Monitoring and Evaluating Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Programmes
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The present handbook was developed in consultation with many community-based organizations and youth groups around the world. Thanks go primarily to them for their work and their dedication. In particular, thanks to all those who answered questionnaires and participated in meetings; without them, the handbook could not have been completed.

Richard Ives of the consultant firm educari (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) prepared an electronic mail (e-mail) questionnaire, which was sent to a wide number of groups participating in two different prevention projects of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): the Global Youth Network and the Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse. The questionnaire requested information on the groups’ experience in monitoring and evaluating their activities. On the basis of that information and the available literature, Mr. Ives then prepared a draft. Some of the groups that had sent input were then invited to a four-day meeting in Vienna at which the draft was comprehensively critiqued and major amendments made. Mr. Ives produced a second draft, taking account of the comments made. The participants of the Global Initiative also provided information through a “self-evaluation instrument” and through a series of meetings in which they shared their experience in monitoring and evaluation. Giovanna Campello, UNODC coordinator of the Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse, included this material and then substantively revised and edited the draft.

Gautam Babbar, coordinator of the Global Youth Network, provided substantive input and editing throughout the process, which also benefited from the substantive and practical inputs of colleagues at the headquarters and field offices of the World Health Organization (WHO), joint executing agency of the Global Initiative, most notably Mwansa Nkowane, WHO coordinator of the Global Initiative, and Shekhar Saxena, coordinator of the Mental Health: Evidence and Research Unit of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse of WHO in Geneva.

Finally, thanks to the donors, the Governments of Canada, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who made all of this possible.
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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