
WFAD Youth Magazine



Celebrating Global Youth Action

Advancing the Youth Declaration in Prevention,
Treatment & Recovery

Introduction

In March 2025, during the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the WFAD Core Youth Group—comprising 15 members from 13 countries and diverse civil society organisations—launched the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery.

This declaration was shaped by the voices of more than 1,145 young people from across the world, whose insights, experiences, and aspirations guided its development. It outlines six key recommendations for governments, civil society, and other stakeholders on how to meaningfully engage youth in policies and programmes related to substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The message was clear: youth should not be seen merely as beneficiaries of programmes, but as active partners and co-creators. Initiatives must evolve with the times, reflecting the realities young people face today and ensuring that interventions are conducted not only for youth, but by youth.

One Year Later

A year has now passed since the release of the Global Youth Declaration. We recognise that building, transforming, and sustaining effective youth programmes takes time and often significant resources. Yet, across regions, we have already seen promising action. Many organisations and young leaders have already initiated projects and activities that directly or indirectly align with the vision of the Declaration.

This issue of WFAD Magazine 2026 is dedicated to celebrating and showcasing these efforts, youth-driven initiatives, collaborations, programmes for youth, and innovations in prevention, treatment, and recovery. Through their stories, we see momentum building: a collective effort to make youth empowerment and engagement not an afterthought, but a foundation for lasting change.

Looking Ahead

This is only the beginning. The work ahead requires continued dialogue, partnership, and commitment. By highlighting these examples, we aim to inspire others, including organisations, governments, and young changemakers alike, to advance youth participation.

Together, we can ensure that youth are empowered, included, and equipped to shape the future of prevention and recovery efforts worldwide.

Launched during the 68th UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

GLOBAL YOUTH DECLARATION

on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery, 2025

566 Other 1145 Participants (15-29 years)

Represented by 64 Countries

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1 Actively Listen to and Involve Youth**
We emphasize the urgent need to include youth in programme development and policy and decision-making processes at all levels by providing platforms for meaningful youth engagement.
- 2 Enhance Research and Modernise Risk Awareness Campaigns**
We urge Member States and relevant stakeholders to conduct comprehensive, youth-focused, and gender-differentiated research on substance use patterns and translate findings into modernized, sensitive, evidence-based awareness campaigns.
- 3 Implement Gender-Responsive Approaches to Address Substance Use Challenges**
We stress the importance of developing gender-sensitive policies and interventions that acknowledge and are tailored to the unique challenges faced by young people of all genders.
- 4 Ensure Increased Provision of Improved and Accessible Youth Sensitized Services**
We demand accessible, affordable, and sensitized treatment and rehabilitation programmes designed for youth to support their sustainable recovery, recognizing the lack of youth services.
- 5 Empower Youth through Economic Independence and Leadership Opportunities**
We underscore the critical need to support youth in achieving financial independence and fostering leadership opportunities as key factors in sustainable prevention and recovery.
- 6 Strengthen Community Support and Policy Enforcement**
We advocate for expanding community-based programmes, understanding the community's role in youth development and fostering understanding and support of youth challenges, through awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building workshops, and destigmatisation initiatives.
We call for the establishment and consistent enforcement of comprehensive policies preventing substance use exposure among minors and young adults; restricting advertisement; and prioritizing alternatives to...

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1

Activities BY Youth

Submitted by: Bubu Jalloum

Country: The Gambia

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

1

Be Part of the Solution

Target: School-going children, youths, and communities

Duration: From 2024 to Date

Activities conducted

In December 2024, I trained 25 youths in the central river region for a period of ten days. Among the participants were youth from different parts of the region. This was organised by the regional Red Cross of central river region in support of the drug-free club organisation in The Gambia.

On 22 November 2024, the Club conducted a long training day at the Misera Upper and Senior Secondary School. Mr Adama Bah, an Officer from the Drug Law Enforcement Agency in The Gambia, joined the training to share information on different types of drugs, the Drug Control Act, and legal aspects of drug-related matters in The Gambia. The event was attended by all students in the senior level and all teachers in the school.

I joined the DLEAG DRD Officer on two weekly radio talk shows as the regional focal person of the drug-free clubs organisation. The visit to Soma Community Radio and Paradies Radio in Farafenni, North Bank, Region, was part of a wider drugs-demand reduction and education campaign and addressed the general public.

Region, was part of a wider drugs-demand reduction and education campaign and addressed the general public. On 24 September 2025, I was invited for a two-day capacity-building under the UNDP peace-building project to share information on the importance of drug-use prevention, including evidence-based methods.



After the session, I also shared the educational platform of ISSUP.net and UNODC, among others, that can be used to further educate oneself in prevention.

International Summer School Camp

The peace ambassador of The Gambia hosted the international youth summer school, which brought youth from different countries, such as The Gambia, Senegal, and Bissau, together. I was invited to facilitate the drug-free classes for all the youths attending. I was the facilitator of the final days of the camp, during which we identified major issues affecting our countries and developed plans to stop such issues. We also discussed the prevention mechanisms that can be used in our various countries.



Submitted by: Janemy Obiny
ISSUP Kenya Youth Chairperson
Country: Kenya

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

1,4,6

Daystar University Peer Counsellors Training on Substance Use Prevention

Project Details

Location: Daystar University, Kenya
Campuses: Main Campus (Athi River) and City Campus (Nairobi)
Target Population: 18-35 years of age

Duration: Three training cycles were delivered across two academic semesters, with prevention-supportive mentorship and community initiatives continuing to evolve as part of the institution's wider prevention and wellness ecosystem.

Note: The Content was in a more universal prevention approach for a Primary audience comprising multidisciplinary students, faculty, and staff with multicultural backgrounds due to the large population of international students.



Concept of the Programme

Upon receiving training from the African Union on engaging university students in substance use prevention, the Daystar University Counselling Department, under the Students' Affairs Office, invited me a week later to facilitate Peer Counselling training at both campuses. This led to the establishment of the Prevention Initiative, a universal substance use prevention programme embedded within the Counselling Department's Peer Counselling Training.

The Programme aims to strengthen protective environments across the entire institution by equipping students, faculty, and staff with prevention competencies grounded in evidence-based prevention science, the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC) Core, and UPC 81. The focus is to reduce early vulnerability to substance use through strengthened social support, improved well-being, constructive peer influence, and early recognition of emerging behavioural concerns.

My contribution to the programme builds on my background as the ISSUP Kenya Youth Chairperson, a role through which I actively support the professional development of young people pursuing careers in drug demand reduction.

I integrated this into the Daystar programme by mentoring students who express interest in prevention, guiding them on professional pathways, credentialing opportunities, and global prevention standards. This mentorship component ensures that the programme not only builds immediate protective factors but also develops a pipeline of future prevention professionals committed to sustaining long-term community impact.

During my tenure as President of the Students' Health Department Daystar Compassion and Care Centre under the Student Affairs Association, I noted a need for a creative approach towards health that would bring simplicity in a highly stressful academic environment. These included guided after-class colouring sessions as accessible stress-regulation spaces. Students met to colour while enjoying snacks. There was a limited amount of colours available, encouraging students to communicate with each other to enjoy the process. These initiatives expanded supportive networks, promoted healthier coping strategies and strengthened help-seeking behaviour, key protective factors emphasised in prevention science.

Because of the programme's strong outcomes, I continued to be invited back post-graduation to facilitate the prevention components at both the Nairobi and the Main Campus. Across two semesters, approximately 300 participants, including students, faculty, and staff, have completed the training, with each cohort averaging 90 to 100 participants. This level of engagement aligns with universal prevention goals by influencing entire populations rather than isolated groups.

The trained participants now contribute actively to healthier campus norms, earlier identification of distress, and greater support for substance use prevention.

Looking ahead, planning is underway to collaborate with the Daystar University Peer Counsellors (DUPEC) to launch community-centred prevention activities within the Athi River Community as part of upcoming CSR efforts. This will extend the university's prevention strengths beyond campus boundaries and support community-level resilience in alignment with broader public health and drug demand reduction priorities.



This initiative represents a youth-led, institutionally supported prevention model grounded in science and aligned with continental frameworks such as the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control, Africa's Common Position on Drugs, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals emphasis on empowered, healthy youth. It demonstrates how coordinated youth leadership, evidence-informed prevention practice, and institutional collaboration can strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to substance use across populations.

As ISSUP Kenya Youth Chairperson and practitioner trained in UPC competencies, I remain committed to advancing youth-led prevention across Africa. I am available to support African Union Initiatives aimed at expanding youth engagement in prevention, strengthening campus-based prevention systems, and enhancing mental health and substance use prevention frameworks across African institutions.

Thank you for the work you do on a global scale that has paved the way for us to be more equipped to do the work on a community level.





Submitted by: Thembeke Chonelanga
Organisation: Mental Harmony
Country: Lesotho

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1

Youth-Led Policy Interventions for Substance Use Prevention

Overview

Mental Harmony has been actively implementing youth-focused substance use prevention initiatives in Maseru, Lesotho, targeting both university students at the National University of Lesotho and high school students at Phomolong High School. The organisation's approach is policy-driven, using evidence-based strategies to empower students, strengthen institutional rules, and foster peer-led prevention. These initiatives are grounded in international and national best practices, as well as knowledge gained through participation in the Training of Trainers on the Universal Prevention Curriculum.

The overall goal is to create sustainable, drug-free learning environments where students are informed, resilient, and actively engaged in advocating for healthy lifestyles.

Key Activities Implemented

Formation and Training PLAT Members

At both university and school levels, Mental Harmony has established PLAT. These teams consist of students selected from various faculties or grades to ensure broad representation and teachers from relevant

courses such as Biology/life skills in High School and Social Sciences in University. PLAT members are trained on evidence-based policies related to substance use prevention, peer mentoring techniques, and strategies to engage their peers in awareness activities. The training equips them to act as role models, facilitators, and advocates for drug-free lifestyles within their institutions.

Policy Review and Strengthening

A central component of Mental Harmony's prevention work has been policy-driven intervention. At the university and school, existing rules and policies on substance use were reviewed and updated using evidence-based practices. This ensures that the institutions have clear, enforceable guidelines for prevention and peer support. Policies include rules on substance use, guidelines for monitoring student behaviour, and structured pathways for students to seek support when needed.



Challenges Encountered and Solutions Implemented

Coordination challenges within PLAT structures

The inclusion of students, school staff, and community members initially created coordination difficulties, including scheduling conflicts and unclear communication.

Solution: A clear coordination structure was established, with defined roles and regular meeting schedules, supported by communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups.

Unequal participation among PLAT members

It was observed that some members, particularly community stakeholders and busy school staff, participated less consistently than students.

Solution: Flexible meeting times and task-sharing approaches were introduced to accommodate different availability levels and encourage active involvement from all members.

Power dynamics affecting student participation

Students at times felt less confident contributing in the presence of adults, which limited peer-driven engagement.

Solution: Safe and inclusive spaces were promoted, with facilitation techniques that ensured student voices were prioritized and respected.

Low student engagement in prevention activities

Some learners initially perceived substance use prevention sessions as uninteresting or irrelevant.

Solution: Interactive methods such as role plays, storytelling, and peer-led discussions were introduced to make sessions more engaging and relatable.

Limited resources for program implementation:

Constraints such as transport challenges and limited materials affected outreach, especially in some school and community settings.

Solution: Partnerships were strengthened with local stakeholders, and available resources were used more strategically to ensure continued program delivery.

Community (Stakeholders)

Mental Harmony engaged the community as key stakeholders in substance use prevention by involving parents, business owners, and local leaders in policy-related discussions. They contributed to strengthening and supporting institutional and community rules on substance use, helping ensure that policies are enforced and aligned with creating safe, drug-free environments. Their participation reinforces the policy-driven prevention work at both the National University of Lesotho and Phomolong High School.



Submitted by: Mukhtar Aliyu Usman

Country: Nigeria

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

1,5

Leading a Healthy Lifestyle Peer Support and Recovery Programme

Activity Aim

The project aimed to address increasing substance use problems among students across higher institutions in Nigeria through peer-to-peer interventions. Target populations are between the ages of 18 and 25, a population that is often neglected and most vulnerable.

Deliverables

The project has successfully trained 256 young prevention influencers across tertiary institutions in Nigeria, established 5 drug-free clubs, and trained 45 students on the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC-CORE) courtesy of ISSUP Nigeria.

The university has witnessed an impressive decline in drug-use-related cases in the last 3 years. This statement was made by the Vice Chancellor at the joint 1-day stakeholder engagement meeting in January 2024.



National Conference



**Training of Prevention Influencers
at Ahmadu Bello University**



Rallies



Submitted by: Ejikeme M. Ogueji
Organisation: Reclaiming Futures
 Nigeria (RFN)
Country: Nigeria

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1,2,5,6

Empowering Dream-Catchers: Building Nigeria's Next Generation of Prevention Leaders

Introduction

Young people across Nigeria face daily challenges such as trauma, substance use, and limited opportunities. These barriers can erode confidence and restrict their ability to envision brighter futures.

Across many regions, youth led prevention is increasingly recognized as a critical strategy for addressing these challenges sustainably. Since 2018, Reclaiming Futures Nigeria (RFN), through its Dream-Catchers initiative, has been transforming this reality by equipping young people with life skills, peer mentorship, and substance use prevention tools.

At its core, the initiative is built on a simple but powerful principle. Young people are not just beneficiaries. They are leaders and agents of change within their communities.

Welcoming a New Cohort of Leaders

On October 30 and 31, 2025, RFN welcomed 30 new young leaders to its Abuja Hub.

Over two days, participants received training in evidence-based substance use prevention, leadership, mental health awareness, and community engagement.

They strengthened skills in peer mentorship, communication, and empathy, emerging as Dream-Catchers Ambassadors prepared to lead positive change in their communities.

For many participants, this marked their first opportunity to actively lead and influence change at the community level.

Youth Led Action and Growing Impact

With this cohort, the Dream-Catchers network now includes over 4,600 Ambassadors across Nigeria, spanning schools, communities, IDP camps, and other vulnerable settings.

Each Ambassador serves as a champion of prevention and peer support, creating ripple effects that extend far beyond their immediate circles, reaching schools and communities nationwide through sustained outreach.



“Being a Dream-Catcher means helping other young people believe they can overcome challenges and achieve their dreams.” Mubarak, Dream-Catchers’ Ambassador (Abuja)

Creating Community Level Change

Beyond training, Ambassadors return to their communities equipped to:

- Lead dialogues in schools and community spaces
- Facilitate safe peer support environments
- Deliver outreach campaigns using creativity, storytelling, and advocacy

This youth-to-youth approach ensures prevention is not imposed from above but shaped from within communities, making it more relevant, trusted, and sustainable. It also reinforces a powerful message. Seeking help is a strength and leadership can be shared.

Advancing the Global Youth Declaration

This work directly contributes to advancing the priorities of the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery (2025).

Key Contributions

- Engaging young people in designing and delivering solutions
- Empowering youth through leadership development and opportunities
- Expanding access to inclusive, youth focused prevention services
- Strengthening community support systems and advocacy

By training Ambassadors as peer mentors and prevention educators, RFN ensures that youth voices guide action and that prevention efforts remain community driven and sustainable.



Partnerships that Strengthen Impact

The success of this initiative is strengthened through strategic partnerships. RFN is grateful to the US Mission Nigeria and American Spaces Nigeria, whose ongoing support expands reach, strengthens youth leadership capacity, and sustains a culture of prevention and inclusion.

Looking Ahead

The initiative continues to expand its reach, bringing prevention education and mentorship into schools, IDP camps, and underserved communities across Nigeria. The story of Dream-Catchers is one of transformation. Young people who once stood on the margins are now leading change, empowering others, shaping their communities, and reclaiming their futures and shaping a new narrative for the next generation.





Submitted by: Kinya Nina

Organisation: Sound Mental Health

Country: Kenya

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

2,4

Healing Forward: Trauma-Informed Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support through Sound Mental

My name is Kinya N. Gitonga, and I am an MSC. Clinical Psychologist, an author, researcher and founder of Sound Mental Health. Sound Mental is a youth-led mental health organisation in Kenya dedicated to trauma awareness, emotional healing, and the prevention of harmful coping behaviours, including substance and drug use. My work is rooted in the understanding that many young people turn to substances not from defiance, but from deep and unspoken pain. When youth are supported to understand and heal their emotional wounds, they become more resilient, make healthier decisions, and are better equipped to seek treatment or recovery support when needed.

Sound Mental uses storytelling, positive reinforcement, research, and youth-centred programming to help young people recognise trauma and embrace safer ways of coping.

Trauma as a Foundation for Prevention

Across our schools and communities, young people face emotional struggle ranging from family conflict and neglect to grief, violence, and social pressure. Without guidance or safe outlets, these experiences

can lead to reliance on substances as a form of relief or escape. Our mission is to intervene early, helping youth understand what they feel, why they feel it, and how they can cope without turning to drugs or harmful behaviours.

Through reading circles, youth mentorship, trauma-awareness workshops, and creative conversations, we help young people connect their emotional world with their behavioural choices. This trauma-informed awareness becomes one of the most powerful forms of prevention.

The “I Am Sorry” Series Reimagined for Healing

To deepen healing and awareness, I authored a five-book trauma-informed series designed to help youth understand their emotional experiences while strengthening resilience and positive coping.



- **The Healing Workbook**

A compassionate guide that helps young people move step by step toward self-forgiveness, emotional clarity, and inner calm. With guided exercises and reflection tools, it offers healthy coping alternatives that reduce vulnerability to substance use. This book is a tool for individual and group sessions.

- **I Know a Man, I Know a Woman**

A tender but powerful collection of whispered truths and survival stories from men and women living with the shadows of silence, violence, and emotional wounds. It encourages early disclosure, reduces stigma, and promotes help-seeking.

- **Shattered Trust**

An honest look at wounds caused by family conflict, abandonment, betrayal, loss, and missed opportunities. It helps young readers understand how broken trust shapes behaviour and how to rebuild emotional safety, supporting both prevention and recovery.

- **Shadows of the Past**

A raw exploration of unspoken pains carried from adolescence into adulthood, from heartbreak and grief to trauma and betrayal. It guides young people to confront unresolved emotional burdens that often drive risky coping behaviours.

- **Scars to Starts**

A transformative toolkit that helps readers turn pain into purpose and wounds into wisdom. It reinforces hope, positive identity building, and long-term recovery.

Collectively, these books provide emotional education that strengthens prevention, supports treatment motivation, and sustains recovery.

Collectively, these books provide emotional education that strengthens prevention, supports treatment motivation, and sustains recovery.

Sound Mental's Role in Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

Youth Engagement: Young people participate as peer educators, storytellers, facilitators, and mental health ambassadors, shaping conversations and awareness campaigns.

Gender-responsive approaches: Our programmes address the unique vulnerabilities of girls and young women who often experience trauma differently and may use substances as coping mechanisms. We create safe, supportive spaces for them.

Modernised awareness campaigns: We use storytelling, digital content, short videos, and relatable language to unpack trauma, coping strategies, and mental health. The book series itself is a modern tool designed to meet youth where they are.

Accessible services: Sound Mental offers referrals to counsellors, psychologists, and rehabilitation centres for youth showing early signs of distress or substance use. We help them access support safely and without shame.



Community support: We work with teachers, parents, and community leaders to promote trauma-informed understanding of drug use, focusing on compassion, reintegration, and long-term healing.

Economic and leadership opportunities: Through training, volunteerism, and project leadership, we provide youth opportunities that build confidence, skills, and resilience, strengthening their long-term well-being.

Positive Reinforcement through the Sound Mental Awards

The Sound Mental Awards celebrate youth wellness champions, mental health providers, educators, and volunteers who are committed to emotional well-being and substance use prevention.

By celebrating these changemakers, we reinforce hope, encourage commitment, and inspire more youth to pursue healthy coping and recovery pathways.

Integrating Research into Youth Well-Being

Research is an essential part of my work. Understanding the patterns, risks, and emotional factors influencing youth behaviours enables us to design more effective preventive and recovery-focused strategies.

My latest study, which I am conducting, is titled: The Prevalence of E-Cigarette Use, Its Association with Anxiety Symptoms, and an Exploration of Individual Perceptions Among Undergraduate Students.

This research explores how young people use e-cigarettes, what emotional states accompany that use, and how anxiety and

perception influence their choices. The findings contribute to improved prevention strategies, trauma-informed programming, and youth-centred interventions for substance use.

Why This Works Matters

Youth drug use is rarely about the substance alone. It is often a story of trauma, emotional pain, identity, and survival. When young people understand themselves, process their wounds, and gain access to support, healthier futures become possible.

Sound Mental, supported by the "I Am Sorry" series, community engagement, positive reinforcement, and research, is committed to building a generation that chooses healing over harm, support over resilience, and resilience over escape.

I AM SORRY

KINYA N. GITONG

WORKBOOK

I KNOW A MAN I KNOW A WOMAN
Whispers of Silence

SHATTERED
THE POWER OF TRUST

SCARS & STARS

Shadow of the Past

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Submitted by: Shabani Miraji Shabani

Country: Tanzania

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

5

TOT Report on Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC): Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention in Tanzania

The Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA), in collaboration with the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP), Tanzania, and the African Union Commission (AUC) successfully conducted a five-day training on the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC): Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention from 20-24 October 2025 in Arusha. The training aimed to strengthen the capacity of practitioners and stakeholders to design, implement, and evaluate evidence-based prevention interventions targeting young people.

This programme was supported by the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme (CP-DAP) as part of ongoing regional efforts to build a cadre of competent prevention professionals across Africa. The training brought together 32 participants from government institutions, civil society organisations, and academia.

After attending the African Union Commission-funded UPC Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention in Seychelles, 2-6 June 2025, Master Trainers Mr Shabani Miraji Shabani, Prevention Specialist, and Mr Said Madadi,

Education Officer from the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA), returned to share their knowledge with the community. This return-to-community initiative reflects a strong commitment to apply the skills and insights gained internationally to build local capacity and strengthen youth-focused drug prevention efforts in Tanzania.

Objectives of the Training

The main objectives of the UPC Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention Training were to:

- Strengthen the knowledge and practical skills of participants in applying evidence-based prevention principles.
- Promote youth-centred and community-driven prevention approaches.
- Enhance collaboration between government institutions, civil society organisations, and educational institutions in youth prevention programming.
- Equip participants to act as change agents and advocates for substance use prevention within their communities.

- Cascade the training outcomes by conducting ECHO sessions and related capacity-building initiatives in their respective areas to sustain and expand impact.

Methodology

The training was facilitated through interactive learning approaches, including:

- Thematic presentations and group discussions.
- Role plays, case studies, and scenario analysis.
- Peer-to-peer engagement and reflections on community-level experiences.
- Pre- and post-assessments to measure knowledge and attitude change.
- Participants were introduced to the UPC modules focusing on risk and protective factors, youth engagement techniques, and international standards for drug use prevention.

Key Outcomes and Achievements

- 32 practitioners trained and certified under the international UPC framework.
- Enhanced understanding of science-based prevention approaches and application in Tanzanian contexts.
- Strengthened coordination between DCEA, youth organisations, schools, and community leaders.
- Participants developed localised action plans to implement youth prevention initiatives and conduct ECHO training in their home regions.
- Created a network of prevention champions to support peer learning and sustainability.

Master Trainers and Capacity Development

The training was facilitated by Mr Shabani Miraji Shabani, Prevention Specialist, and Mr Said Madadi, Education Officer,

both from the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA), Tanzania.

The two master trainers previously attended the African Union-funded UPC Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention Training held in Seychelles, 2-6 June 2025. Upon returning, they conducted a national Training of Trainers (TOT) as part of a Return on Investment (ROI) initiative to cascade knowledge and strengthen national prevention capacity.

Conclusion

The UPC Youth Engagement in Drug Prevention in Arusha marked a significant milestone in building a sustainable, evidence-based prevention system in Tanzania. The training not only enhanced participant competencies but also laid the foundation for a ripple effect through ECHO dissemination and localised prevention initiatives. DCEA remains committed to promoting science-based prevention and youth empowerment as key strategies in addressing substance use challenges.

Given their demonstrated commitment and ability to transfer knowledge effectively, it is recommended that Master Trainers be considered for future opportunities, technical trainings, and regional collaborations. Their continued involvement will help sustain and expand culturally rooted, youth-centred drug prevention efforts in Tanzania and beyond.

Submitted by: Shabani Miraji Shabani

Country: Tanzania

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

1,2,5,6

“Jioni ya Zamani” Project

“The Jioni ya Zamani” project is a Swahili phrase that means “Evenings of the past”. It is a youth-led, culturally anchored model for substance use prevention and community engagement established under the coordination of the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Arusha, Tanzania. The programme was launched in January 2025 to revitalise cultural values and intergenerational dialogue as protective factors against substance use and related social challenges.

In many Tanzanian communities, traditional platforms that once nurtured values, discipline, and mentorship among youth have weakened due to urbanisation, globalisation, and socio-economic pressures. This erosion of cultural identity has contributed to rising rates of risky behaviours among young people, including substance use. Recognising the need for prevention approaches grounded in cultural wisdom, Jioni ya Zamani was developed as a unique community-based forum that brings together youth, elders, professionals, and community leaders to exchange knowledge and strengthen social bonds. Elders share their experience, moral training and wisdom that enable youth to have resilience.

The platform operates through bi-monthly evening gatherings that blend modern facilitation techniques with traditional forms of dialogue, music, poetry, and storytelling. These sessions encourage open discussion, promote resilience, and inspire youth to embrace positive cultural values while rejecting harmful behaviours.

From January to October 2025, a total of five Jioni ya Zamani sessions were conducted, each focusing on a specific theme related to youth empowerment, identity restoration, and substance use prevention.



By integrating cultural revitalisation with evidence-based prevention principles, Jioni ya Zamani demonstrates that sustainable community transformation is achievable when youth and the elderly unite around shared values, mutual respect, and collective responsibility for a drug-free society.

Objectives

The key objectives of “Jioni ya Zamani” were to:

- Promote youth engagement in substance use prevention through culturally grounded activities.
- Foster dialogue between the elderly, faith leaders, and young people to restore intergenerational trust.
- Strengthen resilience, decision-making, and self-efficacy among youth at risk.
- Use creative arts (music, poetry, drama) as tools for prevention awareness and identity building.
- Demonstrate a community-based prevention model that complements national strategies.

Methodology

The initiative applied a non-clinical, experience-based, and participatory approach combining modern facilitation techniques with traditional practices. Key activities included:



- Life Skills Empowerment Workshops: Focused on decision-making, communication, and emotional regulation.
- Cultural Dialogue Forums (“Jioni Sessions”): Bimonthly evening sessions featuring elders, faith leaders, and professionals sharing life lessons and cultural values.
- University Youth Facilitation: Student volunteers led mentorship and interactive peer education among urban and informal youth groups.
- Expressive Prevention Arts: Music, poetry, and drama performances promoting resilience and sober lifestyles.
- Community Panels: Engagements with substance use professionals and mental health experts, bridging traditional wisdom with modern science.

Key Achievements & Impact

- Reached and engaged more than 300 participants who attended the sessions physically, strengthening community-level awareness and capacity in substance use prevention.
- Visible behavioural and attitudinal shifts among participants, with improved decision-making and confidence.
- Strengthened cultural identity and pride among youth, creating a sense of belonging and purpose.
- Increased trust and communication between young people and community elders.
- Enhanced peer-to-peer learning through university-led facilitation.
- Inclusion of marginalised youth from informal settlements, ensuring diversity and representation.
- Emergence of “Jioni ya Zamani” as a recognised community-based prevention model adaptable to other cities.

Challenges

- Limited funding for sustaining weekly sessions and arts competitions.
- High demand from communities outside Arusha, exceeding initial project capacity.
- Need for technical support in monitoring and evaluation for scale-up.

Recommendations

- Integrate “Jioni ya Zamani” within DCEA’s national youth prevention framework as a cultural prevention model.
- Expand the initiative to other urban centres under a replication plan (“Cha Kale ni Dhahabu”, a Swahili word that means “Old is Gold”) to preserve originality and sustainability.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, universities, and faith-based organisations for continuity.

- Secure support for documentation, evaluation, and media coverage to capture learning outcomes.

Conclusion

“Jioni ya Zamani” demonstrates that prevention rooted in culture, community, and youth leadership can significantly influence behaviour and identity. The platform successfully bridged generations, merged traditional wisdom with modern approaches, and empowered youth to reclaim their role as agents of change.

The initiative stands as a model for reviving cultural roots as a foundation for drug demand reduction and youth empowerment across Tanzania and beyond.



Submitted by: Ahmad Shah

Country: Pakistan

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

5

Participation in the 6th Asian Youth Congress led to involvement in Drug Demand Reduction

My life transformed after I participated in the 6th Asian Youth Congress in Bali, Indonesia, in 2008, which was supported by the U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State: Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL). That is where I got my inspiration and motivation to work in the field of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR).

With the support of the U.S. Department of State: Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement (INL), The Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Programme - DAP, Aga Khan Development Network, and the Govt of Pakistan, I have been to about fourteen different countries across Asia, Africa, and the USA. The theme of the programs I attended was mainly Drug Demand Reduction (DDR).

Before the INL's / CP DRR outreach in Pakistan, drug substance use was not taken as a serious issue, and there was little awareness regarding its prevention and treatment. With the collaboration of INL/C, the Universal Prevention and Treatment Curriculum was developed, which trained Treatment & Prevention professionals.

The INL-trained professionals are the pioneers in the Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) field in Pakistan. As of now, thousands of people have been trained through the INL's programs—UPC, UTC, etc.

Here, I must thank Mr Brian Morales and his able team for their constant support, which has encouraged me to play an active role in the Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) in Pakistan. My long-term goal is to build a Drug-Free Pakistan.





Submitted by: Dr Azqa Shahzad
Organisation: Career Sync Solutions
Country: Pakistan

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1

The Youth-Led Revolution that is Reshaping Recovery

In early 2025, Dr Azqa Shahzad, founder of Career Sync Solutions, invited 12 youth to share their perspectives on supporting people in recovery. They emphasised hope, the importance of community support, and the need to end stigma around recovery. Their voices and ideas are collected and amplified in the e-magazine. The aim of the magazine was not to capture personal stories but to highlight youth insights that can inspire action, awareness, and empathy.

Through these reflections, they hope to remind communities that support matters and that everyone deserves understanding and encouragement in recovery.

The e-magazine was launched during Drug Recovery Month, celebrating the voices of Pakistani youth and reaffirming the commitment of Career Sync Solutions to youth-centred recovery advocacy.

Project Contributors & Youth Advocates:

Mir Muhammad Adil, Hira Mujahid, Wajiha Malik, Princy Kumari, Sanam Ashfaq, Ria Kumari, Bisma Zaib, Maira Khan, Qintra Aisha Nizami, Sidra Zafar, Rimsha Zahir Ali Shah, and Quratulain.

A few of those voices have been highlighted in this magazine, while it is strongly encouraged to read the original magazine [here](#).



Princy Kumari (AFS Changemaker)

“Drug recovery, to me, means a journey of self-awareness and healing. Through the sessions I’ve attended, I’ve learned that recovery is not just about leaving substances behind but about understanding myself, my emotions, and my triggers. Others can guide or support me, but the real change starts from within. It’s about taking responsibility, rebuilding confidence, and choosing a healthier, more meaningful life every single day.”

**Mir Muhammad Adil (Biotechnologist)**

“I have seen what addiction can do to a person. It doesn’t just hurt them; it changes everything around them. I have watched people I care about lose parts of themselves, and it’s painful when you can’t do much except stand by and hope they find their way back. But I have also seen the other side, that is, the strength it takes to recover, to admit you are struggling, and to keep trying every single day. Recovery isn’t easy, but it’s really, and it’s possible. I have learned that people in recovery don’t need judgment or fancy advice. They just need someone to believe in them, to remind them that they’re still worthy of love, even when they feel broken.”

**Sanam Ashfaq (Computer Science Student)**

“As a computer science student, I’ve learned that just like systems can crash and be restored, people, too, can heal and rebuild. Recovery is not weakness; it’s courage in motion. Every effort to rise again, no matter how small, is powerful. I believe that through awareness, empathy, and shared stories, we can inspire others to find hope and strength on their journey toward recovery.”



Qintra Ayesha Nizami (Trauma Therapist)

My curiosity about the link between Adverse Childhood Experiences and substance use led me towards doing trauma-informed therapy with clients. I've witnessed how addressing trauma's roots helps people move from survival to recovery. Healing deepens when we start to understand addiction as the body's attempt to cope with pain and not their moral failure."

**Sanam Ashfaq (Computer Science Student)**

"Drug recovery is more about reclaiming your life while quitting the addiction. Substance abuse in Pakistan is a threat to society, stealing precious years of youth. What's even more disheartening is seeing how this addiction has been normalised as a social trend. However, behind this false image lies despair, broken hearts, strained families, and lost happy years of life. For me, recovery requires immense strength, beginning a new journey of transformation - support from others, commitment to yourself and compassion every day. The true healing begins when you embrace positivity, fight the inner battles, and challenge your limits to stay away from such addiction. It's more about rediscovering and reclaiming your true identity in society - a path where you are actually evolving yourself."

**Maira Khan (Public Health Graduate)**

"If you're walking the path of recovery, don't stop now. What you're doing takes real courage. Healing isn't instant, but every step you take shows your strength, not because you never stumble, but because you keep rising, every single day. You're not alone in this. Healing takes time, and that's perfectly okay. What truly matters is that you're trying and that effort is enough. Keep moving forward; brighter days are coming."





Submitted by: Marjana Muntaha
Organisation: Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Country: Bangladesh

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1,2,6

Youth Leading Change for Health and Recovery

Drug addiction has become a growing public health and social concern in Bangladesh, affecting individuals, families, and communities across the country. The easy availability of substances such as yaba, heroin, and cannabis, combined with social pressures, unemployment, and lack of awareness, has led to a rise in substance use, particularly among youth. According to national reports, a significant proportion of people who use drugs in Bangladesh are under 30 years old, highlighting the urgent need for prevention, early intervention, and accessible treatment services. The stigma surrounding addiction often prevents individuals from seeking help, making community-based support, awareness, and rehabilitation efforts even more crucial. Strengthening youth engagement, peer education, and recovery-focused initiatives is essential to address this challenge and promote a drug-free, healthy generation.

Drug addiction is one of the most pressing challenges facing young people in Bangladesh today. Many youths fall into substance use due to peer pressure, unemployment, curiosity, or lack of proper guidance and support.

Behind every addiction story lies a young life full of potential, waiting to be redirected toward hope and healing. Yet, stigma and silence often prevent them from seeking help.

CAs advocates, we believe change begins with awareness, empathy, and action. Through open dialogue, youth engagement, and community involvement, we can break the cycle of addiction and replace it with understanding and opportunity. Empowering young people to speak out, support their peers, and take part in recovery-focused initiatives is key to building a healthier and drug-free Bangladesh where every youth has the chance to thrive and lead a life of dignity and purpose.



As a passionate youth advocate and professional working in the Human Resource Department at Ahsania Mission Female Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, I have had the privilege of witnessing how empowering young people can transform communities. Through my role as Coordinator of the Ahsania Mission Youth Forum for Health & Well-being, a voluntary initiative under the Health Sector of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, we work to engage, educate, and inspire youth to take the lead in promoting health and well-being, particularly in the areas of substance use prevention and recovery support.

Our forum brings together young volunteers from diverse backgrounds who share a common goal: building a generation that is aware, resilient, and compassionate. We not only engage youth from diverse backgrounds but also involve individuals in recovery, who volunteer alongside us as part of their continued growth and reintegration.

Together, we organise awareness campaigns, youth dialogues, skill development workshops, and advocacy events addressing issues such as tobacco, drug use, and mental health. Each activity is designed to reflect the voices and needs of young people, ensuring they are not only beneficiaries but also active contributors in shaping healthier communities.



In alignment with the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery 2025, our work focuses on strengthening youth engagement, fostering gender-responsive approaches, and promoting community support systems. By bridging the gap between prevention, treatment, and youth empowerment, we are demonstrating that meaningful youth participation is not a slogan but a powerful force for sustainable change.

**Organisation:**

Young Men's Christian Association
of Macau (YMCA)

Country: Macau

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

2,4,6

Preventing Youth Drug Abuse: A Two-Pathway Strategy

Background

The YMCA of Macau was established in 1994 to provide preventive and developmental social services for children and youth. In recent years, drug use among young people in Macau has become more hidden, with many new types of substances appearing, such as e-cigarette drug oils and drug candy. Additionally, the convenience of the internet allows teenagers to access information about these new drugs online. This environment makes it easier than ever for adolescents to be exposed to drugs. We have therefore adopted a two-pathway prevention strategy that encompasses both primary and secondary prevention services, offering comprehensive protective intervention for youth in Macau.

Primary Prevention

The "Youth Community Centre" offers a wide range of drug-prevention education activities for children and teenagers. Participants learn about healthy lifestyles, positive coping skills, and how to say "NO" to drugs. Our key services are:

1) Online Anti-Drug Quiz Competition ("Drug-Free Master 2.0")

Using the popular messaging app WeChat, this quiz game raises young people's

awareness of the dangers of drugs and of relevant laws. Players advance through levels by answering questions correctly; those who reach the highest level enter a raffle to win prizes specially selected for teens.

2) Drug-Free School Promotion Programme

Through school-based education on drug awareness, skill-building, and interest exploration, this programme helps teenagers develop strong protective factors as they grow, steering them away from substance abuse. Activities include adventure-based challenges, emerging sports, volunteer training, and camps.



3) Anti-Drug Board-Game Sessions ('Say No to Drugs' and 'Werewolf Game')

These sessions integrate images that show the forms and physical/mental effects of new drugs into the gameplay. This engaging approach subtly imparts drug-related knowledge to participants.

4) Structured Leisure Programme: "Drug-Free Agents"

This long-term programme engages youth in systematic and continuous recreational activities. Designed to help participants discover their potential, build confidence, and strengthen resilience, it also involves them in promoting community anti-drug initiatives and provides a platform to showcase their abilities.

Secondary Prevention

The "Organic Teen Centre" focuses on adolescents at high risk of drug use. We conduct early intervention, case follow-up, and educational activities to enhance their protective factors (such as self-esteem) and help them stay away from drugs. We implement a secondary-prevention programme in schools through a six-month, funnel-shaped service plan divided into three tiers.



1) Tier 1: Outreach & Awareness

This foundational level involves close collaboration with middle schools to promote healthy living and drug education. Activities are designed to reach students and teachers, build initial connections, and reduce stigma around our services. What we did:

- Conducted thematic lectures, workshops, and booth activities on well-being and substance-use awareness.
- Raised general awareness about drug-related risks and the importance of early intervention.

2) Tier 2: Identification & Empowerment

This tier focuses on early identification of youth with high-risk factors. Selected participants join a semester-long leadership-training course to build their confidence, strengths, and self-efficacy. What we did:

- Used screening tools and teacher assessments to identify at-risk youth.
- Ran a diverse leadership course tailored to youth interests:
 - Dynamic activities: adventure-based training, rope courses, road cycling.
 - Static activities: photography and horticultural therapy
- Organised a school showcase for participants to demonstrate their talents and rebuild a positive image among peers and within the school.

3) Tier 3: Sustained Support & Development

This final tier provides continued engagement and advanced opportunities for youth from Tier 2, fostering further development of their potential. What we did:

- Held regular community events (e.g., holiday celebrations) to strengthen a sense of connection.
- Provided advanced training pathways (e.g., volunteer teams, cycling clubs) to solidify leadership skills.
- Arranged individual follow-up and referral for those with special needs to prevent further risk of substance use.

Conclusion

The two-pathway strategy provides multi-faceted drug prevention for young people. It effectively raises their awareness of drugs, clarifies common misconceptions, and educates them on relevant laws. The strategy also strengthens youths' leadership roles, empowering them to use their strengths and build a positive self-identity.

In this way, it helps to prevent drug abuse triggered by emotional struggles, stress, or negative peer influence. Ultimately, it enables young people to transform from an "at-risk group" into "agents of protection," emerging as active members in a drug-free community.





2 Activities FOR Youth

Submitted by: Simon Gwary
Organisation: Child Without Drug-Abuse Initiative
Country: Nigeria

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

4

Medical Outreach Report

The medical outreach programme, organised by Child Without Drug-Abuse, was successfully executed on 1st February 2025 at Gadon Kaya Environs, Kano State. The initiative aimed to provide free malaria diagnosis, treatment, and deworming services to children below 18 years of age. Additionally, the programme included educational sessions for both children and parents on the dangers of drug abuse and the importance of parental care in preventing substance abuse among children.

Objectives:

The main objectives were:

1. To provide free malaria diagnosis and treatment for children under 18 years old
2. To educate children on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse
3. To engage parents in the critical role of parental care in preventing drug abuse among children

Achievements

The outreach provided medical services, including diagnosing and treating malaria cases among children at no cost, while also treating other conditions as advised by the physician.

Additionally, it conducted educational sessions, including group sessions with children, educating them on the dangers and consequences of drug abuse while engaging parents in discussions on the importance of parental care as a primary defence against drug abuse among children. The programme reached a total of 107 participants (59% female and 41% male).

Evaluation and Feedback

Several methods, including follow-up visits for final doses of medication and follow-up calls to parents, were used to evaluate the success of the outreach and receive feedback from children, parents, and the community. Overall, the feedback from parents, children, and community members was positive.



Conclusion

This medical outreach organised by Child Without Drug-Abuse was a resounding success, achieving its objectives of providing free medical care and raising awareness about drug abuse among children and parents. The programme not only addressed immediate health needs but also fostered a sense of community responsibility in preventing drug abuse. Plans are underway to organise similar outreaches in other communities to further promote child health and well-being.

Donors and Partners: The success of the outreach was made possible through the generous support of the following donors and partners: NAFADC Ports Inspection Directorate, Yaba, Lagos, Khairat Pharmaceutical and Vet Company Ltd, Kano, Jamaal Arewa Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, Kano.



Caregivers and Team Members

The outreach was facilitated by a dedicated team of healthcare professionals and volunteers:

- Pharm. Mohammed Yakubu – Director, Jamaal Arewa Pharmaceuticals, Kano
- Dr Elisha Jabani – Team lead, Medical Outreach, Child Without Drug Abuse
- Mr Jamilu Kabiru Habu – Team lead, organisation & planning, Child Without Drug-Abuse
- Mr Musbahu Sani – lead, Internal Audit, Child Without Drug Abuse
- Mrs Aisha Badamasi – Lead Nurse, Jamaal Arewa Pharmaceuticals
- Miss. Nussaiba Abdullahi – Pharmacy Technician, Jamaal Arewa Pharmaceuticals
- Mrs Rabia Ibrahim – Community Health Extension Worker (CHEW), Jamaal Arewa Pharmaceuticals
- Habila Akolo – Secretary, Child Without Drug Abuse
- Stephen Gwary – Team lead, Monitoring and Evaluation, Child Without Drug Abuse
- Olusegun Michael – Team lead, IT Department, Child Without Drug Abuse
- Simon Gwary – Project Lead, Child Without Drug Abuse





Submitted by: Abdul Karim Kalokoh
Organisation: Community Empowerment for Self Help (CESH)
Country: Sierra Leone

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,4,5,6

From Victims to Leaders

How Community Empowerment for Self Help (CESH) is turning addiction survivors into community leaders

A Generation under Siege

In Sierra Leone's Northern Province, a synthetic drug known as "Kush" has unleashed a public health catastrophe. Its grip on youth has devastated families, overwhelmed communities, and prompted a national emergency declaration by President Julius Maada Bio in 2024. Yet amid the despair, a different story is unfolding in Makeni—one of resilience, leadership, and transformation. At the heart of this story lies a simple but powerful question: Who are better to save a generation than the generation itself?

This question led to the founding of Community Empowerment for Self Help (CESH), a youth-led organisation built on the belief that recovery is only the beginning, and that true progress lies in empowerment.

From Recovery to Empowerment

CESH rejects the notion that young people are merely victims. Instead, it recognises them as architects of their own recovery and leaders of community transformation. The model is designed not only to rescue, but to rebuild and re-root.



The Model: Three Pillars in Action

Rescue and Recover – Community as the Clinic
 CESH delivers immediate, community-based detoxification and psychosocial support. Rather than isolating youth in distant clinics, the programme meets them where they are, using peer-to-peer counselling to reduce stigma and build trust. Graduates often return as mentors, creating a self-sustaining cycle of support that extends beyond what professional services alone can provide.

Rebuild and Skill – From Idle Hands to Skilled Trades

To address idleness and hopelessness, CESH provides certified vocational training in carpentry, tailoring, and IT. The programme goes beyond teaching skills by offering tools and pathways to sustainable livelihoods. Former participants go on to become apprentice carpenters and tailors, producing furniture and school uniforms, demonstrating how economic empowerment can act as a strong safeguard against relapse.

Root and Sustain – Cultivating a Drug-Free Future

Through its agricultural empowerment programme, CESH establishes youth-led farming cooperatives. Participants learn modern techniques, grow food, and generate income from surplus production. This approach supports both food security and financial sustainability, while reconnecting young people to their communities and future opportunities.



A Call to Scale Youth-Led Solutions

CESH has shown that a holistic, youth-led approach can break the cycle of addiction and despair. However, the scale of the Kush crisis requires expanded action. The organisation calls on global partners, including WFAD, to support capacity building, strengthen vocational training, and invest in youth-led solutions that restore dignity rather than dependency.

From Makeni to the World

CESH is more than a programme, it is a movement. A movement that transforms victims into leaders, despair into purpose, and addiction into empowerment. The youth of Sierra Leone are not waiting to be saved. They are saving themselves—and they are ready to lead.



Submitted by: Mrs. Catherine Boyane Oloo Aringo
Organisation: Nakuru Drop-In Center
Country: Kenya

Youth Declaration Recommendation

4,6

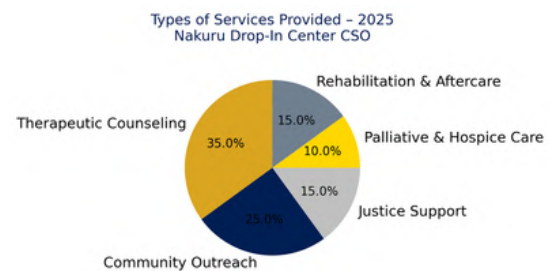
Empowering Healing, Restoring Purpose, Transforming Lives

At Nakuru Drop-In Center CSO (NDIC), healing begins the moment clients step into a space where their story matters. Rooted in faith, culture, and evidence-based care, NDIC brings together mental health, chaplaincy, and community wellness to restore purpose and build lasting resilience. NDIC's interventions are holistic, faith-driven, and youth-centred, specifically designed for young people facing substance use challenges. Through preventive education, mentorship, and community engagement, youth are empowered not only in their recovery, but as active contributors to their communities.

NDIC integrates storytelling, African drum beating, dancing, and singing as therapeutic tools alongside evidence-based outpatient interventions. Personal narratives allow individuals to process trauma, reframe experiences, and cultivate resilience, while communal rhythms promote emotional release, social bonding, and cultural identity. This combination supports emotional regulation, strengthens self-esteem, and inspires hope.

At NDIC, clients enter a space where their personal narrative is valued and validated. This client-centred approach enhances emotional resilience, restores purpose, and strengthens mental well-being, while also

reducing stigma and strengthening social cohesion across Nakuru County. By combining culturally grounded practices with global best practices, NDIC has developed a replicable model that empowers individuals, families, and communities.



By uniting faith, compassion, and professional mental health care, NDIC demonstrates that recovery is holistic, ethical, and sustainable—creating a ripple of hope, dignity, and long-term transformation.



NDIC PROFESSIONALS: Pioneering Change and Shaping the Future at The Kenya Wildlife Service - KWS

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Submitted by: Musa Ibrahim
Organisation: Place of Wellness and Health Foundation
Country: Nigeria

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,2,3,5

Promoting Wellness and a Healthy Future: Youth-Led Campaigns for Substance Abuse Prevention and Mental Health Awareness in Kano State

Introduction

The Place of Wellness and Health Foundation (PWHF) is a registered non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underserved communities across Nigeria. Guided by our mission to raise awareness, empower minds, and promote behavioural change through public health education, PWHF focuses on mental health awareness, substance abuse prevention, and health - lifestyle promotion among women and youth.

Our vision is a Nigeria where every woman and youth is mentally empowered, substance-free, and able to live a healthy, fulfilling life in dignity and freedom. This report highlights our recent youth-focused interventions that align closely with the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery 2025.

1. Massive Awareness Campaigns Against Substance Abuse

In 2025, PWHF embarked on a state-wide awareness campaign across Kano to combat the rising trend of substance misuse and its devastating impact on young people.

The campaign combined community outreach, lectures, and creative youth engagement strategies under our flagship “Clean Minds, Clear Futures” initiative.

Through school visits, community events, and public dialogues, we reached thousands of adolescents, students, and parents with educational messages on understanding substance use, misuse, and addiction; identifying commonly abused substances in our environment; recognising the health, social, and legal consequences of substance use; and promoting practical prevention, early detection, and help-seeking behaviours. Our campaigns featured youth ambassadors, peer educators, and recovering addicts who shared personal stories to inspire empathy and drive change.



2. Targeting Youth - With Special Emphasis on Young Women

Recognising the unique challenges faced by young women, PWHF designed gender-responsive sessions that encouraged open discussions around mental health, self-esteem, and resilience. Female facilitators and mentors created safe spaces for dialogue, helping young women understand social pressures that may lead to substance use, while equipping them with coping mechanisms, confidence, and leadership skills. This approach reflects PWHF's commitment to empowering women as change agents within their families and communities.

3. School-Based Interventions and Club Formation

Schools remain one of the most strategic focal points for prevention and early intervention. They are places where young people learn, socialise, and form behaviours that can influence their lifelong attitudes toward substances. Reaching students early help to build knowledge and resilience before exposure to peer pressure, encourage healthy coping mechanisms for academic and emotional stress, and create a multiplier effect as informed students become advocates among their peers.

PWHF, therefore, prioritised both secondary and tertiary institutions as key platforms for awareness. Our activities included lectures, film screenings, and interactive question sessions where students learned about the science of addiction, peer influence, and the importance of seeking help early.

A major milestone was the establishment of "Substance Abuse Prevention and Early Detection Clubs" (SAPED Club) in several schools.

These clubs, managed by student leaders under teacher supervision, now serve as sustainable platforms promoting healthy choices, peer support, and early identification of at-risk students.

4. Community Ambassadors Network

To ensure sustainability, PWHF launched a Community Ambassadors Network — a group of trained volunteers representing various localities across Kano. These youth ambassadors organise periodic sensitisation activities, identify and support at-risk individuals, and advocate for drug-free living through social and religious gatherings. This initiative has significantly increased grassroots participation and ownership, reinforcing our bottom-up community engagement approach that values local leadership and cultural relevance.



5. Stakeholder Collaboration and Advocacy

Understanding that the substance use crisis requires a collective, multi-sectoral effort, PWHF has been actively engaging stakeholders to build synergy and shared responsibility. Our advocacy efforts have brought together government ministries and agencies (Health, Youth, Education), NDLEA, Hisbah Board, and security partners, community and religious leaders, business stakeholders and philanthropists, as well as academic institutions and NGOs. These partnerships aim to strengthen prevention frameworks, promote rehabilitation support, and integrate youth-led perspectives into state-level policy and strategy discussions.

6. Youth Empowerment and Leadership Development

Beyond awareness, PWHF believes in empowering young people with practical life and leadership skills to foster economic independence, resilience, and self-worth. Empowered youth are more likely to make informed decisions, resist peer pressure, and serve as positive role models within their communities. Our leadership training and mentorship programmes continue to strengthen these protective factors against substance use and mental distress.



7. Research and Data Gathering on Youth Substance Use

As part of our evidence-based approach, PWHF is conducting a Drug Abuse Awareness and Experience Questionnaire Survey among adolescents and young adults in Kano. This initiative is aimed at crucial insights into levels of awareness about substance use and its risks, commonly abused substances among youth, socio-cultural factors influencing substance use, and barriers to accessing mental health and counselling services. The findings will be used to refine our intervention strategies, inform local policy, and strengthen youth participation in research and advocacy. PWHF is committed to advancing the research-to-action link — ensuring that youth data and lived experiences guide every awareness, education, and prevention effort.

Conclusion

The Place of Wellness and Health Foundation (PWHF) continues to embody the principles of the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery 2025 by listening to youth voices, modernising awareness strategies, ensuring gender responsiveness, expanding youth services and clubs, promoting leadership and empowerment, and strengthening research, policy engagement, and community support. Our experience demonstrates that when empowered and supported, young people can become the strongest advocates for prevention, mental wellness, and social transformation in Nigeria and beyond.



Submitted by: Habib Taigore Kamara
Organisation: Social Linkages for Youth Development and Child Link
Country: Sierra Leone

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,5,6

Youth Taking the Lead in Drug Prevention and Community Resilience

Across Sierra Leone, young people represent both the nation's greatest asset and its most vulnerable population. In recent years, a troubling rise in drug and substance use, particularly the use of synthetic drugs such as "Kush", has created a serious public health and social challenge. The misuse of such substances has led to widespread youth unemployment, mental health crises, family breakdowns, and, in some cases, premature deaths.

Despite these challenges, young people have shown a remarkable willingness to take ownership of solutions that affect their peers and communities. Recognising this, the Social Linkages for Youth Development and Child Link (SLYDCL) initiated a youth-driven approach to address the issues through prevention, education, and empowerment.

Project Overview

In 2024, SLYDCL launched an innovative initiative titled "Youth for Resilience and Recovery", designed to empower young people to become active agents in combating drugs and substance misuse.

The project focused on three key areas: prevention, engagement, and community resilience.

Activities included:

- School and community awareness sessions on drug prevention, mental health, and life skills.
- Street-level outreach campaigns, using drama, music, and interactive discussions to reach hard-to-reach youth.
- Youth capacity-building workshops, focused on leadership, entrepreneurship, and positive coping mechanisms.
- Community dialogues involving parents, traditional leaders, health workers, and local authorities to strengthen collective action against substance misuse.



Youth Leadership and Participation

A defining feature of the project was that it was designed and led by young people. Youth representatives played central roles in planning, implementation, and monitoring activities. They developed creative educational content, facilitated peer learning sessions, and mobilised their peers for outreach events.

Through a “train-the-trainer” model, over 50 youth champions were equipped with knowledge and skills to serve as peer educators and community mobilizers. These youth champions have since become powerful advocates, spreading awareness about drug prevention and mental well-being in their respective communities.

One youth peer educator from Bo remarked,

“Before joining this program, I didn’t know how to speak publicly about drug abuse. Now I can educate my friends and even older people about the risks. It has given me confidence and purpose.”

Impact and Achievements

The Youth for Resilience and Recovery initiative has reached over 2,000 young people directly and more than 10,000 community members indirectly through social media, radio programs, and public campaigns.

Key outcomes include:

- Increased knowledge and awareness about the dangers of drug and substance misuse among youth.
- Improved community attitudes toward harm reduction and mental health support.

- Strengthened collaboration between youth groups, civil society, and government stakeholders in addressing drug-related issues.
- Empowerment of young people to take leadership roles in prevention, peer counselling, and advocacy.

The project also contributed to the development of a more positive narrative around youth — not as part of the problem, but as key partners in creating solutions for community well-being and resilience.



Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Several lessons emerged from the implementation:

- Youth ownership enhances sustainability. When young people lead interventions, they attract the participation of their peers and generate greater trust.
- Community collaboration is critical. Engaging parents, local leaders, and health professionals ensures a supportive environment for youth action.
- Integrated approaches that combine prevention, mental health support, and empowerment are more effective than single-focus interventions.

Building on these successes, SLYDCL plans to expand the program to additional districts and establish a Youth Recovery and Support Network, which will provide counseling, rehabilitation referrals, and mentorship opportunities for young people affected by drug use. The organization also seeks to collaborate with national and regional partners to strengthen policy advocacy and integrate harm reduction into broader public health strategies.





Submitted by: Benjamin Odhiambo & Erick Omondi
Organisation: Students Campaign Against Drugs (SCAD)
Country: Kenya

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,2,6

Youth-Led Advocacy for Tobacco Control and Substance Use Policy Reform

Introduction

SCAD (Students Campaign Against Drugs) is a youth-focused organization in Kenya dedicated to prioritizing youth and community voices in policy processes, substance use research, and the reform of national control frameworks. Guided by the mission to strengthen community support and advocate for evidence-based policies, SCAD empowers young people to become the primary architects of a tobacco-free and sober future. This initiative aligns closely with the principles of youth engagement, modernized awareness, and gender-responsive advocacy.

1. Strengthening Youth Voices through Tobacco Tax Advocacy

Within the Kenya Tobacco and Nicotine Tax Coalition, SCAD focuses on engaging youth in higher learning institutions, training young advocates on tobacco control and tax policy; developing age-appropriate educational material on tobacco use and tax policies; and creating social media content to reach adolescents and young adults. The coalition's primary focus is policy reform—raising tobacco taxes to address rising cancer cases.

Engaging youth in Higher learning institutions

SCAD facilitated youth workshops across Nairobi-area universities in partnership with

the Ministry of Health to address tobacco harms, industry targeting, and policy advocacy. Through events like the YMCA Kicheko Fest and sessions at Kenyatta and Daystar Universities, SCAD reached hundreds of peers and empowered 130 educators. SCAD maintained a 50-50 gender representation to address the unique impacts of substance use and gender-based violence, while gathering direct insights into the realities and priorities of young people.

These engagements revealed that while youth are eager to shape policy, they are often misled by industry marketing and sidelined by complex language. In response, SCAD developed a practical guide to help youth overcome nicotine addiction. Based on feedback from peer educators, SCAD is now expanding this resource to cover a broader range of substances and addictive behaviors to better reflect the lived experiences of the youth.



Leadership development: Training on tobacco control advocacy

SCAD developed a tobacco control and tax policy starter pack to build youth competence in policy advocacy. Designed by youth alongside experienced tobacco control champions, the course covers social and economic harms, policy drafting, and digital advocacy. To reinforce these skills, SCAD provides practical opportunities for youth to participate in coalition activities and SCAD club interventions. This initiative has produced a cohort of over 70 youth prepared to engage in various public policy areas. These resources are now available online to ensure long-term access and have been expanded to include broader substance use topics.

Following the training, assessments showed a significant increase in the participants' ability to use advocacy tools like petitions and memoranda, with over 90% of the cohort already actively educating and engaging their peers.

Co-designing learning material

SCAD continuously collects youth feedback to simplify and practicalize advocacy. Responding to identified gaps in knowledge and skills, SCAD co-designed and tested the "Whys and Hows of Tobacco Control" foundational guide and the "Count the Real Cost" interactive curriculum. These resources utilize games, role-play, and simulations to translate technical information into advocacy action.

Once validated by youth, these tools are expected to drive stronger engagement in public policy. While the initial focus remains on tobacco control, SCAD has ensured that the skills, knowledge, and tools provided are readily transferable to other areas of substance use policy and practice.

Engaging youth in reaching children and adolescents

To sustain a network of empowered youth, SCAD engages them across various work areas to enhance their reach and skills. At Jericho SDA Church, SCAD reached 100 children and adolescents using interactive activities like storytelling and role-play to build emotional awareness and decode the harms of substance use. While the broad age range presented a challenge, the participants showed improved understanding of coping strategies and peer influence. SCAD recommends that future programs utilize age-specific groupings and involve parents to maximize long-term impact.

Additionally, SCAD-trained peer educators facilitated workshops for 1,000 adolescents at Nairobi and Lenana Schools, Karima Girls, Starehe Boys Centre, and SOS Children's Villages. These sessions focused on managing risk factors such as social media and peer pressure while building assertiveness and decision-making skills. At Starehe, the student club committed to sustaining this momentum through creative awareness strategies, including debates, poster campaigns, and poetry.

2. Empowering communities and youth to shape and influence the National Policy on Alcohol and Substance Abuse

SCAD views the June 2025 adoption of the National Policy on Alcohol and Substance Abuse as a regional milestone for human rights and evidence-based protection. By convening youth organizations and CSOs, SCAD identified critical priorities, including raising the minimum drinking age and prohibiting digital alcohol promotion.

With support from Vital Strategies, SCAD paired these priorities with data to mobilize youth, journalists, and community leaders, providing the training and templates necessary to defend these proposals to the government.

Beyond regional policy validation, SCAD utilized research to link substance use to gender-based violence during public participation hearings. This united, evidence-based advocacy gave the government the confidence to approve the policy. While this is a significant victory, SCAD remains vigilant against industry pushback and is now focused on safeguarding the policy's implementation at the county level.

Next steps/priority areas for deeper, meaningful youth engagement: digihub, community workgroup capacity strengthening

- SCAD is finalizing and publishing the 'whys and hows of tobacco control' foundational guide alongside the 'Count the Real Cost' interactive curriculum.
- Recognizing that youth desire to support peers but often lack the necessary tools, the current focus is consulting with youth on a peer-to-peer guide. This will serve as a youth-led, early intervention and referral system, with plans to incorporate quit-readiness and motivational interviewing to bridge the gap to professional services.
- A public policy digihub is in the early stages of development to empower youth with the competence to assert themselves in decision-making. Building these digital advocacy skills is a core

part of leadership development, aiming to increase the civic and professional capital of young participants.

- Through coalition members, age-appropriate educational content on nicotine harms is being produced to ensure youth have a clear understanding of the risks. This builds on previous success at Alliance Girls and Alliance High School, where students successfully identified industry targeting tactics and developed relatable ways to educate their peers.
- Following participation in a multi-country study on social media influences, early results show a significant normalization of substance use by influencers. These findings align with previous research showing substance use references in 50–70% of Kenyan secular music videos. SCAD will launch a report on these findings and work with youth to co-design policy proposals for the Ministry of Health and National Assembly.
- SCAD is at advanced planning stages to roll out capacity building for the community workgroups, to strengthen their understanding of the national policy and their role in ensuring proper implementation and accountability.



Organisation: Association of Anti-Drug Abuse Coalitions of the Philippines (AADACPhil)
Country: Philippines

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,2,6

Spearheads Collaborative Drug Prevention Education for Kidapawan Youth

KIDAPAWAN CITY, Philippines – In a significant step towards creating a drug-free community, the Association of Anti-Drug Abuse Coalitions of the Philippines (AADACPhil) successfully led a Drug Prevention Education Seminar for the youth of Barangay Poblacion. The event, a highlight of the Linggo ng Kabataan 2025 celebration, was a collaborative effort with the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) of Barangay Poblacion.

The seminar was expertly facilitated by AADACPhil's Kidapawan City coordinators, Tryphaena A. Collado and Rogelio I.

Batongmalaki Jr. The facilitators operated on the core principle that "Prevention is better than cure", emphasising the importance of empowering young people with the knowledge and life skills needed to make informed and healthy choices.

The initiative's primary goal was to reduce the risk of drug use and prevent substance abuse before it begins. Participants engaged in a series of timely and meaningful discussions covering various aspects of drug prevention.



Topics included effective strategies for safeguarding youth from substance abuse, the shared responsibility of government, community, and individuals in sustaining preventive measures, and the long-term value of committing to a drug-free lifestyle.

SK Poblacion Chairperson, Ms Joanna Edsal Duran and her fellow SK officials were commended for their proactive leadership and unwavering commitment to youth empowerment. Their partnership with AADACPhil exemplifies a dedication to fostering a healthier and more responsible generation in Kidapawan City.

The organisers expressed their gratitude to the Office of City Mayor Jose Paolo M. Evangelista, stating,

"Our heartfelt gratitude also goes to the Office of City Mayor Pao Evangelista for the unwavering support in initiatives that protect, empower, and inspire the Kidapawan youth to shape a brighter future."

This collaborative effort serves as a powerful testament - when government, youth leaders, and community advocates work together, a drug-free future is not just a dream but an achievable reality for the youth of Kidapawan.





Submitted by: Rute Borges
Organisation: Association of Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macau
Country: Macau

Youth Declaration Recommendation

2

The Choice is Yours – A Project by BeCool

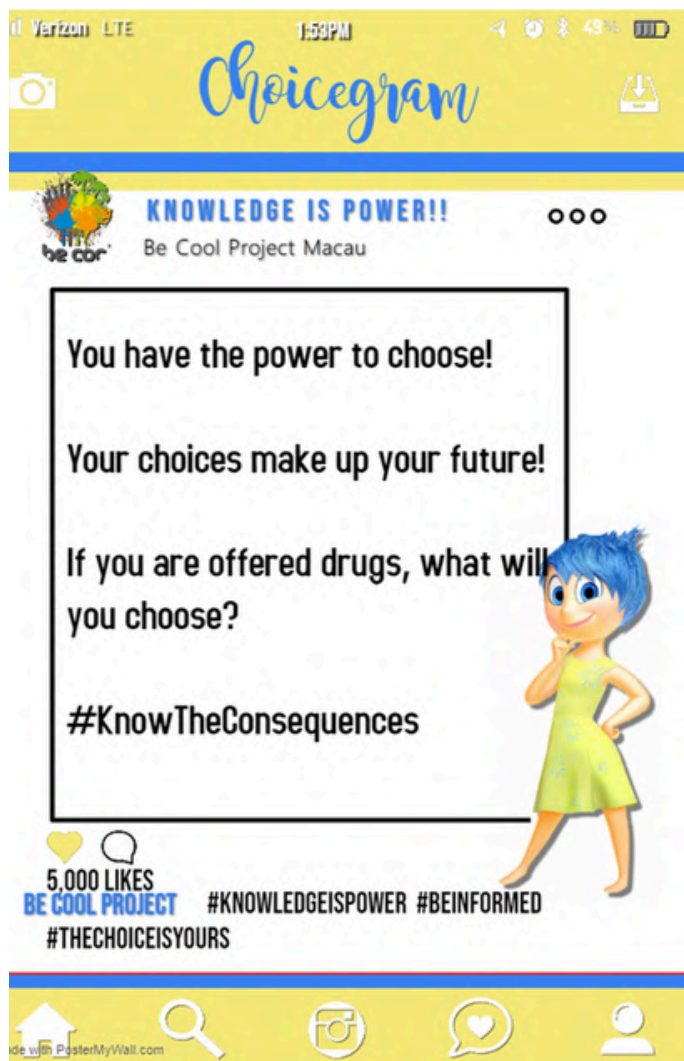
The Be Cool project is the prevention department of the “Association of Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macau”, and our main target is teenagers. One of the programmes implemented is “The Choice is Yours”. This activity aims to empower students with critical thinking and decision-making skills to be more resilient to peer pressure through a direct message with a visual aid. Like the project's main target group, the activity targets middle and high school students.



In collaboration with local schools, we implemented a high-impact engagement activity during break times. The programme was centred around the powerful message: “Your Choices Build Your Future”. Together with our mascot (Cobe) and our “Choicegram” frame (attachment 1), we engaged with students.

The Choicegram frame emphasises the fact that our choices have consequences and that the choices we make are the ones guiding and constructing our future. So, before making a decision, one should have all the information needed to be able to make the best use of their decision-making power. To support the decision-making process, we gave them a booklet (attachment 2) to create awareness about peer pressure and ideas on how to deal with it, as it is one of the common aspects influencing decisions.

Together with the booklet, we gave a souvenir to the students, which was a spinner keychain. One side of the keychain read "decision power" and the other side "What's your choice?". This souvenir is a tangible reminder of the core message of the activity.



Feedback collected from the students was positive. Most students were already familiar with our work from previous activities and talks conducted in schools. The interactive and positive nature of the activity resulted in high participation rates. Students really enjoyed taking pictures with our mascot and loved the souvenir. So, we can say that we grabbed their attention and that the message was seen.

Submitted by: Asia Ashraf, Dr. Sohail Habib Tajik and Ms. Kanwal Ali
Country: Pakistan

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

5

Giving Back Through Life Skills

The Story of the SAGES Training Platform

Sometimes the most meaningful ideas begin in informal moments. During a casual conversation, the three of us — Dr. Sohail Habib Tajik, Ms. Kanwal Ali, and Ms. Asia Ashraf — each Humphrey Fellows with diverse expertise in leadership, communication, and mental health/addiction recovery, reflected on the rising challenges faced by young people in Pakistan. A simple question guided us: “How can we give back to our community in a meaningful way?” Recognising the urgent need for life skills development, we created the SAGES Training Platform—a space to equip the community especially the youth with essential emotional, interpersonal, and behavioural skills.

Our First Step: Supporting Young Medical Students

We began our journey at Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital, engaging with young medical students navigating academic pressure and stress. Through an interactive life-skills session, we taught them: stress management, effective communication and foundations of leadership.

The session helped them explore healthier coping strategies and understand that leadership and emotional resilience begin long before professional life starts.



Expanding to University Students

Our next training was held with students at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), where we focused on communication skills, leadership basics, and “Decoding Happiness”, helping students understand how mindset and emotional awareness shape well-being.

The students participated with enthusiasm, sharing how these simple tools could positively influence their daily routines, relationships, and academic confidence.



Organisation: Green Crescent Malaysia (GCM)
Country: Malaysia

Youth Declaration Recommendation

5

Empowering Youth to Resist Drugs: Building Mental Resilience in Schools

On 21 February 2025, Green Crescent Malaysia, in collaboration with the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) Committee of Adolescent Health and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), conducted the Adolescent Mental Health Awareness Programme at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Jalan Reko Kajang Selangor. The initiative brought together 910 students from Form 3 to 5, with the aim to raise awareness about mental health issues, strengthen their resilience and empower them to make healthy, drug-free life choices.

Why Mental Health Matters in Drug Prevention

Adolescence is a critical stage where academic pressure, peer influence, and emotional changes can leave students vulnerable to risky behaviours, including substance use. Research consistently shows that poor mental health is a major risk factor for experimenting with drugs. By enhancing self-awareness, teaching coping skills, and fostering positive peer connections, schools can become strong protective environments against addiction.

Programme Highlights

The 2.5-hour interactive session blended education, self-reflection, and skills training. Activities included:

- Pre-programme assessment to gauge students' baseline awareness and needs.
- Ice-breaking sessions to foster openness and trust.
- Mental Health Education on recognising stress, emotions, and healthy outlets.
- Workshops on stress management, coping strategies, and mindfulness, enabling students to handle life pressures without turning to harmful substances.
- Group activities that encouraged teamwork, empathy, and supportive peer relationships.



From Awareness to Action

Throughout the programme, facilitators emphasised the link between mental resilience and drug prevention. Students learned how unmanaged stress, anxiety, or depression could make them more susceptible to substance use and how positive coping strategies, seeking help, and surrounding themselves with supportive peers can serve as strong shields against it.

A Continuous Effort

This programme is part of Green Crescent Malaysia's annual school outreach, which has been running consistently to strengthen youth resilience, promote drug prevention awareness and healthy coping skills. Building on the success of this February session, Green Crescent conducted the next school programme on 19 August 2025, reaching more students with mental health and drug prevention education.

Community Collaboration

The success of this initiative reflects the power of partnerships. This collaboration between healthcare professionals, educators, and NGOs demonstrates how community engagement can effectively address both mental health and substance abuse prevention.



Looking Forward

As mental health awareness grows, such school-based interventions are vital to building a generation that can say "No" to drugs not just through willpower, but through knowledge, resilience, and strong social support networks. Programmes like these are not just about preventing drug use - they are about empowering youth to lead healthier, more purposeful lives.





Submitted by: Valentina Soares
Organisation: Pakistan Youth Organization
Country: Pakistan

Youth Declaration Recommendation

4,5,6

Youth Driving Change in Pakistan

The Pakistan Youth Organization (PYO) has played a central role in the development and dissemination of the Global Youth Declaration on Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery 2025. As both a contributor and active promoter, PYO has worked to ensure that youth voices are not only heard but meaningfully integrated into global drug policy discussions.

Through the engagement of core group members such as Dr. Fuhaira Sana Rathore and Mr. Muhammad Abdullah, PYO has actively involved young people across Pakistan in both the development and dissemination phases of the declaration. Their efforts contributed to Pakistan ranking second globally in survey participation, reflecting the strong commitment and engagement of youth in the country.

From Global Dialogue to Local Action

A key milestone in this work was a seminar commemorating the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, organised in collaboration with Mian Afzal Trust Hospital (MATH), Freedom Rehab, and GIFT University, Gujranwala. The event served as an important platform to present and discuss the Global Youth Declaration. In her address, Dr. Fuhaira Rathore highlighted six key recommendations emerging from the declaration, including the need to actively engage youth, strengthen research

and awareness efforts, implement gender-responsive approaches, improve access to services, promote youth leadership and economic empowerment, and reinforce community support systems. These recommendations were based on input from over 1,100 participants across 64 countries. Speakers also emphasised the importance of recognising the International Day as a shared commitment to prevention, treatment, and recovery, while highlighting the role of youth in shaping these efforts at both national and global levels.



Youth-Led Engagement and Prevention Efforts

PYO's work also extends to strengthening the capacity of professionals working in prevention and treatment. A pilot training on trauma and addiction, organised in collaboration with the Trauma and SUD Action Force Initiative (TSAFI), brought together healthcare professionals to explore the "From Myth to Action Toolkit."

The session generated strong engagement and interest among participants, who expressed appreciation for both the toolkit and the Global Youth Declaration. The integration of youth perspectives into professional settings further highlights the importance of inclusive, multi-level approaches to addressing substance use challenges.

Creating Spaces for Dialogue and Reflection

In addition, PYO has organised events that create space for young people to reflect on personal development and well-being. A seminar on Self-Kindness vs Self-Judgment, held at MATH Conference Hall in Gujranwala, brought together students to discuss mental health, self-awareness, and the relevance of the Youth Declaration.

The six-point call to action presented during the event encouraged participants to engage actively with the declaration and take part in prevention and awareness initiatives. Such platforms contribute to building a supportive environment where young people can explore both personal and societal dimensions of substance use and recovery.



Conclusion

Through its work on the Global Youth Declaration, the Pakistan Youth Organization demonstrates how youth engagement can move beyond consultation to active participation and leadership. By combining advocacy, education, and community-based initiatives, PYO has created meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

This approach reinforces the importance of placing youth at the centre of responses to the world drug problem, ensuring that policies and programmes are informed by their perspectives, experiences, and potential.



Organisation: Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA)
Country: Singapore

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

2

The Rising Risk: Why Youth Drug Use Demands Urgent Attention

SANA's Call to Action

At the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA), our Preventive Drug Education (PDE) team develops tailored programmes to address the diverse needs of youths, taking into account their age, risk profile, and whether they are in public or institutional settings.

Our initiatives have consistently achieved a 97% satisfaction rating, underscoring the effectiveness of our efforts in delivering vital knowledge on the dangers of drug abuse.

Our work spans a wide spectrum of initiatives, including preventive drug education talks, youth-at-risk interventions, and advocacy platforms. These programmes provide young people with accurate, research-backed information about the real harms of drug use - countering the often glamorised or misleading portrayals found in social media, pop culture, or peer influence. By combining education with empowerment, we strive not only to raise awareness but also to equip youths with the critical thinking skills, resilience, and support networks to help them make informed decisions and lead drug-free lives.

To ensure that our school-based efforts are comprehensive, we integrate both educational talks and interactive booths. The talks deliver clear and impactful messages, while the booths offer a more approachable space for personal engagement. At the booths, students can ask questions, clarify misconceptions, and openly discuss issues they might otherwise hesitate to raise in larger settings. This dual approach not only deepens youths' understanding but also enables us to identify and support youths who may be at risk or in need of further assistance





Submitted by: Nur Azlinda Zulkifli
Organisation: Ultimate Friends SG
Country: Singapore

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1,2,3,6

Cross-Border Youth Engagement for Drug Prevention and Recovery Awareness

Ultimate Friends SG is a Singapore-based community initiative founded by individuals in recovery, dedicated to preventive drug education, relapse prevention, and empowering youth through shared lived experiences.

Objectives:

- Empower youth to become advocates for prevention and positive change
- Foster cross-border collaboration in addressing drug-related issues
- Provide real-life sharing from persons in recovery to inspire early intervention.
- Encourage inclusive and gender-responsive dialogue among youth leaders and students

Key Activities

- Quarterly Youth Engagement in Batam (Indonesia)
- Conducted at local schools and youth religious centres
- Focused on drug prevention socialisation (“sosialisasi”) through preventive drug education, interactive talks, and storytelling activities.
- Collaboration with local educators, youth leaders, and community stakeholders

- Youth Engagement and Sharing at ITE East & West (Singapore)
- Focused on drug awareness through preventive drug education
- Involves students from diverse backgrounds in dialogue sessions on resilience, choices, and recovery
- Real-life sharing by persons in recovery to humanise addiction issues

Impact

- Reached over 500 youth participants in both Singapore and Batam to date
- Encouraged open conversations about stigma, mental health, and recovery
- Inspired youth volunteers to co-lead awareness campaigns and school initiatives
- Strengthened community partnerships between recovery advocates and schools



Alignment with Declaration Themes

- Youth Engagement: Actively involves youth in designing and leading preventive efforts
- Modernised awareness campaigns: Utilise social media storytelling and peer-led education
- Gender-Responsive Approaches: Ensures female/male youth and educators are represented in information-sharing activities
- Community support: Builds networks across borders to sustain prevention and recovery awareness.





Organisation: Turkish Green Crescent Society
Country: Türkiye

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,2,6

6TH YOUTH ADVOCACY FORUM

Istanbul, Türkiye, 21-23 November 2025

The Turkish Green Crescent Society organised the 6th Youth Advocacy Forum in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 21-23 November 2025 in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with the support of the International Federation of Green Crescent (IFGC). Bringing together 30 young representatives from 18 countries, including South Africa, Uruguay, Malaysia, Belgium, the United States, and Kenya, the Forum aimed to build a shared vision for safer, healthier, and addiction-free communities.

Sport as Force for Change

This year's Forum, held under the theme "Building Safe, Just, and Peaceful Societies Through Sport," highlighted the power of sports and values-based education in preventing addiction, violence, crime, and other risky behaviours. The opening ceremony took place at the Headquarters of the Turkish Green Crescent Society with the participation of 130 young people. The first session featured Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Türkiye, Assoc. Prof. Safa Koçoğlu, Turkish Green Crescent Vice President Doruk Malhan, WHO Türkiye Representative Dr Tasnim Atatrah, and UNODC Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Expert Georgia Dimitropoulou.

They shared their insights on how sport can be instrumental in prevention, peacebuilding, social inclusion, and youth well-being.

Inspiring Stories from Global Sports Experts

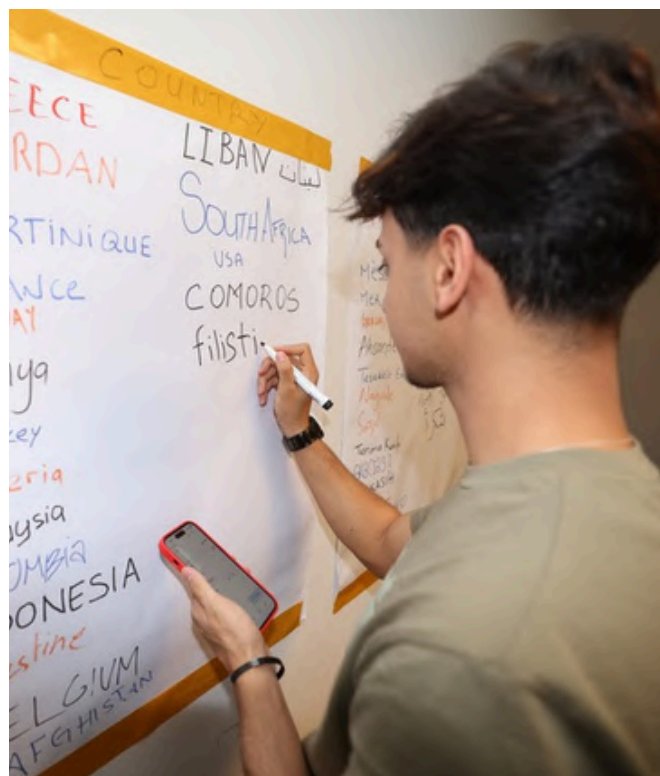
In the second session, Xenia Kourgouzova, Senior Education Manager at the International Olympic Committee, and Assoc. Prof. Arif Çetin from Marmara University's Faculty of Sport Sciences delivered inspiring presentations on the relationship between sport, the body, and behaviour, highlighting the positive impact of physical activity on mental health.



They also emphasised how sports, when grounded in strong values, can empower young people. Mehmet Kani Polat, President of the World Taekwondo Athlete Committee and Captain of the Turkish National Taekwondo A-Team, further enriched the session by sharing his personal journey, showing how his active involvement in sports helped him overcome a challenging environment and transformed his life in a powerful, positive way.

Hands-On Learning through Interactive Workshops and Sports Activities

The Forum's practical training sessions were held at the Riva Camp and Training Centre of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Throughout UNODC's SC:ORE training and the Green Crescent's Life Skills training, participants engaged in interactive workshops, team sports, and group games. These hands-on activities allowed participants to experience firsthand how sports and life skills contribute to addiction prevention.



A Global Network of Youth Advocates

Over the course of three days, the Forum connected passionate young leaders from around the world. Participants left with new tools, training, and inspiration to strengthen peace, safety, and healthy living in their own communities by using sport as a powerful engine for change.

If you want to be part of this experience in the next edition, you can follow us at <https://www.youthadvocacyforum.com/>.

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Submitted by: Valentina Soares

Organisation: Jorge Jaber Clinic

Country: Brazil

**Youth Declaration
Recommendation**

4,5,6

From Treatment to Reintegration: A Youth-Centred Approach to Recovery

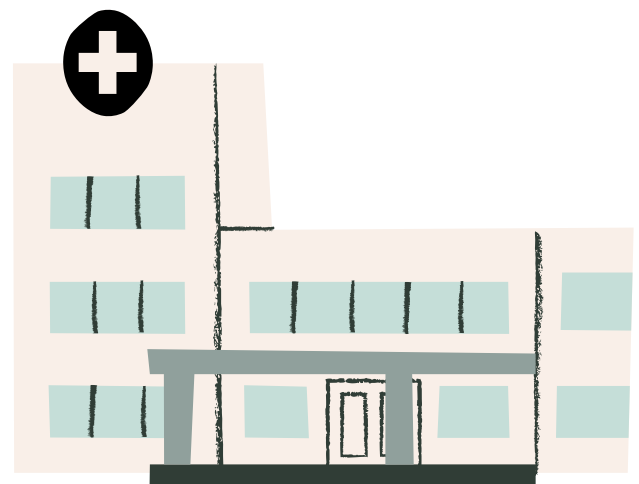
At the Jorge Jaber Clinic in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Master Program was developed in 2024 to respond to the complex challenges of contemporary mental health care among adolescents and young adults. The programme goes beyond clinical stabilisation, aiming to provide concrete pathways for social and productive reintegration.

Designed specifically for young people facing substance use and other mental health challenges, including dual diagnosis, the programme combines psychotherapy, psychiatric follow-up, support groups, community activities, and vocational training. In this model, young participants are not only patients, but active contributors in their own recovery process, engaging as collaborators in therapeutic and educational activities.

A Holistic and Youth-Centred Model

The Master Program integrates clinical, emotional, social, and functional dimensions of care. It emphasises autonomy, dignity, and the rebuilding of connections, with a strong focus on professional development and community inclusion. Through individual psychotherapy, therapeutic groups, and regular psychiatric care,

participants work towards clinical and emotional stability. At the same time, community activities such as shared responsibilities, creative workshops, and social interaction foster cooperation, empathy, and daily structure.



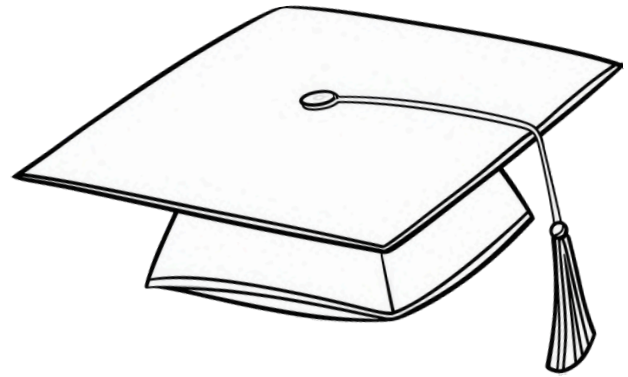
Building Skills for Life and Work

A key component of the programme is vocational training. Young participants can engage in internal courses such as gardening, cooking, general services, and literacy, depending on their needs and interests. Those who demonstrate stability and engagement are given opportunities to participate in supervised work activities within the clinic. These experiences are designed not only to build practical skills, but also to strengthen self-esteem and prepare participants for long-term reintegration into society. Work is approached as a therapeutic tool, with progress recognised through certificates and symbolic rewards.

Individualised Recovery Pathways

Each participant follows an Individual Therapeutic Plan, co-created with a multidisciplinary team. This includes diagnosis, gradual goals, and clear progress indicators, as well as pathways towards less intensive care settings.

Regular evaluations and team meetings ensure that treatment remains responsive and adapted to each individual's development and needs.



Towards Sustainable Recovery

The Master Program represents more than a treatment model. It is a comprehensive approach that integrates clinical care, psychosocial support, an professional training to support young people in rebuilding their lives. By promoting autonomy, social belonging, and the recognition of personal potential, the programme creates real conditions for sustainable recovery. It reflects a broader understanding of mental health as not only the absence of symptoms, but the presence of purpose, participation, and opportunity.



Submitted by: Dr. Mrs. Sheela Lall
Organisation: Woman's Christian
 Temperance Union
Country: Global

**Youth Declaration
 Recommendation**

1,2

Youth at the Centre: Global Efforts to Prevent Substance Use and Build Resilience

Youth are our present and our future, representing nearly 50% of the world's population. Their thoughts, choices, and behaviour are crucial in shaping the moral and social fabric of society. It is essential to channel their energy in the right and creative direction.

For more than 150 years, the W.W.C.T.U. has maintained a vibrant youth department dedicated to positive transformation. Through innovative programmes and outreach, W.C.T.U. has guided countless young people to rise above confusion and hardship, becoming responsible and productive members of society.

Understanding the Challenges

The root causes of youth problems today include poverty, illiteracy, broken homes, addiction among parents, single-parent families, lack of quality time for children, and unrestricted internet access exposing them to harmful influences. Many lack positive role models and face issues such as teenage pregnancy and neglect.

Even among the wealthy, parental absence and lack of moral guidance are major concerns. Therefore, it is crucial to provide love, compassion, guidance, and security to our youth, who often seek these at the wrong places.

Youth Activities in India

In India, youth engagement is approached in three primary ways:

1. Guiding their energy into team games and sports after school.
2. Providing open platforms for free expression on life's issues.
3. Involving them in street dramas, poster, slogan, and essay competitions.

Youth directors actively work in slum areas and among high-risk, marginalised youth. Through sports such as soccer and frisbee at state and national levels, they build discipline and teamwork while promoting a drug-free lifestyle. Counselling and life guidance are also provided, with the movement supported by public participation and donations.



The Ultimate Leap

For the past four years, support has been provided to young people who were heading down the wrong path due to lack of guidance and love.

Many have overcome addiction, theft, violence, and academic struggles. They are now excelling in life and participating in national sports tournaments, demonstrating the impact of sustained support and mentorship.

Youth Programmes in the U.S.A.

Programmes such as “Big Brother and Big Sister Days” foster healthy relationships between older and younger youth, instilling responsibility, love, and security. Speech contests and webinars provide young people with a platform to express their ideas.

Christian youth camps, typically lasting three weeks, help reorient their minds and lives towards faith, service, and positive thinking.

Youth Engagement in Norway

Norway maintains an active youth lobby and organises Christian camps alongside school and college outreach. A youth-run radio talk show promotes positive ideas and life choices, serving as a platform for awareness and change.

Youth Empowerment in Kenya

In Kenya, poverty and parental addiction often leave children without support. The film *Tough Choices*, shown in schools, has become a key educational tool. Following interactive discussions, youth requested similar sessions for parents, recognising the strong influence of parental behaviour. Despite initial resistance, many parents now attend counselling after seeing positive changes in family life.

Awareness in Australia and Canada

Promoting a drug- and alcohol-free lifestyle can be challenging where such behaviour is culturally accepted.

However, when young people are informed about the physical, financial, and emotional consequences of addiction, they engage, reflect, and often commit to lifelong sobriety.

Youth Movements in Korea

Korea has introduced “Green Cafés” on university campuses and established a Foetal Alcohol Syndrome research and training centre. Youth rallies deliver strong messages on the risks of alcohol use, contributing to effective awareness and prevention efforts.

Restoration Work in Ethiopia

In remote areas of Ethiopia, exploitation has led to pregnancies among young girls who are then rejected by their families. W.C.T.U. members provide shelter, skills training, and moral support for six months.

Having experienced the consequences of alcohol and abuse, these young women are supported to rebuild their lives and commit to healthier futures.

Global Impact and Hope

Across many countries, W.C.T.U. continues its work despite resistance from alcohol and drug industries. Although details are sometimes undisclosed, the impact is significant. The organisation remains committed to helping young people overcome addiction and build healthier, more hopeful lives.





Organisation:

World Federation Against Drugs

Youth Declaration Recommendation

1,4,5,6

From Declaration to Action: Empowering Youth in East Africa

At WFAD, the Global Youth Declaration on Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery 2025 is close to our heart and has been a guiding framework for action. Beyond advocating for it and promoting it across international platforms, we have also integrated its principles into our programme development. One of the clearest examples of this is our newest initiative in East Africa.

Introducing “Voices for Change”

The project “Voices for Change: Empowering Youth and Civil Society for Inclusive Prevention and Reintegration” will be implemented in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in collaboration with our local partners C-Sema, UYDEL, East African Liaison, and WFAD DRC.

Funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the project will run from December 2025 until December 2028. It was developed with the Global Youth Declaration at its core, aiming to translate its recommendations into tangible, real-world impact.

A Three-Pillar Approach

“Voices for Change” seeks to strengthen inclusive and democratic governance in East

Africa through youth- and civil society-led, rights-based responses to substance use and crime. This ambition is structured around three key pillars:

- Pillar 1: Strengthening civil society organisations by enhancing institutional capacity, knowledge, and democratic practices.
- Pillar 2: Empowering marginalised youth (ages 15–29, especially young women) and ensuring their meaningful inclusion in governance and advocacy.
- Pillar 3: Fostering stronger dialogue and collaboration among civil society, youth, and governments for coordinated, evidence-based policy responses.

Putting the Youth Declaration into Practice

A central strength of the project lies in how it directly reflects key recommendations from the Global Youth Declaration:

Recommendation 1: Listening to and Involving Youth

Under Pillar 2, youth participation is meant to become structural. Youth Advisory Boards will be established, ensuring that young representatives are included in dialogues

and decision-making processes. The Youth Advisory Boards will actively contribute to programme development and engage in dialogue with policymakers and civil society actors, ensuring that youth perspectives shape the decisions that affect them.

Recommendation 5: Empowering Youth through Leadership and Economic Opportunities

Also within Pillar 2, the project will deliver life skills and leadership training, including financial literacy and social entrepreneurship. These initiatives aim not only to support informed decision-making but also to provide young people with tools for economic independence and long-term empowerment.

Recommendation 4 & 6: Strengthening Services, Communities, and Policy Engagement

Through Pillars 1 and 3, the project contributes to improving youth-sensitive services and strengthening community support systems. By building the capacity of civil society and encouraging continuous dialogues between communities, policymakers, youth, and other stakeholders, the project helps create more responsive and inclusive support mechanisms. Regular roundtable discussions will foster trust, enhance mutual understanding, and support the institutionalisation of collaborative approaches.

We look forward to sharing our progress and lessons learned along the way. To follow the journey and learn more, visit our website: <https://wfad.se/voices-for-change/>

Project activities

Three main pillars





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