

National Council on Substance Abuse
Annual Report



April 2008 - March 2009

Introduction

The NCSA is a statutory body guided by legislation enacted in 1995. It falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs and enjoys an interface with several Government ministries and departments due to the myriad cross-cutting social issues that impact drug use.

As Barbados' National Drug Commission, the NCSA is a dynamic and responsive organization with dedicated staff committed to the task of educating, training, informing, providing technical assistance and counselling to Barbadians from all walks of life on the complexities of drug and alcohol abuse. The NCSA is an important national institution that has a critical role to play in safeguarding the future human potential of Barbados by discouraging and preventing drug use and its attendant behaviours such as crime, violence, homelessness and risky sexual activity that may lead to HIV/AIDS. As the lead agency on drug abuse, it must remain abreast of global drug trends and patterns of use so that it remains on the cutting edge of the discipline of drug prevention and drug addiction. There must be continuous staff training in these areas to allow the NCSA to fulfil its mandate effectively.

In Barbados, drugs play a role in our daily lives from our simple use of caffeine, nicotine and alcohol to prescription and

over-the-counter drugs, and to other dangerous and illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin and ecstasy. All drugs impact our body and change the way we think, act and feel.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Drug Demand Reduction set out the tenets for the optimal functioning of national and international drug commissions as follows:-

- (a) There shall be a balanced approach between demand reduction and supply reduction, each reinforcing the other, in an integrated approach to solving the drug problem;
- (b) Demand reduction policies shall:
 - i. Aim at preventing the use of drugs and at reducing the adverse consequences of drug abuse;
 - ii. Provide for and encourage active and coordinated participation of individuals at the community level, both generally and in situations of particular risk, by virtue of, for example, their geographical location, economic conditions or relatively large addict populations;
 - iii. Be sensitive to both culture and gender;
 - iv. Contribute to developing and sustaining supportive environments.

Mission Statement

To promote sustained action for positive change in the fight against substance abuse and in the facilitation of drug education, prevention and the promotion of drug-free lifestyles

The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) Act 1995 mandates the Council to:

- a. Advise the Minister on measures for the eradication or control of substance abuse
- b. Advise the Minister on measures to prevent the proliferation of illegal narcotic drugs
- c. Devise, undertake and promote programmes and projects aimed at the prevention, elimination or control of substance abuse
- d. Authorize, conduct and facilitate research or surveys on substance abuse
- e. Undertake or facilitate programmes for the treatment and rehabilitation of persons affected by substance abuse
- f. Manage facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of persons affected by substance abuse
- g. Coordinate or facilitate groups and organizations in the effort to eradicate or control substance abuse
- h. Cooperate with local, regional and international organizations with interests similar to those of the Council

- i. Solicit, receive and manage funds donated by Government, the private sector, private citizens and international organizations for the functions mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (h).

Core Values

- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Mutual Respect & Trust
- Teamwork
- Competence & High Performance
- Equal Opportunity
- Creativity & Innovation
- Responsibility & Accountability
- Open Communication & Information Sharing.

Logo

Our logo represents two hands reaching out in support of each other. The open-ended box symbolizes acceptance, warmth and a non-discriminatory and non-judgemental approach towards persons with drug addictions.

Research & Information

OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure the conduct of timely and cyclical research on the nature and extent of the drug phenomenon among various populations in Barbados; to provide a scientific basis for the delivery of effective drug prevention programmes and projects
2. To consistently share research findings with NCSA Board and Staff; to disseminate research findings to key stakeholders locally, regionally and internationally (as a means of informing policy and programming)
3. To use research findings to guide Programme Officers in structuring, monitoring and evaluating drug education and prevention projects
4. To produce timely publications and other communication tools on the nature and extent of the drug phenomenon in Barbados as part of its information role
5. To consistently partner with local, regional and international agencies in an effort to advance the value of the research process in programme design and development.
6. To propel the NCSA mandate through the dissemination of research and information on aspects of substance abuse through the provision of library services.

The following projects were therefore undertaken by the research department during the reporting period:

Global Youth Tobacco Survey

A draft report on the Global Youth Tobacco Survey was submitted to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Comments and suggestions were received from the CDC, the necessary changes were made, and the final report was subsequently submitted.

“Developing Comprehensive Responses to Drug Demand and Harm Reduction”

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) requested the NCSA’s participation in the execution of

a study involving the investigation of current programmes within Barbados that seek to reduce drug use and its associated harms among persons ages 12 to 29. The NCSA accepted the proposal, and the study was officially launched on July 30, 2008. Representatives from a number of broad-based institutions were informed about the project and its objectives, and their feedback regarding its relevance to their areas of work was sought.

Upon completion of the data collection, a two-day National Consultation was held. Persons from various sectors were invited to this event, the main purpose of which was to present the findings of the study and obtain feedback from the invitees.

Evaluations

The Research Assistant completed an evaluation of the Pre-discharge Group Programme at the Government Industrial School. This programme is geared towards providing psychoeducational training and counselling regarding: coping skills, drug prevention, anger management, taking responsibility for one's actions, and goal setting to the juvenile's interned at the

institution for a maximum of one year prior to their release. Additionally, an evaluation was completed of a workshop aimed at educating the new prison officers with regards to: the impact of substance abuse among inmates; the differences between a prison officer and corrections officer; and the changes which take place during the transition from civilian to prison officer and from prison officer to corrections officer.

School-Based Prevention

Aim:

To engage students in drug education activities that will assist them to make healthy and safe choices, identify risky situations, and develop strategies to prepare them for challenging situations.

Goals:

- To reduce the number of young people using drugs;
- To delay the uptake of drugs for as long as possible;
- To reduce the harmful use of legal drugs and medicines;
- To reduce adverse individual and social consequences of drug use; and
- To engage parents where possible.

Primary Schools

Throughout the academic year, the NCSA Primary School Programme offered six structured programmes to the children in classes 4, 3, 1, 2, Infants A and the whole school via the Life Education Centre. In addition to these programmes there

interventions were also conducted which targeted parents and teachers.

Facts & Issues

By December 2008, 284 class three children (age 9-10) at eleven primary schools had received HIV/AIDS and drug use prevention education through this eight-week programme. The participating schools are listed in the following table.

<u>Facts & Issues Schools</u>
▪ Deacons
▪ Hindsbury
▪ St James
▪ Wesley Hall
▪ Good Shepherd
▪ Holy Innocent's
▪ St Giles
▪ Wilkie Cumberbatch
▪ Grantley Prescod
▪ Sharon
▪ Welches

Just the Facts

This HIV/AIDS and drug use prevention education programme has been facilitated in thirteen classes with 286 class one children (age 7-8). At the end of the programme, the children demonstrated their learning through art work. The participating schools are listed below.

<u>Just the Facts Schools</u>
▪ Westbury
▪ St Albans
▪ Cuthbert Moore
▪ Belmont
▪ Hillaby/Turner's Hall
▪ Hindsbury
▪ All Saints
▪ George Lamming
▪ Luther Thorne
▪ Vauxhall
▪ St Stephen's



Drugs & My World – Voices of the Children

The finals of the third annual “Drugs & My World – Voices of the Children” inter-school competition were held on Tuesday November 25th, 2008 at the Warrens Office Complex. The journey began in September 2008 with the full complement of fifteen schools registering to participate in the competition. By the end of October the judging was completed and the preparations were in place for the finals. This occasion brought together twenty children aged eight to nine to demonstrate their opinions on drugs in Barbados. Three-time finalists and defending champions St Christopher's Primary came prepared to meet their challengers from the People's Cathedral, Lawrence T Gay and Wills Primary Schools.

The competition had three elements, round one saw the children perform rhythm poetry and skits on the topic “Drugs are not Child's Play”. In round two, the children spoke with passion and pride on the topic “I'm Drug-Free, You are Drug-Free: Let's Make Barbados Drug Free!” and in the third round the children participated in a fun



Drugs & My World – Voices of the Children Finalists

health quiz. In the end it was the children from the People’s Cathedral Primary School who would emerge triumphant with Lawrence T Gay, St Christopher’s and Wills Primary following close behind.

Each child was considered a winner and received educational gifts, however the winning school received the “Drugs & My World –Voices of the Children” Challenge Trophy and a “Read-a-Round” 3 piece set of furniture for the school library.

Life Education Centre (LEC)

April 14th 2008 The LEC was honoured to host the British High Commissioner His Excellency Mr. Duncan Taylor, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ms. Meg Munn and her Private Secretary Mr. Ben Muxworthy at the Ministry of Education. During the tour they were given the opportunity to interact with

representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the LEC facilitators and everyone’s favourite giraffe – “Harold”.



Ms Meg Munn & Ms Makeada Greenidge with Harold the Giraffe

On October 10th, the LEC Educators proudly received their certification of competency from LEC UK.

Secondary Schools

Most secondary schools' programmes are continuous, enabling the programme officer to cover a wide range of holistic topics over the allotted time. In an effort to incorporate an audio-visual dimension to the programmes, DVDs which extensively cover many aspects of Drug Awareness and Prevention, including Life-Skills and other relevant areas such as HIV/AIDS, Abstinence, Anger Management, Stress, Tolerance, Food, Health and Exercise have been introduced. This approach has created an opportunity for variety, assessment and improved participation in discussions. Local and regional audio - visual aids are also used for discussion, including PSAs developed by the NCSA and PAHO. These learning tools have been used extensively at the following schools:

1. Lester Vaughan
2. St. George Secondary
3. St. Leonard's Boys'
4. Alma Parris Memorial
5. Coleridge and Parry
6. Parkinson Secondary
7. Princess Margaret
8. Christ Church Foundation
9. Grantley Adams Memorial
10. Queens College
11. St. Michael School
12. The Barbados Seventh Day Adventist School

DANDRA

DANDRA refers to the Dance and Drama programme started two years ago as an opportunity for secondary school children to participate in alternative activities. Encouraging young people to be involved in alternative activities forms an integral part of any holistic programme, and teachers at the schools involved – Alma Parris Memorial, St. Leonard's Boys', Grantley Adams Memorial and Metropolitan High School – are pleased with the improvement in discipline, enthusiasm and self-confidence of the students involved in the programmes.

The students are given the opportunity to perform at their schools and other functions from time to time. On 17th February, the dance group at Grantley Adams Memorial participated in their school programme for Black History Day. There is an increasing interest by other schools to be included in these alternate activities which are incorporated with drug education.

During the second term, efforts were made to zero in on the various performance enhancing drugs being abused and their possible negative consequences as this term traditionally has an increase in the amount of sporting activities. Discussion focused on the reasons why people would want to cheat, not only in sports but other areas of life, the increasing societal norm that seems to suggest or promote the view that the end justifies the means and the role that values

and one's value system play in this phenomenon.

Edna Nicholls Centre

The interventions at the Edna Nicholls' Centre were conducted utilizing a more structured approach in group sessions. Since the groups were small the children were kept together with facilitation being done by Mr. Stephenson Caddle, Counsellor, Barbados Youth Service and Ms Makeada Greenidge, Programme Officer, NCSA. The groups were involved in educational sessions with a focus on highlighting risk factors and promoting strategies for resisting peer pressure. The group sessions also aimed at addressing:

- The issues highlighted by the adolescents re: myths and various ideologies resulting from early exposure to street life
- Myths about the effects of marijuana.

The use of DVD presentations again profoundly impacted the adolescents. Feedback from the adolescents highlighted the fact that the sessions were interesting and that learning took place every week. Some students actually began to challenge themselves to abstain from negative behaviours and to actively pursue goals involving working towards passing their Caribbean Examination Council Exams (CXC's). It was also reported that since the sessions, some children have been receiving counselling for their drug use.

Peer Support Programme

The mission for this year's Peer Support groups is to create a group of students who will be role models for the student body, as well as become an arm of the guidance department bridging the gap between students and staff.

The dynamic enthusiasm amongst the facilitators, students and Guidance Counsellors of the eighteen active Peer Support schools can be felt and seen from the high attendance at sessions, the excited and creative sessions as well as the positive remarks from the Guidance Counsellors.

Over the term, groups have covered the topics of self-esteem, values, self-analysis, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and conflict resolution. Guidance Counsellors and teachers have reported that they have seen positive changes in peer-supporters-in-training. They have noted that some of the students' confidence levels have risen and they have also observed them being more assertive in class.



Peer Supporters from Alexandra School

The students at the Irving Wilson School (school for the deaf and blind) transferred their knowledge gain in the session on Bristol boards to create educational posters. The posters were mounted at the school and were also used as part of their health day Friday, 27 February.

This group is interactive and share many challenges that they are encountering in their daily lives. Negative peer pressure seems to fuel many behavioural challenges along with misconceptions about sexual intercourse and the perceived lack of listening and understanding by parents and teachers. The topics presented to this group are based on needs observed by the facilitators with outside presenters assisting with facilitation of the group.

Some parents have visited and called relative to advice with particular challenges encountered with a child and NCSA staff have been able to assist with counselling and referrals. The sessions will continue during the year, also with a recommendation to hosting sessions for parents and guardians.

The highlight of the Peer Support programme was the hike/team-building activity. Eight-five students, representing nine secondary schools, replaced their school shoes with their hiking boots to trek along the path from St Joseph Parish Church to Bathsheba. Mr. Victor Cooke from Eco Adventures led a very educational hike outlining the history of the area as well as

highlighting the plants and animals. The eager children were put in groups and participated in team building activities and brain teasers throughout the day.



Peer Supporters at Work



Alexandra Prospective Prefects' Training

Programme Officers at the NCSA have formed a drama group, its first event was held at the Alexandra School during a training session for sixty-four prospective prefects. The activity was deemed very impactful and appeared in a full page article in the Barbados Advocate as well as in the NCSA's quarterly newsletter.

Community-Based Prevention

OBJECTIVES

1. To consistently deliver and facilitate drug prevention education to children, youth, parents, and adults in communities across Barbados through structured interventions and programmes;
2. To work in tandem with key operatives and stakeholders at the community-based level in an effort to infuse drug prevention education into social development initiatives;
3. To consistently partner with key local stakeholders i.e. the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development; Ministry of Education and Human Resources; Ministry of Family, Youth, Sports and Environment; National HIV/AIDS Commission; Ministry of Health, National Insurance and Social Security; the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Barbados Defence Force, in an effort to alleviate drug abuse;
4. To involve and engage other community agents in the facilitation of drug prevention education, such as the faith-based community, sports fraternity, NGOs, CBOs, service clubs, recovering addicts, civil society;
5. To utilize volunteers in the delivery of drug prevention education in an effort to expand outreach and capacity-building

Prevention First Club

These interventions with boys and girls who attended the NCSA Annual summer camp Project SOFT in 2006 and 2007 are continuing monthly. The group of thirty teenagers are learning more about self-esteem communication skills, gender and group dynamics. During the interactive sessions, the teens are able to share the challenges that they are encountering in their daily lives.

Sports Not Drugs

The NCSA in collaboration with the Barbados Olympic Association [BOA], the

Caribbean Regional Anti – Doping Association and the National Sports Council hosted a series of seminars for Sports Coaches. Over 100 coaches from various sporting disciplines participated.

There was also outreach conducted with athletes and parents attending the inter-school athletic meets for primary and secondary schools.

UWI Outreach

The delivery of drug education / information and support rendered to UWI students continued steadily through the Personal Academic & Career Enrichment

Programme. Seven students were oriented to NCSA drug prevention programmes within the context of the value of teamwork, volunteerism & service.

NCSA Red Wig Sale

In recognition of AIDS Awareness Week 2008, the staff & volunteers of NCSA joined together to raise funds for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The Red Wig Sale was conceptualised to achieve two goals:

(i) to bring members of the general public to NCSA to receive HIV/AIDS education, in an atmosphere that was non-threatening

(ii) to raise funds for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

One hundred and thirty-four members of the public attended the sale and an additional number participated in the condom demonstration and distribution which took place throughout the streets of Bridgetown. Live entertainment was provided throughout the day by HypaSounds and John King.

The Red Wig Sale also provided the opportunity for NCSA to partner with some of our neighbours who willingly contributed items for sale.

Treatment & Rehabilitation

The remand group has been implemented and twenty two inmates are in group. A total of thirty male inmates are in the drug counselling group.

Affirmative action taken by senior officers, has contributed greatly to the smooth running of the programme there is now a higher level of participation by the inmates.

The Inmate Drug Rehabilitation and Counselling programme has also been incorporated into the prison training division sensitisation programme for new recruits.