A Strong Start

Good practices in using a local situation assessment to begin a youth substance abuse prevention project

UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

World Health Organization

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Welcome to the world of substance abuse prevention among youth! This is very important work, and good results are definitely possible. As when building a house, one of the keys to good results is to build a firm foundation—and the best foundation for any youth substance abuse prevention initiative is a local situation assessment and good planning.

Although you may be familiar with the situation in your community, an assessment will help fill in gaps in your understanding of the nature of the problem and the resources that are available to your work. Before conducting the situation assessment it is necessary to prepare by carefully networking, training your staff, and gathering existing information (for example, in the form of survey results and police and hospital records). This will set you up to conduct the assessment (e.g., by conducting your own surveys, key informant interviews and focus groups), giving you a detailed picture of the problem and resources. This will, in turn, allow you to be precise with your project goals—and to eventually know if you are succeeding with your work. Moreover, done correctly, the local situation assessment can achieve even more—it can be an excellent tool to attract your youth target group and others to your work from the very beginning.

This publication will help you develop a project with a strong foundation—one that strives to involve young people and other important groups in determining the local substance abuse situation and in planning to address the situation. It is not a step-by-step recipe for planning a substance abuse prevention project on the basis of a local situation assessment (for this type of resource, please visit the website of the UNODC Global Youth Network www.unodc.org/youthnet), but rather, a presentation of principles that, when applied, will increase the likelihood of successful outcomes. The principles are based on the experiences and insights of more than 100 very different local partners operating in eight countries (Belarus, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia) from three different regions of the world (Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and Southern Africa). They are drawn from the major themes that arose when these local partners were asked to reflect on what worked and didn't work soon after conducting their own local situation assessments and after planning their own substance abuse prevention project. If you are interested, annex I will tell you more about how we have been working with our local partners.

These partners brought a wide variety of talents and resources to their work, but they also met numerous challenges along the way. Some of the challenges were from within— for example, overburdened staff or unexpected staff changes. Other challenges arose from the community: local partners, at times, operated in communities where many groups were ready to get involved and there was a history of good cooperation; however, in other communities there was less experience or interest in working together. Rural or remote communities presented unique challenges also.

Your organization too, will be bringing its resources and unique talents to a situation that differs from any situation encountered by our local partners. This means that even though many people have contributed to the information in this publication, it is only a guide. You need to see yourself and the young people you involve as the experts on your project and your community.

The publication is divided in three main sections following this introduction. The first section deals with preparing for the local situation assessment, while the second is about conducting the local situation assessment. In the third section, we look at the experience of our local partners in using the local situation assessment to mobilize partners and plan a substance abuse prevention project. In each of the sections, we present certain core principles that our local partners identified as important to keep in mind and, for each of these, we also present some concrete suggestions on how to go about putting them in practice. After some concluding thoughts, we have included a few annexes in which you can find details about our project, the way we have developed this publication and who are our local partners. Our hope is that this publication helps you to build a strong foundation for your work.

1. Preparing for the local situation assessment

This is a publication about building a strong foundation for the implementation of your prevention project through careful planning and accurate preparation. It should therefore come as no surprise to you that the experience of our partners shows that even this phase of finding out what the problem is and of deciding what to do about it requires careful planning and accurate preparation! Our partners identified four main principles in this phase to do with the standing of the organization in the community, the collection of existing information, making the plans to undertake an assessment known and making sure that whoever is undertaking the assessment has the right skills to do so.

Cultivate a reputation as an effective partnering organization

By showing ability and consistently delivering a good service, others will see your organization as effective and reliable. If you can do this while demonstrating positive values such as honesty, respect, openness, tolerance and generosity, you will win even more allies—and present a great model for your youth!

Providing an effective service puts an organization in a strong position to developing quality relationships in the community. The quality of the relationships and linkages your organization has developed in the community will have a large bearing on your success in conducting a local situation assessment. See what a local partner from the Russian Federation had to say about this:

> *"Our organization used personal contacts for getting access to information, for speeding up the process of getting it and for free-of-charge access to information."*

Union of Women, Irkutsk, Russian Federation
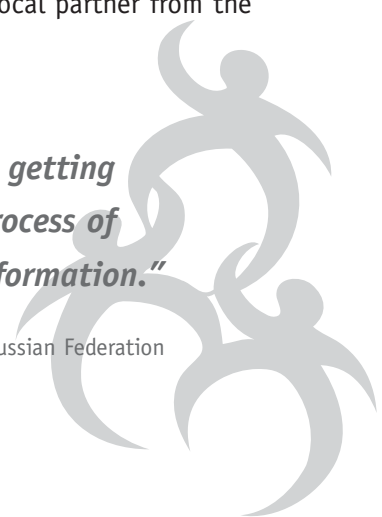
Central to forging a reputation as a strong organization with quality relations is a "professional approach" among staff; that is to say, present yourselves as knowledgeable, capable, and respectful. Many local partners mentioned that showing a professional approach was a huge help in getting cooperation from government, school, and police officials. For example, before the launch of their project, a representative of NAN, another local partner from the Russian Federation, participated actively in a community round table on preventing substance abuse among youth, which led to support of their own project.

A professional approach can be enhanced by cultivating a "learning culture" in your organization. Encourage staff to keep on top of new trends and available information by reviewing press releases, publications and research on substance abuse. Providing ongoing training to your staff and volunteers is a good way to instil a professional attitude. By making the training available to others or by sponsoring seminars and conferences in the community, your group will gain recognition and be seen as a "player" in the community.

What if you are so new that you haven't had a chance to develop any reputation yet? You will need to approach your work with particularly care in order to build credibility along the way. When you are relatively unknown in the community, effective networking is even more crucial for you—you will need to carefully identify partners or allies with a positive reputation who can help open doors for you. Whether your most effective allies will be the police, schools, the media or some other group will depend on your particular community. For instance, in some communities, a government relationship or "stamp of approval" will be important, whereas in others it may make little difference.

Use the collection of existing information on the problem of substance abuse to build momentum for your assessment

The first thing you will need to do before you start your local situation assessment is to decide what is the information that you need to collect in order to understand the substance abuse situation in your community. There is considerable literature on this issue, therefore this is not something that our local partners tackled in their discussions. The box at the end of this section provides a short summary and you can find further information by visiting our website at www.unodc.org/youthnet.

Once you have decided which information you need, it will make sense to determine what information already exists. You can use this phase to build a base of information on the situation, but also to begin building awareness and momentum for your project. Where can you expect to find good existing information? Every community will be different, but hospitals, schools, drug control agencies, the police, and government departments often have statistical records that are helpful. Local partners found that the most useful kinds of information were survey results, police enforcement records on the kinds of drugs available in the community, and treatment agency or dispensary information found in publications, reports, lectures and seminars.
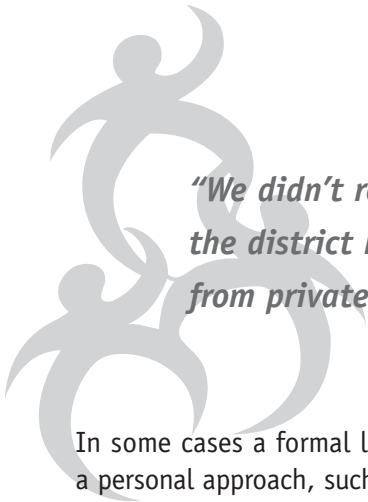
In some cases a formal letter of request may be needed to access this information, but a personal approach, such as a phone call or meeting, is usually most effective. Obtaining records from a government department can be cumbersome and time consuming, so it helps to be flexible, as explained by one of the local partners from Belarus.

Make sure that your requests for information do not result in an all "take" and no "give" arrangement. Beginning a practice of sharing acquired information with those who have shared with you (while ensuring confidentiality as required) will earn you more partners and allies. At the beginning, you may not have information to share; however, you can still show a willingness to share by offering other practical help (for example, one of your rooms for meetings), becoming more active in taking and giving referrals, and by offering staff or volunteers for committee work. Determine the perspectives of those you wish to engage on the issue and be alert to ways that you can support their work. The information you will be gathering may be of interest to these other groups, but they may be more interested in ways you can help them address some of their priorities.

In every community there will be agencies and groups that, for different reasons, are not so helpful. Some authorities may say they are too busy to help or they won't share their information with you because of the sensitivity of the information. In some cases, they will be hesitant to cooperate because they are afraid they'll get a poor reputation by becoming involved in this issue, and in other cases, they simply don't have an accurate picture of what is going on. You may encounter cases of lack of interest or resentment toward your project or your partners. For example, one of our local partners in the Russian Federation found that they made no progress trying to get the cooperation with the local administration, due to "the disinterest of local politicians in this problem and lack of interest in taking any kind of action to solve it." With those who harbour negative attitudes, all you may be able to do is honestly present your intentions and avoid taking sides where there's conflict (remember the professional attitude?). Beyond that, keep in mind that some find this a difficult issue to talk about. To these people stress that you don't want to identify anyone (e.g., ask them not to give you names), and remind them that it is only by raising and discussing the issue that solutions can be found.

It is not unusual to find that there may be little useful information available in a community. Agency records vary a lot in their quality, and surveys are so expensive to administer that many years can go by between surveys, even in more affluent communities and countries. So, in many communities there will be little documentation, while in others the information may be too old, incomplete, not separated out in a useful way (e.g., by age or gender), conflicting, or clearly inaccurate. Even relevant existing records and survey results give a limited snapshot of the picture.

"The police officers were so happy to hear about the project that, even though they didn't have much information in their records, they promised to support it."

Themba Trust Project, South Africa

However, even if it doesn't result in much useful information, this phase gives you an important chance to let others know about your plans and draw them into your work. See what happened to the Themba Trust Project in South Africa. And by simply asking for information on youth drug use you will be drawing attention to the need for research and good record keeping. And most importantly, it is only by confirming what is available that you can be completely clear on the new information that you need to plan your project.

What information is necessary to understand the substance abuse situation in a community?

Our starting point is that substance abuse in a community is caused by the interaction of many different factors. To prevent a substance abuse problem, it is therefore necessary to understand, in a specific community, what puts (young) people at risk of abusing substances (risk factors) and what may protect them from it (protective factors). The following is a list of issues that you might need to explore.

Substance abuse
Who is using substances? What is their age? What is their gender? Are they in or out of school? When and where do they use?

Knowledge on substance abuse
What do people know about substances? Do they know their names? Can they recognize them? Do they know their effects? Does this knowledge differ with age, sex, ethnicity, class or other socio-economic characteristics? (Be careful not to stereotype!)

Personal and social skills
Do young people have the opportunity (in the family, in school or in the community) to develop the personal and social skills that will help them find their place in the community, face and resolve problems that might arise, and resist social pressure to abuse substances?

Cultural values

What are the attitude of people towards using substances? Do different groups (by age, sex, other socio economic variables) have different attitudes? Do attitudes differ according to the characteristics of the person that is using (e.g. for an older person, it might be ok for adults to smoke, but not for young people)? Or according to the occasion (e.g. it is ok to use a certain substance once in a while together with friends)? What are the attitudes towards substance abuse of the role models of the community? What are the attitudes towards substance abuse portrayed as acceptable through different kind of media?

Community and family life

How strong are family ties in the community? Do parents have the time, energy and skills to adequately care physically and emotionally for their children? Is there adequate communication between parents and children on various issues, including substance abuse? Do parents and siblings abuse substances? Are there problems of violence, physical or otherwise?

Community resources
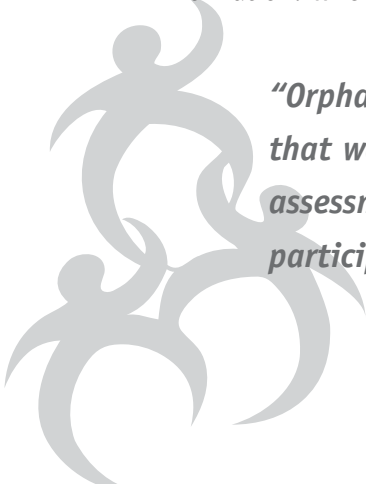
Do (young) people have adequate opportunities and prospects of getting a good education, training, and work? Do (young) people have the opportunity to employ their time in a fun and challenging way? Is there appropriate care provided for people who do not have a family or have problems in the family? Is there appropriate care for those who have physical or mental health problems?

Availability

Are substances easily available? To whom? Where? When?

Let others in your community know about your plans to conduct the assessment

Before actually beginning the assessment process, let others know about your general plans through orientation sessions or bulletins. Doing this before going out and gathering new information will make things go smoother when you approach them for information. Whenever possible, contact people personally to get the word out.

"Orphans were a very hard-to-reach group and the fact that we had no concrete plans prior to starting our assessment made everyone extremely reluctant to participate in the assessment."

AIDS Infoshare, Russian Federation

Even though it is closely linked to your project, it makes sense to see the assessment as a separate phase of the project and give it enough time and resources to organize and conduct it. When it's time to begin contacting sources for their information, you will then be able to explain where you are going with your project, and why the information from their records would be helpful. Take for example, the experience of AIDS Infoshare, a partner from the Russian Federation.

Explaining your project fully at this early point may be a bit awkward because, of course, you can't know exactly what you'll be doing until you have collected all of your information. However, you can explain your concerns and describe how this project intends to help the community by highlighting the general aims or principles of the project, (e.g., targeting older male adolescents; using a peer approach; aiming to focus on protective factors, etc). Most members of a community are interested in improving conditions for youth—if you can logically explain how your work will benefit the community, you will be able to tap into this interest. Most importantly, it is important to be honest and transparent in presenting your plans—if you aren't sure about something, say so. Clarifying your plans at this early point will help build realistic expectations for your project as you proceed.

Drawing others into the project at this early point increases your chances of mounting a successful project. But your success will also depend a bit on the history of mobilization in your community. Responses to your invitation may be quick and enthusiastic if your community has had good experiences in this regard. On the other hand, if prevention work in the community is typically done in a fragmented manner or if there is a general pessimism about anyone's ability to improve the situation, you may find resistance or limited cooperation from those you approach.

There may be a poor understanding of what effective prevention is about in your community. In this case, as you orient others to your plans, it will help to educate them on prevention (e.g., requires sustained rather than one-shot activities) to build realistic expectations. You may need to convince some that this is not another case of "more hot air, lots of talk and no action", but rather an important part of a long-term process.

Provide training to conduct the assessment, particularly for involved youth

Once you've determined what information is available and, therefore, what information you are lacking (and you will, most probably, be lacking some), you are in a better position to plan how you will collect it, in other words, to plan your actual local situation assessment. In the next section, you can find some indication on how our local partners went about undertaking their assessments and what methods they found most useful. Regardless of the methods you choose, before you start, you will need to ensure that you have competence in conducting the assessment. Conducting the local situation assessment calls for basic research skills that your group, with some preparation, can bring together through some combination of training and partnering with an organization with proven experience in this area.

The best information on youth drug use is most often from youth themselves and the best way to acquire this information is by training young people to collect it. The young people involved in your project will have many talents and much enthusiasm that will be critical to your work, but they will not likely have much experience in researching community drug issues.

A Case example

From the very start, we made it a point that this project be handled by the youth. A successful consultative forum for youth and children was made involving nine organizations and service agencies including the youth council. The group selected 35 youth leaders as trainers on: primary prevention of substance use; leadership; peer counselling; and life-skills. During the last day of training, the youth took over the planning of the assessment.

As part of their plan, the youth made a master listing and survey of children ages 8-14 to reach out to the beneficiaries through: community based education; awareness; advocacy; or their own method of campaign. This was now the 'barangay profile' and it gave first-hand information on the children's situation. The youth leaders were now able to design appropriate activities for the active participation of their beneficiaries.

Kahayag Foundation, The Philippines

Their training needs to be "experiential" in nature and include opportunities to learn about and become comfortable with focus group discussions and key informant interviews (two of the most useful methods for gathering new information) by conducting mock interviews, and leading group discussions. If there are plans to administer a questionnaire, conduct observation or include a case study, you will also need to give attention to these methods. Regardless of the collection methods, training will need to give attention to the ethics of conducting community research (including such issues as confidentiality, respecting sources, and faithful reporting of information). Of course, along with the work, build in lots of opportunity for fun! Addictus, a local partner from the Philippines found that a song and dance contest was not only a lot of fun, but it also proved to stimulate much community-wide interest in the project.

Experiential training can provide an opportunity to pre-test your questions (whichever collection methods you use) to make sure they will provide the information you are looking for. This pre-test of the questions can also serve as a pre-evaluation of some of the types of people you wish to survey, to make sure they are good sources of information on the issue. Through a pre-evaluation of the knowledge of respondents, you can determine where you can expect to find the most accurate picture of what is going on.

What works

∴ Cultivate a reputation as an effective partnering organization in the community, by doing good work and, wherever possible, supporting other stakeholders in their activities;

∴ Strengthen your position by partnering with other recognized stakeholders that can open doors for you;

∴ Use a personal approach, by phoning or visiting those that have potentially useful information;

∴ Employ a "give and take" approach, by offering to further share information gained through your investigation (obviously, within the limits of confidentiality!);

∴ Ensure that stakeholders in the community know about your assessment and understand your work;

∴ Ensure that you have the capacity to do the assessment, through some combination of training (particularly for the youth) and partnering with stakeholders with proven experience in this area.

2. Conducting the local situation assessment

In this section, you will find a description of the experience of our local partners in undertaking the assessment, what happened when they collected the information and what are the things to keep in mind to ensure that the information you collect is useful.

Use your contacts to access those you wish to collect information from

You will likely find that you depend on other agencies in different ways to complete your assessment. Partner agencies, besides helping with the research, can help with gaining access to young people (e.g., through schools), serving as key informants (e.g., doctors), and making sense of the data (e.g., university or government researchers). By making a concerted effort to keep all partners, including parents, informed throughout this process, you will keep them on board.

A major form of assistance is "opening doors"—whether of a school, gang, orphanage or prison—to give you access to some of the people you wish to survey. Before approaching groups for this kind of access, you will need to determine whether a formal or informal approach is most appropriate. In some cases, it will make most sense to take the formal route, which could include a courtesy call, scheduling an appointment, and paying particular attention to "protocol" (e.g., talking to the leader of the community first). If you are unsure, following the lines of authority and respecting accepted etiquette with these authorities makes good sense, even if you don't expect much direct help.

A Case example

The initial stage of our assessment process involved meetings with community leaders of the three selected areas (Jangwani, Miburani and Kigambani). Their participation and views were sought in relation to both the substance abuse problem in their area and as to how we should carry out the assessment. The leaders were given the opportunity then to nominate representatives to be involved and to attend the preparation workshop. Groups of between five and eight young people then carried out the work in each area. These groups were then responsible for the collection of the information and the writing up of the reports from the respective areas.

YCIC, Tanzania

Sometimes "everyday community members" without any stake in the issue (e.g., small shopkeepers) can be quite helpful. Parents are often difficult to engage on this issue, and the best way to collect information from them is to use other parents that have been trained for the task.

It is difficult to collect information from (or conduct prevention with) institutions with a punitive approach to drug problems, because those involved are often afraid to talk about the issue. It may not be possible to do anything about that immediately, but by providing sensitization and education for these organizations, more supportive policies and practices may evolve over time.

Other points for easing access to those you wish to survey:

∴ With those expressing reservations, note previous well-regarded projects that had a similar purpose, or good work that you've done in the past;

∴ Take time to develop rapport;

∴ Set aside biases, approach the work with a non-judgmental attitude, and reflect a strong acceptance and respect for other agencies or groups;

∴ Organize separate meetings for various groups (e.g., youth, community leaders and community members) to increase level of comfort;

∴ Be really clear with people on how the information will be used and on steps you are taking to ensure confidentiality;

∴ Be reliable, i.e. follow through on what you say you will do.

A Case example

We entered the community with the support of the Mental Health Clubs, who introduced our project to the relevant sectors. Letters of invitation were written to the local authorities for a meeting to sensitize them on the issue of substance abuse among youths; then a standing committee was formed. It was easy to organize/ mobilize youths in these communities because the meeting comprised local politicians, leaders of youth groups, churches, schools and clinics (though we would have liked to have police in this meeting as well).

When you have entered the community through stakeholders it is easy to get access to the youths. The target group was in-and-out of school youths aged 14-21 years old. Youths involved were from churches, schools, theatre groups, community clubs and bars/taverns and market places. Using influential youth in the community worked. The youth leaders were very instrumental in identifying youths to be involved in the assessment and especially those who were influential in the community. The youth met and were sensitized on substance abuse; they then collected information from fellow youths, and were also a good source of information.

Mental Health Association of Zambia, Zambia

Work hard to gain the trust of targeted youth and other respondents

Almost all non-medical substance use by young people is illegal and carries a stigma. As a result, people may react to survey questions in very different ways. Some youth may exaggerate their use of drugs or pretend not to take the exercise seriously in front of their peers. More often, for fear of being labelled or even apprehended, people will be hesitant to offer information, and they will minimize the extent of drug use in the community. The quote below tells us about the experience of a Russian local partner.
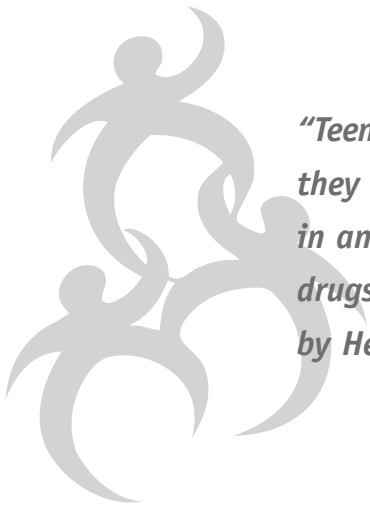
"Teens in a structured discussion with adults initially said they didn't know anything about intravenous drugs, but in another less formal setting, spoke about where the drugs could be bought and young people being infected by Hepatitis B, and C, from sharing dirty needles."

Assistance 2000, Russian Federation

So, regardless of the methods you choose, the issue of trust will loom as the most important factor in determining the accuracy of the information you gather. You will likely find that targeted youth—if they trust you—will provide the best information, because they have first-hand knowledge and the issue is relevant to them. If they feel that you are genuinely interested in working with them, they are usually quite willing to talk about substance abuse issues and can provide an in-depth level of knowledge on a variety of important questions, e.g., reasons for use, values, attitudes, types of drugs, their slang names, ways of using them, where they can be obtained, and failures of previous prevention efforts. They can also help to connect you with other youth in their network. Bear in mind that young people are not all the same, differing according to age, education, social situation and subculture (punks, rappers, etc).

In order to gain trust, ensuring the confidentiality of those who give you information must be a priority for you (a particular challenge in smaller communities or neighbourhoods where everyone knows everyone else). Confidentiality means a commitment by the researcher not to share any information about the person being surveyed or about persons mentioned by the surveyed person. When youth are in very difficult situations and share information based on confidentiality, it is not acceptable to break that trust. With the young person, look for creative ways to deal with the information (e.g., take out details that would identify them). In some situations (as was done by a number of the local partners), confidentiality can be reasonably assured by using a written survey questionnaire and telling youth not to put their name on the form.

The only exception to this is when the researchers learn through their work that someone has been harmed (e.g., sexually assaulted) or is at risk of being harmed, and judge that reporting the incident or threat to their supervisor is likely to improve the situation. The best way to clarify for everyone how confidentiality will be handled when conducting a survey is to develop a clear "protocol" or set of procedures to follow, carefully go over the protocol with everyone you approach for information, and stick to it! This issue is, at times, not straightforward, yet it is very important for respondents, as reported by PUSH, a local partner in Zambia: "A young person cried when he realized that he gave out information that could land him in trouble later on."

"We did one of our focus group discussions in the open due to the lack of available space; we did not feel comfortable when some community residents started to eavesdrop. So we had to discuss other matters and reset the sessions in a more secluded venue."

Addictus, The Philippines

Ensuring the personal safety of those collecting and giving information may be a concern in some cases. The very nature of prevention work may mean operating in communities and neighbourhoods where violence is a possibility. When you believe that the assessment may place someone in a risky situation, such as a violent neighbourhood, or contact with potentially dangerous people, take guidance from reliable persons in the community. Finally, picking the right setting is an important way to build a sense of trust and safety. For example, conducting group sessions in a public setting may discourage open and free flowing discussions because of the sensitivity of the issue.

A Case example

We took the young people out of the school to a youth camp where they would be able to talk freely as they were out of the school environment. This was helpful as the learners expressed themselves freely. In some cases (e.g., with young people boarding in a school or in an orphanage) doing data collection activities in a youth camp away from their usual surroundings helps them feel more at ease and relaxed. The benefits of this activity should be weighted against the costs, which can be expensive."

Themba Trust Project, South Africa

Other ways to build trust, particularly when seeking information from youth, include:

∴ Use a less formal, personal approach with young people;

∴ Find an entry point of interest to them and combine meetings with fun and excitement (e.g., field trips, festivals, youth camps, theatre, an outing to the beach or other activities such as drumming or chess);

∴ Begin with creative games and icebreakers to build team spirit;

∴ Conduct the sessions away from the school or community (e.g., at a youth camp);

∴ Rather than immediately asking survey questions, lead in slowly with less threatening topics, such as sports or music, or ask about the use of substances in the community generally (at the same time, you will need to take care to avoid gossiping);

∴ A possibility may be the use of anonymous suggestion boxes in schools and youth centres;

∴ Give positive feedback on their participation or contribution.

Focus on the quality of information collected

Your resources to undertake an assessment are likely to be limited. Therefore, rather than trying to obtain large amounts of data, it makes most sense to focus on the quality of the information. Aside from being really clear on what you want to learn from your assessment, and taking all possible steps to gain access and develop a sense of trust with respondents, the most important measure you can take to ensure the quality of the information you collect is to use more than one method and more than one source.

You have a variety of basic community research methods to choose from, including focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews, pencil and paper surveys, observation, immersion and case studies. Using a combination of these methods and a combination of sources will help verify information and ultimately give you confidence in your results. For example, a local partner from Russia found that while a recent written survey of students showed general well-being among their families, group discussions with the same young people, showed a different picture.

Using more than one method is helpful for another reason: when depending on others for assistance, your plan may simply not work out, as reported by a Russian local partner: "The principal didn't choose pupils according to our agreement. The number was less, the grades were not mixed, and it was only grade twelve." In this context, it is useful to have other sources for the same information.

There is no shortage of information available on community research methodology (you can find some applied to prevention on our website www.unodc.org/youthnet). Here is a summary of how the local partners viewed several methods.

Focus Group Discussion

> *"Collecting new information can be combined immediately with discussion of this information from the youth point of view and mutual correction both from our side and young people."*

Anti-AIDS, Russian Federation

Focus group discussion was reported as the most effective method for collecting new information from youth. Youth are comfortable with discussions so focus groups have good potential to draw out rich information on youth subcultures (e.g., tendencies, behaviours, slang) that may be difficult to pick up any other way. The in-depth and two-way flow of information in focus groups has the effect of drawing in participants and increasing their sense of responsibility. It is possible that some leaders may sway the discussion and that some youth may not be frank, but this is a possibility with all of the different methods.

Key informants interview

> *"Collection of information from adults was best done in the form of key informant interviews, and the communication skills of the interviewers and their experience and knowledge in prevention and rehabilitation helped."*

NAN, Russian Federation

Key informants interviews often work best with government, NGO and stakeholder officials, and with adults who are involved with young people in their daily work (although some found that the adult informants did not, in fact, have a strong understanding of what was actually going on with young people). However, it can be helpful to get key informants' opinions to know what their position and sense of responsibility is on the issue, and to position you to involve them later in the project.

Written questionnaires

If there is an environment of complete trust and anonymity, carefully developed written questionnaires may yield a good response and useful information. However, it may be difficult to create this sense among the young people you wish to survey. The experience

of AIDS Infoshare, from the Russian Federation was not unusual: "Many of the children used one word answers, instead of explaining or describing answers in detail. It was quite evident that they were far more interested in completing the task quickly than in providing complete answers. Also, we were unable to convince them that their answers would be kept confidential, so it is unlikely that they answered the questions honestly. Several children told us that they were terrified that the director would read their answers, so they wrote what they felt would be acceptable to the adult staff."

Other methods

An issue, particularly with younger people, is their difficulty in understanding terms or in articulating their feelings on what can be an emotional topic. When comprehension or literacy is a problem, information can be exchanged through stories, drawings, photographs or acting, allowing all young people to contribute to the assessment in a way they feel comfortable with.

A Case example

We did a mapping exercise, which included listening and observation and one to one outreach. We emphasized things the young people needed to observe, such as how people spent their time or certain features such as church buildings, taverns/ bars, school, markets, landmarks, etc. As a group of oriented and trained peer educators, we went out into the community to gather information.

The intention was to know what people do, at what time, specifically the young people. The groups also talked to some individuals and asked a few question just to get an idea of what they do in their lives. Ultimately, the data we collected helped us determine who to bring together and just where to get them.

Family Life Movement of Zambia, Zambia

In many cases, local partners found that informal meetings and a conversational approach were most productive, particularly with young people. For example, Probushdenie in Belarus found that "it happened that in the presence of teachers, social workers and police inspectors, the target youth didn't answer our question and showed no cooperation, while during our informal contacts with them they were very open and cooperative." Similarly, asking young people directly if they are/were drug users, or if they want to join the project, does not work. As a local partner from the Philippines learned, this puts them on the defensive: "In one of our sessions, we asked who among our participants are or were drug users. Nobody raised a hand and somebody answered that nobody in the group ever used drugs, which we knew not to be true. And during the rest of the session, some of them no longer actively participated." Be wary, therefore, of using an

authoritative manner with young people, collecting information from them using older people or even in the presence of adults, teachers or parents. A better role for adults is as facilitators, supporting youth in the collection of information.

What works

∴ Use a combination of methods to increase the accuracy of your information;

∴ Use representatives of the target group as collectors of information among their group; this will also help to gain the trust of the respondents;

∴ Use adults as facilitators rather than "doers"; place them in the role of supporting youth in the collection of information;

∴ Use your contacts to access those you wish to collect information from;

∴ Before contacting those you wish to collect information from, determine whether a formal or informal approach will be most appropriate;

∴ Develop a "protocol" or set of guidelines for collecting information and ensuring confidentiality; the protocol should guide those collecting your information and be presented to respondents to gain their trust;

∴ Find a fun and non-threatening entry point to your questions, especially with youth (e.g., general questions about their interests, youth games, theatre, fun and excitement!);

∴ Find a safe and appropriate venue, possibly away from adults and the usual surroundings;

∴ Ensure the personal safety of those collecting and giving information by anticipating and avoiding dangerous situations.

3. Using the local situation assessment to mobilize youth and others to support your project

This last section will tell you a bit more about what to do with the results of your assessment and how to plan in a way that will help the implementation of your activities later on. As you will see, our local partners did not discuss so much what would be a good prevention plan, rather how to go about planning. What is known about what works and what doesn't in terms of preventing substance abuse is well documented. In this section, you will find a box summarizing some main points. Please visit our website www.unodc.org/youthnet to find some further references that might help you explore these issues more in depth.

Use the results of the assessment to draw others into your project

Presenting the findings from the local situation assessment provides a key opportunity to engage various elements of the community, such as political leaders, schools, other key agencies and the media. Many will have helped you in some way with the local situation assessment, while others will have become more aware of drug problems, so there will be strong interest in your results. Capitalize on this interest by inviting support and participation in the next phase of the project. This is best done as early as possible. By giving your partners a genuine opportunity to influence the direction of the project, you can quickly build broad support for your work and possibly benefit from in-kind help (e.g., free use of facilities).

A good way to begin mobilizing is to schedule one or more community forums to present your results and to discuss ways to respond to the challenges presented. Publicize these events fully, using existing vehicles such as newsletters, religious and cultural events, and various media (e.g., electronic, print, and folk). At the community events, consider presenting your data in different ways, e.g., as a dramatic depiction of the situation, or with posters or music. The media will likely be interested in your assessment results, so this may be the best time to introduce them to your initiative. Harmony from the Russian Federation found that "the editorial staff of the regional radio of child and youth programmes willingly agreed to participate in the seminar and to create a youth radio site."

Again, during this phase, there is no substitute for a personal approach. Use your own personal contacts to open doors and encourage community leaders (e.g., church organizations, women's groups, or organizations of youth and parents) to participate. If you can bring the leaders of these groups to personally support your work, they can mobilize youth and parents in their own organizations on behalf of the project, and just as importantly, they may be able to win you support from other key groups. A local partner from Thailand won cooperation from the sub-district head, village headman and community leaders by bringing a proposal to their monthly meeting.

At these events it is critical that you approach potential partners with a "win-win" attitude. It will be easier to engage groups in a broad partnership if you show a readiness to share opportunities and control of the project. Make an effort to understand the perspectives of your partners and take pains to remain neutral in any disagreements. Presenting yourself and your organization as very important may reduce the interest of others in becoming involved, as will entering into power struggles and making empty promises. Also, take care that you don't send an underlying message that disempowers other stakeholders, such as: "OK, you have been working in this community for quite some time, but now we will tell you what should be done."

A good way to initiate planning is to hold brainstorming or consultation meetings (possibly attached to a social event) with strong representation from young people. A lot of preparation is needed to ensure the success of planning meetings. This would include: sending letters of invitation; "community hopping" to inform everyone of schedules and venues; and following up to ensure good attendance.

Based on the ideas generated at the meetings, project staff can develop a draft proposal and circulate it to everyone that participated. Our partners in Lang Ha, Viet Nam found that "disseminating and analyzing the proposal helped to merge viewpoints and increase consensus between groups." Feedback obtained can broaden your understanding of the possibilities.

There is a lot of work and persistence required to mobilize a community to support your project. As a local partner from the Philippines in our discussions put it: "You have to do a lot of follow-up because people will forget—and even if you do the follow-up, they forget!" When they do respond to your invitation to get involved, find ways to publicly thank them, even for seemingly small contributions (as another Philippine local partner observed, "the youth leaders pay for their own transportation, which if you think about it is not little!").

Early in the planning phase, you considered whether it would make most sense to integrate this project with other existing programmes—at this point you may need to make a decision on this question. Project planning is rarely easy, but involving others in the process is more demanding still. The fruits of this approach however are clear: valuable in-kind support, greater potential effectiveness and a project that is much more likely to be sustained over the long term.

Effective prevention activities

In every community, there are many risk and protective factors at work determining the nature and extent of substance abuse problems. Therefore, it is only a combination of activities addressing such risk and protective factors that can hope to address the problem. One kind of activity on its own will not make much headway and there are many that can be considered.

Developing personal and social skills
The sessions should be interactive, providing the opportunity to try out skills in a safe environment. They should be sustained frequently over a certain amount of time and can be provided by adequately trained youth workers, young people, and teachers.

Working with families
Improve parenting and communication skills of parents, as well as their knowledge of substances. Address substance abuse by parents and older siblings in the family.

Improving community resources
Vocational training for young people; job placement services; opportunities to spend free time in a fun (ask the young people! they know what is fun for them!) and challenging way (sport training and competitions, making and listening to music, theatre, etc. etc.); youth-friendly social and health services (through re-orienting existing services or providing new ones).

Availability
Create substance free areas (for example, smoke-free areas). Mobilize the community so that regulations on legal substances are observed. Liaise with law enforcement agencies so that regulations on illegal substances are enforced in a way that is respectful of human rights and effective.

Cultural values
Promote cultural values, norms, role models, media messages that discourage substance abuse and encourage a responsible and healthy lifestyle. Challenge cultural values, norms, role models, media messages that encourage substance abuse. Lobby for the introduction or enforcement of regulations restricting the advertisement of legal substances.

Information on substances
Provide information that is scientifically based, accurate and balanced through media that are accessible to and trusted by your target group. Be honest about substances and substance abuse. Pilot test your activity with your target group to make sure that you are getting the (right) message across.

Involve targeted youth in the mobilization process

Of course, the most important group to mobilize is your target group—young people who are using or who are at risk of using substances. These young people can be difficult to reach. They may not be in school or belong to other youth organizations, so it can be difficult getting close enough to develop a rapport with them. Your chances of engaging these young people are much better if you've already involved them in the local situation assessment in some way (i.e., to help gather or give you information). They will be very sceptical if they sense that you are trying to impose a programme on them. Rather, they will need to sense respect from you, which is best shown by taking the time to listen to them, and exchange points of view with them. Help them understand the benefits of working with you on project development and find meaningful roles for as many as possible.

"It took about six months for young people in our group to understand their abilities and capacity for project work."

DAPC, Russian Federation
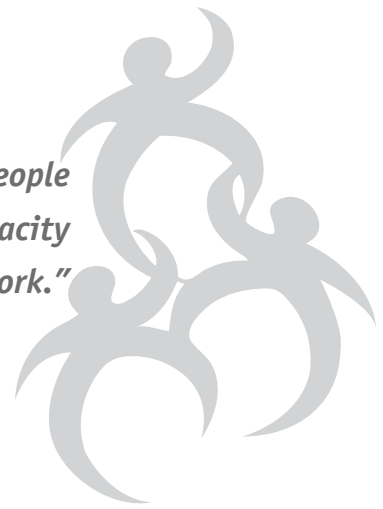
Part of the challenge in engaging targeted young people is that they will likely have different developmental and knowledge levels. Often, young people lack technical knowledge and a sufficiently broad view of the situation to participate with adults in planning. Consequently their suggestions may at times be too expensive or in some other way beyond the scope of your project (e.g., they may want the project to take stern measures against big drug suppliers in the community). Also, planning involves writing, and written information is of less interest to young people. Some youth you may be working with may simply not be ready to get involved in planning.

However, it would be a mistake to underestimate the potential of young people to learn and contribute—given the opportunity and appropriate support, young people will usually surprise you with their capabilities. So, try to find a role for all interested youth. With some effort and creativity, it is possible to match tasks with their abilities and interests (from writing, conducting training sessions, chairing meetings, distributing proposals, and brainstorming activities, to buttering bread and cleaning of grounds and meeting rooms). When a suitable role is not found for them, youth will likely become frustrated and drop out. But when you are successful, the increased confidence and personal growth is easily observed.

A Case example

The youth target group was divided into two groups by age (17-21 and 13-16 year olds) and were encouraged to organize themselves by electing their officers and creating committees for special purposes. A training/workshop on action-planning was held, this time involving the other members of the core group. They were asked to define their community, explain their concept of the 'ideal' community, and identify the means by which they can get to the 'ideal'. Through this, the problems and needs of the community were identified. This laid the basis for the action-planning of activities that are essential to the objectives of the project.

Creative tools were utilized (role plays, poster making, games) during the process. Generally, the group was supported in creating the action plan but the output was totally dependent on them.

Foundation for Drug Information and Communication, Inc., The Philippines

The more that the target group are drawn into the planning, the more likely you will develop plans and activities that are of interest to them and their peers. Other ways to increase meaningful participation of your youth target group in planning include:

∷ Involve them from the beginning;

∷ Consider breaking up groups according to age to help develop plans;

∷ Show trust and confidence in their capacities, and if necessary, provide them support;

∷ Train them on the planning process using a creative, participatory approach (e.g., include games and community theatre) to increase interest and build confidence;

∷ Help them understand the limits of the project by clarifying the resources available (i.e. financial, human, timeline), so their input can be realistic;

∷ Provide practical support (e.g., food, transportation and pay for work) as fully as possible;

∷ Build lots of fun into the process; shorten the planning sessions if necessary and add song/dance shows and contests, sports fests, and outings;

∷ Identify positive, enthusiastic young leaders to attract others;

∷ Regularly provide youth with constructive feedback, so they can learn from the experience;

∷ Incorporate their ideas as fully as possible.

Manage expectations throughout the assessment and planning process

Before you launch into the planning phase, you will need to sort through all those groups who have expressed interest and, noting those with greatest commitment and expertise, discuss roles with each. A good way to clarify responsibilities, and build in accountability and sustainability from the beginning is to formalize arrangements with key groups through Letters of Agreement or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), or something similar. The result is a "support system" that provides a firm foundation for moving ahead with detailed planning for the project.

"A situation of extreme poverty affects youth participation; expectations of target participants become very high."

Kaugmaon Center for Children's Concerns Foundation, Inc. The Philippines
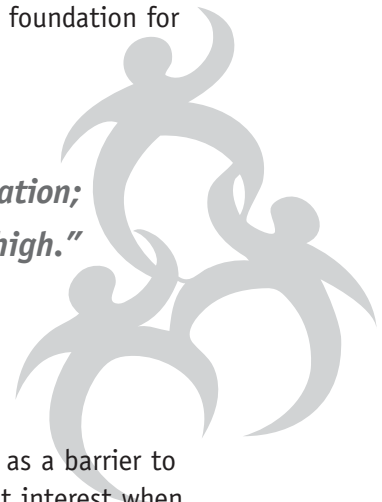
Project funding is almost always an issue and some partners may see it as a barrier to getting anything done. Some partners found that community groups lost interest when it became clear that there were very limited resources for the project. One partner in Russia, AIDS Infoshare, purposely delayed involving the targeted youth because they felt it could be harmful to these extremely vulnerable and isolated youth to do so when the future programme activities were uncertain.

To minimize these concerns, it is helpful to maintain a focus on the issues and the goals rather than on questions of funding early on. But as you create awareness in the community, hopes will be raised. To avoid disappointment (and indeed, to approach your work ethically), it is important to be realistic about prospects for funding and to explore alternate ways to address the issues identified through your local assessment.

As was the case earlier in the process, "transparency" is an important ingredient in this planning phase—being clear, honest and open about your aims or "agenda" and your financial picture will lead to more effective joint planning. Ask partners upfront about any concerns or misconceptions. A commitment to transparency reduces unrealistic expectations, increases feelings of ownership, heightens involvement, avoids misunderstandings or even attempts to undermine the process. According to Addictus from the Philippines, "The participatory process of preparing the proposal (i.e., information giving, critiquing, revising, and editing) spurred collective ownership, responsibility and a mutual stake in the project among the barangay leaders, target groups and the support institution. Working relationships and expectations vis-à-vis the project were clarified, defined and agreed upon early on."

Building a broad network of partners from the outset increases your options and may provide the best buffer against unrealistic expectations and funding problems. As DAPC,

a local partner from Russia observed, "It was not a problem to integrate the work of other NGOs into our project area. It brought many more abilities and resources for all concerned and built local capacity." With this network, it is important to work toward an accurate understanding of what is possible through prevention among agencies and in the community generally. The Centre of Psycho-Pedagogical Rehabilitation and Development of Children in Russia came to the conclusion that "even after establishment of the Coordinating Council on Prevention of Substance Abuse Among Youth, people were more keen to take on one-moment actions rather than move toward systematic work." When agencies and the community-at-large more fully realize that prevention work needs to be ongoing and imbedded into the life of the community, expectations for any single project will become more realistic. This understanding can be developed through orientation sessions or fact sheets on what works in prevention directed to various parts of the community, including political leaders and the media.

Accept that there may be resistance to the project and try to address it

There may be many possible reasons for resistance to your project. Some may be sceptical because they have conflicting priorities or approaches (e.g., treatment or enforcement rather than prevention), because they feel threatened by your activity, or because other prevention efforts didn't go anywhere (and it is, after all, often difficult to provide clear evidence of their effectiveness). Some who are new to drug issues may even be afraid of hurting their image by becoming involved in this issue.

When it comes down to it, it can be quite difficult to fully engage others in planning a project. At times, government offices have rules, procedures, time lines or priorities that make working with them awkward and frustrating. On the other hand, NGOs may be difficult to engage for other reasons, including: being too busy; a lack of interest; a sense of suspicion or competition; inexperience with the issue; not enough information and not enough stability to commit to participation. You will need to decide how much effort you will expend to bring them into your work.

In some communities, parents are a difficult group to work with. They are almost always busy trying to manage both an income and their families, and their reactions can vary from feeling that drugs are not a concern for their child, to feeling that the problem is beyond their control. However, by keeping them informed of their child's involvement in the project (and if necessary, getting their permission), they are more likely to actively support your work. Other suggestions:

∴ Use a one-to-one approach with parents, personally inviting them;

∴ Involve parents that have been already involved in other activities in the organization;

∴ Partner with existing organizations where parents or other adults are active;

∴ Be careful to avoid labelling their child.

You may find your project trying to engage very difficult groups, such as drug sellers, and possibly corrupt police and community leaders. Current and former gang leaders may be difficult to engage, however they can be quite pivotal in your work and it may be possible to develop a relationship with them based on mutual trust and respect.

You may decide that some of these difficult groups are important enough to your project to justify extra time to try to understand their perspective and determine shared aims. The essential message to all who resist your invitation is that, when everything else is said and done, collaboration makes more sense than trying to achieve similar aims alone. In spite of these efforts, you may decide that you will need to proceed without all of the support you were seeking. By accepting and respecting the "lack of readiness" of these partners, you may be able to involve them down the line by keeping them informed through periodic updates.

Remain flexible with your plans

Flexibility is a key to planning a project. For instance, as you begin to organize, you may see that you will gain more support and have more impact if you place your project within a larger community development effort. This may mean adjusting or compromising part of your plan for the benefit of the larger effort or simply for better relations.

Flexibility also means paying attention to timing. When time is limited, you may need to identify and reach out only to the community members that are most accessible and most important in the planning process. In all cases, you will need to strike a balance between taking time to build the necessary relationships, and moving quickly enough to maintain community interest in the project.

Other flexibility and timing issues:

∴ Take care to avoid conflicts with day to day living patterns when you schedule meetings (e.g., scheduling meetings in the business district after hours, or when farmers are out in the fields);

∴ If you cannot take advantage of special events, take care to avoid conflicts with them: "If there is a fiesta, or a birthday or a burial, then you can forget your activity";

∴ In mobilizing schools or teachers, you need to work around their schedules;

∴ Sometimes the commitment of political leaders is delayed because they first want to see how much support you have from the community.

What works

∴ Show a readiness to share opportunities and control of the project;

∴ Be transparent—that is, clear, honest and open—with your aims and your financial picture;

∷ Take care not to raise expectations unduly; maintain a focus on the issues and the goals rather than on questions of funding;

∷ Use assessment results as a way to build a network and momentum for planning;

∷ Involve all interested young people in the planning process by giving them clear information on the project, matching roles and abilities, training them as needed and supporting them as they perform the roles;

∷ Follow up, follow up, follow up ... and then follow up some more;

∷ Show appreciation to those that support the project; and,

∷ Formalize agreements with partners through written statements that clarify roles and responsibilities.

4. Conclusion

When you've completed your assessment and initial planning you may feel there are others you wish you had engaged, or that other methodologies for collecting information might have yielded better results. On the other hand you may feel, as did some local partners, that you would simplify the assessment if you were to do it over. The good news is that it's not too late to benefit from this experience—it's important to understand that the work of assessing and programme planning needs to be an ongoing process. In the words of Addictus, Inc. a local Philippine partner: "The saving grace, however, is the realization that local situation assessment is not a one-shot activity".

These observations suggest that conducting local situation assessments and mobilizing communities is as much art as it is science, and that what works in one community may not be so effective in another. Nevertheless, the practices (identified and summarized in each section of the publication, and listed below) found by local partners to work, provide strong guidance to those wishing to build a strong foundation for their youth substance abuse prevention programme.

How to use a local situation assessment to begin a youth substance abuse prevention project

How to prepare for the local situation assessment

∴ Cultivate a reputation as an effective partnering organization in the community, by doing good work and, wherever possible, supporting other stakeholders in their activities;

∴ Strengthen your position by partnering with other recognized stakeholders that can open doors for you;

∴ Use a personal approach, by phoning or visiting those that have potentially useful information;

∴ Employ a "give and take" approach, by offering to further share information gained through your investigation (obviously, within the limits of confidentiality!);

∴ Ensure that stakeholders in the community know about your assessment and understand your work, by clarifying their direction and main elements;

:: Ensure that you have the capacity to do the assessment, through some combination of training (particularly for the youth) and partnering with stakeholders with proven experience in this area.

How to conduct the local situation assessment

:: Use a combination of methods to increase the accuracy of your information;

:: Use representatives of the target group as collectors of information among their group; this will also help to gain the trust of the respondents;

:: Use adults as facilitators rather than "doers"; place them in the role of supporting youth in the collection of information;

:: Use your contacts to access those you wish to collect information from;

:: Before contacting those you wish to collect information from, determine whether a formal or informal approach will be most appropriate;

:: Develop a "protocol" or set of guidelines for collecting information and ensuring confidentiality; the protocol should guide those collecting your information and be presented to respondents to gain their trust;

:: Find a fun and non-threatening entry point to your questions, especially with youth (e.g., general questions about their interests, youth games, theatre, fun and excitement!);

:: Find a safe and appropriate venue, possibly away from adults and the usual surroundings;

:: Ensure the personal safety of those collecting and giving information by anticipating and avoiding dangerous situations.

How to use the local situation assessment to mobilize youth and others to support your project

:: Show a readiness to share opportunities and control of the project;

:: Be transparent—that is, clear, honest and open—with your aims and your financial picture;

:: Take care not to raise expectations unduly; maintain a focus on the issues and the goals rather than on questions of funding;

:: Use assessment results as a way to build a network and momentum for planning;

:: Involve all interested young people in the planning process by giving them clear information on the project, matching roles and abilities, training them as needed and supporting them as they perform the roles;

:: Follow up relentlessly and show appreciation to those that support the project; and,

:: Formalize agreements with partners through written statements that clarify roles and responsibilities.

Annex I

The project and the methodology

The project

The UNDCP/WHO Global Initiative on the Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse ("Global Initiative" for short) is a collaboration between the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, formerly UNDCP) and approximately 100 community based organizations in Belarus, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zambia.

This publication is the first of a series arising from the Global Initiative, each providing good practice ideas on a particular aspect of community youth substance abuse prevention. This publication focuses on using a local situation assessment as the basis of planning a youth prevention project, involving youth and building community support.

The Global Initiative as a whole has two objectives:

∴ To mobilize communities to take action to prevent substance abuse among their young people; and,

∴ To identify good practices in this field.

To achieve the first objective, the project identified approximately 100 organizations experienced in community based social development work in the eight countries from three different regions mentioned above. These local partners were trained on how to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate community based activities for the prevention of substance abuse among young people, including how to undertake a local situation assessment. Subsequently, the local partners were invited to undertake such an assessment and on its basis develop a proposal for the prevention of substance abuse among the youth of their communities. The proposals were reviewed and discussed and a grant was provided to the local partners for them to implement the activities.

To achieve the second objective, the Global Initiative has organized meetings among the representatives of the local partners for them to share their experience in implementing a particular aspect of their prevention activities and identify good practice that might

be useful for other community based organizations worldwide. This publication is the result of the first of these processes, as described more in detail below, focusing on the aspect of using a local situation assessment to plan a community based substance abuse prevention response.

The methodology

Best practice development is a common activity in the field of substance abuse prevention. Most often, best practice guidelines are based on a systematic review of scientific programme evaluations. While this is an important form of knowledge, this method can miss or misinterpret what is going on when studying people, their activities, and their complex relationships. Therefore, this project chose to use a method that systematically draws knowledge from those with hands-on experience conducting local assessments in "real world" settings.

A few months into the beginning of the prevention activities of our local partners, we sent them a self-evaluation instrument (see annex III) for them to document what their experience had been in undertaking a local situation assessment and in planning a prevention project. Partners were encouraged to involve as many project team members as possible in the completion of the instrument, to be concrete with their responses and to use examples whenever possible.

All completed self-evaluation instruments were translated, analyzed and synthesized and one representative from each partner was invited to attend a meeting to further analyze the findings from the self-evaluation instruments. A regional workshop was held in Moscow, Russia for the local partners from Belarus and the Russian Federation, another regional workshop was held in Pretoria, South Africa for the local partners from South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia; finally, national workshops were held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, Manila, Philippines, and Bangkok, Thailand.

Workshop agendas emphasized participation, including:

∷ Brief presentations on defining terms and on the information already provided through the self evaluation instruments;

∷ Telling structured stories focusing on one of five areas of the investigation;

∷ Participating in small group dialogues with the story teller;

∷ Role playing, or otherwise depicting a good practice; and,

∷ On the basis of these activities, generating best practice statements for each area of investigation.

The Story-Dialogue Method (J Feather and R Labonte, 1996) was the main tool used in the workshop to generate ideas and insights. This method was chosen because it provides a framework for community practitioners to share and get feedback on their

experiences, and to gain an understanding of prevention activities and all the decisions that go into them. Stories can be helpful in better understanding the complexities of what is going on and in examining such questions as, "What? Why? How? What does this mean?" By adding opportunities for reflection, dialogue and role playing of practices, the workshops moved from a close examination of particular stories to a broader understanding of what works generally, and why.

The publication contents are based on the completed self-evaluation forms received; and, the best practice statements and the stories generated at the workshops.

Limitations

Although the ideas found in the publication are drawn from the experiences of a great number of projects operating in diverse cultures and circumstances, it is not possible to say that the ideas and insights presented in this publication will apply to groups in other communities. Further, because English was the operating language for the project, information generated from many of the projects required translation, and it is possible that some of the ideas presented by local partners were lost in the translation.

The publication is not intended as a technical manual presenting step by step "how to" information on conducting local assessments and mobilizing communities. Those interested in these and other types of references are invited to visit the website of the UNODC Global Youth Network www.unodc.org/youthnet and of WHO http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/en/.

References

Labonté, Ronald N, Feather, Joan (1996), *Handbook on using stories in health promotion practice,* Health Canada, Ottawa, 1996.

WHO (2000), *Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse: A Workbook For Project Operators,* WHO/MSD/MDP/00.17, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2000.

WHO (2000), *Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse: A Facilitator Guide,* WHO/MSD/MDP/00.18, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2000.

Annex II

The workshops, the participants, our local partners

FIRST EXPERIENCE SHARING MEETING FOR THE PHILIPPINES
10–13 June 2003, Manila, Philippines

Representatives of local partners

Mr Fernando "Tots" P Rico	Addictus-Phils Inc.
Ms Julie Itaas	Bidlisiw Foundation, Inc.
Ms Cerila B Salibio	Childhope Asia Philippines, Inc.
Ms Arceli Omberga	Foundation for Adolescent Development, Inc.
Mr Dennis Baceda	Foundation for Drug Information and Communication, Inc.
Ms Marilou Batayola	Higala Association, Inc.
Ms Ruth Montojo	Kahayag Foundation, Inc.
Ms Evelyn S. Galang	Kapitran Komunidad People's Coalition (KKPC)
Ms Faustina Carreon	Kaugmaon Center for Children's Concerns Foundation, Inc.
Mr Job E. Saramago	Kauswagan Community Social and Development Center
Ms Anita Morales	Metsa Foundation, Inc.
Mr Marvin Capco	Red Cross Youth Department, The National Philippine Red Cross

Observers

Ms Lilia Dulay	Chief, Preventive Education, Training and Information Division, Dangerous Drugs Board
Mr Masakuza Kawabe	Technical Officer, Prevention of Substance Abuse, WHO
Ms Cheril Rabanillo	Director, PHILCADSA

Secretariat

Mr Marco Ambrazado	Philippine Red Cross National Youth Council
Ms Giovanna Campello	UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit, Vienna
Ms Nadia Gasbarrini	UNODC Regional Office for Belarus and Russia, Moscow
Mr Rustom Mariono	Philippine Red Cross National Youth Council
Mr Romeo "The Magnificent" S. Orilla	Philippine National Red Cross
Mr Gary Roberts	Canadian Center on Substance Abuse
Ms Katie Walker	UNODC Country Office, Hanoi

FIRST EXPERIENCE SHARING MEETING FOR VIET NAM

23-26 September 2002, Hanoi, Viet Nam

Representatives of local partners

Mr Doan Xuan Hieu	Hai Phong Provincial Youth Union
Ms Nguyen Thanh Huyen	Ha Noi Provincial Youth Union
Mr Tran Hong Quan	An Lac Commune, Ho Chi Minh City
Mr Nguyen Ngoc Toan	Son La Provincial Youth Union
Mr Pham Hong Thai	Nghe An Provincial Youth Union
Mr Hoang Van Toan	Moc Chau Commune, Son La
Mr Pham Quoc Dong	Du Hang Keng Commune, Hai Phong
Mr Nguyen Van Phuc	Le Mao Commune, Nghe An
Ms Bui Ha Thu	Thanh Xuan Trung Commune, Ha Noi
Mr Nguyen Trung Thanh	Nghe An Provincial Youth Union
Mr Nguyen Thanh Phong	Phu Nhuan Commune, Ho Chi Minh City
Mr Tran Xuan Tue	Phong Lai Commune, Son La
Mr Vu Xuan Hieu	Hung Vuong Commune, Hai Phong
Mr Nguyen Tue Vinh	Lang Ha Commune, Ha Noi
Mr Nguyen Ngoc Rang	Ho Chi Minh City Provincial Youth Union

Observers

Sr Pol Col Bui Xuan Bien	Director, Standing Office of Drugs Control
Ms Margaret Sheehan	Health Promotion Officer, WHO Hanoi
Ms Nguyen Minh Tan	Central Office, Viet Nam Youth Union

Secretariat

Mr Peter Lunding   UNODC Consultant
Ms Nguyen Thi Bich Tam   LaDeCen Development Training Centre
Ms Ha Thi Tuyet Nhung   LaDeCen Development Training Centre
Ms Katie Walker   UNODC Country Office, Hanoi

FIRST EXPERIENCE SHARING MEETING FOR THAILAND

5-8 August 2002, Bangkok, Thailand

Representatives of local partners

Ms Sunant Ittirattana   Duang Prateep Foundation
Ms Tanom Butpradit   Chaiprukmala Community
Mr Somwang Peungkuson   Chorake Chop Community
Ms Chochat Ringrod   IOGTT
Ms Duangkae Buaprakone   Makam Pom
Mr Tanawat Tamrongcharoenkul   Pladao (Kon Kraud)
Ms Nisita Panyaporn   Institute of Juvenile Justice
Ms Srisom Malaitong   Buddha Kaset
Ms Sarinya Singtongwan   TYAP
Mr Chartrat Kruahong   Indochina Intersection Development Institute
Ms Banjit Sairokam   Hug Muang Nan Foundation
Mr Wanchai Srinatom   Seka School
Mr Chaiwat Ngamjit   Takop Pa Group

Observers

Mr Pornsivid Varavan   Office on Narcotics Control Board

Secretariat

Ms Nontathorn Chaipech   Thai Red Cross
Ms Nisarat Wangchumtong   Thai Red Cross
Mr Rapeepun Jameonreong   Thai Red Cross
Ms Katie Walker   UNODC Country Office, Hanoi

FIRST EXPERIENCE SHARING MEETING FOR BELARUS AND RUSSIA

29 July-1 August 2002, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

Representatives of local partners

Belarus

Ms Natalia Tarasyuk	Gomel Regional Health Centre
Ms Ljudmila Shabalina	Regional Narcological Dispensary
Ms Marina Prokopenkova	Gomel Medical Institute
Ms Alla Kravzova	NGO "Doverje"
Ms Galina Stasevic	Brest City Health Centre
Ms Natalja Dunaevskaja	Centre Of Social Assistance To Creative Youth "Intelligence"
Mr Andrey Cekac	Republican Health Centre
Mr Ivan Tarashkevic	Minsk City Health Centre
Ms Lena Grigoreva	Republican Organization "Probushdenje"
Ms Natalja Nemkevic	League Of Youth Voluntary Service
Ms Alla Dergay	Youth Educational Centre "POST"
Ms Ekaterina Zelenkovskaya	Centre "Hope And Recovery"
Mr Valerij Bodnar	BANT—Belarussian Association of Non-Governmental Television
Ms Ljudmila Bliznjuk	Belorussian Association of UNESCO Clubs
Ms Valentina Savizskaja	Civic Women's Union "Uliana"
Ms Tatiana Yushprach	NGO "The Real World"

Russia

Ms Natalia Sirota	Russian Charitable Foundation "Nan-No to Alcoholism and Drugs"
Ms Irina Krushkova	AIDSInfoshare
Mr Yuri Cernousov	Youth Organization "Prospekt Mira"
Ms Elisaveta Dzirikova	Charitable Centre "Compassion"
Mr Vladimir Zaretskij	Institute Of Pedagogical Innovations
Mr Aleksandr Bulatnikov	Research Institute On Mental Health
Mr Igor Belaev	Club UNESCO "Optimalist Podmoskovja"
Mr Andrey Gerish	Centre Of Psycho-Pedagogical Rehabilitation Of Children And Youth
Ms Nadia Isidorova	NGO "Your Choice"
Ms Elena Zabrodina	Regional NGO "Duchovnoje Zdorovje"
Mr Michail Grishin	Centre "Podval"
Mr Sergey Belogurov	Centre "Innovations"
Mr Vagan Kanayan	City Centre For Children And Youth

Ms Tatjana Zimbalova	Medical Prevention Centre
Ms Margarita Gripas	Regional NGO "Look At The Future"
Ms Lidia Maleeva	Anticrisis Centre For Youth
Ms Elena Bondareva	Consulting Point For Teenagers "POST"
Ms Svetlana Kochetkova	NGO "New Century"
Ms Olga Ashirova	Foundation "AIDS-Stop"
Mr Soslan Hugaev	Republic Centre For Drug And Alcoholism Prevention
Ms Vladena Dyackova	Support Centre For Children And Youth "Light"
Ms Marina Orlova	Drug Abuse Prevention Centre
Ms Marina Mokienko	NGO "ANTIAIDS"
Ms Tatjana Pachaeva	Union Of Women Of Republic Of Altay
Ms Natalja Sherbakova	Union Of Women Of Vladivostok
Ms Svetlana Klimenko	Committee Of Women For The Protection Of Children From Drugs
Ms Ershena Goncikova	Centre "Harmony"
Ms Ljudmila Olefir	Association Of Humanitarian Initiatives
Mr Vladimir Lasik	Charitable Foundation "Assistance 2000"
Mr Denis Efremov	Regional NGO "Siberian Alternative"
Ms Irina Galjamova	NGO "Pervouralsk Without Drugs"
Ms Larisa Astachova	Foundation "Take Care"
Mr Veniamin Volnov	Siberian Initiative
Ms Yulia Kondinskaya	Charitable Foundation "Siberia-AIDS-Stop"
Ms Elena Duma	NGO "Humanitarian Project"
Ms Yulia Posevkina	Russian Women Movement
Ms Elena Myakina	Charitable Foundation "Garmonja"
Ms Olga Zaporozhez	Baykal Women Union "Angara"

Secretariat

Mr Grigory Latyshev	Drug Abuse Prevention Centre
Mr Dmitry Rechnov	Drug Abuse Prevention Centre
Mr Denis Kamaldinov	NGO "Humanitarian project"
Mr Gennady Roshchupkin	UNODC Moscow
Ms Nadia Gasbarrini	UNODC Moscow

FIRST EXPERIENCE SHARING MEETING FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

15-18 July 2002, Pretoria, South Africa

Representatives of local partners

South Africa

Mr Solly Rakale	Alcohol and Drug Concerns—Kholofelo Hope Centre
Ms Khanyisile Twala	Elim Clinic—Tembisa Office
Ms Patricia Ndlovu	SANCA Nongoma—Alcohol and Drug Help Centre
Ms Sarah Ledwaba	SANPARK Community Centre
Ms Tholani Mchunu	Themba Trust Project—Youth Camp
Mr Jabulani Makhubele	University of the North, Department of Social Work—Community Youth Outreach Project
Ms Maretha Visser	University of Pretoria, Department of Psychology—Community Unit
Mr Ray Airosa	Youth for Christ South Africa

United Republic of Tanzania

Mr Michael Machaku	AMREF Kinondoni-Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Youth Centre
Mr Stewart Chisongela	Elimu Ya Malezi Ya Ujana (EMAU)—Responsible Parenthood Education for Youth Project
Ms Pfiriael Kiwia	Kimara Peer Educators and Health Promoters Trust
Mr Ahmed Haji Saadat	Masgid-Taqwa Youth Society
Mr Kachepa Mango	Youth Cultural and Information Centre (YCIC)
Mr Said Juma Othman	Zanzibar Association of Information Against Drug Abuse and Alcohol (ZAIADA)

Zambia

Mr Days Mhone	Family Health Trust-Anti AIDS Project
Ms Margaret Phiri	Family Life Movement of Zambia
Mr Levy Kafuli	Kanyama Youth Training Centre
Ms Didduh Mubanga	Mental Health Association of Zambia
Ms Clementina Mbewe	Programme Urban Self-help (PUSH)
Mr Francis Mulenga Fube	Youth Alive Zambia (YAZ)
Mr Joseph Kalaluka	Zambian Red Cross Society
Mr Dennie Wilfred Himoonde	Zambia Schools Anti-AIDS Club Patron Association

Observers

Mr Melvin Freeman	Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Department of Health, Pretoria, South Africa

Mr Gary Lewis	ODCCP Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
Mr Joseph Mbatia	Mental Health, Ministry of Health, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Mr Ashbie Mweemba	Chainama College Hospital Board, Lusaka, Zambia
Mr Siphiso Phakade	Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Department of Health, Pretoria, South Africa

Secretariat

Ms Tecla Butau	Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, WHO Regional Office for Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe
Ms Giovanna Campello	Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse, UNDCP Demand Reduction Section, Vienna, Austria
Ms Chantel Marais	ODCCP Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
Ms Zodwa Mbvubelo	SAAPSA, Pretoria South Africa
Ms Mwansa Nkowane	Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse, Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, Geneva, Switzerland

Annex III

The Self Evaluation Instrument

Introduction

For the UNDCP/WHO Global Initiative on Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse, your project was asked to conduct a local situation assessment that became the basis of your project proposal. This is a critically important part of your work because everything that follows will be based on your local assessment and proposal. So, we have prepared this self-evaluation to help you think about and document your experience in undertaking the local situation assessment and in developing your project proposal. The information that you provide us will be brought together with the experiences of others and will become the basis for the discussion on good practices at the first experience-sharing meeting.

PLEASE READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE RUSHING INTO REPLYING!

Part A

One purpose of the local situation assessment was to help your organization define the problem by collecting information on the extent and nature of substance use and on the risk and protective factors that lead young people to use substances. In some cases, this information may have already existed (e.g., hospital records, treatment centre statistics, and police data), while in other cases, you may have had to collect new information to really understand what was going on.

Question 1

Please draw a circle to show the amount of your assessment that was based on information that already existed, and the amount based on new information that your group collected for this project. For example, if about 75 per cent of your assessment was based on existing information, you would draw a circle like this:
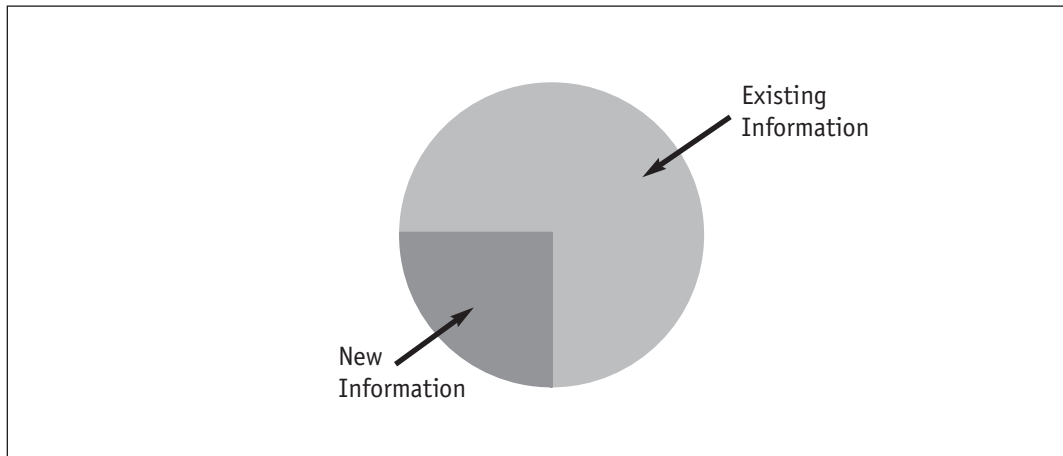
Now, please draw a circle for your assessment.

Question 2

What worked for you in gathering existing information? Why? Please give at least one concrete example!

Question 3

What didn't work in gathering existing information? Why? Please give at least one concrete example!

Question 4

There are a number of different ways to collect new information (for example, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, surveys, narratives, observation, and case studies). Think about the amount and quality of the information you got from each of the methods you used. Which was the most useful ? Please rank them below (1 = most useful method, etc.).

Question 5

What worked for you in collecting new information? Why? Please give examples!

Question 6

What didn't work in collecting new information? Why? Please give examples!

Question 7

The young people that you are targeting can be good sources of information. If you tried to collect information from these young people, what worked? Why? Examples please!

Question 8

If you tried to collect information from these young people, what didn't work? Why? Please give examples!

Part B

A local assessment can also help to mobilize the community. Asking others for information can help them become aware of the problem, and can lead to partnerships and important resources for a project when the time comes to take action.

Question 9

Please draw the change that has occurred in the awareness of groups in the community as a result of the assessment. Use circles to represent your organization and important groups in your community (for example, targeted young people, key government officials, local politicians, schools, health services, media, etc). Use as many circles as you want. The larger the circle that you give a group, the more they are aware of the substance abuse problem. Draw two pictures: one for the situation before and one for the situation after the assessment. For example, the following set of drawings represents a community in which the local situation assessment made only the teachers and the local politicians more aware of the substance abuse problem in the community. The other groups in the community were not made more aware. The teachers were made more aware than the local politicians. Parents were already more aware than other groups.
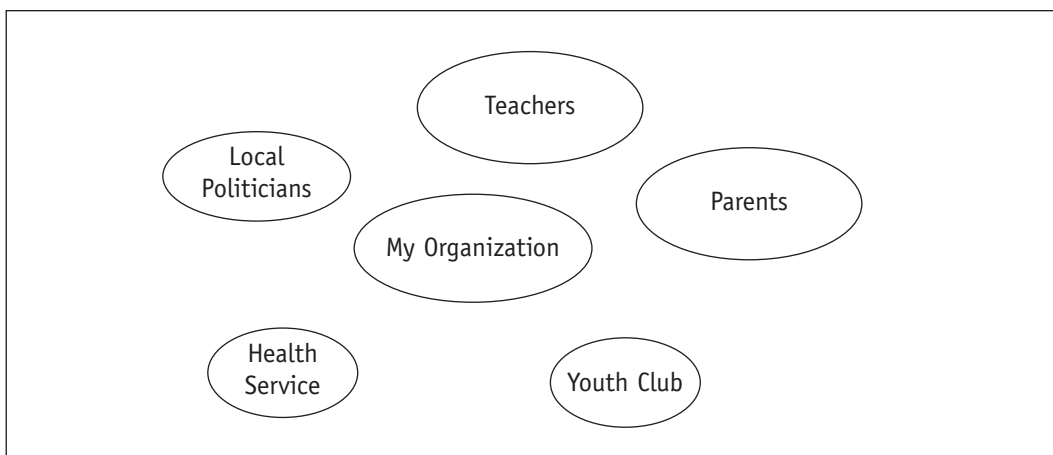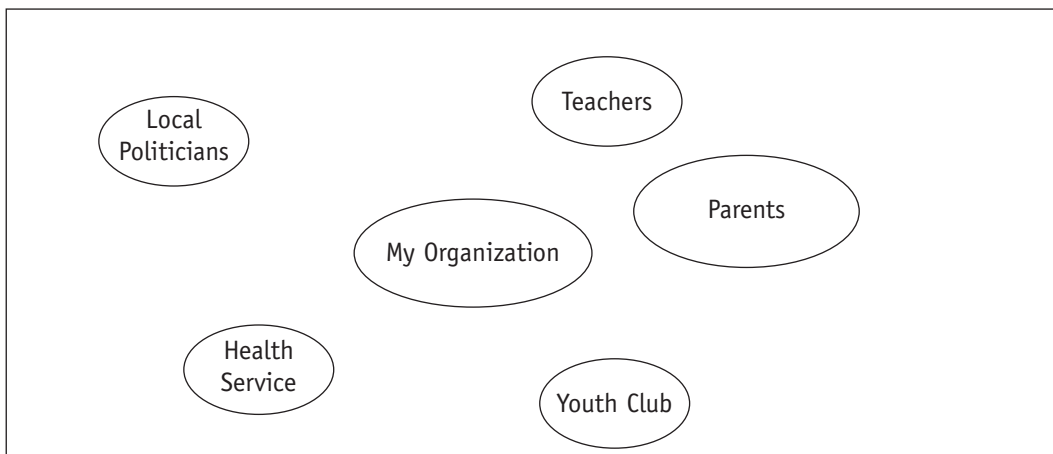
Now, please draw how the situation was before your assessment ...

... and how it is as a result of your assessment.

Question 10

Please draw the change that has occurred in the relationship between your organization and various groups in the community as a result of the assessment. Use circles to represent your organization and various groups in your community (for example, targeted young people, key government officials, local politicians, schools, health services, media, etc). Use as many circles as you want. The closer the circles from your organization, the closer the relationship with your organization. Draw two pictures: one for the situation before and one for the situation after the assessment. For example, the following set of drawings represents a community in which the local situation assessment resulted in a closer relationship with the local youth club and the school, but not with the other groups in the community.
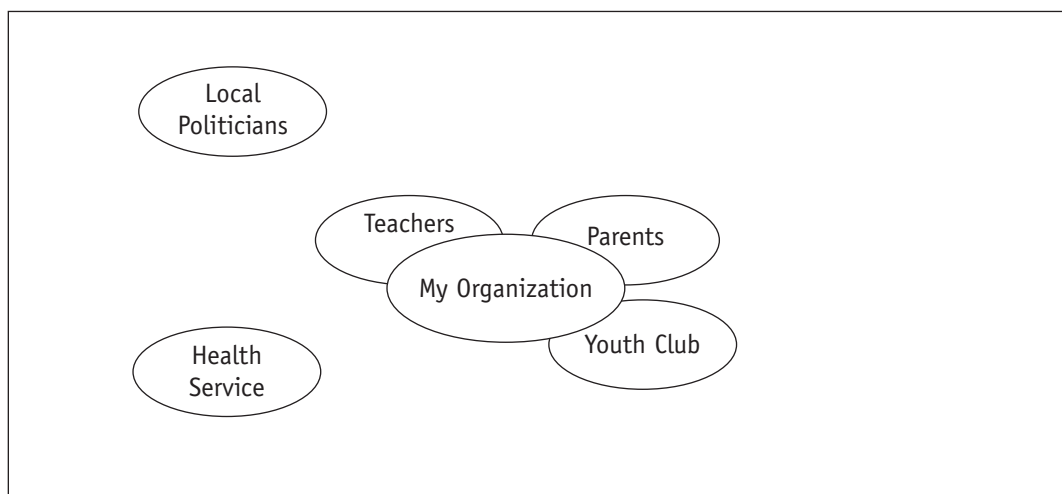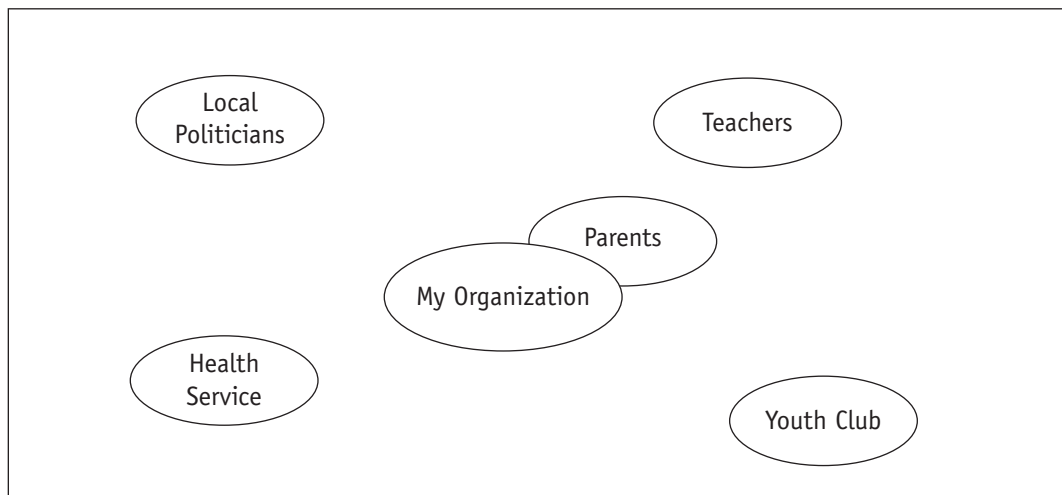
Now, please draw how the situation was before your assessment ...

... and how it is as a result of your assessment.

Question 11

In trying to mobilize various groups in the community to support your project, what worked best? Why? Please give at least one concrete example!

Question 12

What didn't work? Why? Please give at least one concrete example!

Question 13

If you made an effort to mobilize targeted young people to support your project at this point, what worked for you? Why? Please give examples!

Question 14

What didn't work? Why? Examples please!

Part C

Your local assessment brought together information on three main issues: the extent and pattern of substance use among young people; the risk and protective factors that lead young people to use substances; and partners and resources that could assist in responding to the situation. Your next task was to take this information to develop a proposal that would address the situation, involving partners as appropriate.

Question 15

Please draw a circle to show: *(i)* who was involved in moving from the results of the local situation assessment to the finished project proposal, and *(ii)* how fundamental their role was. The more fundamental, the bigger the section you will draw in the circle. For example, imagine that in developing your proposal from the results of the local situation assessment, five groups were involved: the staff of your organization; targeted young people; the regional Global Initiative coordinator; other NGOs, and a local government agency. The young people, the NGOs and the government agency were only involved in the initial discussions. Your circle would look like this:
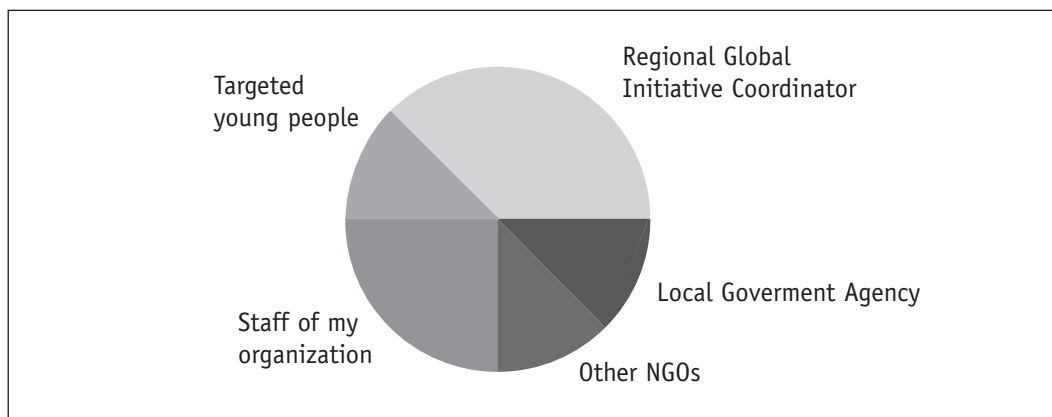
Now, please draw a circle for the development of your project proposal.

Question 16

What worked best when trying to involve other groups in the development of your proposal? Why? Please give examples!

Question 17

What didn't work? Why? Examples please!

Question 18

Again, thinking about targeted young people particularly ... Did you try to involve these young people in the development of your project proposal? If so, what worked for you? Why? Examples please!

Question 19

What didn't work for you? Why? Examples please!

Question 20

Please draw a timeline showing the steps that you undertook to develop your project proposal on the basis of the results of the local situation assessment. An example of a very simple timeline could be the following:
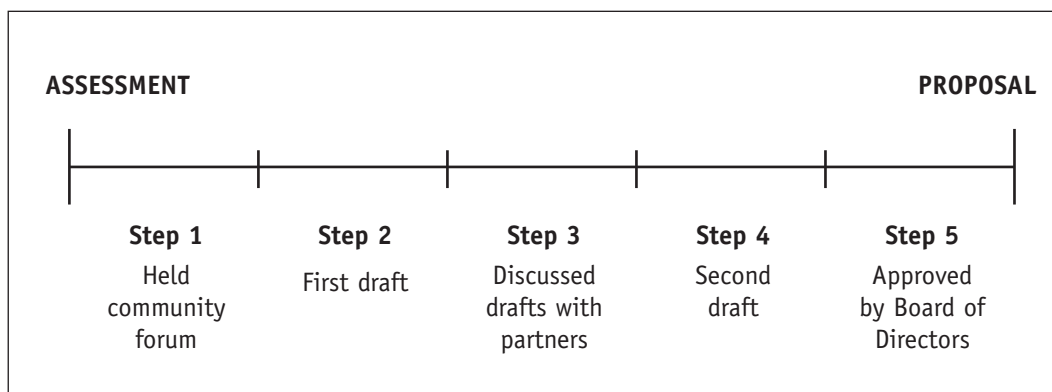
Now, please show us what happened in your case. You can add as many steps as you want.

Part D

Finally, looking back at the whole process of undertaking the local situation assessment and of developing the project proposal, is there anything you would do differently? If so, why?

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