

Working Where The Risks Are



**Drug Abuse Prevention Programme in Asia
for Marginalised Youth**

Contents

DAPPA in Brief	p. 4
UNESCO, Education and Poverty Reduction	p. 5
Marginalised Youth: Who are They?	p. 6
■ <i>A Climate Of Acceptance</i>	p. 7
Drug Use and HIV/AIDS	p. 7
Taking Stock	p. 8
■ <i>Asia in Brief</i>	p. 9
Strategies and Themes	p. 10
- Economic Rehabilitation: Micro-credit and Education	p. 10
■ <i>Breaking The Cycle: From Substance Dependence to Economic Independence</i>	p. 11
- Basic Education, Peer Education	p. 11
■ <i>Tackling Taboos</i>	p. 14
- Capacity building	p. 16
Information and Awareness-Raising	p. 17
■ <i>Important Life-Skills in The HIV/AIDS Era</i>	p. 17
Advocacy	p. 18
Long-term benefits to the Region	p. 19



DAPPA IN BRIEF

What is DAPPA?

The Drug Abuse
Prevention Programme in
South Asia for
Marginalised Youth



What does it do?

DAPPA uses skills-based non-formal education to reach vulnerable young people who are at risk of drug misuse and HIV/AIDS.

Implementing Agency

UNESCO, in collaboration with the European Commission.

Geographical Scope

South Asia: notably India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, but also Pakistan, Malaysia and Nepal.

Target groups

Youth at Risk: DAPPA targets vulnerable young people and their peers, current or potential drug users and HIV-positive youth, particularly among marginalised settings such as slum-dwellers, street children, or certain low caste communities in India.

Families and Communities: The support of the broader community is vital to the DAPPA project, which aims to raise awareness about the nature of drug misuse and harm-prevention activities. On the principle that collective action leads to change, parents, partners and friends are associated as far as possible in project activities.

Organisations and Professionals: Many South Asian agencies work in the field of prevention and treatment of drug misuse. From volunteers at the grassroots level to regional government bodies, the DAPPA project aims to strengthen such organisations, help them develop their networks and to communicate their approaches and results. The goal is

to develop policy and disseminate successful approaches so other agencies can benefit from them, and, in doing so, strengthen 'south-to-south' co-operation.

Actions

Through holistic approaches involving both non-formal education and vocational skills training, the ultimate aim of the various DAPPA projects is to contribute towards alleviating poverty by facilitating both awareness and self-employment among vulnerable youth in Asia.

UNESCO, EDUCATION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

“UNESCO’s fields of competence are critical for empowerment; for creating an enabling environment for people to participate actively in individual and social development through education, respect for human rights, cultural and historical sensitivity in policy design, environmental sustainability, and access to information for all.”

Mr Koichuro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

An integrated concept of education enables individuals to adapt to a rapidly changing social, economic and cultural environment, and to continue to learn throughout life. UNESCO believes that it is vital to foster the development of holistic approaches such as the DAPPA project. Through it, and similar initiatives, UNESCO aims to provide education that ensures sustainable livelihoods based on the lived

realities of marginalised youth. Above all, it aims to give young people a sense of hope, and through helping them acquire skills, to break the poverty cycle.



MARGINALIZED YOUTH: WHO ARE THEY?

Youth are the assets of nations and yet we observe that they are many that are disadvantaged, alienated, excluded and at risk. *"No country has really tried to count the number of youth in difficulty,"*

explains Marc Gilmer of UNESCO who has extensive experience on projects for marginalised youth, over 80 per cent of which are carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charities, often in partnership with governments and international agencies. *"As real statistics are lacking, all we see are fragments of a pattern with Ministers of Employment, Education, Social Affairs or Justice each dealing with one particular group,"* says Gilmer. Poverty and unemployment are major causes of marginalisation. Rigid education systems, which force young people to repeat classes or drop out of school, are another. With little or no education, they are prey to unemployment, drug misuse and HIV/AIDS.



Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, believes that *"all young people... aspire to lead full and productive lives."* What can be done to give them this chance? To function in society, young people urgently need a three-part rescue package in the form of basic education, vocational and social skills. Drug misuse and HIV/AIDS, consequences of marginalisation, need to be addressed with preventive and harm-reduction programmes. DAPPA's rescue package combines all these elements.





A Climate of Acceptance

If a community understands the impact of drug dependence, it can better support those members affected by it. Hence the importance of creating a climate of acceptance. The TTR Clinical Research Foundation runs a community-mobilisation project in an Indian slum in association with UNESCO. It trains teachers, health workers and members of the clergy who are in daily contact with marginalised youth from two low-caste communities. By giving these "service providers" the skills to identify and support marginalised youth, the project aims to mobilise the broader community. To this end it organises numerous awareness-raising activities. Communities and young people are then helped to set up resource centres to offer a broad range of services – health, job skills, and micro-credit – to the whole community.

DRUG USE AND HIV/AIDS

Young people misuse drugs to escape reality, out of boredom or curiosity; to relieve hunger; to rebel; to get the courage required for begging or commercial sex, to keep awake or get to sleep, according to a report by the World Health Organisation.

The use and in particular the injection of illicit drugs, is always a risky behaviour, carrying the additional possibility of HIV infection. When people share needles and syringes to inject drugs, micro-transfusions of blood occur – which can transmit HIV and other microbes. Drug injecting is thus a phenomenon that policy-makers, educators and HIV prevention workers cannot afford to neglect.

Drugs do not have to be injected to carry an HIV risk. Alcohol, smoking drugs or glue sniffing can lead to carelessness about safe sex





and condom use. The association between drug use and HIV infection appears to be particularly serious for young people of low socio-economic status. The environmental factors involved with this include poverty, discrimination and lack of access to education and health services.

Effective information campaigns and preventive education programmes in Western Europe have resulted in a high level of awareness of the risks attached to HIV/AIDS, which, thanks to multiple-drug therapy is now becoming 'manageable'. But as only the world's richest countries can afford the drugs, the only really effective vaccine against HIV, is education. HIV does not discriminate and youth - the assets of nations are worthy of protection.

TAKING STOCK

Before drawing up policies and planning interventions, the extent of the behaviour to be addressed needs measuring so as to target the right people in the right way. One specific DAPPA project implemented in five Indian cities by SHARAN (Society for Serving the Urban Poor), concentrates on assessing situations rapidly and accurately. Educators and service providers can then respond with effective, targeted initiatives to the needs of young urban drug users in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta and Imphal. This is the first time such tools have been developed in India on this scale, and the results will have far-



reaching consequences for policy development.

Initially, SHARAN trains city co-ordinators and research staff to undertake rapid situation assessments of the extent, trends and behaviours involved in drug misuse and the rate of HIV infection among youth. Six workshops (one per city and a national



workshop) are then organised around the reports' findings. Participants at the workshops draw up guidelines for non-formal education and income-generation activities. City and country reports will be published, along with the conclusions of the national workshop.

The final documents of the five-city project will improve understanding of the extent of drug misuse and HIV infection, and serve as a basis for recommendations for interventions on a national scale. They will also advocate on behalf of drug users, so as to persuade policy-makers to provide better informed and more effective drug prevention and treatment services. DAPPA plans to continue this stocktaking through assessments in four other countries: Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

ASIA in brief

While most of the East Asian adult population is now literate, with a 94 per cent literacy rate, in South Asia, the adult literacy rate is only 57 per cent. Persistent poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have had profound effects on South Asian education systems. Nearly half the adult population are illiterate in both Bangladesh and India, while in Pakistan the adult literacy rate is the lowest in the sub-region at 40 per cent. Despite increased primary school enrolment in India and Bangladesh, only three out of four children go to school. In South Asia, fewer than three out of four pupils reach grade five.

STRATEGIES AND THEMES

Economic Rehabilitation

● Micro-Credit and Education

"The first thing poor people need is not a fancy lecture, or to learn how to read or write," claims Mohammed Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank. *"What they need is credit."* Yunus believes that the poor are poor because they lack capital, not because they are illiterate or untrained. Education and literacy are important factors contributing to development, he claims, but they should not be given priority.

Since 1976, when this "bank of the poor" started giving tiny loans to poor, illiterate Bangladeshi women, micro-credit has revolutionised development. In contrast to traditional methods, which put education first, micro-credit schemes hand out cash first and give education or training second. Once a person has credit and is earning money, education can help that person go further and faster; to keep track of profits, keep accounts, or get access to information that can improve their business. To provide sustainable livelihoods to marginalised youth, education and credit must go hand in hand.



This principle is contained in a number of DAPPA initiatives such as the micro-credit co-operative savings scheme run with local youth and community groups in Mumbai by the Mukti Sadan project (see box). Another DAPPA micro-credit project in Madras aims to alleviate poverty in low-caste communities. It lends to women because they tend to spend more on the family.

Breaking the Cycle

From substance dependence to economic independence

In the slum communities and streets of Mumbai, India, a group of 22 unemployed young people and recovering drug users are acquiring basic engineering skills, business savvy and the self-confidence to achieve economic independence and set up shop on their own. The idea behind this project, run by the Mukti Sadan an NGO in association with UNESCO, is not a new one, but it provides a textbook example of what such initiatives can do. From detoxification through counselling, basic education and training, the young people are accompanied on the road which leads from substance dependence to economic independence — which in turn enables them to stay away from drugs.

How does the project work? Over an 18-month period the trainees learn to operate machinery in a fabrication unit set up by the project to manufacture simple components needed by local industries. After completion of the first three months, they are paid a small salary based on their motivation, for the next six-month period. They then progress to running the machine shop, taking orders and creating a profit-sharing scheme, using their newly acquired functional literacy skills. Some trainees are placed in local businesses; others start their own. They receive extra training in basic business management and participate in a micro-credit savings scheme involving local youth and community groups.

● Basic Education

“Market mechanisms produce learning which is just as valid and effective as education in classrooms,” claim s Laila Isdandar Kamel, founder of a project in a ‘garbage village’ in Cairo, Egypt.

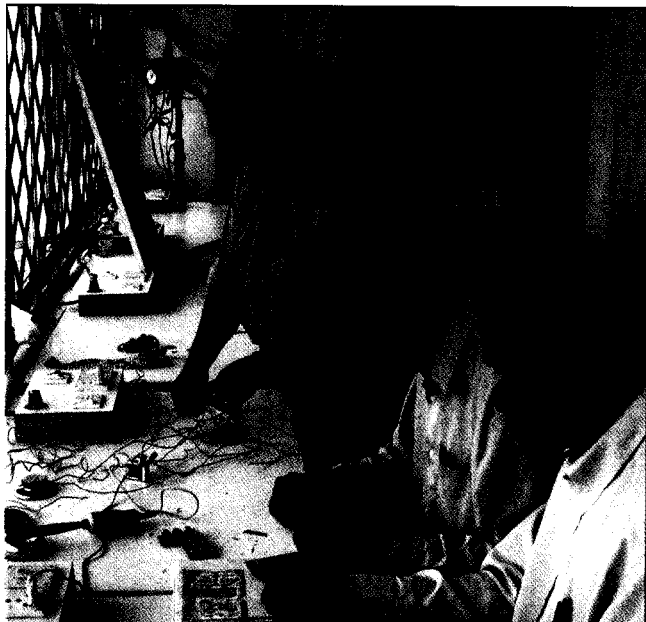
This vision of basic education is shared by many DAPPA projects, with the extra dimension of tackling vulnerability to drug use. Helping young people acquire functional literacy skills is an absolute priority. Such skills can be applied immediately and used in concrete, day-to-day situations.

For example, of the 300 unemployed Sri Lankan youth in a DAPPA youth-empowerment programme, 150 of them end up self-employed. Along with the vocational skills, tools and financing, they have acquired the needed level of functional literacy to set up on their own. The 'added value'? Besides providing role models, the youth actively promote reduction in drug demand in their own communities.

● Peer education

Peer education is an important tool used throughout the DAPPA project as part of a broader preventive education strategy.

Sahara means 'togetherness' in Hindi, so it is entirely appropriate that the DAPPA project in Sahara House in New Delhi, India, should promote peer education methods using real role models who share a language and subculture. Hand in hand with rehabilitation, detoxification and vocational skills training, the project emphasises 'behaviour change communication'. An exceptionally holistic environment, Sahara House, complements preventive education with in-house care and facilities such as needle exchanges and day care. It eventually reintegrates young drop-outs into the mainstream with an enhanced lifestyle.



The DAPPA project uses the peer education methodology to reach out to the community. By using people who have come through recovery as testimony of positive living, Sahara strongly advocates for services to drug users and people living with HIV/AIDS. The result is increased awareness, information and sensitisation about the harm related to substance misuse.



The recovering drug users in the Mukti Sadan project in Mumbai learn about HIV/AIDS, substance misuse, and the need to avoid both, along with their new vocational skills. They then take part in local preventive and therapeutic workshops for families and children.

Similarly, the Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC) in Sri Lanka trains and motivates youth to engage in drug demand reduction in their own communities, villages and vocational centres. In the long term, at least 50 young agents of change will work with other young people in their own communities. Through vocational skills training and non-formal education, the project also attempts to address their long-term needs for rehabilitation.

Training outreach workers is an important component of peer education. In another DAPPA project in Sri Lanka, the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB) selects peer educators from a population of marginalised youth including drug users, to work within specific areas of Colombo. These youth are given training and skills to work with drug users through an outreach programme within urban slums. The objectives of this DAPPA project are to build trust and close relationships with the marginalised youth and drug users so as to be able to refer them to local counselling and treatment facilities, where they can be helped to control their behaviour.



TACKLING TABOOS

Traditions, beliefs and value systems need to be taken into account in the design of drug prevention and HIV/AIDS programmes, just as much as the health aspects. In many societies, cultural attitudes discourage discussion about harm prevention because authorities are reluctant to address issues related to drugs and sexuality. Although free access to information is a basic right, young people are thus frequently denied the information and services that they need in order to make their own, informed choices. Yet rates of sexually transmitted diseases are highest among young people, as are unwanted pregnancies, in part due to 'traditional' attitudes to women.

Although drug users are not criminals, many societies associate drug misuse with crime. They are thus marginalised when what they need is care and support. Providing treatment and rehabilitation that is non-judgemental is what is needed, not further exclusion. DAPPA hopes to foster this approach.

Many DAPPA youth-empowerment projects use a holistic approach, which involves addressing total lifestyles, not setting drug use apart as a problem to be treated out of its context. Outreach projects can provide counselling and ongoing support to encourage behaviour change, including promotion of healthy, productive lifestyles. Many countries now encourage innovative preventive projects. But it is important to take taboos into account at the planning stage.

● Capacity-building

Heightened awareness of the harm drug use and HIV/AIDS can cause to individuals and communities and their ability to respond is the 'bottom line' of most grass-roots capacity-building initiatives. Building capacity at the community level and the organisations that support them is a component of many DAPPA projects. This approach can be seen in the DAPPA project run by Deutsch-Ordens Hospitalwerk International (DOH-I), which aims to enhance the capacity of service



providers in Asia to provide holistic drug prevention programmes. Using both formal and non-formal education, the project notably facilitates sharing of ideas for working with drug-using communities through

training and observation of best practice in South Asia and Europe.

In partnership with DOH-I, in-service training is provided as a means to enhance the capacity of service providers in South Asia to provide holistic drug prevention activities. Training courses for workers in non-governmental organisations from Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India, are carried out in Europe by DOH-I to develop technical and institutional expertise in the field of harm reduction and also to foster independent links with European partnering agencies. The participants are also taught how to draft project proposals relevant to their cultural and environmental settings.

The goal of the AIDS Network Development Foundation (AIDS Net), which is based in northern Thailand, is to empower and develop the aptitude of local government agencies, community and non-governmental organisations to design and implement harm reduction activities to prevent HIV infection among injecting drug users and other vulnerable youth. This capacity-



building programme has regional ambitions. Through study visits and networking, participants hope to learn more about harm reduction from the experience of organisations from Thailand, Nepal, India and elsewhere in the region. These include activities as diverse as curriculum development; elaboration of assessment methods; identification of strategies, evaluation and planning of future action and support. The ultimate beneficiaries will be injecting drug users, their partners and families... the people most at risk from HIV. The ultimate goal? To reduce the incidence of HIV infection in northern Thailand.

INFORMATION AND Awareness-raising

The Calcutta police, among others, are targeted by the Calcutta Samaritans drug-prevention project, which sensitises other key community members about drugs and drug-related violence and crime so as to gain community support. No less than twenty-four awareness campaigns on drugs and HIV/AIDS form part of its action. Similarly through street plays and information campaigns using local media, the TT Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation project raises awareness of the needs of youth at risk within a slum neighbourhood near Madras. The Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC) undertook an



assessment to determine the changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and involvement levels of the youth and thus developed appropriately targeted information aimed at the youth. ADIC reaches marginalised youth in Sri Lanka through a package of guidelines, posters, pamphlets, stickers and video material explaining drug demand reduction and promoting healthy, productive life-styles. Information about the harm related to drug use is made available to young marginalised youth in another Sri Lankan outreach programme, implemented by the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board, to help drug users re-examine their drug experience and envisage behaviour change. But what is clear is that information alone does not work - awareness has to complement service appropriate provision.



Important life-skills in the HIV/AIDS era

- How to deal with pressures for unwanted sex or drugs. How to say no.*
- How to make sound decisions about relationships and sexual intercourse, and stand up for those decisions.*
- How to recognise a situation that might turn risky or violent.*
- How and where to ask for help and support.*
- When ready for sexual relationships, how to negotiate protected sex or other forms of safer sex.*
- How to show compassion and solidarity towards people with HIV/AIDS.*
- How to care for people with AIDS in the family and the community.*

ADVOCACY

Publications are a tried and tested way of raising awareness, sharing best practise and influencing educational and social policies. From newsletters to providing a forum for expression, to national reports aimed at influencing government policy documents - the aim is the same: increased understanding of the problems of youth at risk and the most effective ways to help them lead independent lives.

An important aim of the SHARAN five-city, Rapid Situation Assessment project in India is to create policy change and advocate on behalf of existing and ex drug users. Outcomes of this exercise will be disseminated through national workshops and for the purposes of advocating for change.

The DAPPA project run in five Asian countries by Deutsch-Ordens Hospitalwerk International (DOH-I) will produce advocates for change in the form of nationals of these countries who will have had the benefit of experiencing other treatment and prevention methods in Europe. Promoting the exchange of experience and networking are

important in creating supportive environments that are less alienating and more caring of those that are traditionally marginalised.

Developing country scenarios with detailed information about drug use, governmental and non-governmental responses including the treatment and rehabilitation needs of drug users are also part of the project's actions. These will be incorporated as part of UNESCO's web site on Basic Education. Creating and



establishing links with other poverty-related programmes ensures that UNESCO acknowledges that drugs and HIV/AIDS are an important development issue.

Case studies in the form of video material about interventions relating to drug use in different countries will be produced for highlighting what works best and potential ways forward.

LONG-TERM BENEFITS TO THE REGION

An Asia-wide initiative carried out by the Colombo Plan Secretariat aimed to facilitate networking and the sharing of experience between local organisations working in drug prevention, as well as raising awareness of region-specific issues. The project brought together a group of professionals trained to prevent drug misuse, reduce the demand for drugs and deal with the related problems of slum-dwellers in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Thailand. Once familiar with the problems, approaches and policies adopted by other countries, they will be able to recommend approaches and policy developments in their own. The Colombo Plan will also produce a basic set of guiding principles so that other organisations can help the urban poor, such as slum dwellers and street children, cope with drug-related problems.

Orientation visits to existing drugs-based projects are an essential component of the project. The visits enable participants to see international best





practice in action and encounter a range of prevention strategies focusing on drug users. It also promotes North-South co-operation. The North has much to learn from the South in the area of policy development. Micro-credit schemes, for example, have been adapted in underprivileged enclaves of northern cities.

South-South co-operation is fundamental to the DAPPA project, which also focuses on policy development and putting experience into action through training and technical assistance. FORUM has been established as an active network of voluntary grassroots drug treatment agencies in South Asia. Through information sharing, exchange visits and staff training, the project aims to raise the quality of drug treatment in South Asia. A regular newsletter is planned, to provide a platform for expression to grassroots workers. Through this dynamic network, FORUM intends to forge links in the area of drug treatment and prevention between service providers, donor agencies and the governments of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia and Thailand. The exchanges from this network will provide clear recommendations to UNESCO regarding future policy, identifying potential directions for future actions, training, technical assistance and operational research in Asia.

The work of such wide-ranging initiatives as the SHARAN, the DOH-I project and the FORUM network are consistent with DAPPA's goal of creating a critical mass of organisations working in drug prevention. Whether at the national and regional level, they can share their knowledge and experience with other agencies, producing a 'multiplier effect' throughout the region.

The DAPA Project is a process of moving the Dependant to Independence