

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Vienna**

Monitoring and Evaluating

Youth Substance Abuse
Prevention Programmes



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1. Introduction

Key ideas

- This handbook is an introduction for practitioners who want to monitor and evaluate their prevention activities.
- Monitoring and evaluation terminology might be used differently in another context. We propose terminology that we have found helpful and are using in our work.

This handbook on monitoring and evaluating youth substance abuse prevention programmes has been prepared as part of two global prevention projects of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): the Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse (jointly implemented with the World Health Organization) and the Global Youth Network. It draws on information provided by youth groups, community-based organizations and youth workers associated with the two projects and on their experience in monitoring and evaluating their own programmes. It also makes use of the available literature in the substance abuse prevention field and related areas, such as health promotion.

All our civil society partners, who are really the authors of this publication, are listed in the annex. Their contact details are available on our online database at <http://www.unodc.org/youthnet/pdf/database.pdf>.

We have tried to make the handbook relevant to a wide range of prevention activities (for example, provision of information, awareness-raising, peer education, life skills development, promotion of alternative activities, development of vocational skills) and to various staff and volunteers working in the area of substance abuse prevention, helping them assess the effectiveness of what they do. This includes health, youth and social workers, educators and others. It will also be of use to the people who fund projects, enabling them to identify what project staff can do to monitor and evaluate their work.

This handbook is not a complete guide—the topic of monitoring and evaluation is too big for that. It is an introduction to this complex area. It can be used to build on what is already being done and to train staff. Another very important thing to keep in mind is that much has already been written about monitoring and evaluation. The definitions employed are those we have found helpful and use in our work. We hope that by providing a clear explanation of what we mean by each term and using it consistently throughout the handbook, you will be able to recognize the concept even when it is labelled differently in another context.

In chapter 2, we try to make the case for monitoring and evaluation. We felt that everyone agreed that they were important, but few applied them in practice. Thus we tried to give you specific reasons for embracing this process. In chapter 3, we discuss the differences between monitoring and evaluating and the different kinds of evaluation. Definitions ... boring, but necessary! In chapter 4, we discuss what should be monitored and evaluated. Essentially, we discuss what information should be collected when monitoring and evaluating. For example, this is where you will find a discussion of indicators.

This brings us to the next part of the handbook, which is more on “how to do” monitoring and evaluation. For example, chapter 5 is about who should be involved (staff? volunteers? participants? an external evaluator?), and chapter 6 looks at monitoring and evaluation in the context of the project cycle. This means that we explore the effect that monitoring and evaluation have on each stage of the project cycle, especially planning. This is where we discuss the planning of monitoring and evaluation activities in detail. Finally, chapter 7 looks at the collection of data, and chapter 8 at how to analyse them and report and use the information thus generated.

Our hope is that you will find this handbook useful. We would be happy to hear from you and any thoughts, comments or experiences would be really welcome.

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