

Regional Consultation, 2015, Mexico, Centros de Integración Juvenil, A. C.

Summary

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Best practices in the region:

- Define quality standards that are points of reference to assess the quality of intervention. They are based on expert consensus and focused on aspects such as intervention structure and process, so that quality is guaranteed (EMCDDA, 2011).
- Consider guidelines that establish norms to carry out preventive interventions based on the recommendations of national and international experts. This has helped to optimize prevention programs, as well as the analysis of theoretical references and risk factors related to drug consumption (CICAD, 2013; NIDA, 2004).
- Define good practices that facilitate intervention planning, particularly in regards to methodology development, based on scientific research and practices whose effectiveness has been proven (UNODC, 2013; Health and Consumption Office, 2010).
- Mobilize the different social actors and encourage their active participation to create linking and empowerment spaces to build synergies supporting the actions to be implemented.
- Direct work with the target population, involving a multidisciplinary staff in the fields of psychology, social work, medicine, education, among others, allows emphasizing on preventive tasks, which are based on the population necessities and characteristics, life stage, and risk level, thus ensuring interventions regulated by quality standards.
- Network training and education are fundamental elements that must be included in addiction prevention programs aimed at health professionals, and in graduate courses syllabus.
- Consultancy, assessment, and academic and scientific research provide objective information that enables us to identify the efficiency of preventive programs and projects.

Main challenges in the region:

- Options and methods to regulate therapeutic marijuana
- Reconstruction of the social tissue
- Strengthen prevention and treatment programs
- Training of professional human resources
- Building drug policies with a gender, public health and human rights perspective, prevention of use criminalization, and have an impact over sentencing proportionality.
- Strengthening drug cartels.
- Professionalization public security forces
- Lay emphasis in anticorruption measures.

Action-orientated recommendations for the UNGASS roundtables¹:

1. Drugs and Health: Demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion
 - An important sector of the civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean demands to open the debate and advance towards consensus in relation to the regulation of plants such as medical cannabis, as well the acknowledgment of therapeutic uses of cocaine and opium poppy. This should be the axis guiding drug policies.
2. Drugs and Crime: Supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation
 - Strengthen comprehensive measures for both drug supply and demand, respect for the users' human rights, have a gender perspective as its corner stone, and restore the squads that provide of justice and security. Also, restore economic growth as one of the main factors to prevent drug use and crime.
3. Cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities
 - Strengthen protection strategies for vulnerable groups and to monitor the respect for human rights as the corner stone of any comprehensive drug policy.
4. Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation
 - The current situation requires the improvement of international approaches with the aim of strengthening users and non-consumers' human rights, and fostering social development as an essential preventive aspect. Thus a key element in the strengthening of is regional and international co-responsibility.
5. Alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues
 - It must underpin the mechanisms of regional and international coordination against organized crime, in terms of production, distribution and sale of illegal drugs without undermining the human rights of the affected population.
 - Strengthen mechanisms for international cooperation for the economic development of the region, focusing on serious problems such as the immigration of unaccompanied children, human trade and other expressions of organized crime.

¹ The full description of the themes and subthemes of the UNGASS roundtables is available in General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/70/181](#) *Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016*