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Follow-up to the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem**UNODC Handbook on Youth Participation in Drug Prevention Work******I. Introduction**

1. The goal of this Handbook is to offer encouragement, examples, rationale, and concrete advice on how to increase youth participation in substance use prevention, harnessing their insights on the most important target group of prevention – their peers. It is designed to support all decision makers to capitalize on the power of youth participation, exploring their full potential as a force for change. The guidance is targeted to leaders, who are in charge of substance use prevention and health promotion for their constituencies at local, regional, national or international level.
2. This Handbook provides an overview of youth participation, and what role it might play in prevention. It seeks to convey the value of evidence-based prevention in building healthy, and prosperous communities and societies, and the value of youth as important contributors on it. By so doing, it seeks to contribute to the normalization of youth participation in prevention.
3. Among its key messages, it seeks to unravel the misconception that young people have limited capabilities to contribute to substance use prevention. In addition to dismantling the hesitation to include youth based on perceptions of their limited potential, it also seeks to raise caution on the possible undesired outcomes of involving youth merely for the sake of visibility, contributing to an environment of tokenism. Finally, it also seeks to address the misconception that merely being a youth and interested in being involved in substance use prevention is sufficient to achieve prevention outcomes.
4. This guidance document stresses that purposeful, ethical youth participation warrants education for all parties involved, not only on evidence-based prevention, but also on youth participation itself. Decision makers and professionals deserve

* E/CN.7/2020/1.

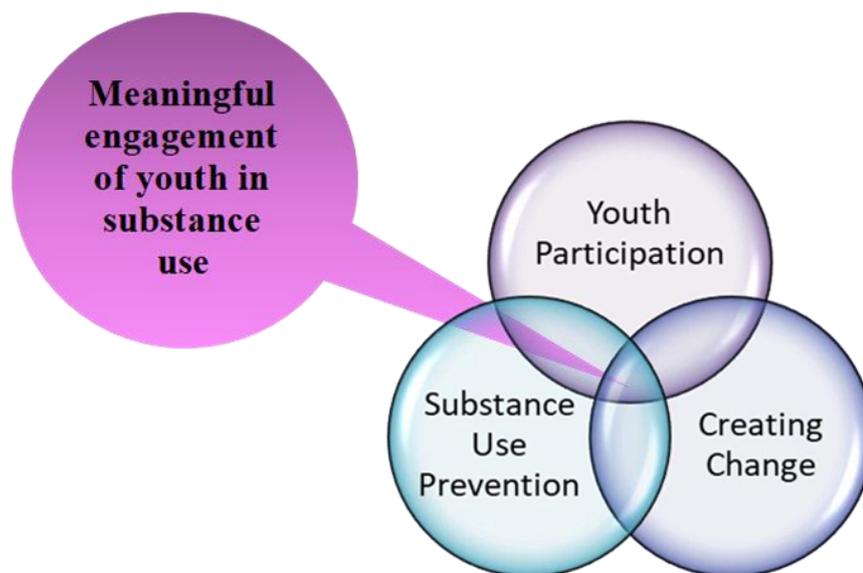
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capacity-building on how to create meaningful participation for young people. Similarly, researchers could benefit from support and training on how to carry out research, both with and for young people. It is equally important to ensure education, training and development for the participating youth. Only sufficient guidance and other organizational support will enable youth to play a meaningful role in the process. Well informed and trained policymakers, leaders and youth are a key component for ethically planning, implementing and evaluating effective substance use prevention.

5. There exists research and guidance on involving youth in political structures or in work related to health and social care and intended to support positive youth development (see i.e. South Australian Government, 2016; UNDESA; Project Y.A.D.; Catalano et al 2019). However, the available research is much scarcer when looking specifically at substance use prevention with active and meaningful roles for youths. This guide aims to open that discussion and create a platform for future research efforts. The guide at hand is based on an overview of the scientific literature and database searches and grounds itself in the real-life case-studies shared by the UNODC Youth Initiative participants and guidance offered by the globally representative expert group assembled during the development of this guide.

6. The call to develop such guidance was initially raised by youth participants during the 2018 UNODC Youth Forum. UNODC annually gathers youth, active in their communities for substance use prevention, to exchange views and experiences, to learn from each other and from experts, and to present their views on substance use prevention to the global representative participating in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, those policy leaders making decisions on the global action to address the world drug problem. It is hoped the Handbook will support creating possibilities for yet more young people to contribute to substance use prevention in their communities, societies and at the level of global policies.



II. Definitions

7. This section provides a set of definitions that are critical to frame the conversation. Many of the words and concepts used in this Handbook may be interpreted differently in different contexts. The following definitions are provided for the purpose of this document and in an attempt to create a common understanding.

8. Engagement is a two-way process generating mutual benefit (i.e. a prevention activity carried out by or with youth with the intent of producing positive outcomes for the participating youth as well as those targeted by the activity).

9. Involvement is a process by which a person or persons actively participate in meaningful activities along a continuum from less active and autonomous roles, such as being a recipient of a prevention activity, to more active roles, such as being an informant or key stakeholder in the process of planning effective prevention systems and activities.

10. Participation is a sustained and meaningful participation of youth in an activity focussed outside of one self; i.e. taking part in a prevention activity or activities in a way that allows one's efforts and achievements to be recognized, provides opportunities to learn and to contribute to something larger than themselves.

11. Protective factors can buffer the negative influence of risk, reducing the likelihood that youth will get involved in substance use.

12. Risk factors are characteristics of the individual or his/her environment (community, school, family, peer group) that research has found can increase the probability of an individual getting involved in substance use.

13. Substance use will refer to a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. "Substances" can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all.

14. Substance use prevention is defined here as helping people, often particularly young people, to avoid or delay initiation into the use of substances, or, if they have started already, to avoid developing disorders and other negative consequences.

15. Often, substance use prevention strategies are effective for preventing the use of all substances, and it may not be possible to differentiate strategies for the prevention of the use of specific substances. Naturally, exceptions occur, such as the prevention of licit substances, the use of which may be effectively prevented by controlling the price, availability and advertisement of them.

16. Good prevention exists in the context of health-centred substance use policies, that encompass both demand and supply reduction, and within demand reduction address also treatment as well as the prevention of the health and social consequences of substance use. Effective substance use prevention addresses the predictors or root causes of substance use often many years before the youth would engage in substance using behaviours. Effective prevention reduces the risk factors that increase the probability of engaging in drug use and strengthens the protective factors that buffer youth from risk. This document focuses on the prevention of substance use as defined above.

17. Youth is understood as anyone between the ages of 11 and 29, in line with the United Nations definition (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). The meaning of youth can vary at the local level and may be influenced by socioeconomic and cultural contexts.

III. United Nations commitment to both prevention and youth participation

18. The world today is home to the largest generation of youth in the history, 1.8 billion (United Nations Youth Strategy, 2018). The United Nations at large is

committed to amplifying youth voices, to increasing their agency, reach and impact, as manifested in the United Nations Youth Strategy, a United Nations-wide document. The involvement and empowerment of youth in the global development processes is an overarching goal in United Nations-wide frameworks. Youth are recognized as a major resource for all development efforts, with their active involvement and leadership required to fully and sustainably reach the global developmental goals. (United Nations Youth Strategy, 2018) (United Nations, 1990).

19. In the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Member States of the United Nations have endorsed the right of all children to express their viewpoints and to be heard in all matters affecting them as summarized in the 1996 DESA report (DESA, 1996). This is a strong base for advancing the participation of children and youth in drug prevention efforts and in the wider work and political discussions on supporting child and youth well-being.

20. Additionally, this document has been developed within the umbrella of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These have been developed as a framework and a call to action for all countries to promote prosperity while protecting our resources. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand in hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The United Nations Secretary General has made a strong commitment to involving youth in all aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in fact promoting youth as the leaders of change as part of the United Nations Youth Strategy.

21. Under the context of UNODC's programme of work in drug use prevention, there are a number of measures that support and complement youth participation. The UNODC Youth Initiative aims to connect young people from around the globe and empower them to become active in their schools, communities and youth groups for substance use prevention and health promotion. It provides a platform for youth to share their experiences, ideas and creativity, and to get support for creating their own substance use prevention and health promotion activities. The Youth Forum is an annual event organized by the UNODC Youth Initiative in the broader context of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the governing body of the UNODC in matters related to drugs. The main objective of the Youth Forum is to gather young people nominated by Member States and active in the field of drug use prevention, health promotion and youth empowerment from around the world. The aim is to allow them to exchange ideas, visions and different perspectives on how to better protect the health and well-being of their peers and provide them with an opportunity to convey their joint message to the global level policymakers. In fact, the idea of this Handbook originated from the 2018 Youth Forum and 2019 Youth Forum, where youth created a list of do's and don'ts that became the framework for this document.

22. The Youth Forum is often a life-changing experience to the participants – the forum allows for networking among the participants as well as learning from the experiences of other youth from different regions of the world on UNODC and on global policymaking structures and discussions in the field of drug use prevention and health promotion. Participatory thematic discussions facilitated by UNODC experts lead to the development of a short consensus statement by the youth to be delivered to the delegates of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the policy making body of UNODC. This Handbook on youth participation rests firmly on a process that not only engaged the youth but empowered the youth to inform high-level policymakers at the international level.

23. UNODC also supports a strong drug use prevention global programme. Prevention strategies based on scientific evidence working with families, schools, and communities can ensure that children and youth, especially the most marginalized and poor, grow and stay healthy and safe into adulthood and old age. Policymakers are often focused on a cost-benefit ratio and by some estimates, for every dollar spent on prevention, it is estimated ten can be saved in future health, social and crime costs.

24. As a support to Member States and practitioners on drug prevention around the world, UNODC has developed the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention which can be found at www.unodc.org/documents/prevention/standards_180412.pdf. The International Standards summarize the currently available scientific evidence, describing interventions and policies that have been found to result in positive prevention outcomes and their characteristics. Concurrently, the document identifies the major components and features of an effective national drug prevention system. The aim of the International Standards is to assist policymakers worldwide to develop programmes, policies and systems that are a truly effective investment in the future of children, youth, families and communities. The International Standards were developed with and recognize the work of many other organizations in the field of drug demand reduction such as the World Health Organization, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, and Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission Organization of American States.

25. The International Standards have been recognized by Member States as a useful tool to promote evidence-based prevention, with reference made in a number of high-level policy documents and statement including but not limited to, the Joint Ministerial Statement on the midterm review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action and Resolutions 57/3, 58/3/58/7, 59/6, 60/7, 61/2 and 61/9 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

IV. What is Prevention

26. The use of alcohol, nicotine products, drugs and other psychoactive substances are major public health problems globally. Substance use is associated with a wide range of negative consequences for health: accidents, violence, stigma, chronic health conditions such as dependence, cardiovascular and infectious diseases, cancers, and much more.

27. Moreover, substance use and its negative consequences can have a profound negative impact on the development of youth, and compromise their educational paths, work life and contribution to society. For communities and societies, substance use can result in significant toll for example in terms of social, legal and lost-productivity costs. Substance use most commonly begins in adolescence, and youth are globally the most common target group for the efforts to prevent substance use.

28. Substance use, and its negative consequences, can be prevented. There are an array of evidence-based strategies available to conduct effective prevention in families, schools, health-care settings and elsewhere. These strategies are based on influencing the root causes (sometimes called “protective” and “risk” factors) behind substance use. These can range from adverse early experiences and compromised parenting to certain personality traits and mental health disorders, from quality of and attachment to schooling to the availability and visibility of substance use, from genetic predispositions to growing up in deprived communities, to name just a few. (Hawkins, J. David, Catalano, Richard F., Miller, Janet Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: Implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 64–105).

29. A myriad of health determinants within the individual, family, school, peer, community and societal domains interact with each other in complex ways and influence the entire developmental trajectories of individuals. This illustrates why substance use prevention is not easy. In fact, many of the popular measures used to prevent substance use, such as only providing information on the dangers of drugs, or alternative afterschool activities as a stand-alone activity, may not be effective for preventing substance use, as they do not successfully impact these root causes.

30. Successfully influencing these health determinants may result in positively influencing development beyond substance use behaviour: to support mental health, family functioning, scholastic attainment. Substance use prevention can be seen as

supporting the healthy and safe development of children and youth in general. Also, against this background it is not surprising that using evidence-based prevention strategies that target many risk and protective factors that are common for a variety of significant outcomes can be cost effective while preventing future health and social care and law enforcement related costs and enhancing productivity in future working life (Pentz, 1998) (Spoth, 2002).

31. The primary objective of drug prevention is to help people, often particularly young people, to avoid or delay initiation into the use of drugs, or, if they have started already, to avoid developing disorders and other negative consequences. Prevention also has a broader purpose, which is to support the development of children and youth allowing them to realize their talents and potential (UNODC, 2013).

32. The interventions and policies that have been found to be efficacious or effective in preventing substance use are described in the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention (UNODC, 2013 and 2018). The starting point of this Handbook is that in order to be ethical, all prevention activities need to be grounded on evidence. Otherwise they will risk wasting resources, motivation, time and energy for activities not contributing to the well-being of the targeted population. In the worst case, poorly planned and executed prevention activities might even result in adverse outcomes for the targeted or the participating youth.

Picture 1

Summary of evidence-based strategies identified in the UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention – Adapted from: UNODC (2019), Summary of evidence-based strategies identified in the UNODC/WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention – Second Updated Edition, Pre-publication version

	Prenatal & infancy	Early childhood	Middle childhood	Early adolescence	Adolescence	Adulthood
Family	Prenatal & infancy visitation Interventions for pregnant women		Parenting skills			
School		Early childhood education	Personal & social skills education Classroom management Policies to keep children in school	Prevention education based on social competence and influence School-wide programmes to enhance school attachment	Addressing individual vulnerabilities	
Community				School policies on substance use Alcohol & tobacco policies	Community-based multi-component initiatives	
				Media campaigns Mentoring	Prevention programmes in entertainment venues	
Workplace					Workplace prevention programmes	
Health sector	Interventions for pregnant women		Addressing mental health disorders			Brief intervention

A. Settings, Ages and Stages in prevention

33. Often, the most important risk and protective factors influencing substance use are specific to a certain developmental stage. Hence, each developmental stage requires different approaches. This is illustrated in the International Standards that are grounded on a developmental perspective (see picture 1). Effective prevention systems offer strategies across the different periods of life.

34. Furthermore, prevention can take place across many different settings (e.g., community, school, family). In successful prevention systems, the interventions and policies are not limited to one setting, such as education sector, but are delivered across the various societal sectors by multiple different actors.

35. Prevention activities can be executed at universal, selective and indicated level. This means activities targeted to populations at large, to specific groups who show early signs of the problem behaviour, or to individuals identified to have elevated risk levels. A good prevention system encompasses all these modalities and each warrants different considerations. For example, at-risk youth might require more support to be able to take part safely and contribute meaningfully, in order to minimize the dangers or risks of them reinforcing negative peer norms when engaging in prevention.

36. High-risk youth might have pre-existing prevention related needs which are critical to consider when working with youth. A general statement is that when working with youth, you begin by being respectful and create an environment in which they can freely share not only their ideas but their needs, which in turn, inform effective prevention efforts. Listening to youth on what kind of support, as well as where and when they would wish to receive it, for coping better can be a crucial step for developing accessible preventive activities with and for them.

37. Prevention is often delivered at universal level, to populations at large, which for some policymakers is the most desirable and perceived to be the most impactful. At the universal level, the targeted populations are inclusive and although there may be youth with specific needs related to prevention, the aim is to strengthen a variety of individual and social supports thus countering risk factors. It should be noted that effective prevention at the universal level may include things such as prenatal care classes that are inclusive of all pregnant women or skills-based education programmes for adolescents in a school setting. In both those examples, the focus is not directly on substance use, but rather the intended outcome is for a decrease in future substance use.

V. What is Participation?

38. Youth participation can be defined as a sustained and meaningful involvement of youth in an activity focused outside of themselves. In the context of substance use prevention, it can mean taking part in the processes to plan and initiate, to implement and to evaluate prevention related programmes, policies, or discussions such as participating on a Prevention Council and assisting to develop a comprehensive approach to reduce underage drinking. It can happen at an individual, social or systemic level. The intensity of youth participation can range from serving as informants or recipients of the activities to having full decision-making power over the activities (see also i.e. Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2003; Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's, 2018; Pancer, 2002).

39. Participation can be described with different terminology, and from a more complex perspective, can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the context and discussion. "Engagement" is often used to refer to a two-way process generating mutual benefit, such as prevention activities carried out by or with youth. "Involvement", on the other hand, may be used to refer to less active and autonomous roles, such as prevention activities carried out to or on youth.

40. "Participation" is often used as an umbrella term to comprise all the different dimensions of engaging or working with youth, and it is the term used in this Handbook. It is used here to refer to the different ways to involve young people at the different stages of prevention activities, in a way that allows them to be recognized, express themselves, learn and contribute to something larger than themselves.

A. Different tiers and dimensions of participation

41. Engagement of youth is often conceptualized as a continuum from non-participation, where young people are manipulated or used as tokens, to full participation, where young people and adults share decision making equally. These stages of engagement are illustrated in the ladder of participation model (Hart, 1992) (picture 2).

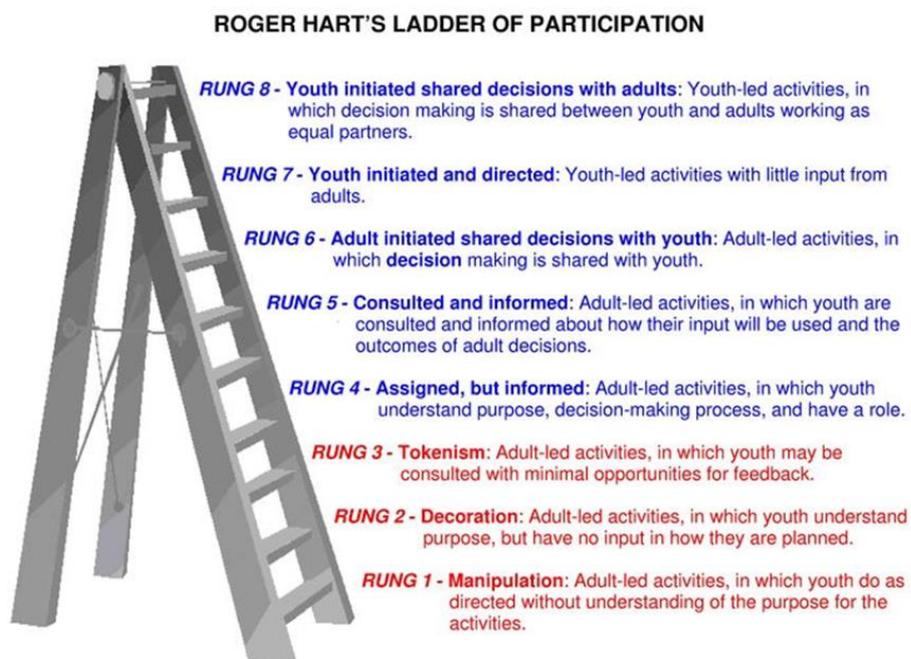
42. Hart's model implies that some forms of youth participation might be non-productive and have unintended, or even negative outcomes for the participating youth. It is important to reflect on the nature of the participation and make every effort to recognize and terminate such non-genuine forms of participation. These can include using youth only to gain publicity or buy-in or inviting youth to take part without transparently outlining the purpose and process. In contrast, the ladder model implies that there is almost always potential for strengthening youth involvement and their sense of ownership.

43. Furthermore, the model provides an important tool for differentiating between different types and levels of participation. Different tiers of participation require different levels of resources – typically more intense participation warrants more time and support for the participating youth and other stakeholders. When setting the goals and planning prevention activities, it is important to strategically establish realistic levels of youth participation without compromising the quality of the activities or the safety of the participating youth. For genuine participation, it is essential to communicate transparently with the participating youth. Consider the answer to the following questions in advance:

- What are the possibilities for them to take part?
- What are the expected outcomes of the activity?
- What support is offered?
- And what inputs are expected from them?

Picture 2

Ladder of participation (adapted from Hart, R. 1992)

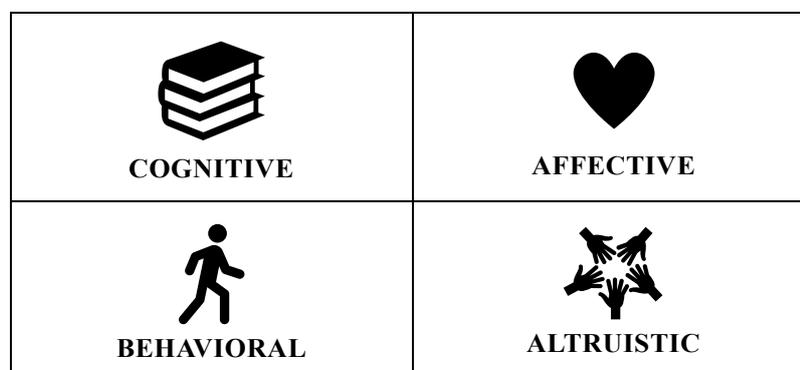


Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, as cited in www.freechild.org/ladder.htm

44. An alternative way of conceptualizing what meaningful, or “genuine”, participation looks like is to divide the participation into a cognitive component (such as learning), an affective component (such as experiencing pleasure from the participation), and behavioural component (such as spending time in realizing activities) (Pancer, 2002). In addition, yet another dimension central for rewarding participation is often suggested to be the opportunity to contribute and have positive influence on to something larger than oneself (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2003) (Centres of excellence for children’s well-being) (Lerner, 2005). This can be illustrated as in the diagram below.

Picture 3

Four dimensions of participation: cognitive, affective, behavioural, altruistic



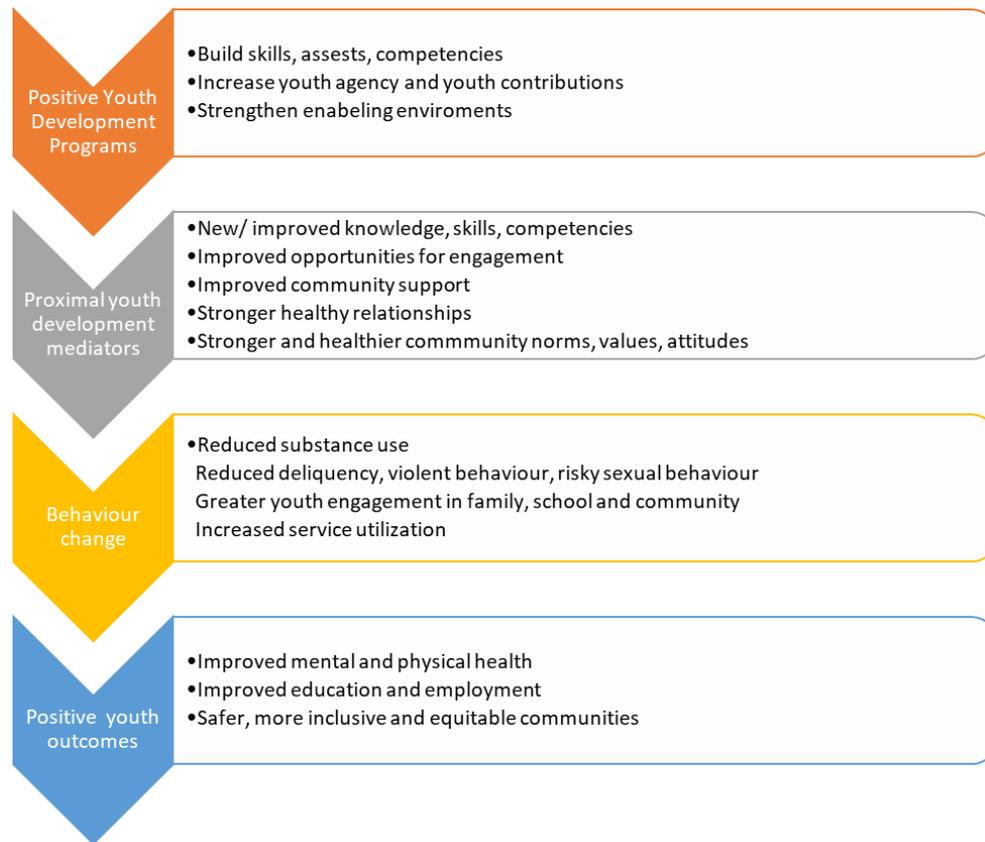
B. Value of Participation in Prevention

45. Connecting with and contributing to something larger than one self can be a fundamental element in the successful development of a young person (Lerner, 2005). Participation, empowerment and health and well-being are often seen as interconnected (Jennings, 2006). Substance use prevention has been conceptualized as supporting the socialization process, namely adapting to active contributing roles within different family, education, leisure, work and societal communities (Kellam et al, 1975).

46. Conversely, facilitating active youth participation can support youth well-being and, simultaneously, also positive prevention outcomes. The Positive Youth Development (PYD) literature offers one theoretical framework for facilitating the active engagement of youth for supporting their general development and, as part of it, less substance use (Dell, 2013; Catalano, 2019). It offers a way to conceptualize and identify the various developmental assets of young people, which can be supported for sustaining their healthy and positive development. Its theoretical framework offers a tool for distinguishing the core dimensions of positive youth development the preventive activities can target – their assets, agency, contribution and enabling environments.

47. The model below offers a step-by-step approach to structure healthy and positive development around prevention initiatives.

Picture 4
Logic model for impacting positive youth development (Catalano et al., 2019)



48. Many programmes seek to engage youth actively via increasing their agency, and to impact the personal and environmental risk and protective factors, or “developmental assets”, that are influencing their risk to experience harms arising from substance use (Bonell et al, 2016) (Catalano, 2019).

49. However, there remains a lack of available research clarifying the essential components which bring forth those positive effects. This may in part be due to the heterogeneity of positive youth development efforts and the varying quality of the evaluations conducted in this regard (Catalano, 2019; Greenwald, 2006; Bonell et al, 2016; Melendez-Rorrez et al, 2016). The potential benefits of youth involvement in prevention activities as youth service deliverers, and not just beneficiaries, include improvements on indicators related to:

- Academic achievement;
- School engagement;
- School attendance;
- Prosocial peer associations;
- Emotional resiliency;
- Alcohol and drug use;
- Violence and;
- Teen pregnancy (Toumborou et al 2019 – submitted for publication).

50. The mechanisms via which participation leads to empowerment, health and well-being are manifold. Participation in social activities in general can provide possibilities to form positive relationships with peers and supportive adults (Camino, 2000). For example, youth can find opportunities to experience friendship, skills development, fun, and pride of accomplishment (Poland, 2002). Youth participation

in programme design can increase accessibility or relevance of prevention activities for the targeted youth (Dunne, 2017) (Paterson, 2008).

51. For a decision maker, supporting more youth engagement can offer a means to increase the relevance of activities seeking to support youth well-being and prevent substance use among them. It can facilitate making the programmes more accessible, attractive and relevant to youth, or for harnessing the power of youth for advocating for policies and practices supporting the well-being of youth and taking in to account issues important for them. It can offer a way to nurture future leaders. Engaging youth in prevention can bear benefits not only for the participating youth, but also for their peers and to the society at large.

C. How to enable successful youth participation across different tiers and dimensions

52. Youth participation can take many different forms and none of the forms is “optimal” – the best roles for a given situation would need to be decided based on the local needs and possibilities. This could range from youth being consulted, to youth controlling the entire process with adults acting as supporters. Youth can participate in designing, delivering and evaluating programmes and interventions seeking to prevent substance use among their peers, or to support positive youth development in general. At a more structural level, the roles for youth could relate to influencing national or local policies or community practices via formal channels such as guiding boards or youth councils, or via more informal channels such as community efforts centred around specific issues. These possible roles are discussed in more detail in the next chapter that will give some concrete examples to spark the imagination of a person who wishes to create such opportunities.

53. Being clear about the scope and purpose of youth participation creates more realistic expectations for the participating youth contributing to a more rewarding experience. Ensuring that the goals are realistic, and achievable, within the given time and resources, is an essential component contributing to genuine participation. Communicating these goals to all stakeholders, and monitoring and evaluating the progress in achieving them, followed by communicating successes or setbacks, are essential building blocks for facilitating sustained motivation and success in youth participation.

D. Match the level of participation to the available resources and organizational readiness

54. Youth participation can be a very valuable means to contribute to achieving prevention goals. Sometimes building possibilities and capacities for sustained participation can be a sole goal in and of itself, as the mere act of participating might be protective against substance use and other detrimental developmental outcomes. For example, schools that support prosocial behaviours and active student involvement typically have less substance use, demonstrating participation is protective. However, full youth participation does not always fit all goals or all situations.

55. Working with youth can require significantly more time than working with professionals tasked to work for youth. Genuinely listening to youth or inviting them to participate in the agenda setting and other stages of the work could create less predictable and time efficient processes than when limiting the input of youth or discouraging youth participation. Furthermore, more active forms of participation often warrant various support for the participating youth. (Poland, 2002) (Powers, 2006) (Brady, 2018).

56. Thus, to identify the optimal and desired level of participation it is critical to consider the resources available, and that are sustainable. Planning for more intensive

participation than what the resources allow for risks raising unrealistic expectations among the participating youth. Moreover, intensive participation might require disproportional input from the participating youth, running the risk of exploiting their time and contribution. It might be helpful to remember that there are many options for a more limited youth participation, that will still be valuable and may be a better match for the youth and the organization. Often, informing the stakeholders affected by the given activity or policy and consulting them about their vested interests and opinions will already make very important contribution to prevention planning.

E. Communicate expectations and possibilities transparently

57. Ethical youth engagement is transparent on all levels. All participants must be aware of the expectations, including an awareness of what level of youth participation can be supported, as well as what is expected from youth or offered to them. It may be useful to use Hart's ladder of participation discussed earlier in the document, to assist in identifying the readiness and needs for youth participation in a given organization. Additionally, Shrier (2001) has suggested a set of questions, available in appendix 1, to determine the readiness to work with youth analysing the following areas:

- The need to listen to youth,
- The ability to enable youth to express themselves,
- The desire to take youth insights in to account, and
- The courage to involve youth in decision making or to share power with them equally. (Appendix 1; (Paterson, 2008) (Shrier, 2001).

58. Without being able to listen and take in to account of youth, shared decision making is not feasible.

F. Make youth participation accessible, safe and relevant

59. Creating an environment that considers, and ultimately values the needs of youth is essential. Ensuring that the participating youth receive enough guidance and other support, is important for ensuring a meaningful and emotionally rewarding experience for the participating youth. Accessible, safe and meaningful youth participation is facilitated by taking the following components into account:

- Provide a transparent and well-justified power-sharing between the youth and the adults;
- Possibilities to learn new skills, and receive guidance;
- Work in a structured environment according to a structured plan;
- Engage in activities that have a fair chance to positively impact the community or target group;
- Provide opportunities for active involvement, to optimize skill development and meaningful recognition;
- Ensure an accessible venue for meetings and activities;
- Account for the needs of youth when considering issues such as timing and language;
- Create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere;
- Consider support for transportation, meals, and other expenses;
- Proactively consider other needs of the participating youth by asking the youth themselves.

60. Additionally, meaningful participation requires that sufficient time is allowed for the planning, implementation, evaluation and for reaching the expected outcomes. Also, it can mean increasing the readiness of the adults initiating the activity, and of the organization within which they operate, to engage with the participating youth and value their contribution. It may help to focus on the strengths of youth to create a welcoming atmosphere, rather than focusing on their vulnerabilities which would be less conducive to valuable youth participation.

61. When engaging with at-risk youth, or with youth experiencing marginalization, these considerations are particularly important. These youth might require more support to enable them to fully participate. The risk of creating non-genuine participation might be even greater with them, as the participation might be more easily limited to mere attendance without the needed support – explaining why only occasionally involving at-risk youth has been criticized as tokenism (Paterson, 2008). On the other hand, genuine investment is well justifiable as the viewpoints and needs of at-risk or vulnerable youth are often less well represented in the public discussions or planning for services and prevention work.

62. It is important to be conscious that youth participation, when not executed well, may have detrimental effects on the participating youth, and that at-risk youth might be particularly vulnerable to such iatrogenic effects (Ferreira et al, 2012) (Paterson, 2008). For example, the possible needs for anonymity and confidentiality of at-risk or marginalized youth who do not wish to get “outed” to all parties is one important consideration to take into account in targeted or indicated level activities, as participants might get stigmatized and labelled through the selection process or their participation (Sorhaindo, 2016) (Paterson, 2008) (Dunne, 2017).

63. To make the engagement feasible and rewarding for all youth, intentionally plan ways in which youth can adapt their level of engagement and the intensity of their efforts according to their changing capabilities, resources and needs (Powers, 2006).

G. Select youth purposefully

64. When making decision on the youth that are invited to participate, it is important to take into consideration their “fit” to the planned activity, the setting and the target population. Selecting youth that have already mastered essential skills needed in the planned activity can increase the likelihood of success. However, providing an opportunity for youth who do not possess these skills allows them to learn and develop skills they did not earlier consider.

65. Often it is helpful if the participating youth are representative of the targeted population, although sometimes engaging role models, for example, slightly older or more accomplished youth, can be helpful for the prevention activity. The motivation of the participating youth can also be a crucial quality guiding the selection. It is good to note that it is often also possible to foster the motivation, i.e. by communicating accurately and in a welcoming manner and by providing capacity-building.

66. Selecting a diverse group of youth helps to ensure that different needs and perspectives are taken in to account. Especially when planning for indicated or selected level activities or services, it can be beneficial to involve at-risk or marginalized youth, as their needs might not be as well recognized and met as with those of their more well-off peers, and participation might be particularly important to them. Supportive relationships with adults and teens alike, and positive peer culture can be highly protective against substance use. For vulnerable youth, such positive relationships and opportunities for participation can be especially important. (Saewyc E, 2006) (Dell, 2013; Maddahian E, 1988) (Powers, 2006; Brady, 2018).

67. Working with vulnerable youth, however, will typically require planning for additional support and more resources. Moreover, working with vulnerable groups when not well managed, might more easily result in unintended consequences, such as creating opportunities for learning negative peer norms, poor values or coping

strategies, or risking stigmatization and labelling through the selection process, as discussed above. For example, some peer led interventions have been found to encourage more alcohol or tobacco use among high-risk groups, when the peer facilitators already affiliate with substance using peers or engage in risky behaviours themselves. (Emmers et al, 2014) (Mc Arthur et al, 2015) (Rorie, 2011) (Sorhaindo, 2016) (Paterson, 2008) (Dunne, 2017).

68. Thus, working with individuals or groups at heightened risk requires more careful consideration and additional work must be done to ensure they have enough support, receive well-structured activities and training for it, and are protected from any possibilities for negative outcomes so that they can receive a safe and rewarding experience. Use of peer leaders with at-risk populations might not be advisable and policymakers are urged to closely monitor these activities for the reasons indicated above.

69. Identifying how to best involve youth in ways that allow for matching the possibilities and the needs of both adults and youth in the given situation, resulting in optimal roles across the project cycle and in optimal intensity of participation, can hopefully be aided and inspired by the examples of the different roles for youth in substance use prevention outlined in the next chapter. It discusses how youth can contribute at the different stages of programme planning, realization and evaluation, as well as to the policy processes, within the substance use prevention field.

70. It may be helpful for policymakers and community leaders to consider the following initial list when beginning to work with youth:

Assess your organization for readiness to meaningfully engage with youth:

- ✓ Available finances to support youth
- ✓ Available human resources to support youth
- ✓ Available time to include youth
- ✓ Readiness of your organization to foster youth participation
- ✓ Strategy has been determined in advance to structure youth participation

Effective prevention in evidence:

- ✓ The organization values substance use prevention
- ✓ There is a plan for prevention interventions based on science
- ✓ Prevention interventions match the setting and target group
- ✓ Prevention outcomes are clear and measurable

Meaningful youth engagement is the goal:

- ✓ Youth engagement matches your context and values
- ✓ Youth are recruited fairly with an appreciation of diversity and awareness of promoting non-stigmatizing selection
- ✓ Youth are capable and able to be successful in the assigned task – they are not “set up to fail”
- ✓ The tasks for youth are well defined and clearly communicated
- ✓ Expectations of youth are communicated in advance and agreed upon with the youth
- ✓ The youth will have the chance for a fun and emotionally rewarding experience
- ✓ Opportunities for skills development, for learning, for strengthening their assets
- ✓ Positive relationships with peers, with supportive adults

- ✓ Recognition for effort, recognition for positive involvement, recognition for progress and success – pride of accomplishment
- ✓ Opportunities for supporting the well-being of peers/community
- ✓ Considerations such as time, place, transportation and food are taken into account to support the youth

Support for youth is in place:

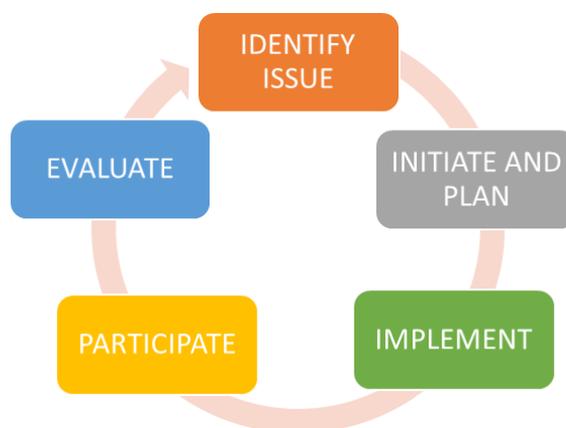
- ✓ Considerations have been made for safety and confidentiality if necessary
- ✓ A staff member or other adult is assigned a mentoring or monitoring role for each youth
- ✓ Communication vehicles have been established to convey ideas quickly and accurately
- ✓ Any consent forms required for underage youth are collected in advance of participation
- ✓ In a transparent meeting, ground rules and expectations are conveyed to the youth prior to their commitment of time and energy
- ✓ Capacity-building for adults, to include staff, parents, volunteers and guardians is conducted
- ✓ Possibilities to adapt the level of engagement
- ✓ Welcoming atmosphere, language

H. Youth participation in the different stages of prevention programming and policy making

71. Substance use prevention can be strengthened by involving youth at the different stages of programme planning, realization and evaluation, as well by engaging with and empowering youth in the context of creating change at more political level.

Picture 5

The different stages of prevention related programming in which youth can play a valuable role



1. Identify the issue – data collection and analysis for identifying needs and possibilities

72. Prevention programmes and policies should target the specific, modifiable risk and protective factors identified in the targeted setting through evidence-based strategies (Hawkins, 2002). Obtaining an accurate understanding of these factors behind substance use is the foundation of an effective preventive response. Identifying the resources, including the potential stakeholders available in the given

community and their readiness, is another crucial step in planning sustainable and potentially efficacious prevention activities.

73. Youth can play a valuable role in identifying the needs and possibilities for prevention in their communities. They can have access to sub-populations and offer perspectives that would be hard to reach without their involvement. Their participation can also lay a foundation for planning activities that are appealing and accessible to their peers. Youth participation can also facilitate building readiness among other youth to engage in various roles in prevention.

74. Actively seeking to listen to the youth is especially important when targeting minority groups that might have unique needs and be at higher risk due to their levels of poverty, social or cultural isolation or marginalization. For example, youth may have insights into how issues related to language, culture, gender, sexuality, mental health or drug use status impact their peers. Participating youth should be encouraged to identify needs that might not be readily heard and call for diverse preventive and supportive activities. In some situations, merely being a young person might contribute to being in a compromised situation and not having power over one's own decisions and conditions that affect their lives.

75. There are many tools for aiding in the assessment process and youth can play a role at each stage in the process (see i.e. UNODC, 2017). Youth participation in programme identification and development can range from "light" roles such as serving as informants, answering surveys or taking part in focus group discussions. Youth may also act as primary decision makers where they steer the entire process (Dunne, 2017).

76. The tools typically offer guidance for assessing:

- Substance use patterns, locations and populations using them;
- Factors contributing to this use and to its negative outcomes;
- Existing prevention response and possible gaps in it;
- Resources, including available guidance or tools for evidence-based prevention programming; and
- Potential stakeholders and their readiness to engage in prevention activities.

2. Initiate a plan based on evidence of what works

77. The assessment of the needs often continues with prioritizing the identified issues and planning for a way to have an impact on them or to make a difference. Inviting youth to take part in this process is a great way to build ownership and readiness to act among them. Carrying out the planning with youth, and not only about youth, can offer valuable insights. The participation of youth can help to develop programmes that are more responsive to the group's needs, reflect prevailing community culture and achieve greater participation and buy-in (UNODC, 2016) (Paterson, 2008).

78. The planning often starts by building a logic model that outlines the outcomes, as well as the local modifiable risks and protective factors contributing to those outcomes, which are identified during the assessment and which the planned activities will target directly. To truly be able to have an impact on the most important factors identified related to substance use in the given setting, it is essential to base the planning on evidence of what works. Planning the activities poorly will risk not only wasting the scarce resources in ineffective activities, but also resulting in unintended possibly negative outcomes (such as increased stigma, increased curiosity towards and experimentation with substance use, weakened credibility of future prevention efforts, etc.).

79. Evidence-based approaches are outlined in the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention (UNODC & WHO, 2018), in the European Prevention Curriculum (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2019) and in registries

of existing evidence-based programmes, such as Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development. There are a number of ways to approach selecting the best prevention interventions, including by considering the risk/protective factors under focus, as well as the age of the targeted population and the setting where the activities could take place as helpful parameters to start with. It is also helpful to identify a strategy fitting the needs, priorities and resources in the given context.

80. Youth participation can contribute to the planning process using their unique perspective and understanding of how to engage other youth. For example, their contribution can be helpful in the production of different educational and communication materials, where youth can for example help to enliven the interventions with relevant case studies and examples (Poland, 2002) (Paterson, 2008).

81. While adapting an existing programme to meet the realities of a given context may be more cost-effective than developing and testing a new one, the reality is that evaluation must be done to ensure the adaptation did not impact the anticipated outcomes. Adapting the activities to fit the given setting is elemental in implementing them in efficacious way (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2002). Youth can play a role in adapting activities to make them more relevant to their experiences, carried out in a language familiar to them, and in general accessible to them. As an example, youth have been successfully involved in the adaptation of a brief intervention targeting drug using homeless youth (Baer, 2004) and of a life-skills based school programme to disadvantaged minority youth (Botvin, 2001) as well as in adapting a family skills programme in Thailand (see case study below).

Case Study: Cultural Adaptation, Implementation and Evaluation of Family skills programme with active youth participation in Thailand

82. Schools and Families Together is a family skills programme that has been successfully implemented in various contexts across the different geographical regions for substance use prevention. It consists of 14 lessons that each include separate sessions for parents and youth followed by sessions for the families as a whole. During the lessons, families get to practice and reflect on a wide variety of parenting and life skills and discuss topics important for their family life. The programme is targeted to families of 12–16 year old youth.

83. In 2016, Pinyuchon and the Bangkok School Foundation set out to pilot the programme in Thailand, with support from the UNODC Youth Initiative. The idea was to work with high school students and their English teachers to translate the English programme manuals into Thai to adapt them, and to pilot the programme in high schools evaluating its outcomes.

84. The project director, teams of students and teachers, and the Bangkok School Foundation worked collaboratively across all the project phases, and it was estimated in the end that 30–40 per cent of the project activities across the planning, adaptation, implementation and evaluation were carried out by the students, most importantly during the translation and adaptation, as well as in communicating about the programme and its results to the potential participants and other stakeholders.

85. In practice, it was challenging for the students to translate the manuals with sufficient accuracy, and the plan was changed so that the students took a more active role in ensuring the content, its examples and language were relatable and interesting for Thai youth. All 14 lessons of the three manuals for parents, adolescents and family skills training sessions were translated by professional translators, and then reviewed by the youth. The youth also made Thai graphic, cartoons and pictures for the manuals.

86. Students participated in the training workshops for trainers of the programme alongside adult professionals. They also took part to the recruitment of families (37 families out of which 72 per cent completed the entire programme and its

evaluations). They created and maintained a Facebook-page for the project, where they shared pictures and other updates on the activities and on their outcomes.

87. The parent reported improvements over the 4-month programme in family resilience, cohesion and communication, as well as in parenting skills. Improvements were also observed in youth attention problems, aggression, depression, and social skills.

3. Implement the strategy/plan/activities

88. Implementation is often a motivating stage for the youth to take part in. Also, from the viewpoint of the youth receiving the activity, activities delivered by peers can increase the perceived credibility of the message and relatability. For example, well trained youth can successfully deliver educational programmes in schools, recreational settings and elsewhere in the community for younger children (O'Donnell, 1997) or for their peers (Emmers et al, 2014) (Cujipers 2002) (Mc Arthur et al, 2015). Other good examples can be found with tobacco prevention and cessation support by youth to their peers (Audrey, 2006).

89. Youth can also have an invaluable role in supporting recruitment and outreach. For example, for indicated level prevention programmes and related services, they can support in recruiting at-risk peer youth and help to lower the barriers for their peers to access such services and programmes (Dunne, 2017) (McCambridge, 2004) (Mardsen et al, 2006). These barriers may occur especially at the selective and indicated levels, when the targeted youth or their families may be influenced by substance use or mental health issues or other potentially marginalizing or stigmatizing issues, which make well-functioning recruitment particularly valuable.

Case-study: Outreach for brief intervention Uganda, Line Up Live Up sports programme

90. Line Up Live Up is an evidence informed life skills training programme for sports settings developed by UNODC. It aims to offer easily implementable tools for integrating life skills sessions into the context of organized sports, and seeks to prevent violence and other risky behaviours, including substance use, among the participating youth.

91. In Uganda, the programme has been implemented with the support of the Ministry of Education and Sports and or NGO Uganda Youth Development Link, involving youth not only as the recipients of the programme, but also engaging youth on the planning, delivery and evaluation of the activities. Community based recreational sports were used as a setting to reach the youth that is most at-risk and equip them with valuable life skills, such as resisting social pressures, coping with anxiety and communicating effectively with peers.

92. The goal was to prevent crime and use of drugs among youth in order to increase knowledge of, as well as changing attitudes toward drugs, criminality and violence. The programme consisted of short sessions that integrated social skills development with physical activities (e.g. playing with footballs), that were delivered during longer sport-practice session. The programme included the following topics:

1. Goal Setting
2. Taking control over impulse in risk situations
3. Cherishing strength and learning from our mistakes
4. Respect and embracing equality
5. How peer pressure can lead you to harm your body
6. Protecting oneself against more than one risk
7. Correcting wrong perceptions
8. Dynamic of group attachment

9. Giving and Asking for Help

10. Taking steps to reach your goal

93. The activities started on October 2018 and a total of 445 at-risk young people took part of the activities that were delivered by youth volunteers working with the organization. The overall impact and results of the programme are being evaluated, with the involvement of youth, at the time of publication of this guide. Promising data shows that 96 per cent of the participants reported positive change, and the following testimonies were received from the participating youth:

“I have learnt refusal skills, for example saying ‘NO’ to peer pressure”.
(Jona, 17 years)

“I benefited a lot from session three (strength); because I had low self-esteem since most people around me used to say that I am a failure and cannot do anything for myself, but when I passed the ball and scored and got hugged, I felt like a winner”. (Sarah, 15 years)

4. Monitor and evaluate the results of the activities

94. When engaging with youth in prevention, it is important to acknowledge their role as invaluable informants in evaluation. They can provide feedback and insights on programme implementation, relevance, fidelity, satisfaction and effectiveness, as well as on ways to enhance engagement, reach and sustainability. They can engage in formative research on the tools used with the targeted group to make them as effective and fit for their audience as possible.

95. Youth can be engaged to provide this information via surveys, focus groups, observer notes or session satisfaction forms, artistic contributions, informal discussions, and many more.

96. Furthermore, with enough support available, youth can actively participate not only in the collection and analysis of such data, but also in the planning and steering of the entire evaluation process.

97. When engaging in research with youth, it is helpful to emphasize that the performance of the participating youth is not under scrutiny, but rather the intention is to have youth participation guide the adults to provide better structures and possibilities for effective activities that engage youth (Poland, 2002). The overall focus should be on establishing a good rapport with the involved youth, creating a sense of being vested in the project, and for the youth to contribute to and facilitate good data-quality (Poland, 2002). Finally, involving youth in the communication on the evaluation results can bring significant power to the message and can also help the participating youth feel and make themselves heard (Poland, 2002).

98. Evaluation done in the context of assessing the outcomes of the activities, can be a good starting point for starting the project cycle anew and revising the activities or planning for new ones, bridging the assessment of the outcomes with the assessment of new needs and possibilities for action.

99. Youth can also be engaged in research beyond evaluating the programme outcomes and reach. Research can be a medium for identifying issues, building motivation for change, for mobilization and for empowerment. Participatory research offers an approach and tool set for research that is based on empowering the research subjects, here the youth, to use research as a vehicle to make their needs and the structural issues impacting them visible and heard and to make a change. Participatory research with youth can be an effective means to mobilize them and create behavioural, social and political change. (Powers, 2006). Some core elements of participatory research include close collaboration with the researcher and research subjects, reciprocity in these interactions, educational orientation and an emphasis on taking and creating action and recognizing the politicized links between knowledge and power (Poland, 2002). Young people can design data collection tools, participate

in data analysis and interpretation, and participate in reporting and in dissemination of the results (Brady, 2018).

Case study: Communities that Care

100. Communities that Care (CTC) (www.communitiesthatcare.net/) is an example of how youth can be involved in all stages of the prevention process. CTC is an evidence-based preventive system that has been rigorously evaluated and found to be effective in promoting youth well-being and preventing problem behaviours such as substance use (Hawkins et al 2009, Hawkins et al 2014, Oesterle et al 2018). It uses a public health approach to prevention, aiming to reduce risk factors that predict substance use, and increase protective factors that promote positive development. Youth participation and involvement is encouraged and fostered at each of the stages of the CTC process. For example, youth representatives are invited to join adults in their community in forming a prevention coalition that guides local prevention efforts; youth complete a survey that measures risk and protective factors in the community (www.communitiesthatcare.net/userfiles/files/2014CTCYS.pdf), and data from the youth survey is used to make decisions about prevention priorities and to target areas for intervention; youth are also invited to participate in the selection of specific evidence-based programmes (www.blueprintsprograms.org/) that align with local need – and they may also participate in the implementation and monitoring of such programmes. Youth are often programme participants, but may also be involved in the delivery, such as in peer tutoring and mentoring programmes.

101. CTC includes youth in a manner that offers opportunities for them to be involved in prosocial activities in the community, helps them develop new skills, and provides them with recognition for their efforts and achievements. Youth have the opportunity to bond with adults and peers who model clear standards and healthy behaviours, such as avoiding substance use (www.communitiesthatcare.net/how-ctc-works/social-development-strategy/).

102. It takes skill on the part of adults, and sometime even training, to learn to involve young people in meaningful ways. Some CTC coalitions in the state of Colorado have recently decided to use “implicit bias” training with their adult members in order to combat “age-ism” and learn how to work inclusively with youth.

103. The level and specific form of youth involvement differs from one CTC community to another. One successful example is from a United States community that used the photovoice methodology to engage youth in assessing adolescent substance use. Using an intentional and planned method that involved youth taking photographs and creating captions, youth were able to reflect their community’s strengths and concerns regarding substance abuse, address the question of what contributes to adolescents’ decisions to use drugs, and present a compelling argument for action (Brazg et al., 2010).

I. Youth participation in different prevention settings

104. In an ideal situation youth will participate in and receive prevention interventions which positively support their development from different sources and settings across the different periods of their development. Families, schools, recreational settings as well as online environments are all examples of optimal settings for prevention, where youth can reach to their peers with prevention interventions and messages. This section will highlight some possibilities and examples of youth participation in the context of drug prevention strategies in different settings. As discussed previously, strategies have been found to be effective when they target children even before they are born. Given the youth focus of the Handbook, only strategies targeting children and youth from early adolescence and onwards will be discussed.

1. Schools

105. Schools are one of the most common settings for substance use prevention. The education sector has the capability to reach entire cohorts, and to bring together many different community stakeholders (school personnel, students, families, health and social care actors, civil society and others). There are also important synergies between the academic goals of a school and prevention programmes, given that the latter have the power to support school attainment, classroom functioning or other aspects of school functioning while preventing risky behaviours. (UNODC, 2013) (UNESCO, 2017)

106. At the level of the classroom, programmes can prevent substance use by supporting classroom functioning and the socialization of the students during the first school years; supporting the development of social, emotional and decision-making skills, and providing opportunities to practice these skills in the context of substance use related issues; and helping youth understand and resist social influences. In general, efficacious programmes are interactive and grounded in the active participation of students, whereas programmes focusing on delivering information only, do not work for preventing substance use. (UNODC 2013) These classroom-based prevention programmes can be facilitated by peers and adults alike, as long as the facilitators are well trained, and the programmes are structured and based on evidence. (Mc Arthur et al, 2015) (Norberg, 2013) (Emmers et al, 2014). Peer leaders are most recommended for universal level programmes, as working with at-risk youth requires more caution in the selection and training of the youth and structuring the programme.

107. At the level of school culture and policies, developing a positive school culture encouraging prosocial behaviours and active participation of students in school life, developing clear substance use norms and policies and supportive practices to address any possible incidents of substance use or mental health related issues can all contribute to substance use prevention. (Fletcher et al, 2008) (Hodder et al, 2017) (UNODC 2013). Here youth have a valuable role to play as well, as successful substance use school policies are typically developed with the participation of all stakeholders, including students, and enforced systematically engaging the student representatives in the follow up as well.

108. In tertiary education (universities, colleges, vocational schooling), addressing school policies and culture, altering the environment with social marketing campaigns, and providing brief interventions, can prevent substance use, and student participation in planning, targeting, delivering and marketing of these prevention interventions can also be valuable.

109. Across these different forms of school-based prevention, youth involvement is not limited to the possible roles they can take in delivering and supporting the interventions. As these approaches are typically interactive, active involvement of youth as a recipient is often an essential feature of well working programmes. Moreover, school attachment, active student participation, positive bonding and commitment to school are all associated with positive development and substance use prevention, so supporting them is good prevention in itself. (UNODC, 2013) (UNESCO, 2017)

2. Family

110. Families are one of the most powerful socialization agents across cultures, and thus also essential settings for prevention. Supporting parenting skills and family functioning prevents substance use and other risky behaviours. (UNODC, 2013) Youth can be involved in prevention programming in the context of families, for example during the planning and adaptation phase. Typically, the core of these programmes centres around parents practising and developing their parenting skills. In the vast majority of cases, these programmes are thus delivered by trained adults. However, the case study reported in this section presents a model where young university students are involved in family skills prevention programmes.

Case-study: Training university students to deliver evidence-based family skills prevention programme in the Spanish University of Balearic Islands, GIFES's research group

111. Project “youth as active prevention agents” was set up by the University of Balearic Islands to explore the potential of young university students to get involved in providing evidence-based prevention activities for young people.

112. A total of 75 third year students from the Social Education degree were involved in the study; 38 of them took part in in-person teaching, 37 participated in online teaching, and 46 were a control group that only took the assessments.

113. Students completed a specific training on the Spanish Strengthening Families Programme 12–16 for adolescents. The training was practically the same as that received by qualified professionals, including lectures, group work, discussions and role-play, lasting altogether 14 hours.

114. The learning process was evaluated with pre- and post-measurements based on the COMPETEA (Arribas & Pereña, 2015) instrument to analyse the optimal professional profile; Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS; Aarons et al., 2010); a programme knowledge questionnaire; and descriptive questions on satisfaction. In addition, at the end of the training, in-depth personal interviews were conducted. The aim is to document the feasibility of using students without prior professional working experience as deliverers of family skills programmes, and to analyse the optimal student group to engage in such activities.

115. Once the training and evaluation were finished, certificates were provided to enable the trained students to deliver the programme. It should be noted that evaluation of impact is ongoing with consideration for potential resulting changes in risky behaviour.

3. Media and online environments

116. Media campaigns, including campaigns in social media, when executed well, can positively contribute to the prevention of substance use, although care is needed as there are many examples of unsuccessful campaigns. Effective use of media is based on solid theoretical basis, targeting precisely defined target groups, achieving adequate exposure, testing the messages thoroughly while developing them and evaluating the campaign, and often connecting to other evidence-based prevention efforts. The contents may aim to change norms and culture around substance use, offer concrete suggestions for avoiding risky behaviours, educating on the consequences of substance use, or educating parents on how to better support their children. (UNODC, 2013)

117. Youth have many roles to play here, from identifying the issues and developing the messages to testing, disseminating and evaluating them. Testing the developed messages thoroughly with the target group during formative research should be a core component of all media campaigns, and youth participation in this role should be the minimum level of youth participation in any campaign targeting youth.

118. As effective campaigns are grounded on scientific theories of persuasion and behavioural change as well as on scientific evaluations, there is a need to balance the roles of the contributing youth other stakeholders. When executed poorly, there lies a danger of tokenism of using youth voices to get attention without really being able to reach the promised prevention outcomes or transparently communicating the actual aims and outcomes to the participating youth.

119. Social media and other electronic platforms are very popular and can offer possibilities to reach youth, and even to target the messages to very specific groups. Care needs to be taken no matter what media vehicle is being utilized to ensure strategic and targeted prevention messages are disseminated.

120. Besides utilizing media for messages aiming to change individual's health behaviours, media campaigns can be used for supporting change in policies and

governmental structures relating to prevention. The goal will be more at the level of changing the perceptions and motivation of decision makers, as well as at creating public discussion and mobilizing people for the cause. It is important to remain conscious of the power share and who controls the messages, so that youth are engaged to amplify their own responsible voices and appropriate prevention messages rather than merely an agenda set solely by adults.

121. In addition, it is good to note that exposure to media, and especially to popular culture (e.g. celebrities, film, music), can strongly influence the adoption of risky behaviours among youth, including substance use. Banning all marketing across the different forms of media of licit substances has been explored as one component of a multifaceted environmental approach to prevent the use of licit substances. This is a difficult strategy to impose and to monitor as media producers promote substance use in more subtle ways such as product placement. Approaching the regulatory bodies that govern the media industry and engaging them in substance use prevention messaging may be one way to address this issue.

Case study: Truth Campaign

122. Launched in 2000, truth® is the largest national youth smoking prevention campaign in the United States. Its objective is to change social norms and reduce youth smoking among teenagers aged 12 to 17. The campaign focuses on a very specific target of teenagers: high-sensation seekers and those who are open to smoking.

123. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, facts on addiction, and the health and social consequences of smoking – allowing teens to make informed choices based upon these facts about the industry and its products. It features advertising, a website, social networking sites and interactive elements, events, and grassroots outreach through summer and autumn tours.

124. From the beginning, young people were involved in all aspects of the campaign. Prior the campaign launch, the campaign convened 600 middle and high school students in order to gain insight into where youth felt the effort should head and to brainstorm approaches that would work with young people. These summits became annual. Also, a youth board was created to steer the campaign. Furthermore, a public relations agency was hired not only to execute the campaign’s media relations but also to coordinate youth activism and assist the local grassroots activities of participating youth. One of the many methods of engaging with youth was the “Outbreak Tour”, that travelled with DJs, games, a lounge area and “ambassadors,” a variety of trendsetters, to counteract tobacco companies’ promotional efforts and interact with youth.

125. In its first four years, the truth campaign was estimated to prevent 450,000 young people from smoking and to save as much as \$5.4 billion in terms of prevented medical care costs in its first two years. (Allen, 2009) (World Health Organization, 2008) (Farrelly, 2009) (National Social Marketing Centre, 2019)

4. Youth voices in political processes, governmental structures and public discussions

126. Besides facilitating youth participation in initiating and realizing prevention related projects and programmes across the different settings, youth potential to contribute to larger policy reforms and public discussion should be supported. This can take many different forms.

127. Youth participation can be channelled through “issue-based advocacy” or via “institutional participation”. (Stoneman, 2002) There exist many good examples of viable channels for policymakers to strengthen the substance use prevention field by engaging and empowering youth more. They could both take place at the very local level, in schools and local clubs or other organizations for example, or at regional or national level, as well as at global level. For creating advocacy around particular

issues with youth involvement, youth would typically require external support, such as transportation or meetings that are held during after-work hours to allow them to participate. Additionally, youth need clear and transparent expectations, goals and objectives that help to guide their participation.

128. Besides action around particular issues, creating structures and opportunities for institutional participation should be on the agenda around prevention systems. Many opportunities exist for influencing prevention related policies and activities as participants in steering groups and other advisory bodies. These types of advisory roles could be present across the different levels and sectors and should be open to youth.

129. However, creating youth participation that is rewarding for the participating youth and that contributes to reaching the institutional outcomes that the youth are invited to support does not always happen fast or by itself. Education and other support both for the youth invited to take part, as well as for the adults, are required to create an environment conducive to patience and change.

Case study: Enforcing local alcohol policy implementation with the support of students in the Finnish Local Alcohol, Tobacco and Gambling Policy Model

130. The Local Alcohol, Tobacco and Gambling Policy – Pakka – is a model for community action, tailored to the Finnish context and aimed at preventing harm from substance use, smoking and gambling through local cooperation. The focus is on the availability of alcohol, tobacco and slot machines. Activities are focused on situations where under 18 year-olds have access to alcohol, tobacco or slot machines and where alcoholic beverages are being sold or served to intoxicated people or minors.

131. The Pakka model brings together key actors in the community – public authorities, economic operators, young people, parents, and the media – to pool their expertise to reduce harm in the community. The development of the model started in 2004 as a project focused on local alcohol policy in pilot communities, but has developed in to a national level programme, implemented in the majority of communities and benefitting indirectly over 2.7 million individuals out of a population of 5 million.

132. The activities include, for example, local work groups to coordinate the work among private and public sector entities, mystery shopping to test the age-limit control, trainings to retailers and restaurant personnel, awareness raising campaigns, school activities, and others. The activities are tailored by the local steering groups to meet the local needs. Young people typically participate in the steering groups and contribute, for example, to the efforts to raise awareness or reach parents with messages on the beneficial outcomes of enforcing the alcohol and gambling laws. Young people are always involved in the mystery shopping. Students just over 18 are compensated with a small monetary reward for conducting checks on the compliance on the laws to serve alcohol to minors, dressed as younger youth.

133. The quasi-experimental evaluations have shown reductions in alcohol availability among minors and among intoxicated customers of entertainment venues as a result of the intervention. Furthermore, an increase in abstinence among underage youth as well as some positive changes in attitudes and knowledge on age-limit control have been documented. (Holmila M, 2012).

5. Communities

134. At the level of communities, separate interventions take place in various settings within a community and must be supported by mobilizing the community. By engaging the various stakeholders, collecting local data to identify the factors contributing to substance use and related problems, by assessing other needs and resources (including the stakeholders), and by basing the planning on this local assessment data, the effective uptake, implementation and sustainability of prevention interventions can be supported. (UNODC & WHO, 2018) Community-based

initiatives are multi-component, and those that have been found effective typically sustain the activities over a longer period of time, engage research institutions, and provide adequate training and resources. (UNODC, 2013) As these community initiatives aim to prevent youth substance use and to engage the relevant stakeholders, they almost always also engage youth.

6. Prevention systems as whole

135. Just as in the level of communities, at a larger regional, national, or community level, good prevention systems are well coordinated, engaging the different stakeholders, and take place across different relevant governmental sectors. Similarly, also at the system level, good prevention is always based on a good quality data, on an analysis of the local factors contributing to substance use and requires continuous monitoring and evaluation. Most importantly, good prevention practices are based on evidence on what works in preventing substance use. Coordinating the work well, and sustaining it in the long run, are additional building blocks of a good prevention system.

136. Engaging all the relevant stakeholders support effective planning, eliminates overlaps and addresses gaps in the planning. Stakeholders ensure good fit to the local context, buy in of the prevention activities as well as the sustainability of prevention programming. In this context inviting and empowering youth to take part at different levels and stages of prevention programming and policymaking contributes to the effectiveness of a prevention system.

VI. Conclusion: enabling and encouraging youth participation in substance use prevention

137. This Handbook for policymakers for supporting youth participation in substance use prevention builds on the other existing guidance on how to encourage youth participation in other health promotion contexts (such as the ones produced by the Pan Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health's in 2018 and by the South Australian Government in 2016 – see references). It also resonates strongly with the experiences of the youth involved in the production of this guidance document, who summarized the do's and don'ts for facilitating youth participation in prevention by the 2019 Youth Forum participants available in the appendices.

138. The Handbook offers help in creating more opportunities for youth to take part in substance use prevention that genuinely support the well-being of the targeted youth while also being beneficial to the youth taking part in the planning, delivering and evaluating it. As discussed throughout this guide, effective substance use prevention, as well as genuine youth participation that has positive outcomes for all parties. Although resources are required, it is not only feasible but beneficial to create possibilities for active and meaningful youth participation.

139. It is thus strongly recommended to seek to create the maximum level of participation that current resources allow, striving to implement evidence-based prevention programmes which benefit from youth participation. Above all, there is an ethical commitment to making things better for youth and to avoid generating unintended negative consequences or iatrogenic effects. It is essential that policymakers do not compromise quality or evidence informed prevention interventions just to involve youth. Youth participation should be considered an enhancement to an existing evidence-based and comprehensive prevention approach.

140. Some of the key messages for any decision maker involved in youth well-being or substance use prevention include:

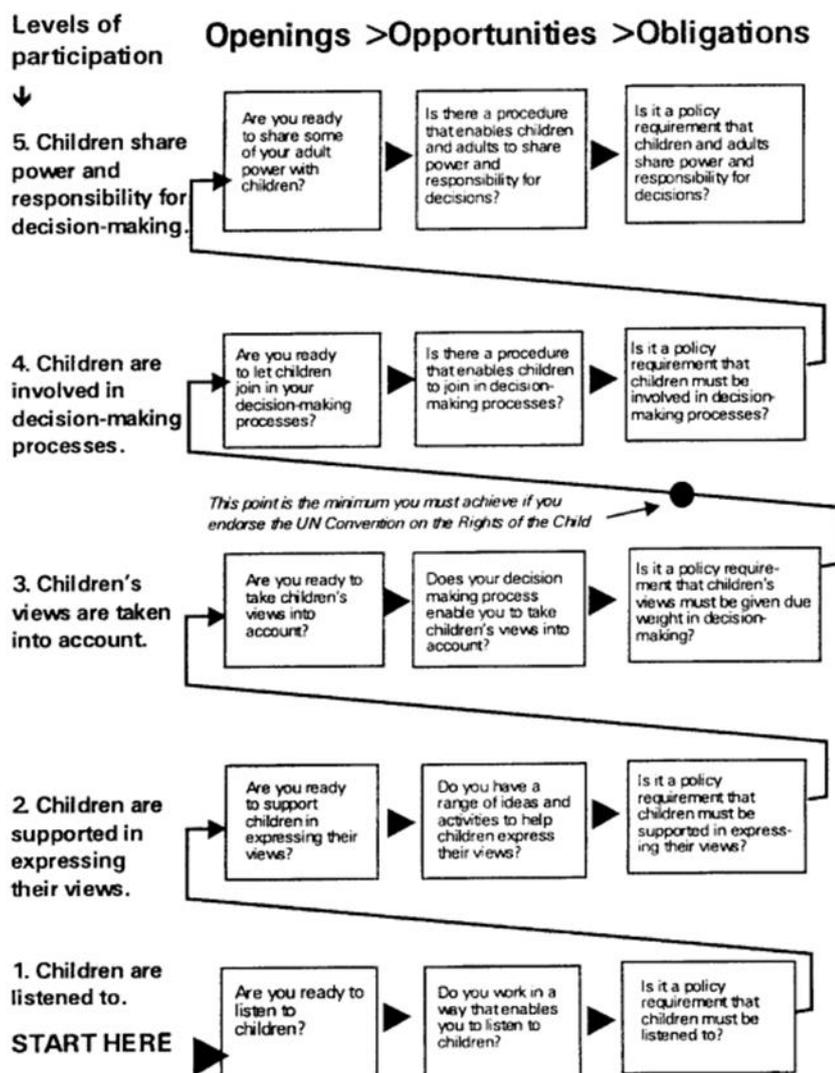
- ✓ When creating policies impacting young persons, let their voices be heard!
- ✓ When creating any policies, assess and consider the potential impact on health and youth.

- ✓ Assess organizational readiness to find out how the political, legal and administrative structures enable youth participation and ensure rights to it; assess the economic and social conditions enabling youth to use their right to participate.
- ✓ When accepting funding, know what it is tied to – i.e. tobacco and alcohol funding should be carefully considered before being accepted for prevention.
- ✓ Support cultural shifts and use of tools and capacity-building for supporting adult stakeholders to enable and value youth.
- ✓ Create concrete structures and provide resources for youth participation.
- ✓ Select youth to take part that fit the planned activity and its targets – ensure diversity, use relatable youth leaders, create positive peer learning and ensure safety for the youth.
- ✓ Transparently communicate the expectations and possibilities of participation, and when asking youth to contribute, make sure their contributions can and will be taken into account.
- ✓ Allow for successes – plan activities that are based on evidence, fit for the particular context and respecting cultural adaptations, and avoid disjointed or non-strategic activities.
- ✓ Ensure the activities have a chance to achieve positive and meaningful outcomes for the targeted and participating youth alike.

VII. Appendices

Appendix 1:

141. Modify 5 sets of questions from this:



Appendix 2:

142. Possible ways to create meaningful participation based on the experiences of the youth participants of the 2019 Youth Forum (as prioritized in discussions on what have been rewarding experiences of participation in substance use prevention for them).

Do	Don't
<p>Recognize the power of youth voice Collaborate with youth Encourage youth as they are not always aware of what they are capable of</p> <p>Provide opportunities for growth, capacity-building, self-realization: Provide opportunities to share and learn from peers, and from adults via mentorship. Create opportunities for networking for youth, with peers and professionals and decision makers from different fields – making connections can be much more powerful than learning new information. Provide capacity-building on creating programmes, activities and on fundraising. Support youth in learning about the world around them, about the root-causes of their own health, well-being and opportunities, and facilitate them to comprehend the real problems they should and could work to solve. Involve youth in scientific research Fund youth led activities, youth organizations, political and programmatic processes involving youth.</p> <p>Do not only build the skills of youth on how to function in the adult led systems, but also make room for the natural youth participation and voice in the adult centred systems.</p> <p>Accessibility: Support both adults and youth to reflect on their privileges, as a one way to support fair representation. Ensure representation of different backgrounds, nationalities, identities Ensure freedom of the expression for all, disregard of ethnic or political background or world views. Provide access to information on political processes, opportunities, local resources. Utilize social media in reaching out to the youth.</p> <p>Create structure and coordination for the youth related work and for youth participation as a means to increase its impact and accessibility of it. Support a system of communication mediating contact between youth and policymakers. For</p>	<p>Use youth as decoration, tokenize youth, use youth just to get pretty pictures</p> <p>Discriminate any stakeholders by age</p> <p>Use selective participation – avoid inviting only the high achievers, youth from appropriate backgrounds or with views close to your own opinions</p> <p>Use overcomplicated language or processes of participation that would require specific knowledge for the youth to take part</p> <p>Disregard the input of youth, even if it does not come in the “adult language”</p> <p>Avoid creating processes for youth participation without ensuring the youth receive enough support and guidance to truly take part</p> <p>Speak for children or youth, or trust in knowing what their needs and opinions are without hearing from them</p>

<p>example, encourage student councils to connect to decision making. Give youth a right to vote – in different roles, at different levels</p> <p>Show youth the results of their work for motivating them to continue and for allowing them to learn from their achievements and failures</p> <p>Be at the forefront of substance use prevention and care for those already affected by drugs and for their families.</p>	
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Appendix 3:

143. References

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