

Project name	<u>Youth Drug abuse Prevention project in Nansana Municipality outskirts of Kampala, Uganda</u>
Project description (maximum 3100 characters with spaces)	<p><u>Youth Drug abuse Prevention project in Nansana Municipality outskirts of Kampala, Uganda</u></p> <p>Background</p> <p>Uganda is a youth growing population nation. By 2014, Uganda stood out as the country with the youngest population in the world, with 78 per cent of the total population being persons below the age of 30 and those younger than 18 years old were at 55 per cent.¹ In a positive light, this puts Uganda on a global map as one of the countries with a young population. This in light reflects benefits for the future of the economy, arising from the potentially huge supply of labor as well as large market for goods and services.² The reality though is that is that this demographic structure also comes with a number of challenges which arise from the quality of the youth population and among these include alcohol and drug abuse, criminality behavior and violence. Many factors have been blamed for the increased violence and crime among youth which include: rapid population growth, poverty, unemployment and abusive conditions in the home, the decline in the authority of local communities, alcohol and drug abuse, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family and impulsivity. Young people commit various offences, become addicted to drugs, and use violence against their peers and other people.</p> <p>Many youth in Uganda impetuously engage in certain behavior due to the desire of getting something to eat and as a result of drug abuse and unemployment are always caught on the wrong side of the law. Many of them have resorted to theft as a way of dealing with the social emotional aspect of life such as peer pressure, fit in and boredom. This rather communicates that preventive and protective measure through organized sports need to be put into place to equip the young people with life skills</p>

¹ See Census report Uganda (2014)

² Access to Justice needs for youth in Uganda by LASPNET (2018)

most especially refusal skills.

A table illustrating juveniles as accused/suspects in selected crimes

S/No	Crimes	No. of Juveniles accused
1	Defilement	181
2	Thefts	967
3	Assaults	144
4	Breakings	291
5	Robberies	68

Source, Annual Police Report 2017

Youth in Uganda most especially those in slums have engaged in various crimes and violent actions ranging from theft for instance the controversial gang group known as “Kifeesi”, assault, fighting amongst themselves, alcohol and drug abuse, capital offences like murder and rape, cyber-crimes, breakings, robberies and political extremism. Youth Gangs is becoming a major problem in Uganda and yet has received less attention. Following our discussion with two groups of young people at the UYDEL Masooli Rehabilitation Centre, they shared with us their experiences about these groups. They revealed that youth gangs engage in various anti-social and maladaptive behavior ranging from drug abuse, rape cases (gang rape and this is on the rise in Uganda), stealing, pick pocketing, mal- adaptive sexual behavior and theft, stealing metal from garages, sniffing petrol, drug abuse, scrap from garages, Stealing people’s phones and properties drug trafficking, injecting drugs, hitting people with metal rods and arson (burning markets).

Failure to obtain employment affects the livelihood of youth and puts them in a poverty trap which predisposes them to criminality behavior. The resultant effect of this has been that the population has imposed so much stress on resources and the available goods and services. In the urban and semi urban centers, this has detrimental pressures exerted on infrastructure as evidenced by the congestion of spaces in towns and cities, with increasing slum settlements. According to the United Nation Population fund (UNFP), a good proportion of youth in Uganda, especially those below the age of 24, live in urban centers and 63 percent of in mates are youth.

Drug abuse phenomenon in Uganda

Drug abuse and other substances such as alcohol, khati, drugs and tobacco) continues to pose a serious challenge to health, social and economic well-being of young people in Uganda. Anecdotal evidence continues to reveal that the trend in substance abuse has since changed and may have increased both in terms of proportion, population and also in regions. Uganda has never developed a semblance of a substance abuse status report to date. Pockets of research and data collection on substance abuse also appear in forms of baseline surveys and needs assessments.

Lack of a national commitment normally expressed in policy frame work interventions and Laws can be a challenge in addressing substance abuse and other Narcotics. Uganda signed and ratified the United Nations (UN) Narcotic Convention 1961³. Today Uganda has a narcotic law passed in April 2015, but not operationalized to show commitment and compliance in combating substance abuse. Most services are haphazard and uncoordinated, which has been a recipe for poor delivery and increased substance abuse among young people in particular. There has been no progressive national report has been undertaken to provide a detailed picture of what is happening on the ground in terms of substance abuse. Such a law needs to reflect the needs of the local realities as well the emerging new technology to address substance abuse.

There have been some interventions to address drug abuse in the country. Most of these have concentrated in law enforcement less in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Many of these are located in urban centers mainly in Kampala city, largely uncoordinated, underfunded and NGO driven.

Nationally, law enforcement and policy development to regulate drug abuse has remained largely unattended to and yet this had a potential to reduce the drug abuse phenomenon. Government actions and statements have not comprehensively addressed drug misuse, thus there is a need to advocate for a comprehensive policy measures to reduce SA, but also to protect those individuals and groups, especially children, youth, students, universities and women who are at risk of being negatively affected by SA. The enactment of sound policies and interventions that work to curtail drug abuse in Uganda is long overdue, if we are to address the physical and social consequences caused by drugs.

³ Uganda is a signatory to the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic drugs 1961, Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988.

Youth Drug abuse Prevention project in Nansana

Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) initiated a Youth Drug abuse Prevention project in Nansana Municipality outskirts of Kampala, Uganda with support from IOGT- NTO Sweden. The project was amplified with further capacity building on Universal prevention Curricular in 2017 and subunit meetings at the UONDC in the last 4 years.

Nasana Municipality: Nansana is located on the main highway between Kampala and Hoima, the Road. The town is approximately 12 kilometers (7 mi), by road, north-west of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. This is approximately 9 kilometers (6 miles), by road, south of Wakiso. Nansana is a high-density working class neighborhood however due to the ever increasing population in Kampala Majority of the population is shifting to Nansana making it the fastest growing slum area in central Uganda coupled with high rates of crime, drug abuse prostitution and high level of school drop outs. Population of Nansana division by 2014 population census males were 68411 and the female were 78039 adding up to a total of 146450

Local authorities estimate 65% of young people between 15 and 25 years in the area are involved in petty crime, drug abuse and prostitution with the division mayor suggesting that prostitution be licensed in the area because over 700 girls are involved something the town clerks have refuted as it will greatly exposed their children to pornography and drug abuse. According to police and media reports the high level of crime is attributed to the increasing use of drugs especially alcohol and marijuana among young people coupled with high rates of unemployment.

Drug abuse situation: Wakiso District: Uganda faces a high prevalent youth drug use and alcohol use; ease of alcohol access; community tolerance for underage drinking and use of drugs; lack of drug-free alternatives for youth; adults provide alcohol and drug to youth; limited consequences for alcohol offenders; lack of law enforcement and consistent enforcement. Baseline survey was conducted working with municipality local leaders and staff.

It was established after a baseline in the area in 2017 that out of 197 out of school youth 88(46%) had accessed and used drugs and 77% had used alcohol.

There was a need Support, facilitate and cause community member network to underage drinking as a Task Force to deliver prevention education programs and Carry out division hall meetings and explore strategies to help increase information; carry out alcohol mystery compliance checks. Support youth vocational skills, Develop resources. Provide drugs and alcohol-free alternatives for youth and facilitate active enforcement of drugs and alcohol bi laws. Promote initiative via media. Engage youth life skills sessions. Conduct seminars for alcohol retailers Enterprise setting.

With training from Colombo Plan about prevention interventions and Community Anti-drug Coalition of America (CADCA) there need to develop capacities on how to expand and role out effective and practical primary prevention measures that would protect youth and in particular children and youth, from drug use initiation. We have witnessed an increase in number of community members receiving alcohol and drug prevention messages through villages meetings, and social media platforms. This is being done by community based organizations trained by UYDEL on how to incorporate alcohol messages into their programing and activities.

Case study 1

Sports for a healthier body and healthy society and significance for the use of sports

With the above trend we need to harness the power of sport to help keep young people out of trouble. Many people have it that economic vulnerability is one of the cause of youth crime in the country but we believe that when equipped with the life skills they can able to control themselves even in situations of impoverishment and be able to avoid engaging in criminality behavior. Organized sports that help to equip young people with life skills proves to be an interesting construct with regards to resisting engagement in mal adaptive behavior such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence and crime.

According to the European drug prevention quality standards, sport is considered a recreational setting in which intervention takes place. According to many criminology experts, the most effective approach to reduce youth crime is to steer young people away from negative social activities before they become involved in criminal activities (Hartmann and Depro 2006). Rehabilitation was seen as the most effective way of

dealing with offenders not incarceration. There is need for a balanced approach of dealing with youth offenders. Though some may need to be incarcerated, but many more need to be engaged in community programs that build character, increase self-esteem and develop life skills Millie et al (2005). Andrews et al, (1990) suggested that social development programs that provide youth with positive peer interaction, opportunities to develop problem solving skills and a supportive adult help reduce the risk factors associated with youth crimes.

The organized sports programs that are successful at reducing youth crime appear to develop feelings of competence, connectedness and empowerment among youth Gatz et al (2002). Similarly Diana (2000) depicted that the benefits of organized sports for at risk youth are maximized if programs are skills based, team focused and learning rich. Hirschi (1969) social bonds theory claims that individuals with stronger bonds to society are less likely to engage in delinquency, as delinquency may put these valuable bonds at risk of disintegration. The elements of this theory are attachments, commitment, belief and involvement. Such a theory explains well the context and benefits of organized sports programs to the youth because with regard to social acceptance, research indicates that youth seek comfort from those who welcome them and rein force their senses of belonging. While in sports activities the young people create friendships, develop a sense of belonging and connectedness thus reducing on their involvement in maladaptive behavior such as crime and drug abuse.

Sports at UYDEL and Slums areas: Slum areas increase the susceptibility for engagement in maladaptive behavior among youth. Since UYDEL operates in the different slum areas of Kampala among others which include: Bwaise, Banda, Makindye, Nakulabye, Nateete and Kamwokya serving over 900 youth daily who benefit from our services. Sport is a good mobilizing strategy and was a good a avenue to pass on educational messages to the young people. Last year UYDEL organized a sports gala under a theme “Who said alcohol is fun” and early this year I got a chance to interface with one of the youth who participated in the sports gala and he told me something that was so interesting.

“Before you organized the sports gala we could come at the football pitch with alcohol sachets and also take drugs but ever since you organized a sports gala and talked about the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs we no longer do that, my fellow friends even come to play football when they are

sober”.

UYDEL uses sports to work with young people at risk of offending in deprived areas most especially slums in Kampala under the UNODC sports based prevention program known as LINE UP LIVE UP to equip young people with life skill such as refusal skills, critical thinking, coping with stress and emotions, decision making and problem solving and effective communication and relationship among others. As UYDEL we believe that these life skills are fundamental in preventing and bringing about a reduction in alcohol and drug abuse and engagement in criminality behavior among youth. Organized sports seeks to build resilience for youth at risk, specifically by using sports as a way of reducing anti- social behavior and drug use among young people.

Truthfully speaking sports activities motivate young people to build confidence and extend social networks, improve health, reduce anti-social behaviors, re-offending and develop skills and goals for moving forward. Sports and diversion or distraction: when young people are engaged in sports under supervision, they are distracted from negative environments and under surveillance so do not commit crimes at the same time. We have observed that young people like loitering around the village which increases their susceptibility to engaging in crime and other anti-social behavior but with sports they gather at the pitch and engage in various sports activities thus kept occupied and busy. Sports as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: The way young people behave is largely influenced by their thoughts. Under this young people are engaged in sports activities to promote moral values, discipline, respect for others, teamwork, self-esteem to address the factors at many cause deviant behavior.

Sports as a hook: sing sports to engage young people in what can be called “relationship strategy” to attract them and encourage them to adhere to programs delivering wider interventions. Organized sports activities meets the need that youth have for risk taking, increases the feeling of connectedness, develops problem solving skills, Fosters team work, develops athletic abilities, increases self-esteem, develops cognitive competence, develops life skills and many have found employment in the sports field.

In conclusion it’s apt to deduce that youth who participate in sports have got lower risks of engaging in delinquent behavior than those who don’t participate in sports

activities. All UYDEL centers and NGOs recommend that we substantially employ the use of organized sports for social and educational measures with regard to life skills to ensure that our children avoid taking drugs and engaging in criminality behavior improve their healthy life styles.

Case study 2: Coalitions formation

This project running since 2017 with support Community Anti-drug Coalition of America (CADCA)/INL. The coalitions were formed in two communities namely Nansana Division and Bwaise located in Kawempe division with each coalition having 40 members representing the 12 sectors with the community. Members in the coalition were all tasked to do community assessment to gather data that would be used as evidence in order to develop a proper problem statement so as to effect population change in their communities. The information collected was tabulated as per the individual coalitions and the research finding were disseminated during the coalition training and this formed the basis for developing problem statement, logic model and the Action to undertake so as to see a better and safe environment.

During the process the coalition members were elected to different sub-committees (Steering, planning, community assessment, membership and communication) and each committee was given a task to accomplish

- To promote and advocate for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse awareness and prevention in Bwaise. To develop, monitor, and evaluate a comprehensive and collaborative ATOD community plan, herein referred to as the “Comprehensive Plan”, which includes but is not limited to: Coordinating the collection of data concerning ATOD abuse and the needs programming, effectiveness of local programs and services.
- Designing and submitting the “Comprehensive plan” to appropriate state and local government.
- Soliciting requests for funding from the local organizations which provide services as delineated in the item (1) above and making funding recommendations to state and local government to meet the goals of the “Comprehensive Plan.”
- Monitoring funding amount available year-to-year and dispersing according to member’s vote. To eliminate duplication of efforts while ensuring that

comprehensive and collaborative ATOD community programs are available throughout Bwaise.

The community coalitions are progressing well with a few challenges especially communication among the members and commitment from some members but as the trainings continue they are appreciating the work and role of the community coalition in effecting population change.

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