

# Workshop Series

KISUMU | NAIROBI | MOMBASA

'Uniting Treatment and Prevention for Effective Drug Management in Kenya'



Si. Svenska institutet

SCAD

UNHEARD VOICES OF AFRICA



THE KISUMU FORUM: 16TH-18TH OCTOBER, 2023

Working together to Connect Prevention and Treatment Practitioners for Effective Drug Management in the East African Region

## Observation (s)

The East African region is faced by many drug issues. Most of the countries in the region are either drug destination or drug transit points. Many young people have been influenced in the habit due to many underlying social and economic factors.

There exists a major gap in the awareness of drug problem, prevention and treatment among countries, and also in communities at local levels. There is need for more efforts to be aimed at strengthening capacities of institutions and civil society actors if any meaningful impacts are to be realized.

Civil Societies need to work closely with the government institutions for better results

This needs to go beyond the National territories since drugs, and crime have been identified as cross boundary issues.

There is a call for more such like integrated forums in order to strengthen Networks and achieve the vision of a drug-free East Africa region

## Background

The Swedish Institute and World Federation Against drugs (WFAD) in partnership with Sober Life International (SLI), Students Campaign against Drugs (SCAD), Unheard Voices of Africa (UVA) and Renaissance Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (R-TRC) conducted a two-day workshop series on connecting the parallels uniting treatment and prevention for effective drug management in Kenya on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at Royal Gardens Hotel in Kisumu County. The multisectoral workshop series assembled National Government (National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), Kisumu Directorate of Alcoholic Drinks Control, UNESCO and 20 Civil Society Organizations in the prevention, treatment and aftercare fields.



Community Focus Group Discussion



NACADA Presentation



## Highlights

The coordinating team emphasized on the objectives of the workshop series by discouraging partners to stop working in silos and embrace integration with diverse partners and CSOs in connecting the parallels with an aim of reaching a common goal of uniting treatment and prevention dimensions of substance use disorders (SUDs). During the keynote speech, WFAD speaker, Regina discussed the continuum of care and from early detection, prevention to long sustained recovery. She also informed the team on both the international standards on drug use prevention and the international standards for the treatment of drug use disorders. NACADA presentation highlighted the regional demographics on issues of alcohol and drugs. This included initiation of substance abuse in terms of age cohorts.

## CSO Group Discussions

The participants were divided in groups depending on their core business in order to identify exact areas they could integrate with the fields which are not their core business. An evaluation of pre-test conducted during the first day of the workshop series on integration of prevention and treatment of SUDs showed positive and reasonable moves, the team however acknowledged that more united efforts need to be put in place to make positive steps which is possible through this kind of forums. CSOs discussed on three key issues: Barriers to integration; Opportunities for integration; Ideal responses to SUDs in the continuum of recovery (Aftercare).



Connecting



Lived Experiences Session



Group Discussions

### Findings

It was identified that Prevention programs are funded and there is an element of them working on their own without referrals to treatment, while majority of treatment centers are private entities; with a commercialized approach and not affordable to the local community. Sharing of data was also part of the discussion as an important aspect of prevention and treatment of SUDs. NACADA representative enlightened the team members on a reporting tool where anyone can access and report their work. The team had a short capacity building on basic screening tool CAGE-AID. The Trans-theoretical Model process of change was discussed and the participants identified areas of intersection as they tackled change from abuse to sobriety. Social economic transformation at community level was also part of the conversation, and the team emphasized that community development need people who are sober. Impacting success stories were shared and the lived experience shared was very moving. Addiction was discussed to be happening in along span of time; hence persons with issues of addiction need support like any other community members from the point of experimentation through active use to treatment and after care.

### Community Engagement

The Coordinating team, together with Renaissance CSO conducted a baseline survey of substance use, prevention and treatment in a rural community. This was tailored in a meaningful Focus Group Discussion (FGD) where 14 community members both male and female assembled in a remote lake village of Kagwel, Seme Sub-County in Kisumu County. While responding to concerns on why the community thought SUDs was a problem in the lake region, the participants shared their experiences indicating that indeed it is a problem that needs collective effort to address the situation, especially among the young people. Some of the problems and experiences shared by the community members included: heavy drinking, violence, wastage of money, negative investments, sexual abuse, unstable families among others. The participants also confirmed to the team that there has not been meaningful engagement to discuss issues of alcohol and drugs in both in public spaces and health facilities. As the session drew to a close, each team member had the opportunity to emphasize on the significance of the focus group discussions. The team appreciated the participants for making time and acknowledged the need to walk together with the community and deliberate on how best to combat the rising cases of SUDs at the lake region. The team also reiterated that engagement with community was an eye opener for both parties to identify where gaps were compared to other regions so as to strengthen ties and connect the parallels in terms of prevention and treatment dimensions. The participants were urged to invest time and money from the lake wisely by joining Saccos and Chamas that will eventually help them access big loans and venture into other useful income generating activities. They were as well tasked to be ambassadors in the community, put information into practice to bring about change.



Partners

### Epilogue

In conclusion, the technical team representing SI, WFAD, SCAD and Unheard Voices of Africa appreciated all CSOs and partners for the cooperation and opportunity to work together and move on as team. They encouraged holistic approach, enthusiasm and combined effort in connecting the parallels uniting prevention and treatment for effective drug management. An Action Plan for further engagement and joint activities was formulated and this will be a key indicator of the success of the initiative.