# 8ᵗʰ Annual Meeting of the Grenada Drug Information Network

## St. George's , Grenada

# Information for Drug Policy

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# Summary

- A Strategic approach the drug problem
- Information, policy, plan, action
- How is drug related information defined and collected?
- How to leverage Information (DIN)
- Final thoughts

# Introduction to CICAD

- The Inter- American Drug Abuse Control (CICAD) was created more than 20 years ago and currently serves the members states of the Organization of American States (OAS)

- CICAD's core mission is to strengthen the human and institutional capabilities and harness the collective energy of its member states to reduce the production, trafficking and use and abuse of drugs in the Americas.

# HEMISPHERIC PLAN OF ACTION ON DRUGS, 2011-2015

- **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**
- **DEMAND REDUCTION**
- **SUPPLY REDUCTION**
- **CONTROL MEASURES**
- **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

- *At the local level, countries will have their own national drug strategies and plans.*

# Institutional Strengthening

- **OBJECTIVE No. 1**
- Establish and/or strengthen national drug authorities, placing them at a high political level, with the mission to coordinate the effective planning and implementation of national drug policies.
- **OBJECTIVE No. 2**
- Design, implement, strengthen and update national evidence-based strategies and policies on drugs.
- **OBJECTIVE No. 3**
- Establish and/or strengthen national observatories on drugs or similar technical offices to develop national drug information systems and foster scientific research on this subject.
- **OBJECTIVE No. 4**
- Promote periodic, independent evaluations of policies, programs and interventions.

# How to approach drugs in a strategic way

- **Information**:
  - Knowledge communicated or received about the drug issue
- **Policy**:
  - A definite course of action adopted and pursued by the government
- **Plan**:
  - A method for doing something
- **Action**:
  - The thing that you do
- **Evaluation**:
  - Determination of outcomes or impacts through careful appraisal or study

# The Drug Situation

- – Analysis of consumption and its consequences
- – Analysis of supply (trafficking) and its consequences

# Drug Consumption and its consequences

1. What is the extent of drug and alcohol use? (prevalence, incidence, frequency of use, binge drinking etc)

2. Who are the persons involved in such use (e.g. age and sex of users)?

3. What is the nature of the use or abuse problem (e.g. types of drugs being used; frequency of use; route of administration, etc.)?

4. Why has such drug abuse occurred? Are there changes in availability of drugs, lower prices? Are there socio-economic changes, e.g. increased urbanization, overwork, unemployment, a recession?

# Drug Consumption and its consequences cont'd

5. What are the possible factors initiating and supporting this drug use?

6. What are the resulting social, psychological and health-related problems? Are they acute or chronic? How are such consequences affecting family, work and community institutions?

7. What are the social and other factors associated with alcohol and other drug use?

# 'Epi' Methods

- General Population Surveys
- Special Population Surveys
- Rapid Assessments
- Existing Data
- Key Informants, focus groups and other qualitative methods
- Longitudinal Studies
- Natural history studies
- Special studies

# Drug Supply and its consequences

- An adequate comprehension of the relationship between the supply and demand of drugs is essential to understand the overall market in a specific country.

- How does demand or increased demand of a particular drug affect availability and marketing mechanisms?

- The effective control of substances subject to exportation generates excess at local level, which can bring increasing consumption and further demand.

# Drug Supply and its consequences cont'd

- Explore and analyze the patterns of production, trafficking (imports- exports), distribution, and commercialization of different substances, trying to correlate those patterns with demand' behaviors.

- The analysis should be done for legal and illegal substances

- Aspects related to the supply of drugs such as the trafficking behavior, chemicals precursors, money laundering, organized crime and related problems or harms such as environmental harm, violence, social repercussions, etc

# Examples of Drug Supply Data

- Drugs Seized: Quantity, Number of units and Number of seizures

- Seizures of chemical precursors and chemical products, raw materials and other materials used in the production process

- Seizures of pharmaceutical products

- Areas cultivated, by Type of plant and Geographic location, and New areas of illicit cultivation

# Examples of Drug Supply Data cont'd

- Areas eradicated, abandoned or otherwise removed from illicit cultivation by type of plant and geographic location

- Persons arrested by type of offence, Age group, Occupation and Nationality

- Persons convicted by type of offence, Age group, Occupation and Nationality

- Persons arrested by type of offence, Age group, Occupation and Nationality

- Money laundering cases related to drugs

# An Example: Analysis of Results for a Comparative Study on Drug Use

- By far the most widely consumed substance is alcohol and this is followed by marijuana.

- Prevalence is relatively high but there is plenty of variability from country to country.

- Marijuana is the most widely used illegal substance and in most cases, its use is even more prevalent than tobacco.

# Analysis of Results

- Tobacco, consumed via cigarettes, is subject to more experimentation than marijuana but has a lower rate of current use in the majority of countries.

- Other substances of note include cocaine, crack, and ecstasy.

- The results for inhalants have been the most surprising obtained so far since the prevalence rates for a number of countries were higher than expected.

# Analysis of Results

- There seems to be a clear relationship between behavior problems and substance use such that most substances students with more behavioral problems report higher prevalence rates.
- The same is observed with substance use and school performance.
- Ease of access (4 to 5 of every 10 students think marijuana is easy to get, 14% on average think cocaine was easily to get)
- Perception of harm. Many students do not know the dangers of:
  - frequent misuse of prescription drugs
  - occasional or frequent use of inhalants
  - occasional or frequent use of ecstasy

# Policy Implications

- Each country in the study has an idea about what the main drugs of use are, and what the extent of use is.

- In relation to other regions, the prevalence of use of some of these substances particularly marijuana and inhalants, is relatively high.

- The age of first use estimates are fairly consistent across countries so the specific point in time where prevention programs intervene can also be fairly uniform.

# Policy Implications

- The variability of prevalence and risk factors from country to country will inform the way that the prevention programs are designed and customized to each country.

- Therefore the structure and emphasis of prevention and other programs will have to be different based on the specifics of the drug patterns in the country.

- Most indicated Risk Factors

# How to manage drug related information at the national level?

- A drug information network:
  - A group of people who, representing either themselves or an agency, collect, analyze and disseminate information on drugs for the purpose of monitoring trends, developing policy, and implementing appropriate programs and responses.

# Elements of a Drug Information Network

- A coordinator
- An interactive network of professionals and agencies
- A standardized way of collecting and reporting information
- A network meeting, at least once a year, where members discuss their data in the following context:
  - Identifying existing drug use and drug trafficking patterns
  - Identifying important changes in drug use or drug trafficking
  - Discussing the implications of the data for policy and practice
- Present their data to policy makers and to the general public where possible
- An annual report
- A dissemination plan for important publications

# Some Thoughts on GRENDIN

- GRENDIN is a model for the Caribbean
  - Excellent structure of agencies and indicators
  - Streamlined operation for data collection and publishing
  - Annual Meetings
  - Supports reporting requirements for the MEM
  - Continuous improvement
- But like everything else, there is room for improvement.
- Network meetings are the most important component in any drug information network. It is here that the data are presented and discussed.

# Some Thoughts on GRENDIN cont'd

- There should be presentations from all major sectors (law enforcement, prevention and treatment, research/academic community etc)

- More discussion needs to be generated among the members of the network.

- Ensure that a report of the proceedings of the meeting are disseminated in a timely manner.

- It is important for network members to understand that they are expected not only to report their data, but to bring some level of analysis to the meeting.

# Some Thoughts on GRENDIN cont'd

- An Annual Report

Thank You

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