



## Evaluation of Government Programs in Mitigating Drug and Substance Abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

*The issue of drug and substance abuse has become a major concern in Kenya, particularly in the coastal region. In response, the government has implemented various programs to mitigate the problem. The objective of this paper was to evaluate the government's programs for mitigating drug and substance abuse in the Kilifi and Mombasa Counties of the coastal region of Kenya. Social learning theory and functionalism theory served as the study's guiding principles. The study was further underpinned by the interpretivism approach. The study used descriptive and evaluative research designs, with data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The study was conducted in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. Data was collected from 552 respondents, who included 384 household heads, 20 victims, 2 county education officers, 2 county commissioners, 2 county health officers, 70 administrative chiefs, 102 village elders, 9 senior NACADA officers, and 8 religious leaders. The data collected included the existing programs that are directly or indirectly implemented by the government, as well as their impacts on the residents of the study area. Government programs in the study region focused on prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and harm reduction, proving effective to varying degrees. The study revealed that law enforcement programs were more effective than the others. The study recommended the re-evaluation of these programs, including reinforcing their weaknesses and conducting constant evaluations to maximize the strengths of the organizations.*

**Keywords:** Government Programs, Mitigating Drug, Substance Abuse, Kilifi and Mombasa Counties

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Almost all countries across the world have been contending with the endemic problem of drug abuse, especially among the young generation. Notably, drug and substance abuse has become one of the looming human-induced disasters globally, making it a profound concern among the community of nations owing to the significant detrimental effects it has on almost every aspect of life and development. Generally, drug abuse has been conceived as the detrimental use of drugs that alter the mind (Korir, 2013). Substance abuse is exacerbated by a score of socioeconomic problems, including unemployment, poverty, and crime in general. As asserted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2018), substance abuse has been on the rise globally, especially in developing countries, which have seen little intervention regarding prevention. Alarmingly, young people, who constitute at least 16 percent of the globe's population and are critical to the realization of both a healthy and productive future, remain the most affected category of people. To tackle this global menace, various governments have responded by coming up with policies and programs that aim to uproot the crisis (Nyongesa et al., 2021).

Currently, Kenya is faced with serious socioeconomic problems related to the high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse. The wider ramifications include ill-health disability, declined productivity, unemployment, financial instability, and the disintegration of families, which in turn has inflicted untold suffering on parents and families as productive members become wired into drugs (Kaithuru, 2020). Today, substance abuse in Kenya has become rampant in urban areas owing to the liberal use of drugs and substances, especially among young people, which in turn has resulted in increased crimes and domestic violence in numerous households across the country. The wider effects of drugs and substance abuse, especially

among the youth in the country, have prompted the government to intervene to remedy the situation. The interventions have been mixed, ranging from policies to preventive programs.

The government utilizes the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts as a vital strategy in the prevention of drug and substance abuse. Many countries across the world, especially those that have been adversely affected by the menace of drugs and substance abuse, have long embarked on treatment and rehabilitation programs as a preventive measure. Kenya is not an exception and has strived to allocate resources for these programs to mitigate the profound consequences that the menace inflicts on the affected victims (Okello & Novelli, 2014). Empirical evidence shows that treatment has the potential to change people's destructive behaviors, alter relapse, and ultimately remove them from the addiction. As one of the chronic recurring illnesses, it may require a series of treatments before being put under control. Generally, effective treatment is achieved when appropriate treatments are prescribed. The treatment and rehabilitation of substance abusers have tremendous economic benefits for the entire society, or at least some sectors that drive the Kenyan economy (Mwai et al., 2023). In light of this, the Kenyan government has also invented some modalities that have been designed to address the mitigation of drug and substance abuse among the young population across the country through treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Drugs and substance abuse continue to be thorny issues facing contemporary communities throughout the world. In Kenya, it has become one of the major social catastrophes, with the commonest and most easily identifiable manifestation in public health (Mbuthia, 2016). Notably, it has become one of the endemic problems that have bedeviled the country. Similarly, the lucrative drug industry is governed by ruthless cartels that reap millions of shillings from the business each year. In the views of Oguya et al. (2021), drugs and substance abuse have been responsible for several predicaments, such as wage loss, property destruction, especially in schools, increased healthcare costs, increased domestic violence in several households, and family disintegration, just to mention a few. Barasa (2013) adds that it has become a multifaceted problem that cuts across virtually all sectors of society and hinders the ability of both young people and adults to realize their full potential. The reduction and uprooting of the substance abuse menace has been a priority of almost every government across the globe, and Kenya is no exception (Oguya et al., 2023).

As reflected by the recent biannual report of the NACADA, the coastal region is one of the best-known hotbeds for drug and substance abuse, especially among the young population. Regarding this, out of the many places identified as the epicenter of the crisis, both Kilifi and Mombasa Counties stand out (NACADA, 2023). The leading countries have been found to be hit by the excessive use of hard drugs, including cocaine and heroin. According to the biannual report by NACADA, at least 45 percent of the residents in the region admitted to having used at least one substance. Unsurprisingly, Kilifi County topped the list regarding the usage of at least one substance, which stood at 55.9 percent. It was followed so closely by Mombasa County, which stood at 51 percent (NACADA, 2023). Undoubtedly, the menace of drugs and substance abuse in the region is one of the thorny issues that has necessitated mixed responses in a bid to stabilize it before it spiraled into an unsustainable crisis.

A number of reasons have been offered to explain the unprecedented rise in drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties (Nyongesa et al., 2021). Among them are the flourishing trade in illicit drugs and substance abuse that has aided the accessibility of these drugs with too much ease, and the tourism sector has long been regarded as one of the economic drivers for both counties. However, the sector has also been criticized for buttressing the intense usage of drugs and substance use for recreational purposes as well as the intensification of drug peddling, especially among youths (Oguya et al., 2023). Another reason is the significant failure by the government to make the crisis an imminent human-induced disaster and to round up serious intervention measures, most of which have been largely humanitarian. In this case, therefore, it is the prime interest of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of programs the government puts in place in its pursuit of mitigating drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an evaluative research design, which helps to ascertain the effectiveness of government-related programs in the mitigation of drug and substance abuse. Evaluative research design helped in the structured assessment of the existing government programs to determine the extent of their successes and failures. Additionally, since it uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this design helped gather respondents' opinions on the programs. The evaluative research design was utilized to evaluate the challenges and opportunities facing government programs employed

in managing drug and substance abuse in the selected counties in the coastal region of Kenya. Data was collected through interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and questionnaires. The study was conducted in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. The two counties were purposively selected because they have a high prevalence of drugs and substance abuse in the coastal region. Data was collected from 552 respondents, who included 384 household heads who were selected through simple random, 20 victims who were sampled randomly, 2 county education officers who were sampled using purposive sampling, 2 county commissioners who were sampled using purposive sampling, 2 county health officers who were sampled using purposive sampling, 70 administrative chiefs who were sampled using the simple random technique, 102 village elders who were randomly selected, 9 senior NACADA officers who were sampled using purposive sampling, and 8 religious leaders who were purposely sampled. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs was analyzed using thematic narrations and presented through descriptions.

### III. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Existing Government Programs employed to Mitigate Drugs and Substance Abuse

The respondents were asked to indicate the existing programs that are employed by the government to mitigate drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. The results are discussed in this section.

#### 3.2 Preventive Programs

In this section, findings were mostly about the programs deployed by the government in a bid to spread knowledge of the dangers of drugs and their usage among the community. The prevention programs in the coastal region of Kenya are aimed at educating the public, particularly the youth, about the dangers of drug abuse. These programs involve various strategies, such as school-based drug education programs, community outreach programs, and public awareness campaigns. School-based drug education programs aim to provide young people with accurate information on drug abuse and the potential negative effects that drugs can have on their lives. The community outreach programs involve engaging community leaders, religious organizations, and other stakeholders to address the root causes of drug abuse in the region. Finally, public awareness campaigns aim to educate the general public on the dangers of drug abuse and encourage individuals to seek help when necessary.

##### 3.2.1 Education and Awareness campaigns through NACADA

NACADA is a Kenyan government agency established in 2003 to spearhead the country's efforts in the fight against drug and substance abuse. The agency was established under the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act of 2012, which seeks to provide a framework for the management of drug and substance abuse in the country. NACADA has been tasked with several functions, including developing policies, coordinating and facilitating the implementation of drug and substance abuse programs, and raising public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse. The agency works closely with other stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, to achieve its mandate.

Drug and substance abuse continues to be a major problem among people living in the coastal region. The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), in collaboration with the county governments of Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Tana River, and Taita Taveta counties, undertook a survey to get to know the level of drug and substance abuse in the coastal region. From the survey findings, Mombasa County was leading in terms of abuse of at least one drug or substance, followed by Lamu County, Tana River County, Kilifi County, Kwale County, and lastly Taita Taveta County. The survey also indicated that the major drugs and substances abused in Kilifi and Mombasa counties were alcohol, tobacco, bhang, and khat. Other abused substances included heroin, cocaine, and illicit brew. Drug and substance abuse has had negative socioeconomic and health consequences, including death, among the people living in the coastal region. NACADA has therefore employed several programs for the purpose of mitigating drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa counties. NACADA works together with the national government administrative offices, county governments, ministries, schools, colleges, universities, technical institutions, parastatals, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, self-help groups, and individuals interested in freeing Kilifi and Mombasa counties from drug and substance abuse (NACADA, 2020).

During the Interview with the NACADA officials, one stated that:

*These laws and policies include enhancing the penalties for manufacturing, possession, trafficking, and use of these drugs and substances of abuse and enhancing the prosecution of these offenses. In addition to that, NACADA also assists the county governments of Mombasa and Kilifi in prescribing offenses for law enforcement officers who aid or collude with individuals suspected of committing offenses involving drug and substance abuse. The Authority also helps in developing and implementing policies that seek to enhance productive investigations by officers of the law to ensure the production of reliable information in court as evidence against the offenders* (Interview with NACADA officials, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023).

One of the programs that NACADA has employed in mitigating drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa counties is assisting and supporting the county governments in developing and implementing policies, laws, and action plans on the control of drug and substance abuse. It also coordinates, in collaboration with other lead agencies and non-state actors, the formulation of national policies, laws, and plans of action on the control of drug and substance abuse and facilitates their implementation, enforcement, continuous review, monitoring, and evaluation (NACADA, 2021).

Furthermore, another important mitigation measure by NACADA to reduce drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa counties is sensitizing the public and creating awareness on the issue of alcohol and drug abuse. NACADA educates the public either directly or in collaboration with other public or private bodies and institutions. For the purpose of addressing drug and substance abuse and its consequences in Kilifi and Mombasa counties, NACADA offers sensitization, support, and planned trainings that target individuals, families, barazas, communities, and institutions in both the private and public sectors, including schools, colleges, universities, and workplaces, among many others. Trainings on the prevention of drug and substance abuse build the capacity of participants to recognize and put into practice interventions supported by empirical and scientific evidence (NACADA, 2020).

In addition, NACADA also coordinates and facilitates the participation of the public in the control of drug and substance abuse and its complications in Kilifi and Mombasa counties. Through public education and training, NACADA promotes the participation of the public in preventing drug and substance abuse in these counties at various levels, namely, family-based prevention, school-based prevention, workplace-based prevention, and community-based prevention. With regards to family-based prevention, NACADA emphasizes the importance of parents showing love to their children, setting rules and boundaries that promote good behavior, being actively involved in monitoring all the activities that their children engage in, and being positive role models in general. NACADA also works with schools to put in place school-based prevention measures such as implementing policies that reduce drug accessibility to students, establishing positive school cultures where students feel encouraged and challenged to do their best, and equipping the students with personal and social skills to help them cope with peer influence regarding the abuse of drugs and other substances. It also ensures workplace-based prevention in these counties in that employees are provided with health and wellness programs, stress management programs, and counseling programs in an effort to decrease employee health costs and the occurrence of events that might reduce productivity (NACADA, 2020).

During the interviews, one of the NACADA officials from Kilifi County pointed out that:

*NACADA also encourages communities and community-based organizations in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties to work together in order to build a society that is free from the negative effects of drug and substance abuse.* (Interview with NACADA official, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2023).

Equally important, NACADA also promotes inter-agency cooperation among lead agencies responsible for reducing the demand for alcohol and drugs in Kilifi and Mombasa counties. All these stakeholders join forces to reduce excessive alcohol intake, drug abuse, and their related harms. This is done by increasing taxes on alcohol and commonly abused drugs, regulating alcohol density outlets, limiting the hours of sale, developing and implementing commercial host liability laws, and enhancing enforcement of laws that prohibit sales to individuals under the age of full legal responsibility (NACADA, 2020).

To emphasize that, a NACADA official in Mombasa noted that:

*NACADA also works side by side with these lead agencies to keep the emerging trends and patterns in Kilifi and Mombasa counties regarding the production, manufacture, sale, consumption, trafficking, and promotion of drugs and substances of abuse under observation. In line with this, the authority, in collaboration with relevant private and public stakeholders,*

*facilitates and conducts research on drug and substance abuse in these counties and controls the dissemination of the findings of the research* (Interview with NACADA official, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023).

The NACADA Resource Center therefore acts as an archive of research data on the abuse of drugs and substances and serves as a national repository for alcohol and drug abuse research and knowledge. This provides a baseline on which implementation partners can work in an attempt to put into practice the prevention measures required to curb drug and substance abuse and its consequences in Kilifi and Mombasa counties (NACADA, 2021).

In Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, NACADA has been working to implement various programs aimed at reducing drug and substance abuse. One of the key programs is the creation of awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public on the dangers of drug abuse. The agency has also been working with local communities to provide treatment and rehabilitation services for drug addicts. Additionally, NACADA has been partnering with the county governments to establish drug rehabilitation centers and support groups (NACADA, 2020).

The agency has reported that it has made significant progress in the fight against drug and substance abuse in the region. For instance, NACADA has reported a reduction in the number of drug-related crimes, such as robbery and violence. The agency has also noted an increase in the number of people seeking treatment for drug addiction in the region (NACADA, 2020).

### **3.2.2 The Parenting Skills Education Program**

The Parenting Skills Education Program is an essential governmental initiative that plays a critical role in improving parenting skills, reducing child abuse and neglect, and promoting positive parent-child relationships. The program has had a significant impact on parents and caregivers across Kenya, reaching over 500,000 parents and caregivers since its launch in 2003. The program's implementation in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties in 2019 was successful, reaching over 10,000 parents and caregivers through various activities. However, despite the program's successes, there is still a need for more resources and support to expand the program's reach and impact in other counties across Kenya.

The Parenting Skills Education Program is a government initiative aimed at providing education and support to parents in Kenya. The program aims to improve parenting skills, reduce child abuse and neglect, and promote positive parent-child relationships. In this response, we will discuss the history, function, statistical data, and operations of the program in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. During the interviews, the head of an NGO in Kilifi pointed out that:

*The Parenting Skills Education Program has had a positive impact on the war against drug and substance abuse. As an NGO, we have been closely monitoring the impacts of the training programs and meetings held to sensitize the community on the dangers of drugs and have identified improvements in numbers and response. The number of ambassadors for the war against drug abuse in Kilifi County has increased significantly as knowledge gets transferred from one person to the next. We appreciate the response and hope to work towards getting more children on board since most of the programs are child-centered. It is important to hear what the children have to say about the impacts of drug and substance abuse on them. In the process, we will turn the children into ambassadors who will spread the word about the negative effects of drug abuse* (Head of NGO, Kilifi County, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2023).

The Parenting Skills Education Program was launched in Kenya in 2003 by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development. The program is implemented by the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) in partnership with various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations. The program aims to enhance parents' knowledge and skills in child care and development, improve family communication and relationships, and reduce child abuse and neglect. The program offers parenting education through various channels, including workshops, seminars, and community outreach programs. One of the religious leaders in Mombasa informed me that:

*The Parenting Skills Education Program was welcomed with open hands in Mombasa County. It is disturbing to see young children indulge in drug and substance abuse, as it is against the will of God. With the help of the initiative of the stakeholders, we hope to shape the future of the young generation and steer them on the right path. Religious entities of all beliefs, including Muslims and Christians, agree on this. Unity was necessary since the needs of the people are our concern. We had to come together and work on a reliable solution that cuts across all beliefs* (Mombasa County, Religious Leader, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2023).

The Parenting Skills Education Program is a community-based approach to promoting healthy parenting practices and preventing drug and substance abuse among residents in Kilifi and Mombasa counties. The program aims at offering parenting education and support services to parents and guardians of children and youth, aiming to enhance resilience and reduce the risk of drug and substance abuse, including alcohol, khat, and marijuana (Ssewanyana et al., 2020). In Kilifi County, the program has facilitated the successful equipping of parents and guardians with parenting skills and knowledge to prevent drug abuse. The program utilizes strategies such as parent education classes, parenting support groups, and home visits to provide caregivers with the necessary skills and knowledge to prevent drug and substance abuse in their households. The program partners with schools and community-based organizations to increase awareness about the dangers of drug and substance abuse and encourage parents and caregivers to seek support services. The program is evaluated regularly to ensure its effectiveness in impacting parent practices and reducing the risk of drug and substance abuse (Jaguga & Kwobah, 2020).

The number of parents and guardians participating in the program has been increasing gradually. This has facilitated the increased reach of the program to areas beyond the major cities and towns. Kilifi and Mombasa counties have benefited from the program as it has helped reduce cases of drug and substance abuse. With the help of the teachings on parenting, the guardians and caregivers are able to connect with the children and youths easily and resolve some of the issues that may result in drug abuse (Mwangala et al., 2020). Currently, the program requires increased funding through continued partnerships with other stakeholders, including companies across the two counties.

The provision of parenting skills as a program is well entangled with social learning theory. The activities bring parents together and provide them with an environment where they can learn from each other or from experts. It is through this program that parents decide which program they will implement while raising their children. Most importantly, the social learning environment provides parents with diversified skills that will help them guide their children not to start the process of drug abuse or even how to quit the vice.

According to the National Council for Children's Services, the program has reached over 500,000 parents and caregivers across Kenya. In 2019, the program was implemented in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, with a target of reaching over 10,000 parents and caregivers. The program conducted various activities, including community dialogues, parenting education sessions, and training of trainers. In Mombasa, the program reached over 5,000 parents and caregivers, while in Kilifi, the program reached over 4,000 parents and caregivers.

### 3.2.3 Jitambue Program

The Jitambue program is a Kenyan government initiative that aims to improve access to healthcare services and information for the citizens. It was launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Health and is implemented in various counties across the country, including Mombasa and Kilifi. The program's main function is to provide health education and promote healthy living practices among the communities. It targets vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly, who have limited access to health services. The program uses community health workers to provide health education, screening, and referral services. The program has reported success in other counties, with over 2 million people receiving health education and over 600,000 receiving screening and referral services. The program has also contributed to a reduction in maternal and child mortality rates in some areas.

The Jitambue Program is an initiative created to deal with drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa counties in Kenya. The program is collaboration between the Kenyan government, county governments, and non-governmental organizations. It is designed to empower young people in primary school, high school, and college with information, knowledge, and skills to make informed decisions about drug and substance abuse (Khamis et al., 2016). The program also empowers the youth through the provision of necessities including education and personal effects.

Kilifi County has benefitted from Jitambue Program as it has impacted positively the youth through community sensitization, peer education, and life skills training among others. Drugs including alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and khat are common in the county and account for a high percentage of drugs affecting the youths (Okoyo et al., 2022). Community sensitization campaigns have facilitated the successful transfer of knowledge and raising awareness about the dangers of drug and substance abuse among parents, guardians, children, and community leaders. The approach has led to increased support for the program and reduced cases of drug and substance abuse in the region. Additionally, the peer education program has also shown success in fighting drug and substance abuse. According to an article by UNODC (2002), peer

education involves training the residents to become peer educators who can help spread knowledge about the dangers of drug and substance abuse. The educators have been instrumental in providing support and counseling to individuals struggling with drug and substance abuse.

A victim of drug and substance abuse had this to say:

*The Jitambue peer educators found me at my worst. I was on the verge of destroying my life through drug abuse. However, they educated me on the dangers I was facing and how this would affect my family. I had to start the hard journey to recovery. It was not easy at first. However, I was able to change my ways, and now I am also a peer educator. I am able to connect better with other victims since I have experienced what they are experiencing. As a result, I can easily influence them positively and show them the way to recovery. The Jitambue Program is saving the lives of the residents here in Kilifi (Kilifi County Drug abuse victim, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2023).*

The life skills training program has also been instrumental in equipping the residents of Kilifi County with the necessary skills to make informed decisions about drug and substance abuse. Through the life skills training program, the Jitambue Program has empowered people to resist pressure and make informed decisions about drug and substance abuse (UNODC, 2002). In Mombasa County, the Jitambue Program's community sensitization project has been embraced by the residents due to its efficiency in reaching out to them. Additionally, the peer educators' program has been rolled out with the help of community-based groups formed among the residents of Mombasa to discuss issues affecting the community. During the meetings, members of the Jitambue program sensitize the community on the effects of drug and substance abuse on themselves, their families, and the community (Oduor et al., 2022).

The Jitambue program has been a critical mitigation program as far as drug abuse is concerned. This program is premised on the social learning theory as it is based on exposing drug addicts to an environment that will discourage them from taking drugs. The victims are to learn from the environment as well as what they were taught during the Jitambue program. The facilitators of the program have role models whom the victims can imitate.

### **3.2.4 The Mombasa County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (ADAPC) Program**

The Mombasa County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (ADAPC) program was established in 2014 to address the increasing drug and substance abuse problem in Mombasa County, Kenya. The program's primary function is to provide prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services for individuals struggling with alcohol and drug addiction. The program operates in both Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, providing outreach services to communities, schools, and other institutions.

The ADAPC program is an initiative of the county government aimed at reducing drug and substance abuse across constituencies in Mombasa County. The program has engaged in a range of activities and involved local authorities to achieve its goals. One of the approaches employed in community outreach is through public sensitization campaigns on social media, religious institutions, and community events (NACADA, 2021). The sensitization approach is steered by county education officers, who are tasked with formulating and executing awareness programs for the community.

According to the Mombasa County education officer:

*The ADAPC program is an initiative that was created by the government due to the increasing cases of alcohol abuse in areas along the coast, especially Mombasa. Research indicated that poverty levels and increasing rates of unemployment are some of the causes of alcohol and drug abuse among the residents. As a result, our campaign is focused on empowering the residents to take action through self-help groups and self-employment to alleviate poverty. With the help of organizations such as NACADA, we have been able to reach out to communities for sensitization and, at the same time, conduct research on the improvement of the initiative. We hope to incorporate employment creation strategies into the program soon (Mombasa County Education Officer, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2023).*

ADAPC also applies law enforcement in the fight against drug and substance abuse through its partnership with the county government and NACADA (NACADA, 2021). The program collaborates with police departments in regions such as Changamwe, Kisauni, Miritini, and Jomvu, among others, to crack down on bars and clubs that serve alcohol to minors and those without operation licenses. The major goal is to confiscate illegal drugs, including marijuana and cocaine, and apprehend drug dealers to disrupt the supply chain. Moreover, the program has been engaging in research and data collection to understand the nature and extent of alcohol and drug abuse in the county (Jaguga et al., 2022).

According to the program's statistical data, over 3,000 individuals have been treated for drug and substance abuse since its inception. Out of these, 70% are male and 30% are female. The program has also reached over 20,000 people through its community outreach initiatives. Out of the 3,000 individuals treated for drug and substance abuse, 60% (1,800) have successfully completed the program and have shown significant improvement in their addiction recovery. The ADAPC program has shown a reasonably high treatment success rate of 60%, indicating that a significant number of individuals have benefited from the provided services and have experienced positive outcomes in their addiction recovery.

### 3.2.5 Sensitization/Education through Barazas

Barazas are government community forums convened by local administrative chiefs to discuss issues affecting the community, including drug and substance abuse. The forums target community members, educational institutions, local leaders, healthcare providers, NACADA representatives, religious leaders, and other stakeholders (NACADA, 2022). Discussions focus on modes of mitigating the negative effects of drug consumption and sale on individuals and communities. Chiefs in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties have been sensitizing residents on the dangers of drug and substance abuse through collaboration with healthcare providers. The forums also provide an opportunity for community members to share their concerns and suggestions on the topic.

Chief Barazas in Mombasa have also been beneficial in sensitizing the community on the issue of drug and substance abuse. Through collaboration with NACADA and healthcare providers across the county, the Barazas have been sources of critical information for the residents (Ndururi, 2018).

One of the chiefs in Kilifi County noted that:

*These Barazas are very effective when discussing issues that affect our community. Concerned citizens have been helpful so far. We have been able to collect useful suggestions and information through the Barazas, which has helped the ANU and NACADA in their operations. Additionally, we are also able to create policies that are implemented locally to combat the supply of drugs. Through collaboration with healthcare providers, parents are able to receive education on how to identify whether their children are addicts and how to approach the issue without upsetting the victims. The major setback facing the forums is the lack of commitment from some of the members of the community. Most people expect to receive incentives after the meetings, which are not always possible (Interview with Administrative Chief, Mtwapa, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2023).*

Chief Barazas has facilitated the effective mitigation of drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. The forums provide a platform where all stakeholders can come together and discuss how to improve the situation, educate each other, and provide information that helps boost security. However, the forums underperform due to the lack of incentives for community members to attend the meetings (Ndururi, 2018). Some of the members attend Barazas with the hope of benefiting financially, which has resulted in a decline in attendance. Other community members do not participate in the discussion due to fear of attacks from existing gangs.

During the study, the findings indicated that the program has also been noted for its cost-effectiveness, as it only requires a few resources to implement. Given the limited resources available for addressing drug and substance abuse issues in Kenya, this is crucial. The program's community-driven approach ensures that it is tailored to the community's specific needs, making it more effective.

### 3.3 Treatment Programs

Treatment in drug mitigation involves aiding the abusers and addicts by nursing them back to health in a bid to cure them from the influences of the abuse, which may range from poisoning to physical injuries and mental conditions that need specialized health interventions. The treatment programs in the coastal region of Kenya aim to provide assistance to those struggling with drug addiction. These programs include a range of services, including outpatient treatment, inpatient treatment, and medication-assisted treatment. Outpatient treatment involves regular counseling and therapy sessions, while inpatient treatment involves a more intensive approach that includes detoxification and rehabilitation. Medication-assisted treatment involves the use of medications such as methadone to help individuals overcome their addiction to opioids.



### 3.3.1 Mombasa Drug Control and Rehabilitation Centre

The Mombasa Drug Control and Rehabilitation Centre (DCRC) is a government program in Kenya that was established in 1997 to address the growing problem of drug abuse in the coastal region, particularly in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. The center was established as part of the government's efforts to reduce drug-related crime and improve public health in the region.

The County Commissioner indicated the following in an interview:

*The Mombasa Drug Control and Rehabilitation Center has helped restore order in the streets of Mombasa County. Cases of theft had increased in developed areas where addicts would steal items to exchange for drugs or sell them to purchase the drugs. Also, break-ins to homes and businesses were on the rise. The introduction of a rehabilitation facility helped control the cases as the victims dealt with their addictions and got counseling to avoid relapse. The success rate of the facility continues to increase as more people suffering from addiction visit the center for treatment and counseling. Additionally, families have been sensitized to accept their members back after rehabilitation and create a healthy environment for recovery. Most cases of relapse are related to family feuds, which make the victims feel insecure and unappreciated (Interview with Mombasa County Commissioner, March 18, 2023).*

The DCRC's primary function is to provide drug treatment and rehabilitation services to individuals struggling with drug addiction. The center provides a range of services, including detoxification, counseling, and vocational training, to help individuals overcome their addiction and successfully reintegrate into society. The center also conducts outreach and education programs to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse and promote prevention efforts in the community.

According to statistical data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, drug abuse is a significant problem in the coastal region, with Kilifi and Mombasa Counties being among the areas with the highest prevalence rates of drug use in the country. In 2019, the prevalence rate of drug use in Mombasa was estimated to be around 11.2%, while Kilifi had a rate of 10.5%. These figures highlight the urgent need for drug treatment and rehabilitation services in the region. Kilifi and Mombasa Counties are both major centers of tourism and trade, which contribute significantly to the local economy. However, these industries also provide opportunities for drug traffickers to operate, exacerbating the drug abuse problem in the region. The government's efforts to combat drug abuse have been met with various challenges, including a lack of funding and inadequate infrastructure.

### 3.3.2 Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Centre

The Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Centre is a government program that was established to address the growing problem of drug and alcohol abuse in Kenya, specifically in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. The program was launched in 2005 and is funded by the Kenyan government, with the aim of reducing drug and alcohol abuse and addiction in the region. The Pwani Rehabilitation Center provides a range of services to individuals who are struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. These services include counseling, detoxification, rehabilitation, and aftercare services. The center operates as a residential facility, where patients receive intensive care for a period of up to six months.

Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Center is a government facility dedicated to the treatment and rehabilitation of alcohol and drug abuse patients along the coastal towns, including Kilifi and Mombasa. The center is open to receiving patients from various regions who seek to deal with addiction problems or require counseling. Through integration with government agencies, including NACADA, Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Center provides comprehensive and integrated care to individuals who struggle with quitting alcohol and substance abuse. Some of the services offered at the facility include detoxification, rehabilitation, and counseling. The center has psychologists, medical doctors, and nurses who provide a holistic approach to treatment. The approach has been successful in mitigating drug and substance abuse as it addresses the root cause of the addiction problem and equips patients with recovery skills. The center has been able to provide efficient services to patients from Kilifi as it provides a supportive environment for individuals who are under treatment. The facilities are designed to provide the patients with a comfortable and safe environment during their stay. According to NACADA, the environment promotes the easy elimination of anxiety and stress associated with the recovery process and allows individuals to focus on their recovery journeys. Additionally, the center offers training on social skills to help patients reintegrate into society after recovery. An administrative chief from Mombasa County agreed to this through the following articulation:

*The people of Mombasa have access to facilities that provide treatment and awareness of alcohol and substance abuse. Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Center conducts regular campaigns in Mombasa to create awareness of the presence of a center that welcomes everyone struggling with addiction or mental health problems. The campaigns have helped attract concerned individuals and families with members suffering from addiction. Over time, the number of patients from Mombasa in the facility has increased, leading to an improvement in the state of security in the location and villages within (Mombasa County Administrative Chief, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2023).*

In terms of statistical data, the Pwani Rehabilitation Center has treated over 6,000 patients since its establishment. The program has been successful in reducing the rate of relapse, with only 20% of patients returning to drug and alcohol abuse after completing the treatment program. The program has also been successful in reducing crime rates in the region, with many former addicts becoming productive members of society.

Many individuals in the region turn to drugs and alcohol as a way of coping with these challenges, leading to addiction and other negative consequences. The political context is one of government intervention, with the Kenyan government recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing drug and alcohol abuse in the region. The economic context in which the program operates is one of limited resources, with the government struggling to provide adequate funding for the program. However, the Pwani Rehabilitation Center has been successful in securing additional funding from international and non-governmental organizations, which has helped to expand the scope of the program and improve its effectiveness.

### **3.4 Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Programs**

The government typically uses law enforcement and criminal justice programs in drug abuse to reduce the movement and trafficking of drugs within regions. These programs are specifically guided by the constitution of the country and are solely responsible for apprehending and punishing offenders. Law enforcement and criminal justice programs in the coastal region of Kenya aim to combat drug trafficking and other drug-related crimes. These programs involve the police, the judiciary, and other law enforcement agencies working together to apprehend drug traffickers, prosecute offenders, and seize drugs and drug-related assets.

#### **3.4.1 The Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU)**

The Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU) is a specialized police unit in Kenya that is responsible for combating drug trafficking and abuse. The unit was established in 1994, following the increasing trend of drug trafficking and abuse in the country. The ANU is under the jurisdiction of the Kenyan National Police Service and operates throughout the country, with particular focus on drug hotspots such as Kilifi and Mombasa Counties.

The primary function of the ANU is to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking networks operating in Kenya. The unit achieves this by conducting intelligence-based investigations, interdicting drug shipments, and arresting drug traffickers. The ANU also works to prevent drug abuse by engaging in public awareness campaigns, providing treatment and rehabilitation to drug addicts, and working closely with other government agencies and international partners to combat the drug trade. The Kilifi Head of the County Security Committee had the following to say in an interview:

*The ANU has been at the forefront of the fight against drug and substance abuse in Kilifi County through the disruption of supply chains. Through well-coordinated raids aimed at recovering illegal drugs and apprehending criminals in the drug business, the unit has helped reduce the number of drugs circulating in Kilifi County. Additionally, through collaboration with other institutions, including schools and workplaces, the unit is able to create awareness of the effects of drug and substance abuse. The impacts include the development of physical and mental health issues and the presence of repercussions as stipulated by law. Through the campaigns, the unit can advocate for law and order and prevent more people from abusing or selling drugs. Finally, by educating the public, the unit is able to reduce cases of insecurity caused by drug and substance abuse, including robbery and theft, among others. Security in Kilifi County has improved significantly with the increase in interventions by ANU (Kilifi County, Chairperson of County Security Committee, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2023).*

The ANU has had some notable successes in recent years. For example, in 2020, the unit seized over 2,000 kilograms of narcotics with an estimated street value of KES 3.3 billion. Additionally, the ANU arrested over 1,000 drug traffickers and dealers and prosecuted over 500 cases related to the same. These figures indicate a significant impact on

drug trafficking activities in the coastal region of Kenya. The high number of seizures and arrests suggests that the ANU has been successful in disrupting drug supply chains and apprehending criminals involved in the drug business, ranging from drug trafficking to drug abuse.

### **3.4.2 The National Police Service (NPS) Drug and Substance Abuse Prevention Program**

The Kenyan government launched the National Police Service (NPS) Drug and Substance Abuse Prevention Program to address the country's growing drug and substance abuse problem. The program has been implemented in various counties across Kenya, including Kilifi and Mombasa Counties.

The program was launched in 2016 and is implemented in collaboration with various stakeholders, including the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), the Ministry of Interior, and other government agencies. The program's primary objective is to create awareness about the dangers of drug and substance abuse, provide treatment and rehabilitation services to addicts, and enforce the law to prevent drug trafficking and peddling.

During the Focused group discussions (FGDs), one of the key respondents had this to say:

*As local administrators, we play a vital role in the eradication of drugs and substance abuse by liaising with the police. In this context, we are tasked with the responsibility of enforcing drug policies and laws in our respective localities. Oftentimes, whenever we want to make arrests, we collaborate with the police officers. Young people, who are the main victims of the menace, have been our regular customers during such arrests. Recently, we have also embarked on creating awareness and educating the victims of drug and substance abuse on the importance of adhering to the existing drug laws. Furthermore, we also educate on the wider effects of drugs and substance abuse, especially during public barazas (FGD, Village Elders, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023).*

The program has also established school-based programs that target both primary and secondary schools in the two counties. The programs aim to educate students about the dangers of drug and substance abuse and equip them with life skills that can help them make informed decisions about drug use.

### **3.4.3 The Kenya Prison Service (KPS) Rehabilitation Programs**

The Kenya Prison Service (KPS) is a government agency responsible for managing prisons and rehabilitation centers across the country. The KPS Rehabilitation Programs are designed to help inmates acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will enable them to lead productive lives upon release. The programs were established in response to the high rate of recidivism among inmates in Kenya. Inmates would often reoffend upon release, contributing to the country's already high crime rates. To address this problem, the KPS introduced various programs aimed at rehabilitating inmates, including education, vocational training, and counseling. Inmates are trained in a range of skills, including carpentry, masonry, welding, and tailoring. The education programs offered include primary, secondary, and tertiary levels and are tailored to the needs of individual inmates.

During an interview with victims, one of the beneficiaries had this to say:

*I used to inject drugs after being introduced to them by a colleague. I thought this would have ceased, but unfortunately, I found myself in this terrible place. I thought the place was a drug-free zone until I was reintroduced by my fellow inmate. I decided to seek medical attention to remedy my deteriorating health condition. I am glad I became a beneficiary of the MAT program. Currently, my condition is improving quite well, and I am thankful to KPS for bringing this program to us (Interview with Victim, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023).*

The Kenya Prison Service is a department housed in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government. The Department is enshrined in the Prisons Act, Cap. 90, and the Borstal Institutions Act, Cap. 92, Laws of Kenya. The Prisons Act mandates the Department to perform several functions, including the containment and safe custody of inmates; rehabilitation and reformation of inmates; controlling and training of young inmates in the Borstal Institutions and Youth Corrective Training Centers; and providing facilities for children who have accompanied their mothers to prison. Since its establishment, it has contributed to public safety and security by guaranteeing safety in prison facilities as well as the rehabilitation of convicted persons for community reintegration. It is one of the vital criminal justice systems that has the greatest impact on people's rights, especially those on the wrong side of the law.



The KPS Rehabilitation Programs have been successful in reducing recidivism rates in Kenya. In 2020, the KPS reported a 22% reduction in recidivism rates compared to the previous year. Additionally, the programs have contributed to the rehabilitation of thousands of inmates, many of whom have successfully reintegrated into society after serving their sentences. The KPS Rehabilitation Programs have been effective in reducing recidivism rates by rehabilitating inmates in Kenya. The programs have successfully reintegrated approximately 60% of the rehabilitated inmates into society, as evidenced by their ability to find employment, maintain stable housing, and avoid re-offending. The low relapse rate of only 10% within a year after release indicates that the programs have equipped inmates with the necessary skills and support to lead productive lives.

#### **3.4.4 The Judiciary Drug and Substance Abuse Control Program**

The Judiciary Drug and Substance Abuse Control Program is a government initiative in Kenya aimed at addressing the issue of drug and substance abuse in the country. The program operates in various counties, including Mombasa and Kilifi, which are known hotspots for drug and substance abuse. The program was established to provide a comprehensive approach to drug and substance abuse control by integrating the efforts of various stakeholders, including the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, health professionals, and community-based organizations. Through education and awareness campaigns as well as by offering treatment and rehabilitation services to those who are drug addicts, the program aims to prevent drug and substance abuse.

In Kilifi and Mombasa Counties, the program operates through various initiatives, including drug courts, which provide a legal framework for addressing drug-related offenses. The program also provides training and support to judicial officers and law enforcement agencies to enhance their capacity to handle drug-related cases effectively. Additionally, the program offers treatment and rehabilitation services to drug addicts, including counseling, detoxification, and vocational training. According to statistics from NACADA (2023), drug and substance abuse is a significant problem in Kenya, with over 3 million people estimated to be using drugs. Kilifi and Mombasa Counties are among the most affected, with high rates of drug-related crimes and drug addiction. However, the Judiciary Drug and Substance Abuse Control Program has made significant strides in addressing the issue through its various initiatives, including drug courts and rehabilitation programs.

#### **3.5 Harm Reduction Programs**

Harm reduction programs aim to mitigate drug abuse problems through an empathetic approach to already-practicing abusers and addicts. These programs are often aimed at the victims and approach drug abuse in a conventional way that encourages animosity. The programs often include aiding the drug abusers with safety equipment such as sterile syringes that they then use in their drug abuse. The goals of these programs are often focused on reducing the harm caused by drug abuse. In this study, notably through the focus group discussions, most of the elders felt that the harm reduction programs, which were previously considered a very good idea, have taken a turn for the worse. The elders felt that prevention as opposed to harm reduction was the best mitigation for drug abuse since it brought in a sense of alienation to the users, who then became irredeemable. However, the residents acknowledged the harm reduction exercises in the region, most especially in Mombasa County, with most residents acknowledging their existence.

##### **3.5.1 The Kenya Red Cross Society's Needle and Syringe Program (NSP)**

The Kenya Red Cross Society's Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) is a public health initiative aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections among people who inject drugs. The program was first introduced in Kenya in 2002 and has since been implemented in several counties across the country, including Mombasa and Kilifi. The NSP provides clean needles and syringes to people who inject drugs, as well as offering HIV testing, counseling, and referral services for treatment and other health care needs. The program also includes education and outreach activities to raise awareness about the risks of sharing needles and other injection equipment.

During the interviews with the beneficiaries of this program, one of them had this to say:

*You know what? I think we people who inject drugs have been ignored for quite some time. We normally risk our lives, and sometimes we end up contracting sexually transmitted infections since, oftentimes, we share syringes and needles since most of us cannot afford to purchase them. However, our lives have never been the same since the introduction of the needle and*



*syringe program by the government in collaboration with the Kenya Red Cross. The program has enabled us to access little hindrances like needles and sterile syringes. I strongly believe that this program would help mitigate the risks that are associated with needle and syringe sharing (Interview with a Victim, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2023).*

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) is one of the oldest and leading humanitarian organizations in Kenya. The society was established in late 1965 through an Act of Parliament, Cap. 256 of the Kenyan laws. Currently, the organization is running numerous activities countrywide, all of which aim to address the dynamic and bedeviling challenges confronting Kenyans, among them famine and drought. Additionally, it also addresses emerging issues that threaten economic development and prosperity, including drug and substance abuse. Relating to this, society has been driving the Needle and Syringe Program (NSP), especially in areas worst hit by the menace of drug abuse.

In Mombasa, the NSP operates through a mobile outreach program that visits several hotspots for drug use, such as the Majengo and Kisauni neighborhoods. The program distributes free needles and syringes and offers HIV testing and counseling services to drug users. In Kilifi, the NSP operates through a static clinic located at the Kilifi County Referral Hospital. The NSP has been successful in reducing the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections among people who inject drugs in Kenya. According to the Kenya National AIDS and STI Control Program, the prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs in Kenya was 18.3% in 2018, down from 29.3% in 2012. The NSP has also helped to reduce the number of new HIV infections among people who inject drugs, with an estimated 1,600 infections averted between 2012 and 2018.

### **3.5.2 The International AIDS Alliance Coast Harm Reduction Program**

The International AIDS Alliance Coast Harm Reduction Program is a government program that operates in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties in Kenya. The program was established in response to the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region, which was largely driven by the use of injection drugs. The program's primary function is to provide harm reduction services to people who inject drugs, including access to clean needles and syringes, opioid substitution therapy, HIV testing, and counseling.

According to an interview with the CEC Health Department from Kilifi County:

*The International AIDS Alliance Coast Harm Reduction Program has been beneficial to the people of Kilifi County. Since its introduction, we have had a steady increase in the number of people checking into rehabilitation centers from regions where the government has not been able to extend its services. The program also helps in controlling the spread of diseases including HIV/AIDS which is beneficial to the residents and the addicts. Their efforts have been recognized by agencies including NACADA which is working on a collaboration program to facilitate improved reach within the county and improve the range of services offered (Interview with Kilifi CEC Health, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023).*

The alliance has established drop-in centers where addicts of injecting drugs can access healthcare services, including treatment for addiction and a clean needle supply. The program has been able to distribute over 300,000 clean needles, reducing the sharing of needles and the risk of contracting HIV and other blood-borne infections (NACADA, 2021). Moreover, a peer education program has been established where individuals consuming injection drugs receive education on safe injecting practices and reduce the risk of overdose and other complications (UNODC, 2002).

Since its inception, the program has made significant progress in reducing the transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs. According to the program's statistics, the percentage of people who inject drugs in the region who are living with HIV has decreased from 45% to 10% over the past decade. In addition, the program has helped reduce the number of new HIV infections in the region by 60%. The program's success can be attributed to its comprehensive approach to harm reduction. In addition to providing clean needles and syringes and other harm reduction services, the program also focuses on addressing the root causes of drug use, such as poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination. This approach has helped to build trust between the program and the community it serves, which has been essential to increasing the program's effectiveness.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusion

The objective was to evaluate government programs for mitigating drug and substance abuse in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties of Kenya. These programs were identified as preventive, treatment, law enforcement, criminal justice, and harm reduction programs. The programs identified included NACADA Education programs, The Jitambue Program, Parenting skills and family support programs, The Mombasa County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Control (ADAPC) program, and sensitization programs through barazas. For the treatment programs the study identified, Mombasa Drug Control and Rehabilitation Centre, Pwani Alcohol and Drug Abuse Rehabilitation Centre, Reachout Centre Trust, and the Port Reitz Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Centre Under the law enforcement and criminal justice programs this study identified, NACADA, The Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU), The National Police Service (NPS) Drug and Substance Abuse Prevention Program, The Kenya Prison Service (KPS) Rehabilitation Programs, and the Judiciary Drug and Substance Abuse Control Program Under the harm reduction programs identified in this study, the Kenya Red Cross Society's Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) and the International AIDS Alliance Coast Harm Reduction Program

Conclusively, drug and substance abuse is a significant problem in the coastal region of Kenya, affecting individuals across all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. The government has put in place several programs aimed at mitigating drug abuse, and these programs have been effective to a significant extent. However, there are still several challenges facing the programs, including inadequate funding, inadequate facilities, inadequate staffing in the treatment programs, limited public awareness of the programs, and corruption. There are also opportunities, including the willingness of the government to tackle drug abuse, the existence of community support for the programs, and the presence of partnerships between government agencies and non-governmental organizations. In this case, therefore, much needs to be done, with the government and other actors such as NGOs, CBOs, and FBOs working together because the results have shown they contribute much.

### 4.2 Recommendation

Most of the initiated programs to curb the menace of drugs and substance abuse are constrained by a lack of adequate finances. Therefore, the study recommends adequate funding for the programs to help in effective implementation and the realization of success. However, these funds must be used prudently by the implementing institutions with maximum transparency and accountability. Increasing funding for law enforcement and criminal justice programs is an essential recommendation to enhance their effectiveness in combating drug trafficking and distribution. The government should allocate more resources to the law enforcement agencies to increase their capacity to conduct investigations and arrest drug traffickers. In addition, there should be a concerted effort to reduce corruption in law enforcement agencies to ensure that the resources are used for their intended purpose.

Improving the quality and accessibility of treatment programs is also recommended. The government should increase funding for staffing and facilities to improve the quality of care in treatment programs. Also, there should be efforts to increase the accessibility of these programs to those who need them the most. This can be achieved by increasing the number of treatment facilities and providing transportation for those who may not have access to these facilities.

Strengthening preventive programs by targeting high-risk populations and incorporating evidence-based practices is another recommendation. The government should target high-risk populations such as the youth, the unemployed, and those living in poverty. To add on that, preventive programs should incorporate evidence-based practices that have been shown to be effective in preventing drug abuse. These practices can include providing education on the dangers of drug abuse, promoting healthy lifestyles, and providing access to support services.

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