

REPORT

UNODC

Youth Forum 2020

02 - 04 March, Vienna, Austria



Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section

Drug and Health Branch



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Acknowledgments

The UNDOC Youth Forum 2020 took place from 02 – 04 March 2020 at the Vienna International Centre in Vienna in the framework of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

UNODC would like to take this opportunity to extend its gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation and the Sovereign Order of Malta for their support in funding the UNODC Youth Initiative. Additionally, UNODC expresses gratitude to the Government of South Korea for providing supplementary resources. All have directly supported the UNODC Youth Forum over the past years, making it possible for youth from middle- and low-income countries to participate.

We would also like to thank the many representatives from Permanent Missions who worked hard to identify and nominate outstanding youth in a timely manner to participate in this year's Youth Forum 2020. Our team is convinced that your considerate interest and support have been greatly contributing to our mandate empowering youth leaders countering the world drug problem. This year, we received the highest number of nominations, a total of 101 nominations, which demonstrates a growing support for youth leadership and participation. The Youth Initiative is experiencing a steady growth and we anticipate that growth to continue in the future. Hosting such a complement of diverse youth leaders from around the world and giving them a stage and voice in health and drug policy would not be possible without the Permanent Missions involvement in the nomination process.

For the Youth Forum 2020, the UNODC would like to thank the following countries, as well as the Sovereign Order of Malta for their nominations:

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, The Gambia, Ghana, Israel, Jamaica, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Sweden, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey and the USA.

At this point, we would like to extend our gratitude to those Member States who have taken the initiative to sponsor their youths' participation in the Youth Forum which has allowed for an increased number of participants able to participate through the support of donors.

We are looking forward to continued nominations in future years and hope to expand even further the impressive list of Member States that support the Youth Forum.

Please note that this document contains hyperlinks to social media accounts and related pages on the UNODC website.

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The UNODC Youth Forum 2020 at a glance

The UNODC Youth Forum 2020 took place from 02 – 04 March 2020 at the Vienna International Centre in Vienna. In the framework of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), 101 youth participants were nominated to attend the three-day workshop to learn about the prevention of substance use. Youth were empowered to share the experience from their home country in order to benefit from a global exchange of practices and plan their own activities under the scientific guidance of the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention. For this year's meeting, 43 countries nominated participants. After a selection process that included submitting a CV, completing a survey as well as an interview process, 51 youth confirmed their attendance. 93% of involved countries intended to send one or more youth to participate in the Youth Forum 2020. Due to the increasing spread of COVID-19 in late February 2020, last-minute cancellations resulted in a total number of 32 youth participants from 39 countries.



“We urgently have to act on the world drug problem. We have ten years left to achieve this and other targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. A Decade of Action, which is not much time, but I have confidence that with young people like yourselves we can make it.” - H.E. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the UNODC

At the Opening Ceremony, the Executive Director of UNODC, H.E. Ms. Ghada Waly welcomed the youth participants to the UNODC expressing her support for youth participation in policy making: “We urgently have to act on the world drug problem. We have ten years left to achieve this and other targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. A Decade of Action, which is not much time, but I have confidence that with young people like yourselves we can make it.”

The need to take into account youth in a multi-factorial approach to drug prevention was further stressed by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the International Organisations in Vienna, H.E. Mikhail Ulyanov. In his speech to the youth, H.E. Ambassador Günther Granser of the Sovereign Order of Malta expressed his deep

conviction that youth need to become active in a dialogue with policy makers to make their voices heard and to ensure that their perspective is taken into account.

Ms. Miwa Kato, Director of Operations of UNODC and Mr. Gilberto Gerra, Chief of the Drug Prevention and Health Branch of UNODC, reminded the youth of the importance of referring to scientific evidence, and not to be influenced by misleading views disseminated by the media or ideological agencies. They also reiterated that the world drug problem was not a recreational issue, but an expression of suffering, vulnerability and inequalities for a large part of the young population.

During three days of interactive workshop sessions, youth leaders came together and learned about science-based substance use prevention and how scientific research is applied to lead to better outcomes for those affected.

As part of what has now become a tradition, two young leaders participating in the Youth Forum 2020 were nominated and selected by their peers to speak on behalf of the full group and deliver the Youth Statement at the Plenary Session of the 63rd CND. The Youth Statement was written by the youth themselves and called on policy makers to prioritise substance use prevention and work with youth to make the world a safer place. Please find the official statement below in this report. We invite you to also review past years statements via [this link](#).



In 2020, the Youth Forum received unprecedented media coverage through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The webstory that was posted on the UNODC's website also highlights the work of the youth, you can read it [via this link](#). We also invite you to have a look at our social media platforms through clicking on the following icons.



Youth UNiting for a Decade of Action

Empowerment and team building at the Youth Forum

The Youth Forum is a vehicle that allows a global community of active youth leaders in the field of substance use prevention to actively engage with and understand science-based and effective substance use prevention. During three days, youth gain the knowledge and tools to be applied to effective substance use prevention programming in their home communities. Ahead of the meeting, youth were asked to familiarise themselves with the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention¹ published by the UNODC and WHO, and to prepare tasks in six worksheets to acquire a basis of knowledge that was extended at the Youth Forum.

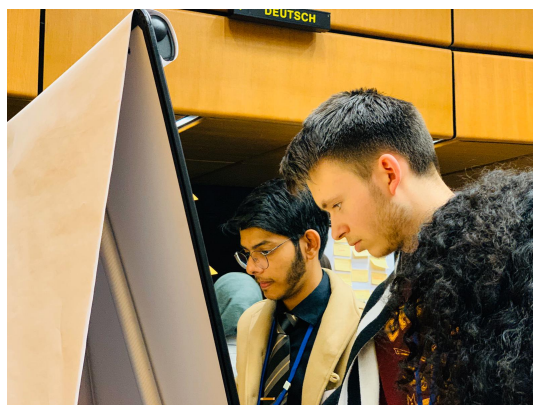
UNODC reached out to each nominee to begin the application process. Each Youth Forum nominee committed to an application process including an online questionnaire, submitting a CV, and going through an interview process with UNODC. As English is the working language of the Youth Forum participants' English language proficiency was one of the important requirements. Due to the interactive nature of the Youth Forum participants must be able to communicate with others at working proficiency to not only benefit from the experience but to be able to meaningfully contribute.

Social Media strategies were used to ensure that participants contacted each other ahead of the meeting and a buddy-scheme was put into place so that participants could prepare the worksheets in groups of two to three people.

UNODC is striving to create a community of youth leaders that extends beyond the three-day meeting on the fringes of CND and will go on to be a cohort of youth that can call on each other for ideas and support from around the world with diverse experiences.

Employing creative strategies to learn about scientific research

Learning from each other about issues prevailing in different communities around the world, youth became aware of the multi-factorial nature of substance use disorders and strategised effective substance use prevention activities to be implemented in their home communities. During the three-day experience, the facilitator used interactive activities to help create a better understanding of the International Standards on Drug Use Prevention and the scientific research that informs effective substance use prevention.



¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/prevention-standards.html>

Youth were empowered to share their experience from their home country in order to facilitate an open exchange of views on the topic. The experience of sharing also created a platform to break down myths and inaccurate information. Getting to know each other in this initial exchange, the importance of scientific evidence continued to be stressed by all participants as an important factor in creating change. The multi-factorial aspects of substance use disorders were discussed so that youth could assess for themselves in which areas their home communities need more support. Self-reflection was an important tool that led young leaders to assess how they personally deal with stress management and how support networks can help to better deal with stress triggers.

The highly interactive format of the workshop encouraged the youth to step out of their comfort zone. Through the use of team building activities, issues influencing the likelihood of substance abuse were discussed. This also gave participants the chance to share what issues their home communities were facing, as well as sharing their stories about how they became active in addressing those problems.

Youth Empowerment informing strategic thinking and policy decisions

With scientific knowledge, the youth were able to make an assessment of the prevention and treatment strategies in place from a scientific point of view.

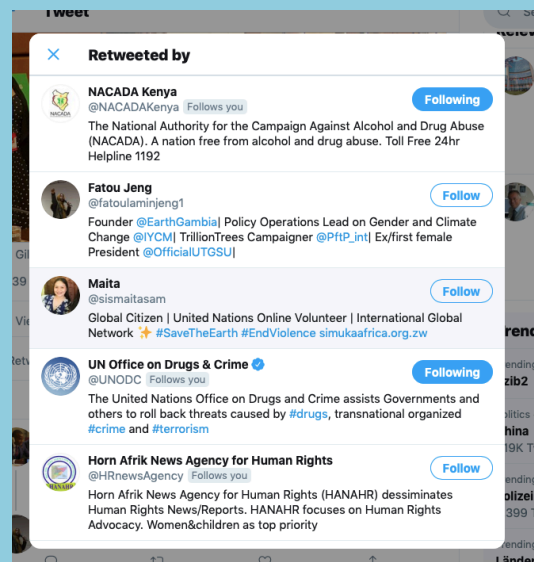


Familiarising themselves with scientific research methods and their findings provided a basis for designing outreach activities that each youth participant planned in order to later implement in their home community. Within three days of workshops, the youth united to create and deliver a Youth Statement containing their perspective on relevant aspects of substance use prevention to the Plenary of the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Ensuring that youth voices are heard by global policy makers is one of the achievements of the Youth Initiative since its creation in 2012.

Social Media Outreach

The UNODC Youth Initiative operates via connecting youth through social media, enabling the youth to initiate and scale up prevention related projects. Hence, the social media campaign of the UNODC Youth Forum is coordinated to promote a health-centred and evidence-based perspective for prevention of drug use, promote health, youth empowerment as well as to actively contribute in achieving the SDG 3.5. Followers on social media, the general reception and feedback on posts are monitored and comments and posts by followers are answered within a timely manner to keep engagement high. Strengthening and deepening the conversations with the online audiences and ensuring targeted communications leads to a long-term engagement of youth leaders and their peer groups.

Liaising with the Advocacy Team of the UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section enhances the coordinated output and editorial consistency of the project and provides greater visibility to the Youth Initiative. The overall social media implementation to meet the objectives of the UNODC Youth Initiative had been achieved in full. Below you can see some screenshots of the UNODC PTRS Tweets and Retweets of the Youth Forum.



The performance on Twitter is measured based on how many people are reached, view videos, comment, share and click. An increase of the posting performance was achieved in the reporting period from February to March 2020.

Social Media statistics for the YF 2020

Social Media Channels	New Followers	Engagements	Replies	Likes	Media Views	Posts
Twitter	44	2371	7	483	726	65
Facebook	125	3035	122	110	580	45
Instagram	150	2002	66	1822	2005	10
SUM TOTAL	319	7408	195	2415	3311	120

Source: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) Account of the UNODC Youth Initiative

The following table presents the statistics of the social media outreach activities from February to March 2020. The table uses six indicators to show the overall performance of our three Social Media Platforms, namely Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. An increase in all parameters was achieved in the reporting period.

The Youth Initiative Network

The impact of youth on their communities has been demonstrated in the past by successful efforts implemented after participation in the Youth Forum. This year, we are happy to report that social media engagement was higher than in the previous year in the same recording period.

The continued engagement of youth ensures that effective substance use prevention is implemented in communities around the world from the perspective of youth leaders, as well as policy makers. Through the continued support of our donors, youth are able to be actively engaged in the decision-making process related to substance use prevention. Young people become educated about the health-implications of substance use and how effective, evidence-based prevention strategies lead to better outcomes for all affected.



CND Side Event sponsored by the Russian Federation

Youth Participation in Drug Use Prevention



As a clear outcome of past years' Youth Forums, UNODC enlisted a group of youth leaders and researchers to develop a Handbook on Youth Participation in Drug Use Prevention. Only one year later, we were able to publish this Handbook as a conference room paper at the 63rd CND, demonstrating how the idea of a handful of youth can make a difference at the international level. In addition, on 06 March the Drug Prevention and Health Branch partnered with the Russian Federation to host a side event

to launch the Handbook. The event was successful with over 100 participants attending. Thanks to the organisation of the Russian Federation, practices and strategies on prevention activities for and by young people were presented. Four Youth Forum representatives were also present to observe how past youth involvement at the CND has led policy makers to consider the input of the Youth Forum. For further information please refer to the attached programme of this CND side event.

Youth leaders active in their communities during COVID-19

At the Youth Forum, every participant was asked to design an action plan. Participants of the YF 2020 and YF 2019 are active in their communities to help vulnerable members of society during the COVID-19 crisis.



Fatou Jeng from The Gambia is active in information campaigns throughout the neighbourhoods of Banjul to inform people about social distancing, prevention measures and the symptoms of COVID-19. For more than six weeks, she and her colleagues have been driving through neighbourhoods and knocking on doors to increase awareness and keep people safe.



Even during the Coronavirus epidemic, Marshall Jack Morrisseau from Canada and his organisation Brandon Bear Clan Patrol continue to do harm reduction by disposing of syringes found on the street. About the changed circumstances of his volunteer work he told us: "Usually we consist of 25+ volunteers who

come patrol our downtown core but due to COVID we are limiting our numbers and only doing a mobile patrol." Marshall can also be found making sandwiches for those living on the street.



And one of our alumni from the Youth Forum 2019 is a "Safe Distancing Ambassador". Javier Ng Jing Xuan from Singapore is engaged in intensifying measures on social distancing to minimize the spread of COVID-19. He points out to members of the public that they should walk at least 1 meter apart and asks them to wear their face mask. He is also advising people not to eat out and tries to disperse large gatherings.

Wash your hands to help prevent the spread of COVID - 19



UNODC Youth Forum 2020 participants washing their hands, from left to right:

Gambo Wakili from Nigeria, Carolina Estefany Pineda Lopez from Peru, Sara Azizi from Syria, Visharadi Bandara from Sri Lanka

From Bauchi State, Nigeria, Gambo Wakili showed us how washing your hands has become more important than ever. For washing her hands effectively, a family member pours water over her hands to create running water. Check out our gallery of youth washing their hands to raise awareness on the importance of personal hygiene during the pandemic on [Twitter](#). These are leaders putting their prevention knowledge to work!

Youth Statement 2020 at the Plenary Session of the 63rd Session of the CND

"Excellencies, influential representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

We would like to express how honoured we are to be given the floor to speak on behalf of youth from all over the world. We are a group of 39 youth from 32 countries with the responsibility to help you understand the needs of nearly 13% of the world population.

We call on Member States to - Start effective science-based drug use prevention efforts as early as possible so future generations can live healthier lives. Drug use prevention needs to start as early as infancy and childhood with programs that help parent be better parents and help children grow and develop. The International Standards on Drug Use Prevention is the foundation for selecting effective interventions at all developmental levels.

We call on Member States to - Focus school-based and community-based prevention efforts on the development of skills including leadership and communication skills. Only knowing about drugs does not change behaviour but we know learning skills such as decision-making, communication, stress management and developing self-esteem is critical in helping young people to be healthy and safe.

We call on Member States to - Provide opportunities for youth to become leaders and to find solutions that will lead to healthier communities. Youth need positive adult role models that will encourage them to think critically, respect diverse opinions and take action.

We call on Member States to - Integrate a system that addresses and promotes mental health care as a foundation for healthy individuals and communities. Youth around the world face social inequality, conflict situations, trauma and abuse, stigma and discrimination. Sometimes we need emotional and psychological support to negotiate these challenges.

We call on Member States to - Work together with civil society to provide genuine support and safe spaces for persons who use drugs and their families.

We call on Member States to - Empower youth to be change makers and to help their peers and friends in making decisions. We are the ones that make an impact in our communities. Youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow, we are the leaders of today. Today we call on you to take actions now and together. You have the power to create a healthy community for everyone. If you ask us how you can do that, we will tell you to get everyone involved!

Come together right now to make better reality - turn our dream into reality. "



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Preview of the Youth Forum 2021 & important information for PMs

Interest in the Youth Forum has been growing steadily over the past years. This is why the UNODC is exploring the possibility of having two tracks for youth participants at the YF 2021. Participants will be split into two age groups, one for youth participants and one for young professionals at the beginning of their career. Permanent Missions will be invited to nominate youth for the two separate categories. And, provided funding is available to support the implementation of the two track system, we will debut this effort in 2021.

The multifactorial nature of substance use prevention calls for the involvement of guardians and parents. Therefore, at the YF 2021 there will be a programme for parents or adults accompanying underage youth. They will get the chance to learn more about the importance of their role in a child's or youth's life using scientific evidence as the base for their learning experience.

At this point, we would like to extend our gratitude to those Member States who have taken the initiative to sponsor their youths' participation in the Youth Forum which has allowed for an increased number of participants able to participate through the support of donors. At the YF2021 you will have the chance to sponsor another participant from another low- or middle-income country in order to facilitate a global youth dialogue on substance use prevention that takes into account the most diverse perspectives possible.

In order to prepare nominations for the YF 2021 Permanent Missions will receive a guidance document in June and are then invited to start the nomination process. We are looking forward to receiving your qualified candidates and seeing how young people keep taking their future into their own hands.

List of Participants - YF 2020

Last Name	First Name	Country
Adikari	A M Visharadi W Amarakoon Bandara	Sri Lanka
Ahmed	Malak Sayed Taha	Egypt
Al Azab	Mouafak	Syria
Alsaawy	Abdullah Mohammed A	Saudi Arabia
Alvior	John Rey C.	Philippines
Amaguaña	Carlos David	Ecuador
Azizi	Sara	Syria
Belouahad	Hemza	Algeria
Bobozoda*	Nasimjon	Tajikistan
Bowen	Shari-Fay	Jamaica
Bullen	Yabu Regina	Norway
Bustamante Paz	Diego Andres	Bolivia
Caparica Correia*	Luisa Maria	Portugal
Carr	Rachel	Antigua and Barbuda
Ekinci	Busranur	Turkey
Ellul*	Adrian Dominic	Malta
Galvez Garcia	Sara	Germany
Ganbold	Ujin	Mongolia
Gavrilović	Ana	Serbia
Hajibayli	Bilgeyis	Azerbaijan
Han*	Yixuan	China
Jeng	Fatou	The Gambia
Joomun	Muhammad Azhar Ibne Habib	Mauritius
Kachanemas	Natthapat	Thailand

Last Name	First Name	Country
Lan*	Songyue	China
*Please note that this youth was not able to participate due to personal considerations related to COVID-19.		
Lesmes Valenzuela	Juan Diego	Colombia
Mammadov	Murad Aliyar	Azerbaijan
Mamonov	Nikita Maximovich	Russian Federation
Marxer*	Nicolas	Liechtenstein
Morrisseau	Marshall Jack	Canada
Murray	Trinity	USA
Nujaim	Maya	Canada
Nyman	Filip	Sweden
Park*	Jeeoh	Republic of Korea
Pereira da Silva*	Carlota	Portugal
Pineda Lopez	Carolina Estefany	Peru
Polyakova	Valeria	Russian Federation
Polyatus	Maxim	Russian Federation
Razić	Ena	Bosnia Herzegovina
Sammer*	Sandra	Austria
Santana Boa*	Erica Patricia	Portugal
Saymen	Eslem	Turkey
Shaabna	Zareefa Harbi	Palestine
Stacevičs	Marks	Latvia
Steeb	Emma Maria	Austria
Tan Xin Yu*	Francine	Singapore
Tsapolina	Yulya	Russian Federation
Vasileva	Zornitsa	Bulgaria
Voothayakumar	Divaghar S/O	Malaysia

*Please note that this youth was not able to participate due to personal considerations related to COVID-19.



SIDE EVENT

Youth Participation in drug use prevention: a way to build healthy, and prosperous communications and societies

Speakers

- (Moderator) Ms. Maria Visloguzova, Acting Chief of Division, Department on New Challenges and Threats, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
- (UNODC) Gilberto Gerra, Chief, DHB
- (UNODC) Ms. Elizabeth Mattfeld, PTRS
- (Pakistan) Mr. Shahryar Khan Afridi, Minister of State for Narcotics Control
- (Venezuela) Mr. Alberto Alexander Matheus Melendez, Chief of the National Anti-Drug Office
- (Kyrgyzstan) Mr. Timur Isakov, Executive Secretary of the State Coordination Committee for Drug Control
- (Vietnam) Mr. Tran Le Duy, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Vietnam in Vienna
- (Russia) Mr. Valery Savelyev, Deputy Chief of the Division on International Activities of the Department for Youth Projects and Programs, Federal Agency for Youth Affairs
- (Russia) Mr. Nikita Lushnikov, Member of the Steering Board, National Antidrug Union
- (Russia) Ms. Valeria Polyakova, Head of Youth Movement of National Antidrug Union

Objective of the event

Strengthening Youth Voices!!!

In January 2020, Secretary General António Guterres launched the biggest global conversation on the world's future, the UN75 dialogue and specifically called for youth participation in the discussions.

"We need to come together, not only to talk, but to listen",

"It is absolutely essential that you all join the conversation. We need your opinion, your strategies and your ideas for us to be able to deliver better for the people of the world that we must serve."

Substance use particularly impacts young people and it is critical that the international community support young people to grow and become healthy, active and empowered members of society. It is essential to continue to support youth participation at all levels from peer groups and local communities, up to the highest-level political discussions.

During the side event, you can learn the strategies and interactive programmes that support positive youth engagement in substance use prevention and empower youth voices in our communities and societies.

If you have interest in Youth and their Participation, please save the date! See you on **THURSDAY, 6 March, 13:00 to 13:50, Room M3 (M Building)**



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DAPC GRANTS promote drug use prevention and youth empowerment in many countries around world. Youth volunteers mobilized communities and raised funds that are then donated to UNODC to support youth-centered activities around the world.

This is truly from youth, to youth, for youth!

UNODC Youth Initiative

was launched in 2012 by the Drug Prevention and Health Branch to promote a health-centred and evidence-based perspective for prevention of drug use, health promotion and youth empowerment, and is actively contributing in achieving the SDG 3.5.

www.unodc.org/youth

UNODC Handbook on Youth Participation in Drug Prevention Work

provides an overview of youth participation, and what role it might play in prevention. It seeks to convey the value of evidence-based prevention in building healthy, and prosperous communities and societies, and the value of youth as important contributors on it. By so doing, it seeks to contribute to the normalization of youth participation in prevention.



UNODC YOUTH FORUM provides an annual platform and call to action for youth to learn from each other, to understand the complexity of the issues related to substance use and immerses youth for three days in evidence-based prevention strategies that work, so they can become agents of change.



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3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



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CND Side Event - Programme