



A culture of evaluation in the prevention of drug use and other risky behaviours

This proposal aims at strengthening a culture of evaluation of effectiveness in the practice of the prevention of drug use and other risky behaviours globally. The initiative will further strengthen the prevention hubs created in the context of “Prevention Strategy and Policy Makers”, a joint initiative of the Department for Anti-drug Policies of Italy and UNODC to disseminate the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. Policy makers and researchers in low- and middle-income countries will be trained and involved in the scientific evaluation of interventions and policies on the prevention of drug use and other risky behaviours.

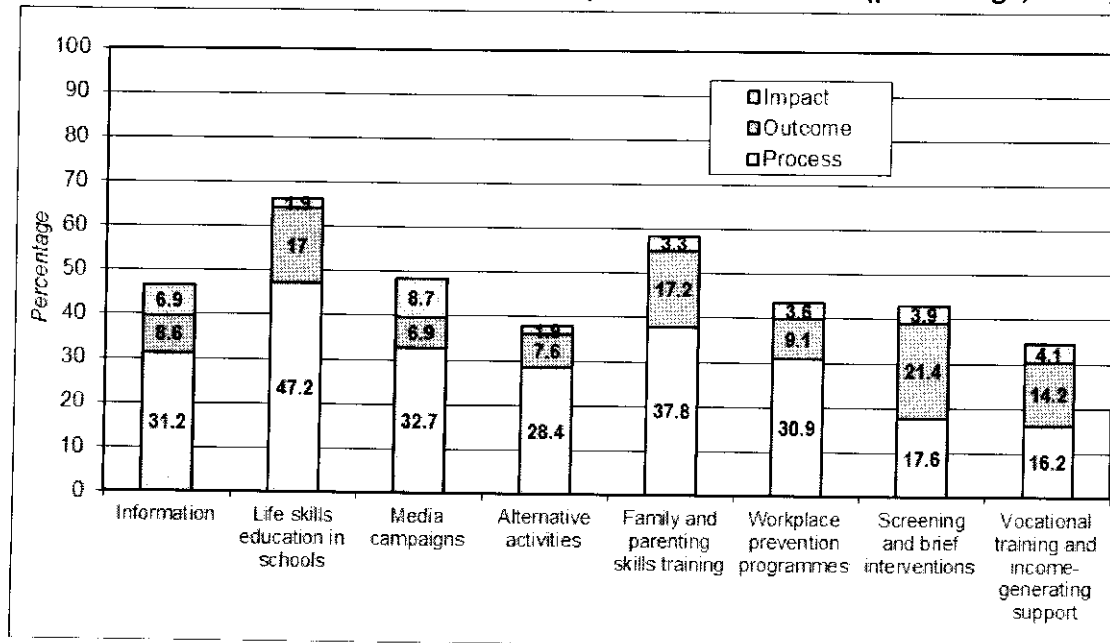
Background

The development of the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention, undertaken by UNODC during 2012, highlighted the great progress undertaken by the science of prevention in the last 20 years, but also the many gaps. These include the general paucity of scientific studies assessing the effectiveness of interventions and policies in terms of preventing substance abuse and drug use, particularly in comparison to the availability of efficacy studies and particularly so in low- and middle-income countries.

This should come as no surprise. In 2012, only 2-7% of the Member States reporting on the progress made to implement the 2009 Political Declaration reported having conducted or planned the impact evaluation of prevention activities (see Figure 1). Moreover, in the context of the “Prevention Strategy and Policy Makers” seminars, a joint initiative with the Department for Anti-drug Policies of Italy to disseminate the Standards among policy makers, the need for evaluation and to strengthen the capacity of policy makers, practitioners and researchers to undertake evaluation came in sharp relief, with repeated requests on the part of participants for additional guidance and resources on evaluation.

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Figure 1. Evaluation by Member States of prevention activities (percentage, N=74)



The Evaluation Initiative

To address the situation briefly described above, this proposal will aim at training and involving in the evaluation of drug prevention at least two of the regional prevention hubs developed in the context of "Prevention Strategy and Policy Makers". This joint Initiative of the Department for Anti-drug Policies of Italy and UNODC is active in four regions: Central America, North Africa and the Middle East, East Asia and Southeastern Europe. Moreover, its reach has been expanded to two more regions with the support of the relevant UNODC Regional Programme: Eastern Africa, both English- and French-speaking and West & Central Asia. More than 50 countries have been involved (see Figure 2).

Through the Initiative, policy makers met together to review the status of drug prevention in their countries at the light of the Standards and plan together an improvement plan. The Evaluation Initiative will build on this work by developing and providing guidance on how to scientifically evaluate interventions and policies for the prevention of drug use and other risky behaviours.

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Figure 2. The 56 countries participating in "Prevention Strategy and Policy Makers"



The golden standards of evidence-based practice is clear: randomised control trials assessing the efficacy and effectiveness of interventions and policies with regard to preventing drug use, substance abuse and/or other risky behaviours. In practice, however, the financial and human resources available to undertake this kind of evaluation are scarce in all but the highest income countries.

A global representation of scientists would assist UNODC, electronically and through a meeting, to develop a consensus on acceptable alternative methodologies, indicators and, possibly, instruments in the public domain. The development of such guidance is aimed at facilitating the undertaking of evaluation of prevention of drug and risky behaviours worldwide. This work would build on existing resources and guidelines, most notably CICAD (see "An Information Framework for the Design of National Demand Reduction Policies and Programs" and "Juego de Herramientas de la CICAD para la Evaluación de Programas Universales de Prevención del Uso de Drogas en los Jóvenes"), EMCDDA and the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance. Guidelines will be published in all official UN languages.

On the basis of the guidelines, training materials would be developed aimed at policy makers and researchers to be utilised in meetings of two of the regional prevention hubs, possibly in North Africa and the Middle East and in Central America. A small grant would also be made available to undertake the scientific evaluation of a promising prevention intervention. This would not only strengthen some of the policy makers and researchers with practical skills, but would also add to the global basis of scientific evidence (which is particularly lacking with regard to low- and middle-income countries) and to the global availability of evidence-based programmes in the public domain. With the assistance of the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance of which UNODC is part, the evaluation would also be able to

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assess the interventions with regard to their effectiveness in preventing violence and not only drug use and substance abuse.

Budget

Activity	USD	Totals
Global meeting to develop guidelines on the scientific evaluation of drug prevention	30,000	
Two regional meetings to train policy makers, practitioners and researchers	80,000	
Two grants to undertake the evaluation of a promising prevention approach in a low and middle income country	40,000	
Management of the process, including the development of the guidelines and the training materials (6 w/m of a professional)	70,000	
Miscellaneous	1,200	
Total		221,200
PSC (13%)		28,800
Grand Total		250,000

