scotti captured powerful images of some of the children affected by drug-related crimes. Instead of leaving them behind, incarcerated parents are sometimes given the opportunity to raise their children in prison. Conditions are not ideal but often these children have nowhere else to go.



The women's prison *El Buen Pastor* (The Good Shepherd) in Bogotá, Colombia, built a maternity ward and a special nursery for children up to three years old (in the picture). Most inmates are single mothers serving sentences for drug trafficking.



Rural prisons in eastern Shan State, Myanmar, allow children to stay with their parents and participate in their daily routine. A young boy plays in the prison yard before inmates are called to their cells.

INTERVIEW

Antonio Maria Costa charts road ahead for UN Office on Drugs and Crime

In an interview with Walter Kemp for *Perspectives*, the Executive Director considers his second four-year term.

As you begin your second four-year term as UNODC Executive Director, what opportunities and challenges do you see ahead?

The world is a dangerous place. Drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism damage communities and even threaten the integrity of States. UNODC has mandates to address these big issues. Our job is to prevent and tackle uncivil society. That's a tall order and a big responsibility for a relatively small office. There are growing expectations of what UNODC can deliver in terms of technical assistance, legal advice and research, and I want to ensure that we live up to those expectations. I would also like UNODC to be a flagship of reform where Member States can see that they get good value for their money.

Looking back, which field visits have had the most impact on you?

Every time I go to the field I learn something new. Of course, it is important to talk to ministers, diplomats and experts about UNODC's work. They are our stakeholders, and I need to hear first-hand what their priorities and interests are.

But it is just as important for me to get out into the streets, prisons and the countryside to see people whose lives are affected by drug addiction, to talk to police, visit prisons and fly to remote regions to meet farmers whom we are trying to help with alternative livelihoods. It is only by meeting such people and seeing the situation on the ground that you get a real appreciation of the challenges.

In some cases, the experiences can be gut-wrenching. I recently visited a park full of drug addicts in New Delhi which was the closest thing I have seen to Dante's vision of hell. In Nigeria, hearing the testimonials of women and girls who have been trafficked was deeply shocking.

But there can be other times where you feel that your work is having an impact—visiting treatment centres and meeting people who are bravely overcoming their drug addiction, or talking to farmers in Laos who are justifiably proud of the steps that they have taken to make their villages opium-free.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Firearms Protocol came into force in 2005. What can UNODC and Member States do to ensure that the promises made on paper are implemented?

The UN Convention against Corruption is the first of its kind. It covers prevention, criminalization, judicial collaboration and recovery of assets. Some of its provisions, like asset recovery, are truly revolutionary. Gone are the days when corrupt elites can retire comfortably to a sandy haven, living off ill-gotten gains in unmarked bank accounts. Borders and safe havens should no longer be an impediment to investigations or bringing guilty parties to justice. But of course this requires that countries actually implement the Convention. National legislation and international cooperation are starting to change in line with the Convention. This is very encouraging.

“ I recently visited a park full of drug addicts in New Delhi which was the closest thing I have seen to Dante's vision of hell.”

The Firearms Protocol has had less attention, and the rate of ratification has been slow. So greater ratification is a priority. In terms of implementation, the key is to work with States to make sure that their laws make the illicit manufacturing and illicit trafficking of firearms a criminal offence, to train law enforcement officials to improve their abilities to confiscate, seize and dispose of weapons, and to make sure that weapons are properly identified and traceable. Most modern conflicts are fought with small weapons, not tanks and artillery. The more that can be done to prevent and combat the flow of illicit firearms, the better the chances of keeping such weapons out of the hands of criminals, insurgents and terrorists.



Executive Director Costa speaks to a drug addict in New Delhi's "Needle Park."

You have described cannabis as the weakest link in the global drug control chain. Why?

The popular perception of cannabis is that it is a "soft" or "recreational" drug. The problem is that this lax approach creates a permissive environment for drug abuse. And cannabis can then become a gateway to other harder drugs. Worse than that, the psychoactive substances in cannabis (called THC) are becoming more potent. When I was at the University of California, Berkeley in the 1960s, the cannabis that some students were smoking had 2 or 3 per cent THC content. Today, THC levels of some of the higher-grade cannabis can be ten times as much. That makes cannabis not only more powerful, it makes it more dangerous, not least in its effect on health. So Governments need to have coherent policies on cannabis and to encourage more effective prevention and treatment.

What do you think of the argument that drugs should simply be legalized?

I disagree. Drugs are illegal because they are dangerous, they are not dangerous because they are illegal. People take drugs because they want to be stimulated or sedat-

ed. Either way, their brain changes. Would you want a pilot or train driver or the guy in the car coming towards you to be on drugs? Do we want to make drugs cheaper and increase the number of addicts? Legalization would worsen public health, not improve it. We cannot trade a greater threat to public health against a possible, theoretical decline in crime. Governments need to be able to protect health and provide security.

That being said, prison is not necessarily the best solution for drug addicts. More needs to be done to improve treatment. And heavy-handed eradication of coca or opium fields is not a panacea to reduce supply. There needs to be sustainable development in the drug-producing countries. In short, I am not at all in favour of legalization. But I would urge a more holistic approach to the world drug problem that looks at reducing demand and supply and disrupting the trafficking routes.

Human trafficking is another global problem that affects millions of people. Are we facing a modern form of slavery?

Yes we are. There is no other name for the practice of co-opting women and girls into the sex industry against their will, or forcing people—often young children—

“ I see UNODC as a conscience, reminding States of their commitments and helping them to live up to their own standards.”

into slave labour. States are slowly becoming more aware of this problem and taking steps to stop it and prevent it, but we have a long way to go. Like drugs, the problem is not only about trafficking. We also have to reduce demand and stop the supply. UNODC is very active in this process and we are fortunate to have a very committed Goodwill Ambassador in Julia Ormond. And we are working with States to encourage them to implement the UN Protocol against Human Trafficking.

Drug abuse has fuelled the spread of HIV/AIDS in certain regions. Is the international community doing enough to contain it?

No. There is still a lot of ignorance about HIV/AIDS. Education is key, as is leadership. The international community is trying hard and civil society is very active in trying to improve prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. But some Governments are either in denial or simply have not woken up to the extent and dangers of the problem. I am particularly concerned about the spread of AIDS through intravenous drug use. In some parts of the world this problem is reaching epidemic proportions. UNODC is particularly active in this field in Central Asia and India. But more action is necessary in other parts of the world.

Afghanistan is a mess and opium is a big part of the problem. What can UNODC do about it?

The situation is getting out of control, certainly in parts of the country. It is very troubling. Opium cultivation shot up this year after a welcome decline in 2005. The profits from the narco-economy are seductive in a country that is so poor and where money can buy power and influence. Drugs, corruption, crime and terrorism are mixed together in a dangerous cocktail. If there is one country that embodies all the things that UNODC works to prevent it is Afghanistan. UNODC measures the extent of opium cultivation in the country. Increasingly, I believe that we will have to help Afghanistan improve its drug treatment programmes since there is growing evidence that addiction is spreading within the country. We are working with Afghanistan and its neighbours to expose and disrupt drug trafficking routes and improve regional cooperation. There will be no long-term stability without sustainable development. So UNODC is working with Afghanistan and the international community to promote alternative development. We are also keeping a close eye on corruption and or-

ganized crime which have such a debilitating effect on Afghanistan's growth.

UNODC's mission is to make the world safer from crime, drugs and terrorism. How are these issues connected to each other?

Terrorists need money to carry out their attacks. Insurgents need money to survive and to buy weapons. In some cases, terrorism and insurgency are financed by the proceeds of illicit drugs or the profits from organized crime. Because drug trafficking is lucrative, it attracts some of the world's nastiest and most efficient criminal groups. Follow the drug routes from Colombia or Afghanistan to North America or Europe and you will see how drugs support criminal activity, and how this fuels corruption and instability. If we can stop the flow of drugs, prevent illicit revenue from being laundered, and break up the criminal networks that traffic people, guns and drugs, the world would be a safer place.

Is this really feasible?

Sadly, UNODC's star is rising in the international system because there is an increased need for a multilateral body that tries to control drugs and prevent crime and terrorism. I would like to pay tribute to the far-sightedness of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in merging the UN's drugs and crime programmes 10 years ago. UNODC has a big mission for such a small Office. We have to be realistic and identify those issues and areas where UNODC's involvement can make a difference. UNODC is at its best when it is helping others to help themselves, for example strengthening regional capacity or acting as a match-maker between development banks and farmers who need more support.

On the one hand, I see UNODC as a conscience, reminding States of their commitments and helping them to live up to their own standards. On the other hand, I see UNODC as a catalyst. Because we are small and operational, we can quickly bring an issue to light and seek solutions, paving the way for others with more momentum and leverage to come in behind us to bring about change. Is our mission feasible? It has to be. Otherwise drug abuse will spread, organized crime will infiltrate our societies, corruption will rot our Governments and businesses and we will live in fear of terrorism. That is not a vision of the world that I feel comfortable with.

2006 World Drug Report

The annual World Drug Report, UNODC's flagship publication, provides one of the most comprehensive overviews of illicit drug trends throughout the world. Largely based on data provided by Governments, the Report analyses the global illicit drug situation and the main drug markets. It also includes detailed statistics on drug production, seizures, prices and consumption.



Launching this year's World Drug Report in Washington, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa said trends in the global drugs market were moving in the right direction but Governments needed to step up their efforts to reduce both supply and demand.

"Drug control is working and the world drug problem is being contained," he said. "This is true whether we look over the long term or even just over the past few years."

Worldwide, some 200 million people, or 5 per cent of the population aged 15-64, used illicit drugs at least once in 2004, the latest year for which figures are available. Almost every country on Earth is affected.

One recent success story is Laos, which until the mid-1990s was the third largest illicit opium producer in the world. This country slashed its opium cultivation by 72 per cent in 2005 and is on the verge of becoming opium-free.

Despite the progress made in South-East Asia and elsewhere, the UNODC Report identifies three key weaknesses in the global drug control situation: heroin supply in Afghanistan, cocaine demand in Europe and cannabis supply/demand everywhere.

In Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer, the area under opium poppy cultivation fell 21 per cent to 104,000 hectares in 2005, the first such decline since 2001.

However, the Report warned that opium production was likely to increase again in 2006 (see interview with UNODC Executive Director Costa page 18).

Some encouraging trends were noted on the coca/cocaine market. Coca cultivation and cocaine production were broadly stable while seizures of cocaine rose to new highs. Global cocaine use declined slightly.

"Yet demand for cocaine is rising in Western Europe to alarming levels," Mr Costa said. "I urge European Union Governments not to ignore this peril. Too many professional, educated Europeans use cocaine, often denying their addiction, and drug abuse by celebrities is often presented uncritically by the media, leaving young people confused and vulnerable."

The 2006 World Drug Report devotes special attention to cannabis, the world's most abused illicit drug. Cannabis was used by an estimated 162 million people at least once in 2004, and consumption continued to increase. Cannabis is now considerably more potent than a few decades ago and evidence that cannabis use can cause serious mental illness is mounting.

"After so many years of drug control experience, we now know that a coherent, long-term strategy can reduce drug supply, demand and trafficking," Mr Costa concluded. "If this does not happen, it will be because some nations fail to take the drug issue sufficiently seriously and pursue inadequate policies. Many countries have the drug problem they deserve."

http://www.unodc.org/world_drug_report.html

Close-up of cannabis tops with resin.

Why should we care about cannabis?

Approximately 4 per cent of the world's adults—some 162 million people—use cannabis every year, making it the world's most widely used illicit drug. In spite of this, many basic facts about cannabis remain obscure.

By Ted Leggett

The 2006 UNODC World Drug Report devotes special attention to cannabis, arguing that the world should take this drug more seriously. Of particular concern are the growth in the drug's potency and indications that cannabis-related mental health risks may have been underestimated.

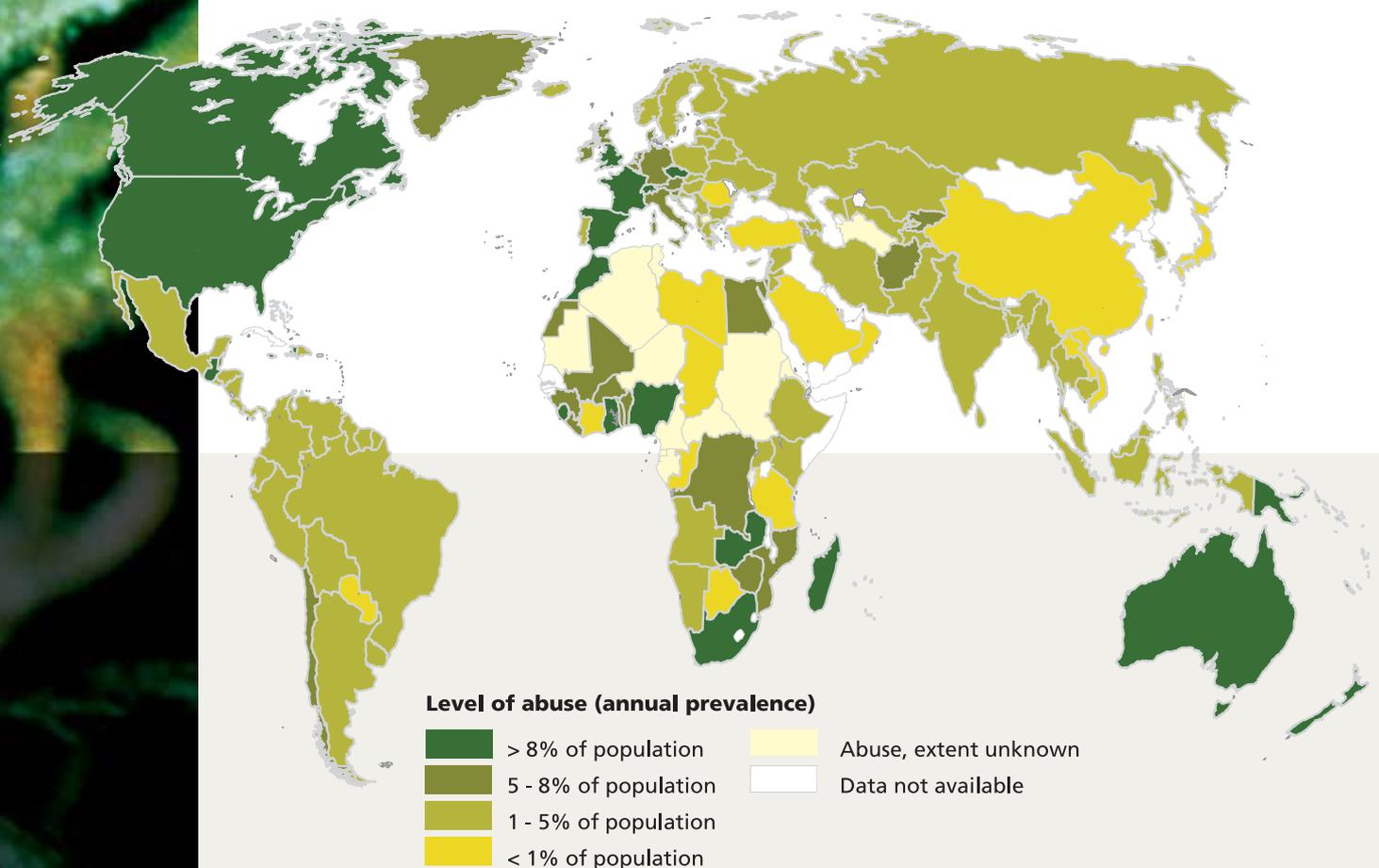
As cannabis can be grown in virtually any country, unlike most other illicit drugs, it is difficult to establish the exact origin of the world's supply. Very few Governments can give an accurate estimate of the number of hectares grown in their

own countries, and the amount of cannabis these fields produce can vary widely. Furthermore, cannabis is increasingly grown indoors in the developed nations, which means that users can, and do, grow their own.

Our understanding of cannabis consumption patterns is little better. In most markets, cannabis is relatively cheap, and unlike other drugs, it is not sold by precise weight. Surveys indicate that most users get the drug for free or buy it through friends and acquaintances. Casual users generally consume cannabis in groups, and only a small amount of the drug

USE OF CANNABIS 2003-2004 (or latest year available)

Source: World Drug Report 2006



is necessary to produce the desired high. Most users would find it difficult to say how much cannabis they actually smoke.

Diverse global markets

Cannabis is the dominant illicit drug in every region of the world and its use is growing almost everywhere. While not every cannabis market is transnational, in the sense that production occurs in a different country from consumption, the problem is truly international.

In economic terms, North America is the largest cannabis-consuming region. Mexico alone is responsible

for more than one-third of global herbal cannabis seizures. In spite of an aggressive eradication campaign, the country still supplies a large share of the massive United States market. High-potency indoor cann-

abis has come to dominate the Canadian market, which is another source of significant imports in the US. Africa comes second in the world in terms of herbal cannabis seizures, which is remarkable given the continent's limited law enforcement capacity. Africa is also home to the world's leading producer of cannabis resin, Morocco. Southern, West and East Africa all contain large cannabis-producing countries, but there is little specific data available about the scale of cultivation.

It is difficult to reconcile what is known about cannabis production in Central and South America with the available information on the extent

a major exporter beyond the region. Paraguay is reportedly the main source of the cannabis consumed in the Southern Cone and Brazil, and may be the single largest producer of herbal cannabis in the world.

Oceania has the world's highest annual usage levels, including those of Papua New Guinea, where an estimated 30 per cent of the adult population consumes the drug annually. Most countries in this region appear to be self-sufficient in their cannabis supply.

While much of Europe still prefers cannabis resin to herbal cannabis, this appears to be changing in many important markets. The

Cannabis is the dominant illicit drug in every region of the world, and its use is growing almost everywhere.

of cannabis use in the region. Although surveys indicate a relatively small user population, large cannabis seizures take place regularly. Moreover, with the exception of Colombia, no country is known to be

Netherlands, which has been in the vanguard of the indoor cannabis revolution, is named as an important supplier to at least 20 other countries. In Eastern Europe, Albania plays a similar role. Most of the

TYPES OF CANNABIS

Several drug types can be produced from the cannabis plant. They fall into three main categories:

- **Herbal cannabis**—the leaves and flowers of the plant. Also known as marijuana, ganja and other street names.
- **Cannabis resin**—the pressed secretions of the plant, commonly referred to as hashish in Western countries and charas in India.
- **Cannabis oil.**



The risk of becoming dependent on cannabis is higher than most casual users suspect. Around 9 per cent of those who try cannabis are unable to stop using it.

cannabis resin in Europe continues to be imported from Morocco, however.

Per capita usage levels are low in Asia, but because of its large population, the continent is home to the largest absolute number of cannabis users, an estimated one-third of the global total. A national survey has shown that 2.3 million people are dependent on cannabis in India alone. Central Asia is home to the world's largest wild cannabis fields, but it remains unclear to what extent these crops are harvested.

Potency growth and mental health implications

In recent years, the potency of sinsemilla cannabis, made from the unfertilized buds of the female plant, has doubled, according to studies done in key markets such as the Netherlands, the United States and

Canada. This is not surprising as cannabis breeders in these countries have been hard at work creating a more potent drug since the 1970s. And while sinsemilla is currently less widespread than herbal cannabis (marijuana) and cannabis resin (hashish), the market for high-potency, indoor-produced sinsemilla appears to be growing in many key consumption countries.

Recent research indicates that cannabis consumption may have greater mental health implications than previously believed. These two trends may in fact be related: as high-potency cannabis grows in popularity, the risks of consumption may become more immediate.

While more research is required to determine the impact of the 'new,' more potent cannabis, there has been an increase in the number of people complaining of 'unexpected effects' from consuming cannabis in emergency rooms in the United

States. Demand for treatment for cannabis-related problems in the US and Europe has increased as well.

Finally, the risk of becoming dependent on cannabis is higher than most casual users suspect. Around 9 per cent of those who try cannabis are unable to stop using it. Even when used only once, cannabis can produce panic attacks, paranoia, psychotic symptoms and other negative acute effects. The drug may also precipitate psychosis in vulnerable individuals and aggravate symptoms in diagnosed schizophrenics.

Ted Leggett is an expert in the Research and Analysis Section of UNODC.

For more information, please consult the World Drug Report at http://www.unodc.org/world_drug_report.html



In economic terms, North America is the largest cannabis consuming region.

Paraguay may be the single largest producer of herbal cannabis in the world.

Morocco is the world's leading producer of cannabis resin.

Oceania has the world's highest annual use levels, including those of Papua New Guinea, where an estimated 30 per cent of the adult population consumes the drug annually.

Using art to cope in prison

“Painting is very therapeutic for me.”

Astrid de Gooijer



This painting of Mother and Child won Astrid de Gooijer international recognition.

The prison where Astrid is incarcerated is home to 320 female inmates. However, there is also a much larger men's facility with 4,000 inmates next door, and they all live in difficult conditions. Both jails are overcrowded, which leads to riots, infectious diseases and even occasional hunger strikes.

Unfortunately, inmates have little opportunity to undertake rehabilitation or training while incarcerated as the Government has no capacity to offer these services. However, some volunteers, such as the chaplain Agustín Alcázar, help make inmates' lives a little brighter.

Astrid de Gooijer, a 60-year-old Dutch national imprisoned in Ecuador, recently won an international art competition for prisoners entitled "Discover the Face of Life." This contest, arranged by the International Commission for Catholic Prison Pastoral Care, received more than 1,500 entries from 49 countries.

Imprisoned on a drug charge for the past two years and still awaiting her trial, Astrid says that life in jail "is like hell" because there is nothing to do but wait. She started painting simply to pass time, without knowing about her talent. In fact, she was hesitant to enter her painting into the competition, but fellow inmates managed to persuade her. She still finds it hard to believe that she actually won.

"I started crying immediately when they told me the news," she says in her diary, excerpts of which were on display along with the winning picture. "Can you imagine that I am number one in the whole world? It's like a dream!"

"What I do most is evangelization," he says via e-mail. "But also, every 15 days I bring a doctor and two nurses to check up on the sick inmates, although sometimes there are no resources available to buy medicines for them."

Under these harsh conditions, art can serve as a coping mechanism where prisoners can express their often frustrated emotions in a constructive way. In fact, the women's prison has an informal painting school, which is where Astrid regularly paints, alongside inmates who share this interest.

"Painting is very therapeutic for me," she says, "and I enjoy it very much!"

Global Sport Fund

UNODC and the Qatar National Olympic Committee (QNOC) officially launched the Global Sport Fund in May, at an event featuring professional athletes and schoolchildren.

The athletes held sporting exhibitions and talked with the schoolchildren about the importance of a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. They emphasized that sport is about tolerance and cooperation as much as competition.

“When you play sport, it’s important to respect yourself, your mind and your body,” Dutch footballer Ronald de Boer told the schoolchildren. “You can’t play well or with focus if you’re involved in drugs or distracted by peer pressure.”



The Global Sport Fund (GSF), made possible by a generous contribution from Qatar, will provide grants to NGOs for projects that use sport to prevent drug use and criminal behaviour among young people. It will sponsor events, youth camps and exhibitions and hold training seminars for coaches and young people.

Dutch footballer Ronald de Boer.



UNODC Executive Director Costa (centre) at the GSF launch in Doha.

The creation of the GSF was inspired by the success of UNODC and QNOC in organizing the 2003 Football without Borders camp that brought together young people from Qatar, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait.

Based in Doha, Qatar, the GSF will reach out to young people and organizations worldwide.

For more information, please visit www.globalsportfund.com

26 JUNE 2006

Igor Cassina in Albania

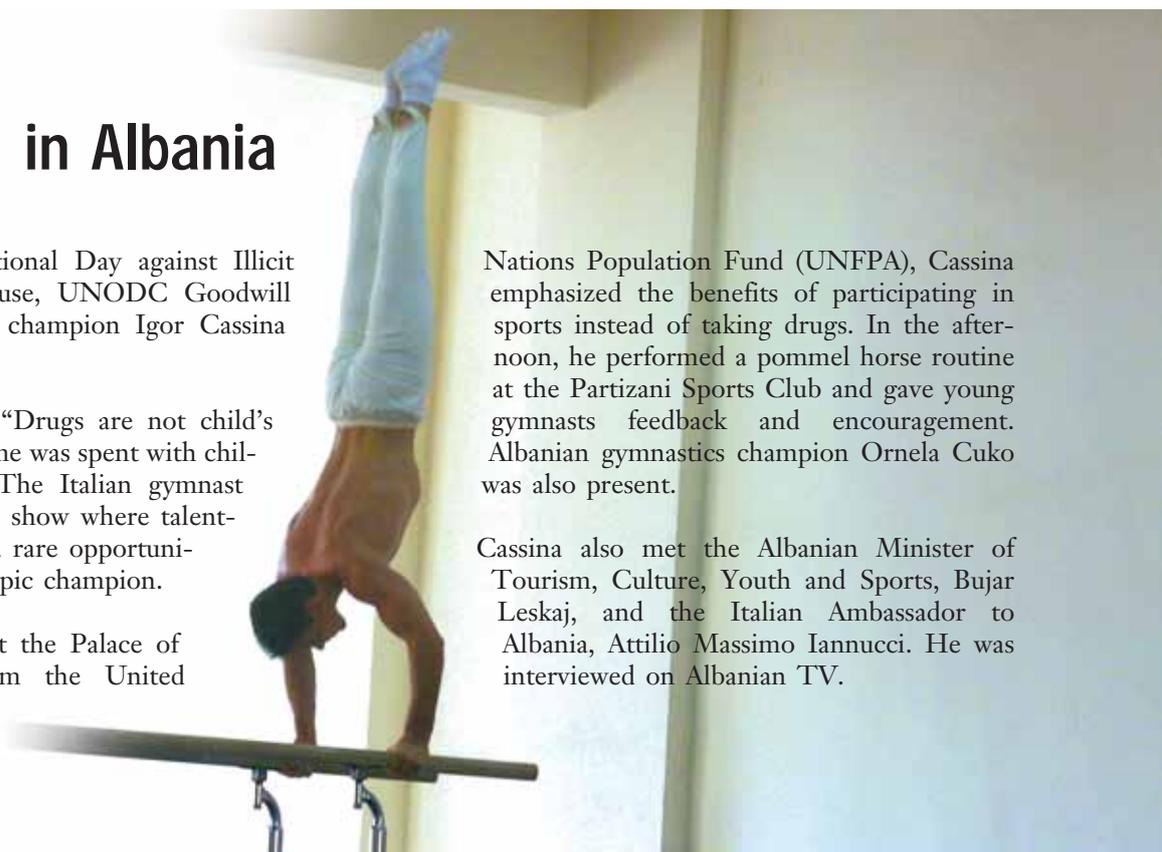
On 26 June, the International Day against Illicit Trafficking and Drug Abuse, UNODC Goodwill Ambassador and Olympic champion Igor Cassina visited Tirana, Albania.

As this year’s theme was “Drugs are not child’s play,” much of Cassina’s time was spent with children and young people. The Italian gymnast attended an aerobics/dance show where talented young people enjoyed a rare opportunity to perform for an Olympic champion.

At this event, organized at the Palace of Sports with support from the United

Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Cassina emphasized the benefits of participating in sports instead of taking drugs. In the afternoon, he performed a pommel horse routine at the Partizani Sports Club and gave young gymnasts feedback and encouragement. Albanian gymnastics champion Ornela Cuko was also present.

Cassina also met the Albanian Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Bujar Leskaj, and the Italian Ambassador to Albania, Attilio Massimo Iannucci. He was interviewed on Albanian TV.





DRUGS

are not
child's play

✓ **Families.** Teach children values and life skills. Love and support your kids so they develop into healthy adults.

✓ **Teachers.** Build children's confidence and self-esteem. Educate kids about drug use and guide them to make healthy choices.

✓ **Children.** Be responsible towards yourselves and your friends. Aside from studying and playing together, inform each other about the dangers of drug use.

Society has a responsibility to protect children from drugs. Home, school and the playground should be safe for kids. As individuals and communities, pay attention to warning signs and address drug-related problems. Get involved in keeping children and drugs apart!



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