



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE ON DRUGS
AND CRIME
(UNODC)



Topic:
Looking into the effects
of easy drug access in
children's present and
future; looking into
criminal networks'
marketing towards young
consumers



Committee: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

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I. Quorum

-Argentina

-India

-Peru

-Australia

-Indonesia

-South Korea

-Brasil

-Italy

-Spain

-Canada

-Japan

-Thailand

-China

-Kenya

-Turkey

-Colombia

-Malasia

-United Kingdom

-Egypt

-Mexico

-United States

-France

-Netherlands

-Vietnam

-Germany

-Nigeria



II. Committee Background

The committee of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) specializes in drug control, crime prevention, counter-terrorism, and anti-corruption efforts. With a large variety of responsibilities, the UNODC is a crucial specialized body within the UN. The organization helps governments create successful policies and initiatives in these areas by offering technical and especial support, knowledge, and aid in building capacity. In order to support evidence-based decision-making and a greater understanding of these issues on a worldwide scale, the UNODC also carries out research, collects data, and spreads information to the general public and organizations worldwide.

Established in 1997, for two decades the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been thriving to achieve a world safer from drugs, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism. The UNODC is devoted to providing health, security, and justice for all by promoting peace and sustainable well-being. This committee is a global leader that specializes in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime as well as being responsible for enforcing The United Nations lead program on terrorism. The UNODC was founded as a unification of the United Nations Drug Programme (UNDP) and the Center for International Crime Prevention (ICPC).

The UNODC works to establish peace by promoting health, security, and justice programs, recognizing that sustainable peacekeeping serves as a deterrent for terrorism, and corruption. By organizing global programs and field offices, the UNODC provides sustainable long-term solutions as well as immediate, on the ground help to affected regions. The UNODC's utilization of regional offices allows it to tailor frameworks and policies to regional needs, requirements, and priorities. The UNODC relies on existing frameworks and treaties such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption to guide its work.

III. History of Topic

One of the most threatening issues UNODC deals with during our current age is children being threatened to sell drugs. This is affecting children worldwide by causing early traumas and kids and causing health-related problems, like recently a new case was opened. This case talks about teenagers from London being exploited and trafficked to sell drugs, Known as "country lines", these gangs have been known to use children as young as 12 to traffic drugs, using dedicated mobile phones or "lines". Many influential figures such as the Anti-Slavery Commissioner Kevin Hyland who stated the figures were "shocking" and the exploitation was only slowly being



recognised.

Personal accounts from victims, such as the 13-year-old known as Michael, illustrate how criminal networks lure children with the false promise of easy money, like earning £500 a week. This rapidly leads to trafficking where children are sent out of London and forced to sell drugs like heroin and crack cocaine from a vulnerable user's home—a practice called "cuckooing." These gangs systematically isolate the youth from their families, making intervention difficult. Ultimately, these victims face immense psychological and physical dangers, underscoring their treatment as disposable assets within a sophisticated trafficking scheme.

Another case was opened recently, mainly outlining how in Argentina narcotrafficking gangs started to kill children which contrasts from reports gathered a few years ago stating that the gang had never done this, this caused the beginning of the country's first narcocity. A 11-year old kid, named Maximo Jimenez, was never a target, he stopped near a store unaware that drunk narcos were on their way, witnesses say the gangsters showered bullets from a car, killing Máximo and injuring three other children. Máximo's death in March 2023 rocked Argentina and sent a message across its most drug-embattled city: as the chief's search for control – driven in part by increasing demand from Europe – anyone could become their next victim.

Rosario, an inland river port city, has been ensnared by gang violence for decades. Its location is of strategic importance, sitting along the country's main agricultural transport channel. Shipments from cocaine-producing Peru and Bolivia funnel down the Paraguay-Paraná waterway, switching boats in Rosario and other ports, before continuing to Europe and Africa. And now, experts warn business is ramping up (The Guardian, 2023). Máximo's tragic death confirms that the escalating power and strategic importance of criminal networks in cities like Rosario mean that children are now directly caught in the fatal crossfire of the global illicit drug trade.

IV. Topic Information

Easy access to illicit drugs presents a huge risk to children and adolescents, whose developing brains are highly vulnerable to substance abuse. Early introduction often leads to higher rates of addiction and consequences that damage development. These include impaired cognitive function, reduced educational success, and important mental health issues like depression and anxiety. These early impacts compromise the future potential of young citizens and create a substantial public health crisis for all Member States.



The long-term impact of early drug access creates a destructive cycle, endangering a child's entire future and increasing societal burdens. Substance dependence established in youth often results in a permanent reduction in life opportunities, including decreased chances for stable employment and a higher likelihood of future involvement with the criminal justice system. This issue generates significant social costs, requiring increased healthcare spending for treatment and rehabilitation. By obstructing healthy development, easy drug access restricts a generation's capacity to become productive citizens, thus obstructing national and global progress.

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) groups are increasingly using sophisticated and insidious marketing tactics to target young consumers, primarily through digital platforms. The speed and perceived anonymity of social media and encrypted messaging applications allow criminal networks to advertise and sell substances directly. They often use language and imagery appealing to youth culture to normalize drug use. This targeted digital marketing significantly lowers the barrier to entry for first-time users, directly contributing to easy access and creating a payable market for organized crime.

A critical link exists between easy drug access and the exploitation of children by criminal networks. The demand created by young consumers, coupled with social and economic vulnerabilities, often leads to children being recruited into the drug trade itself. They are frequently used as couriers, dealers, or victims of trafficking schemes, as their age offers perceived legal advantages to the criminals. This exploitation makes young people both victims and facilitators, trapping them in a dangerous cycle. Addressing the ease of access is therefore vital for combating child exploitation and trafficking within the illegal drug economy.

V. Current Issues

Argentina

In Argentina drug trafficking is a transit and consumption issue, including cocaine from Bolivia and Peru and cannabis from Paraguay. UNODC works with Argentina through initiatives like the Programme against Synthetic Drugs in Argentina (DROSINAR) to train officials in the identification and dismantling of drug-trafficking networks and laboratories. Illicit Firearms Trafficking in Argentina include participants from UNODC's "Quadrilateral Initiative" with Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico to enhance regional coordination and operational strategies against the illicit trafficking of firearms and their links to organized crime and terrorism.

Corruption is a significant internal challenge in Argentina, affecting its judiciary and security



forces, which can facilitate crimes like human trafficking. UNODC promotes collaboration between national security and public prosecutor's offices to tackle this issue. Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism, Argentina collaborates with UNODC on broader issues of transnational organized crime and to counter the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism in the Southern Cone region. Finally human trafficking, Argentina's corruption among officials has been noted as a facilitator of human trafficking in Argentina. UNODC is working to address the interlinkages between corruption and trafficking in persons.

Afganistan

Afganistan's shifting Drug Crisis demonstrates that, while the Taliban's ban has led to a dramatic, reported 90% reduction in opium cultivation, the overall drug problem has shifted. There is an alarming increase in the use of more harmful synthetic drugs like heroin and methamphetamine (known locally as "shisha"), causing a significant public health crisis. UNODC reports highlight new patterns of high-risk drug use, including public use hotspots, widespread needle sharing, and an urgent need for specialized treatment and harm reduction programs. Additionally operational and access constraints, the UNODC, like other UN agencies and NGOs, faces immense difficulty in program delivery due to the Taliban's edicts, most notably the ban on Afghan women working for the UN and NGOs.

This significantly hinders aid efforts, especially in reaching women and girls, both as aid workers and as recipients of health and alternative livelihood support. Lack of Government Recognition and Coordination, the international community has not formally recognized the Taliban government, creating a complex "aid paradox". The UNODC must engage with the de facto authorities to operate but faces challenges in coordinating efforts due to the lack of formal government structures and a national development plan. Finally, the economic vulnerability and alternative livelihoods of Afganistan, the sharp decrease in opium cultivation has devastated the livelihoods of rural farmers and laborers who have few other employment options.

Colombia

Colombia's record Cultivation Levels, the UNODC's latest measurements show that as of late 2023, Colombia had approximately 253,000 hectares planted with coca, accounting for 67% of all cocaine planted globally. This figure is near a historic high. Colombia's production and violence, the UNODC reports that global cocaine production increased significantly—34% from 2022 to 2023— with the associated violence from ferocious competition among traffickers extending into new regions. Policy divergence and U.S. certification, the data from UNODC

reports feed into the debate over Colombia's counter-narcotics strategy. The U.S. government has



placed Colombia on a list of countries "failing to cooperate" in the drug war, a move largely stemming from a disagreement over the Petro administration's approach, which has focused on a "total peace" strategy and rural development over forced eradication, with differing views on whether this is effective.

Implementation of peace accords in Colombia, the UNODC works within the framework of the 2016 peace agreement, which includes provisions for rural reform and alternative development to address the root causes of illicit crops. A key issue is that the full implementation of these measures has been slow and uneven, which allows illegal economies and armed groups to expand their presence in remote areas, fueling violence and instability. Additionally Colombia's humanitarian crisis, the violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups, who are heavily involved in drug trafficking and illegal mining, has led to a deteriorating humanitarian situation, including increased forced displacement, confinement of communities, and the killing of human rights defenders and former combatants. This ongoing conflict poses significant challenges to the state's ability to exert control and implement long-term solutions in affected regions.

Mexico

In Mexico the Port Security (Container Control Programme) was created, in September 2023, Mexico and the UNODC launched the Container Control Programme in the port of Manzanillo. Plans to expand it to four other major ports (Ensenada, Lázaro Cárdenas, Altamira, and Veracruz). This initiative, in cooperation with the U.S. and the World Customs Organization, aims to minimize the use of maritime containers for the illicit trafficking of drugs, precursor chemicals (especially for fentanyl), and weapons. Human Trafficking, the UNODC in August 2025 launched a campaign in Mexico to raise awareness about human trafficking within indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities, which are particularly vulnerable to forced labor, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation.

Drug Policy and Data, Mexico actively participates in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and collaborates with the UNODC to gather evidence-based information on illicit crop cultivation (poppy) and drug use trends, such as the rise in methamphetamine consumption. Access to Justice, the UNODC works with civil society organizations and the government to address challenges in the criminal justice system and improve access to justice for vulnerable populations. Finally enforced disappearances, the Mexican government has rejected claims by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances that state-led disappearances are "systematic and generalized," calling such allegations "unfounded". Victims' families and human rights organizations, however, continue to work with the UN committee to document the crisis.



VI. UN Actions

The UN created a children's program to help control the UNODC's crisis. This is named GLOK42, this was developed to promote a worldwide coordinated response to children and adolescents at risk of using drugs, and youth affected by drug use dependence. The program goals include, addressing the health and social consequences for children, preventing drug use, treating drug dependence, and facilitating positive re-integration into and contribution to the larger community. Also its main strategies are large scale mobilization, reduce the risks of developing drug use disorders, and to provide appropriate treatment strategies tailored to respond to the specific needs of this age group.

The United Nations has been successful in this program. The countries reached by this children's program are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Liberia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Showing more information about this project, we know it's relevant and useful because it provides a model, within a strong framework of evaluated strategies, that can be adapted to support member states for the scaling up of services to meet the needs of those affected by drug use dependence and its health and social consequences. The focus on science-driven public health approaches in drug control as the springboard for existing good practices.

While the UNODC's GLOK42 program represents an important, science-driven step forward in protecting children from drug-related damage, the organization still faces significant challenges that can slow its impact and efficiency. The scale and complexity of the global drug problem mean that the program's success is often limited by resource control, particularly funding and qualified personnel. The GLOK42 project provides an excellent, evaluated model, but its scaling up to meet the vast, global need is often hindered by these limitations, especially in low- and middle-income countries. This means that while the UN provides the best possible framework, its reach is often circumscribed by the political will and financial contributions of Member States.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the UNODC uses its specialized authority to address the crisis of child exploitation driven by organized crime and the increase of illicit drugs. Real-world cases, from UK "country lines" to the tragic gang violence in Rosario, Argentina, show how criminal networks target and exploit youth, causing severe developmental damage and creating a major public health crisis. This issue has become more relevant in past years due to digital marketing tactics granting young people easy access to substances, threatening their educational advance and increasing future social issues. Therefore, taking apart the infrastructure of transnational organized crime is crucial for protecting the next generation's potential.



The UNODC has responded with science-driven initiatives like the Children's Program, which provides a crucial, evaluated framework for prevention, treatment, and community reintegration across Member States. However, the program's vital mission is often slowed by resource limitations and political limitations, as demonstrated by operational challenges in regions like Afghanistan and the difficulties in scaling up efforts in countries like Colombia. The committee's work, including port security initiatives in Mexico and counter-narcotics efforts worldwide, confirms its commitment to take apart the drug economy, but sustained political will and increased funding are essential to make the GLOK42 model a global reality.

VII. Guiding Questions

- What constitutes "easy access" to illicit drugs for children and adolescents in different global contexts?
- How does early introduction to substance abuse uniquely and permanently affect the cognitive and psychological development of minors?
- What are the most common and evolving marketing and recruitment strategies used by criminal organizations to lure young people into both consumption and trade?
- How can international frameworks ensure that children exploited by drug networks are universally treated as victims rather than penalized as criminals?
- What core, evidence-based principles should national drug prevention programs follow to be most effective among youth populations globally?
- How do underlying socioeconomic factors correlate with increased vulnerability to drug-related exploitation?
- What innovative methods can be used to mobilize financial and technical resources to support long-term, specialized rehabilitation and reintegration services for affected youth?
- What general policies can governments adopt to balance digital freedom with the need to regulate platforms used by criminals for drug-related activity targeting minors?
- How can national agencies improve internal cooperation to create a unified and effective response to this multi-faceted problem?
- What general measures should the international community pursue to hold organized criminal entities accountable for the deliberate targeting and exploitation of children?



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