

## Policy Brief on Youth Tailor Made Drug Prevention Programs in Kenya

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya (NACADA 2022), there are 8,113,749 youths in Kenya aged 25-34 years. This constitutes approximately 30% of the entire Kenyan population aged between 15-65 years. The 25-34 years age group representing youth out-of-school was identified as a vulnerable group for drugs and substance use and dependence. When youths are out of school and unemployed, they have a lot of idle time at their disposal which they may utilize to engage in drugs and substance abuse. This will result in loss of man power which is a major factor in economic development. So far NACADA and The Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts have been engaging the youths through Summits and National Days. NACADA celebrates its International Day against Drugs and Illicit Trafficking

(IDADA) every year to create awareness on effects drug and substance abuse.

Statistics from NACADA National Survey 2022 indicate that one in every five youths aged 25 – 35 years (1,504,377) were currently using at least one drug or substance of abuse. It is against this problem that the government through NACADA and the Ministry for Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts needs to come up with youth tailor made drug and substance use prevention programs. This policy brief aims to identify opportunities which the government through NACADA and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts can engage the youths so as to administer tailor made drug and substance use prevention programs.

### METHODOLOGY

This report used secondary data sources from the National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya (NACADA 2022). The 2022 national survey used a cross-sectional study design to provide reliable estimates to track the national, regional, urban and rural drugs and substance use indicators. The survey was conducted in selected clusters spread across the 47 counties of the Republic of Kenya. The study sampled Kenyans aged 15 to 65 years. The sample for the survey was obtained from the Kenya Household Master Sample Frame (K-HMSF) maintained by KNBS. The total number of individual interviews received was 3,314 translating to an individual response rate of 87%. The data

was weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities and unit non-response in order to conform to known population distributions and eliminate possible bias.

## FINDINGS

The government through NACADA and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts need to focus on the number of youths aged between 25-34 years who are suffering from substance use disorders. Statistics from the National Survey on the Status of Drugs and Substance Use in Kenya (NACADA 2022) indicate that; One in every fourteen youths aged 25 – 35 years (596,336) were addicted to alcohol; One in every thirty-three youths aged 25 – 35 years (247,139) were addicted to tobacco; One in every seventy-one youths aged 25 – 35 years (112,724) were addicted to khat; One in every eighty-three youths aged 25 – 35 years (100,468) were addicted to cannabis. It is evident from this study that 1,056,667 youths are suffering from drugs or substance use related disorders. This is a huge number and a concern which needs to be addressed urgently.

The survey showed that the rate of drug use in urban or rural areas varied according to the drug in use with alcohol more prevalent in rural areas while cannabis use is higher in urban areas. The prevalence rate of past month users of tobacco is 5.9% for urban areas while it is 1.7% in rural areas. Drug prevention programs need to consider which factors play a major role in influencing drug and substance abuse in urban settings as well as those in the rural setup. The survey also showed that the prevalence rate of

alcohol for the past month users was 14% but it was 23% amongst male youths against 7% among females. Males therefore have a higher risk factor. Drug prevention programs targeting males have to be more intensive and extensive as this group has been identified as more vulnerable. The government through NACADA and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts therefore has to step up efforts to engage these youths in various tailor-made drug prevention programs that will assist the affected youths to overcome their addictions. Considerations have to be made with regards to gender, age and residential background so that the programs are as personalized as possible. This will lead to better drug prevention use results.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. NACADA and The Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts should partner and host a national soccer tournament with stopping drug abuse among the youth being the main message. They should also host a joint national summit or use the annual Africa Connect Summit as a platform to discuss the twin topics of prevention of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse and the use of sports in the country to reduce its prevalence in the country; and
- ii. The Ministry of Youth Affairs through the Kenya Youth Empowerment Opportunities Program (KYEOP) it established should introduce alcohol, drugs and substance abuse prevention courses in its training modules.