

Confronting the reality: drug policy, young people who use drugs and a need for evidence-based interventions in Nigeria

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Description:

Nigeria, situated in West Africa with a population of about 178 million people, is the most populous African Nation. Over 60 per cent of this population are young people, hence the country can be described as youthful which is a crucial resource for growth and development. Like many West African countries, the country has a long history in being a trafficking route for illicit drugs from the major producing countries such as Latin America and Asia to the thriving European and North American market. The recent discovery of some methamphetamine laboratories in Nigeria have also shown that the country is moving beyond just being a transit nation to a producing country of some sort of illicit drugs which are also transported mainly to Asia and Europe. In the same light, an increase in drug consumption is also being witnessed. The country has consistently topped the list of 'hard drug' consumers in Africa in the past years. This evidence is enough to awake the conscience of the nation and many other West African nations that drugs are not just in transit but there is also a growing local demand in the region. The information presented in this paper is drawn from literature review and series of interviews and group discussions held with young people who use drugs across six states in Nigeria namely, Delta, Kano, Lagos, Nasarawa, Rivers and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

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