



World Drug Day 2025 and its importance for the Education Sector in South Africa

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Drug use more widespread among the younger generation??



Drug use among youth is higher than in previous generations.



35

Drug treatment in Africa is mostly for under-35s.



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YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUE TO USE MORE DRUGS THAN ADULTS





DRUG USE CHALLENGES

Heroin consumption and injection is rising in Eastern and Southern Africa, resulting in high transmission rates of **HIV** and **hepatitis**, particularly in women and young people.

The **criminalisation** of drugs has led law enforcement and judicial structures to respond to rising drug use by arresting, incarcerating and convicting people - including children and young people - for drug-related crimes. Many are for low-level and **non-violent crimes**.

Increased incarceration, has resulted in overcrowding, deteriorating conditions for young prisoners, reduced access to **health** and **education** services, and increased risk of inhumane conditions and abuse.



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Programmes that are needed:

- Mental health services for children
 - Drug use prevention programmes
- Out-of-school programmes
 - Family preservation programmes
 - Effective child justice programmes.

South Africa's population is estimated to be 63 million people with 13.4 million school learners

Drug use is increasing - drug treatment is essential and alternatives to incarceration.



CHALLENGES

Appropriate treatment for children who use drugs and living with drug use disorders.

Limited access to healthcare, particularly for those with substance use disorders.

Rise in Barriers to Learning, Violence and Gender Based Violence



ENABLING POLICY

Develop national **drug prevention systems** -
in accordance with
the UNODC/WHO International Standards
on Drug Use Prevention.

Reach out to and involve adolescents,
disseminating prevention messages on social media
and other online platforms to minimize drug-related harms
and discourage consumption.

Promote **evidence-backed prevention and treatment**
options for young people, including:

- **Mental health services for people with mental health disorders, support to their families**
- **Screening, brief interventions and health services referral, mainstreamed in the community and in education systems**
- **Family therapy.**

For **deprived or drug-exposed children and youth,**
such as street children, out of school children:
to provide educational opportunities,
vocational skills training and other socioeconomic support.



Youth populations are often **excluded** from **data collection and research** into drug markets.



Youth voices are **not always heard** in drug-policy discussions.

The inclusion of youth voices in policymaking would be a first step towards building a more needs- and evidence-based drug policy

Stigmatization, criminalization and discrimination push people underground and deter them from accessing services.



There is considerable agreement on the importance of prevention and appropriate targeted interventions for children and young people who use drugs.



OPPORTUNITIES



Develop **national drug prevention programmes** that reach children early and promote resilience.



Disseminate **preventive messaging** on social media and other venues to teens.



Promote **evidence-based drug prevention and treatment for youth**, including mental health services, screening, brief interventions, and health services referral, and family counselling.



Provide **educational opportunities, vocational skills training, and other socioeconomic support** for children and teens who were exposed to drugs at a young age and/or are impoverished.

UNODC works with Member States to address the world drug problem through a balanced approach based on public health principles, scientific evidence, human rights and gender consideration, supporting:

- ▶ Prevention of drug use and other risky behaviors
- ▶ Treatment, health care, social protection and rehabilitation services for people who use drugs and people with drug use disorders; and,
- ▶ Access to controlled drugs for medical purposes, particularly for the management of pain, while preventing diversion and non-medical use.

Prevention Guidelines



Family Skills



Life & Social Skills



Youth & Community



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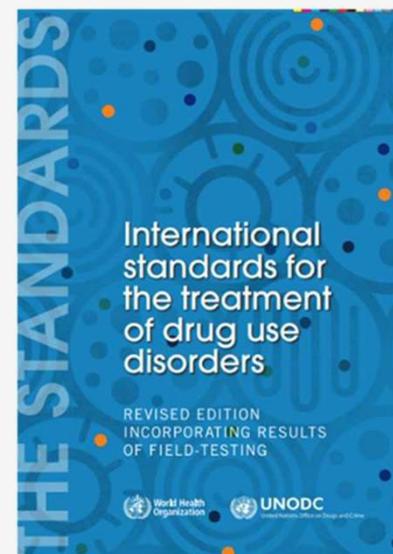
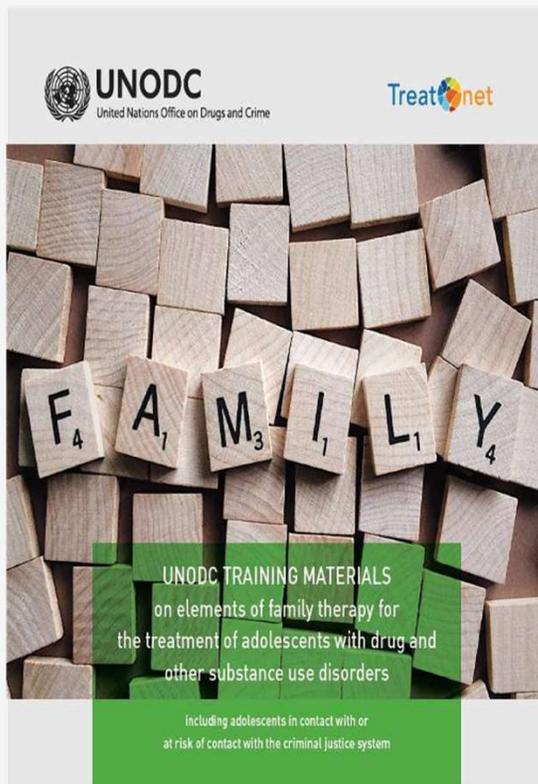
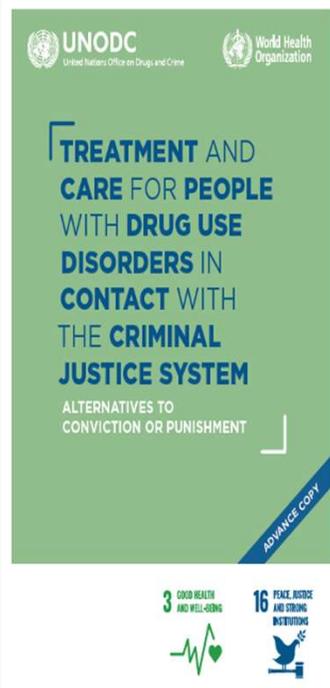
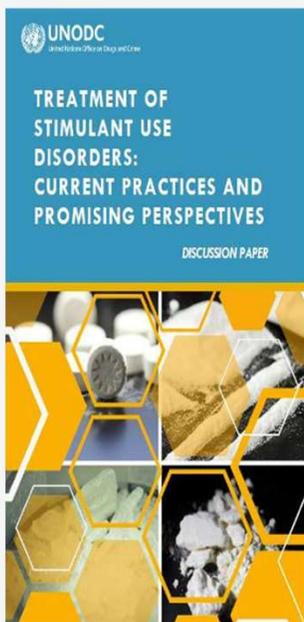
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Overview of some key activities -

- Supporting development of National Drug Master Plans, National Drug Policy, SOPs
- Technical support and Capacity building to roll out: SUD treatment, Quality Assurance of SUD, OAT, harm reduction, overdose prevention
- Alternatives to incarceration
- Strengthening partnerships between health, criminal justice, law enforcement, prison administration and civil society,
- Building the capacity for improving universal access to, and provision of comprehensive HIV services in the community and in Prisons
- Human rights: Address stigma, discrimination and punitive laws
- Building Community-led and Community-based Infrastructure



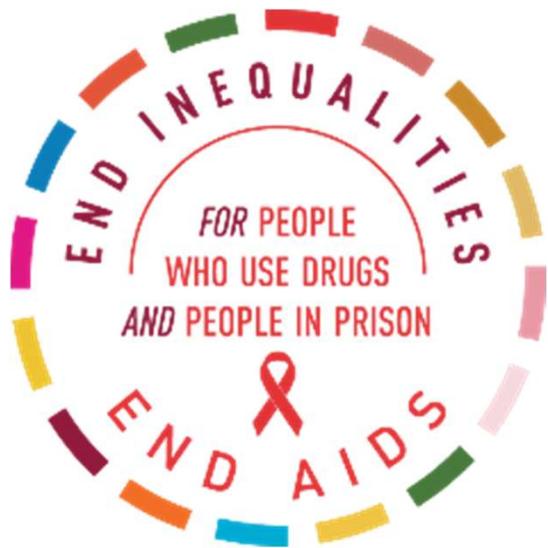
TOOLS



2025 World Drug Day

“The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention”





Thank You!

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