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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Safety Starts Early: Drug Use and Violence Prevention as Public Security Investments

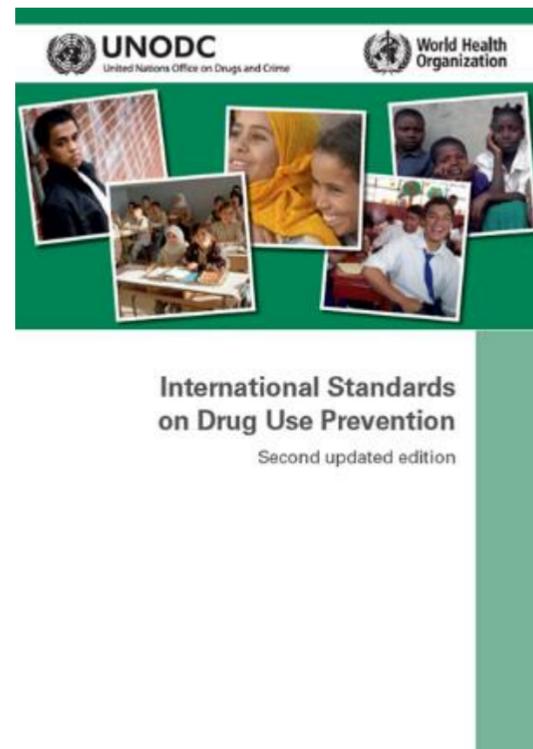
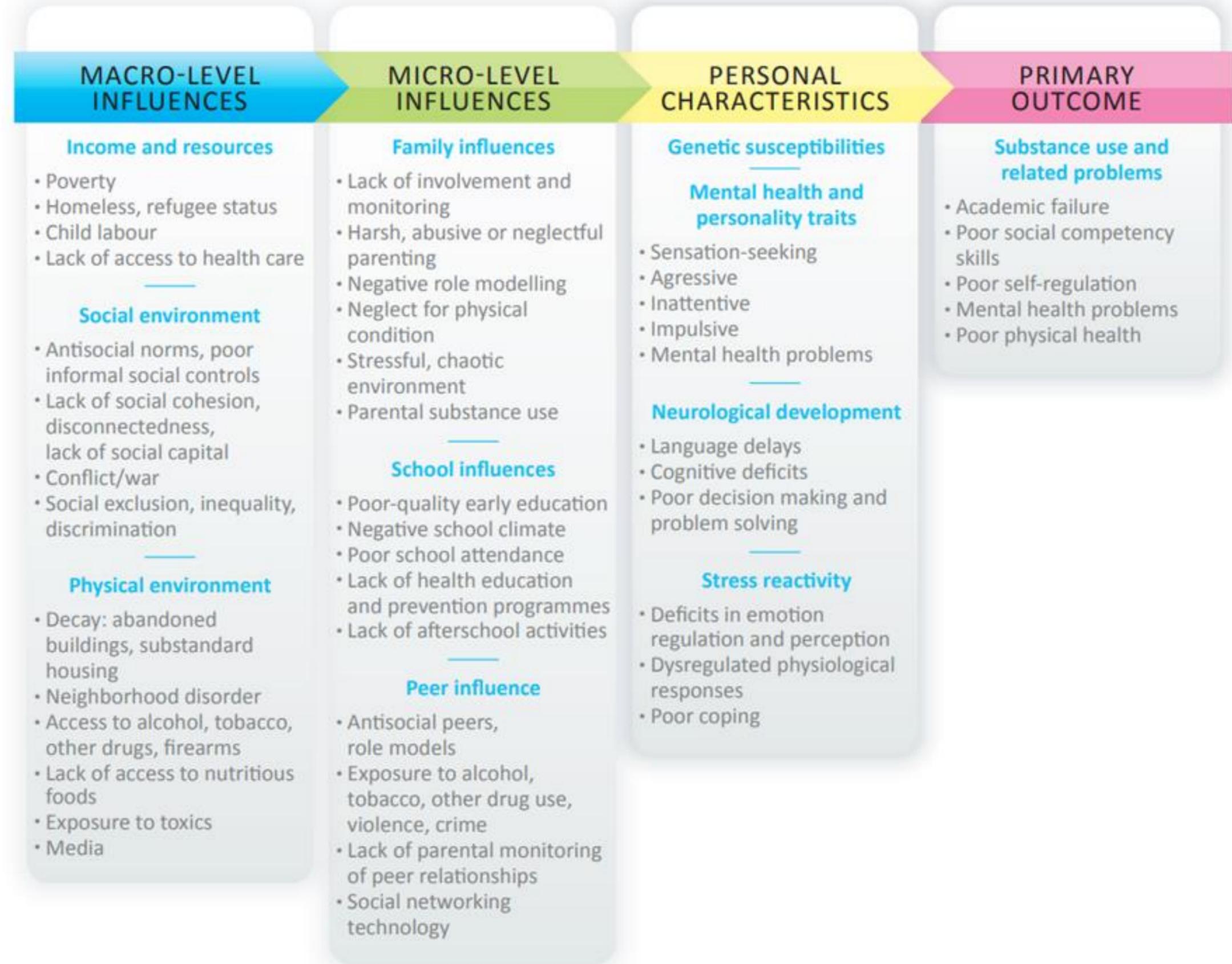
Wadih Maalouf, PhD

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Drugs Laboratory and Scientific Services Branch

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Vulnerability factors for drug use

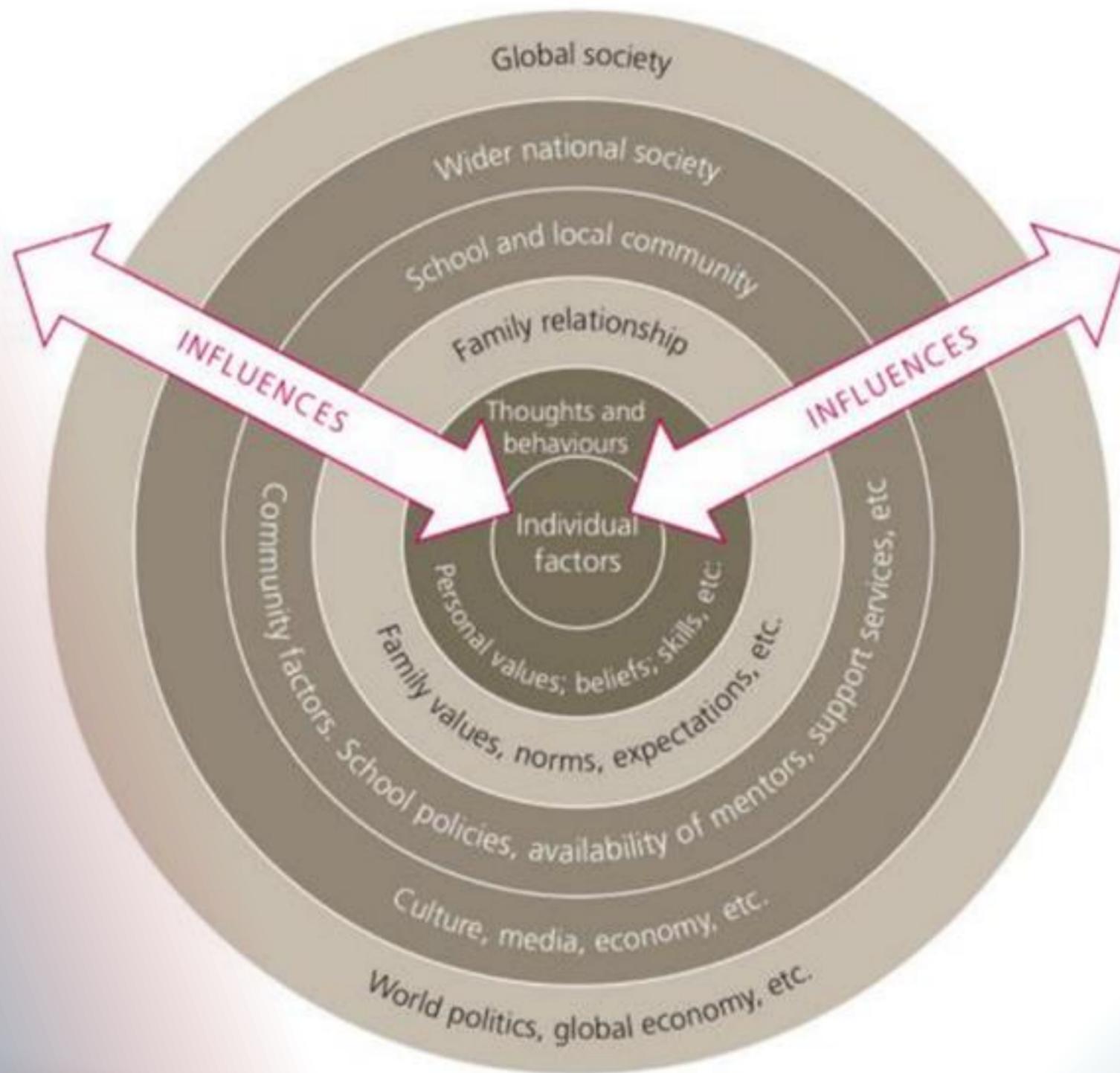


Summary of EB prevention responses per the UNODC WHO Int. Standards

Developmental in terms of age

| | Prenatal & infancy | Early childhood | Middle childhood | Early adolescence | Adolescence | Adulthood |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Family | Prenatal & infancy visitation | | Parenting skills | | | |
| | Interventions for pregnant women | | | | | |
| School | | Early childhood education | Personal & social skills education | Prevention education based on social competence and influence | | |
| | | | Classroom management | | Addressing individual vulnerabilities | |
| | | | Policies to keep children in school | School-wide programmes to enhance school attachment | | |
| | | | | School policies on substance use | | |
| | | | | Alcohol & tobacco policies | | |
| Community | Community-based multi-component initiatives | | | | | |
| | | | | Media campaigns | | |
| | | | | Mentoring | | |
| Workplace | | | | Prevention programmes in entertainment venues | | |
| | | | | Workplace prevention programmes | | |
| Health sector | Interventions for pregnant women | | Addressing mental health disorders | | | |
| | | | | Brief intervention | | |

Figure 1. Factors influencing the risks of crime and violence^a



Ecological model
for understanding
violence

^aAdapted from Ann Masten and Jenifer Powell, "A resiliency framework for research, policy and practice:" in *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*, Suniya Luthar, ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1-29. The World Health Organization ecological model for understanding violence similarly stresses societal, community, relationship and individual factors (see Etienne G. Krug and others, eds., *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002), p. 12).



Structural Vulnerability in Action

Southeast Asia

70–90%

cited economic hardship as primary driver of trafficking

Youth involvement is highest where unemployment, school dropout, and lack of prevention information coincide.

UNODC Trafficking in Border Communities, 2023

France — LIMITS Framework

Key Drivers

low self-confidence, school failure, limited employment prospects

Community pressure, quick money and perceived impunity create an 'equation of risk' for adolescent boys in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

MILDECA / CESDIP, 2022

UK — County Lines

100%

of studied boys had experienced trauma before criminal exploitation

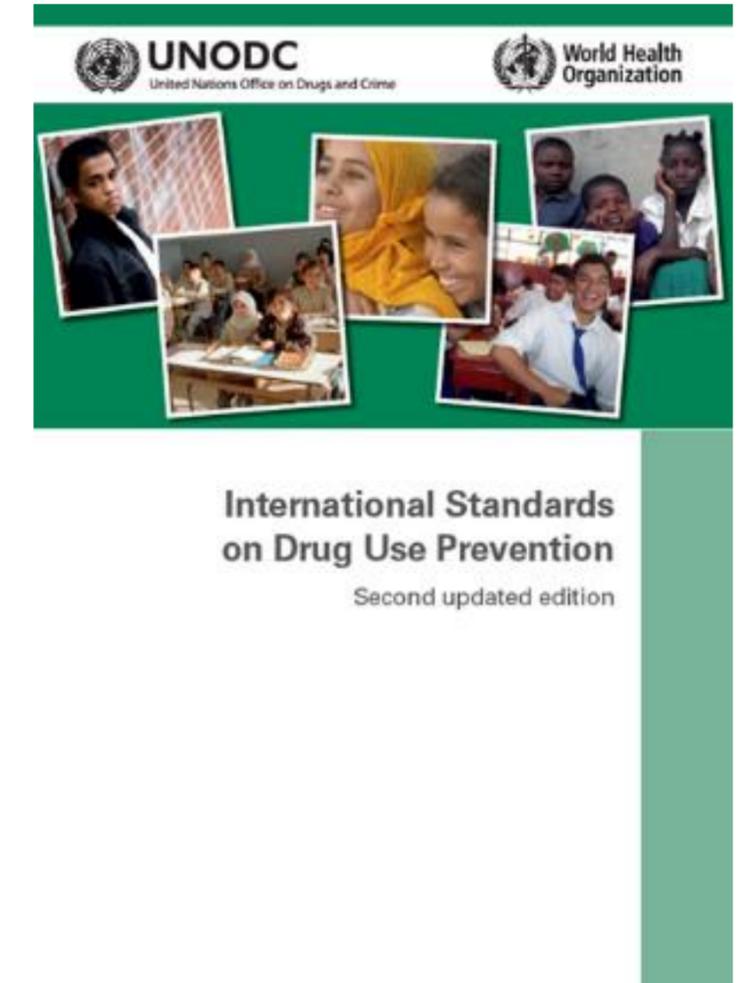
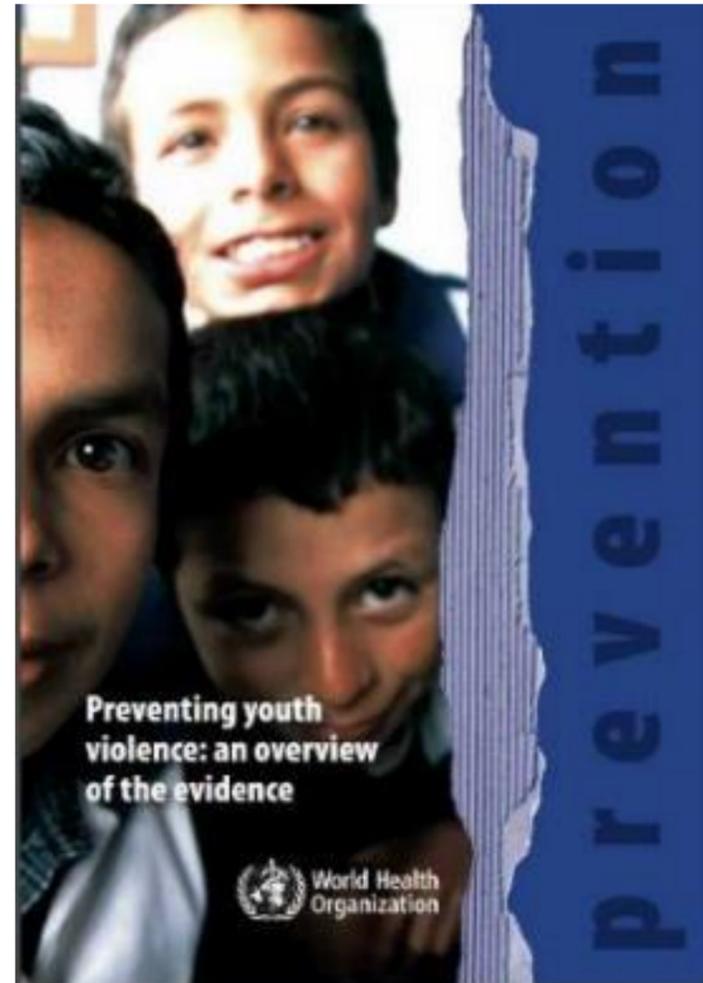
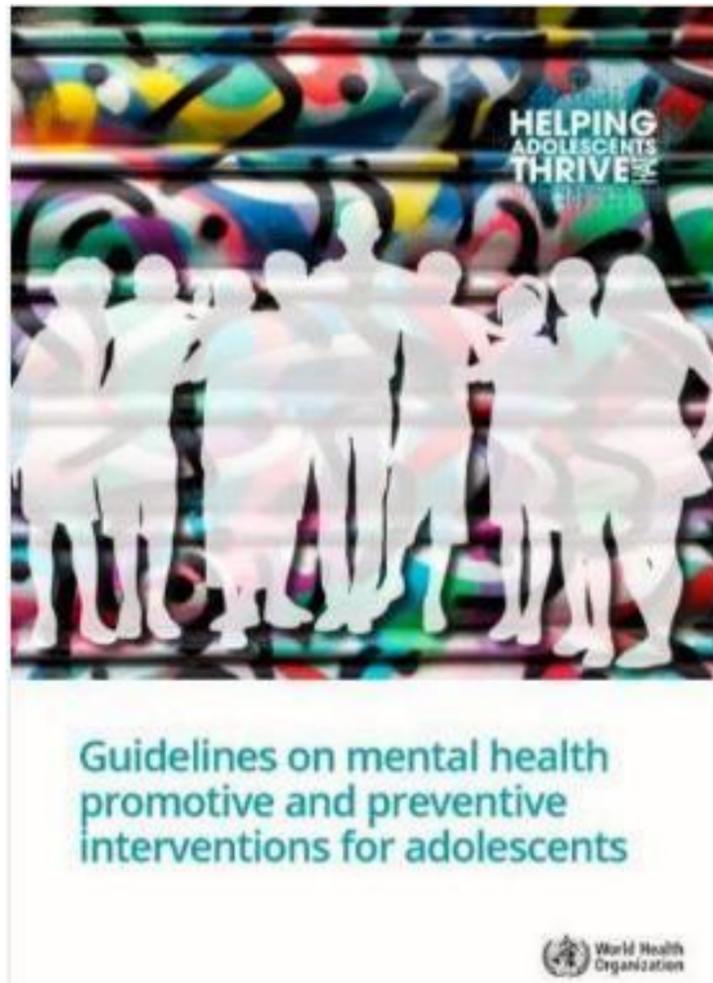
Drug networks exploit young people via debt bondage and intimidation — built on pre-existing adversity.

Dame Sara Thornton, County Lines: Breaking the Cycle, 2022

In conflicts and other context of stress...

- Displacement and instability (Loss of structure, Uncertainty about the future, Constant movement)
- Trauma and emotional distress (violence, bereavement, stress, PTSD, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, survivor guilt)
- Social disconnection and isolation (Family support, Peer networks, Community norms and expectations) ... all shaken anchors
- Economic hardship and survival pressures (Poverty, Unemployment, Lack of access to education, Pressure to support their families)
- Limited access to services and protection (Mental health support, social and other prevention programme, safe recreational spaces, trusted adults, mentors, ...)
- Increased exposure to exploitation (traffickers, Criminal networks, etc...)
- Identity struggles and belonging

Common denominator for many strategies



Is this theory or can it be translated to
action?

The example of family skills in stress
context

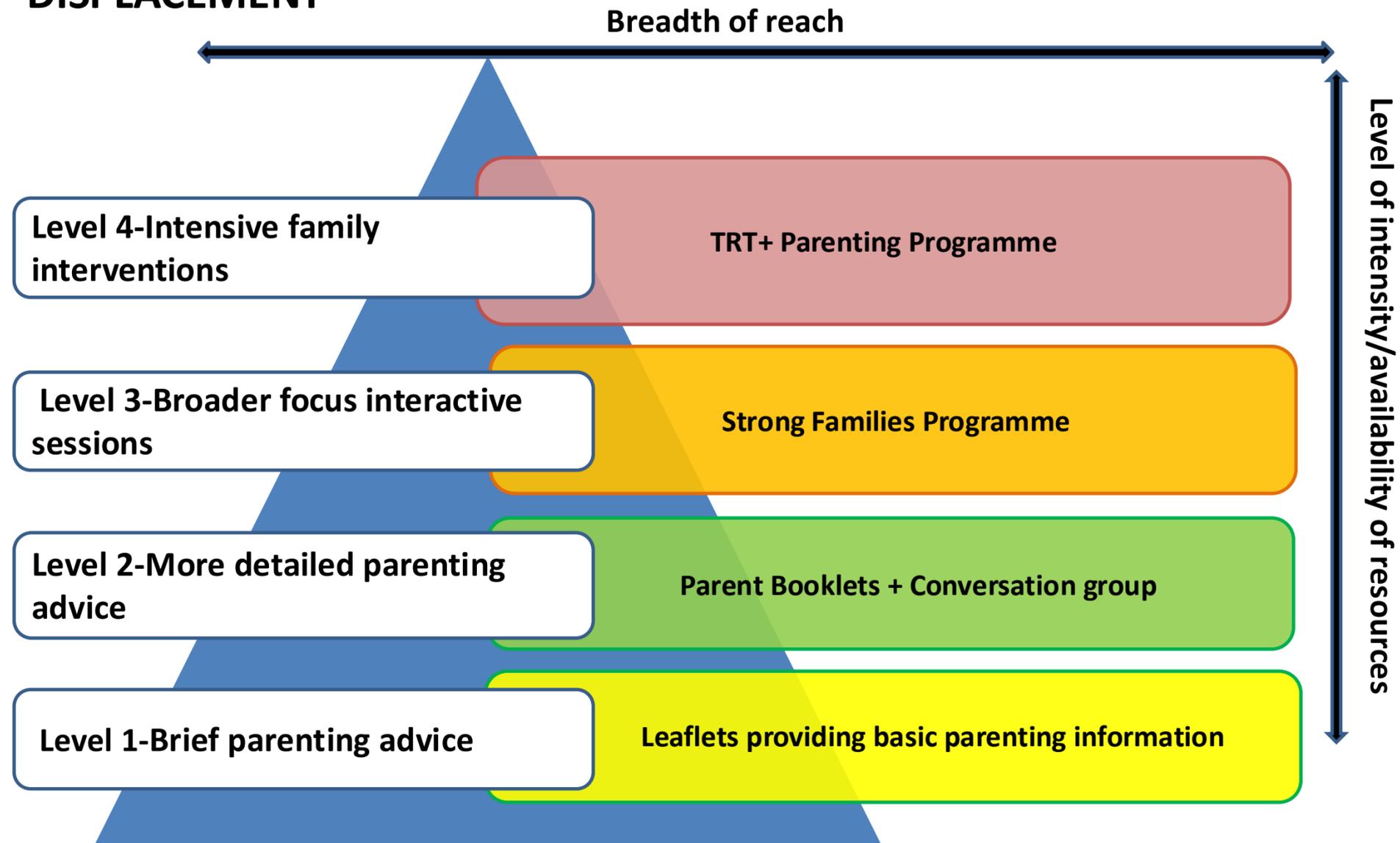




Families are the
frontline of defence

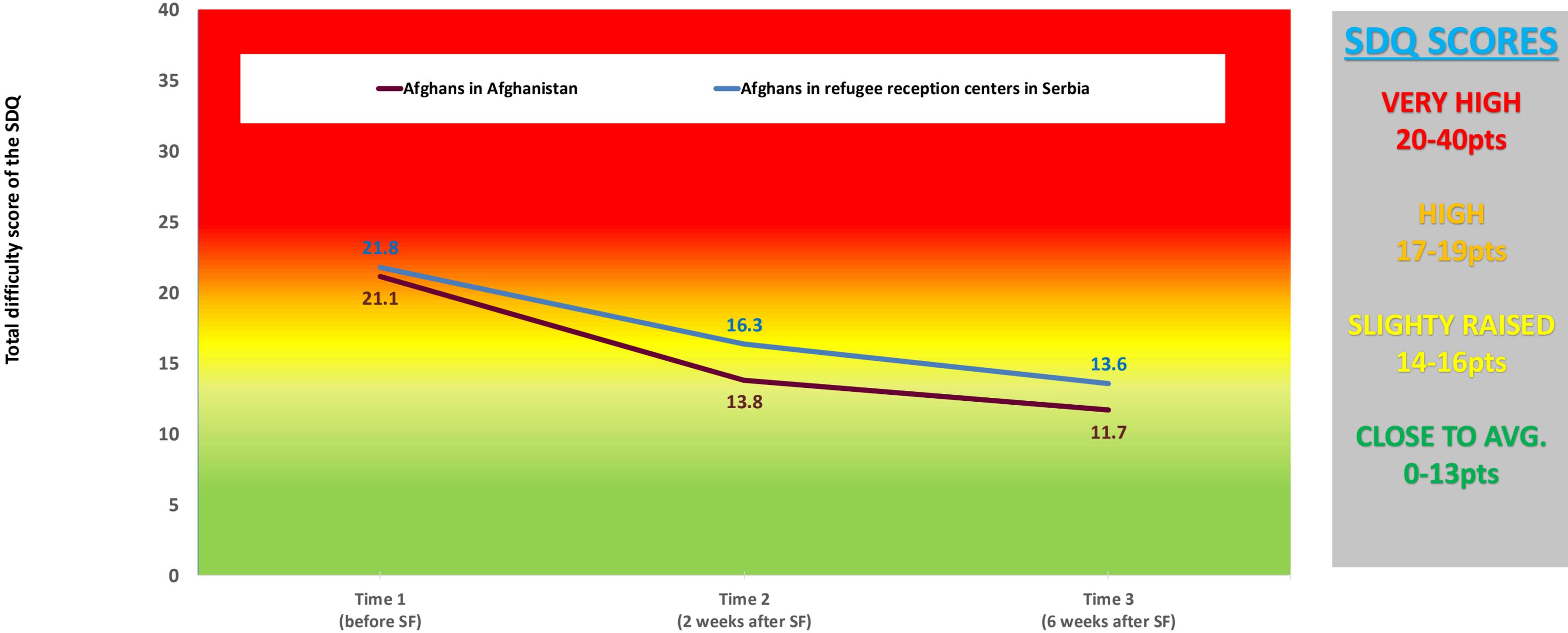
- Primary caregiver-
'protective shield' or
can further
complicate war
stress
- Family interaction
predictive of
children's
adjustment in
conflict settings
- Significant lack of
Family Skills
programmes in such
contexts

A FAMILY MULTI-LEVEL PARENTING AND CAREGIVER SUPPORT DELIVERY MODEL FOR FAMILIES LIVING THROUGH CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT



<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/family-skills.html>

Change in Total Strengths and Difficulties scores for children in the very high or high category in **Afghanistan** (n=41) and in refugee reception centers in **Serbia** (n=9)



Article

Implementation of a Family Skills Programme in Internally Displaced People Camps in Kachin State, Myanmar

Karin Haar ¹, Aala El-Khani ^{1,2,*}, Hkawng Hawng ³, Tun Tun Brang ³, Win Mar ³, Zin Ko Ko Lynn ⁴ and Wadih Maalouf ¹

Evaluating the Strong Families Programme in Lebanon: A Single-arm Study on Family Functioning and Child Well-being

Aala El-Khani ^{1,2}, Dina Idriss-Wheeler ³, Lamia Farhat ⁴, Ali Yassine ⁵, Shatha Darwish ⁶, Wadih Maalouf ⁷



Article

Enhancing Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT) with Parenting Skills: RCT of TRT + Parenting with Trauma-Affected Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Utilising Remote Training with Implications for Insecure Contexts and COVID-19 [†]

Aala El-Khani ^{1,2,*}, Kim Cartwright ³, Wadih Maalouf ¹, Karin Haar ¹, Nosheen Zehra ⁴, Gökçe Çokamay-Yılmaz ⁵ and Rachel Calam ²

Article

Assessing the Feasibility of Providing a Family Skills Intervention, “Strong Families”, for Refugee Families Residing in Reception Centers in Serbia [†]

Aala El-Khani ¹, Karin Haar ¹, Milos Stojanovic ² and Wadih Maalouf ^{1,*}

Ukraine’s children: use evidence to support child protection in emergencies

Evidence based parenting support is needed for families in both sudden and protracted crises, to help protect children from adverse outcomes

Lucie Cluver, ¹ Ben Perks, ^{2,3} Sabine Rakotomalala, ⁴ Wadih Maalouf ⁵

Editorial Perspective: How can we help the children of Ukraine and others affected by military conflict?

Collaboration with STRIVE JUVENILE IRAQ on Strong Families implementation for prevention of recruitment of children.



CH · AM · P · S

Children AMplified Prevention Services



Take home

- The theory is clear, put in practice (low cost intervention aligned with science build essential resilience)
- Need to invest now more than ever
- Invest in multi-sectoral systems, invest early (it takes a village)
- Political interest is there, need to re-invigorate the importance of prevention in current context
- Return in investment is high
- Need is imperative and essential for a better tomorrow.



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Thank you!

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