

NACADA QUARTERLY

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UPSCALING THE FIGHT AGAINST ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IN KENYA

IN THIS ISSUE

MAKE MENTAL HEALTH FOR
ALL A GLOBAL PRIORITY

WORRYING TREND IN
CONSUMPTION OF ILLICIT
BREW IN KENYA'S WESTERN
REGION

STOP 'ALUTA SUNDAY' TO
PREVENT THE COUNTRY FROM
SINKING INTO ALCOHOLISM

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN
THE MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOL
AND DRUG ABUSE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. Upscaling the Fight against Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Kenya

4. Make Mental Health for All a Global Priority

5. Involving the Community in the Management of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

6. Worrying trend in Consumption of Illicit Brew in Kenya's Western Region

7. Millions Worth of Cannabis Destroyed in Isiolo County as Crackdown Intensifies

8. Stop "Aluta Sundays" to Prevent the Country from Sinking into Alcoholism

10. Kenya Hosts Heads of Law and Drug Enforcement Agencies in Africa

12. Regional and Sub-Regional Cooperation Key in Addressing and Countering Drug Trafficking
in Africa

UPSCALING THE FIGHT AGAINST ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IN KENYA

A nationwide crackdown on counterfeit alcoholic drinks and drugs was launched across the country during the festive season.



Principal Secretary, Interior and National Administration, Dr. Raymond Omollo addressing the media during the launch of the nationwide crackdown at KICD

Speaking at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) during the launch, Interior PS Dr. Raymond Omollo noted that there was a surge in the use of illicit alcohol and drugs during Christmas festivities.

"This crackdown is therefore timely as it mitigates the potential harm wrought on our people by illicit brews and counterfeit alcohol that is mostly traded in non-compliant premises," Dr. Omollo said.

"Through this exercise, we can protect our youth from the devastating effects of alcohol and drug abuse." Dr. Omollo however said the crackdown will only target illicit alcohol and drugs while protecting licensed legitimate businesses trading in alcoholic beverages.

PS Omollo called on country governments to effectively play their Constitutionally-assigned role in liquor licensing and drug control. "Whilst we have seen commitment in several Counties, lax administration of these responsibilities undermines the fight against drugs and illicit alcohol. We will sustain engagements with relevant counties to redress this concern," he said.

The Inspector General of Police Japhet Koome, who was also in attendance warned that his officers will adopt a zero-tolerance on drink-driving. "Those drug barons out there, let them get the message clearly. There will be no negotiations. We are already in the festive mode," he said. "The festive mode comes with excitement. Drivers tend to drink and drive. We are not going to allow it. For speeding, we will not tolerate it."

Concerns from the exercise included the proliferation of substandard and counterfeit alcohol and the sale of brands with fake standardization stamps and outlets with deplorable health standards.

The multi-agency exercise is being coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, the National Police Service, the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), the Ministry of Health, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), the Anti-Counterfeit Authority (ACA) and the County Governments.

The meeting which was also attended by all regional commissioners follows a recent order by President William Ruto to enhance the fight against the production, consumption, and sale of illicit alcohol and drugs.

The meeting comes following a recent directive by President William Ruto calling for an enhanced fight against the production, consumption, and sale of illicit alcohol and drugs.

Previously, the government mounted similar crackdowns under the Rapid Result Initiatives program coordinated by NACADA.

MAKE MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL A GLOBAL PRIORITY



Image: Courtesy

Whilst the pandemic has and continues to, take its toll on our mental health, the ability to reconnect through World Mental Health Day 2022 will provide us with an opportunity to re-kindle our efforts to protect and improve mental health.

Many aspects of mental health have been challenged, and already before the pandemic in 2019, an estimated one in eight people globally was living with a mental disorder. At the same time, the services, skills, and funding available for mental health remain in short supply and fall far behind what is needed, especially in low and middle-income countries.

Growing social and economic inequalities, protracted conflicts, violence, and public health emergencies affect whole populations, threatening progress toward improved well-being; a staggering 84 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced in 2021. We must deepen the value and commitment we give to mental health as individuals, communities, and governments and match that value with more commitment, engagement, and investment by all stakeholders, across all sectors. We must strengthen mental health care so that the full spectrum of mental health needs is met through a community-based network of accessible, affordable, and quality services and supports.

Stigma and discrimination continue to be a barrier to social inclusion and access to the right care; importantly, we can all play our part in increasing awareness about which preventive mental health interventions work and World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to do that collectively. We envision a world in which mental health is valued, promoted and protected; where everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy mental health and to exercise their human rights; and where everyone can access the mental health care they need.

WHO will work with partners to launch a campaign around the theme of **Making Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority**. This will be an opportunity for people with mental health conditions, advocates, governments, employers, employees, and other stakeholders to come together to recognize progress in this field and to be vocal about what we need to do to ensure **Mental Health & Well-Being becomes Global Priority for all**.

Courtesy of World Health Organisation

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE



The Authority has launched the framework for Community Engagement in the Management of Alcohol and Drug abuse in Kenya, the first of its kind in the country.

The framework is a national guideline on the continuous engagement of multiple sectors in society to ensure the uptake and support of alcohol and drug abuse prevention and management programs.

Speaking during the ceremony, NACADA Chief Executive Officer, Victor Okioma observed that the framework has been developed at a time when alcohol and drug demand reduction has been measures aspire for the well-being of the society as a whole through scientific evidence-based prevention strategies centered on and tailored to the needs of individuals, families, and communities.

"The framework envisages structured efforts geared towards the provision of home-based care, participation in prevention and advocacy, community outreach and policing; and re-integration of persons with substance use disorders back into the society. Community workgroups connect multiple sectors of society such as businesses parents, media law enforcement agencies, learning institutions, faith-based organizations, healthcare service providers, social service agencies, and governments to develop policies and strategies for prevention, treatment, and aftercare at the community level," he added.

Significant risk factors for alcohol and drug use at the community level include poverty, community, and cultural norms, positive attitude towards alcohol and drug use, and easy access to cheap alcohol and other substances. Family-level risk factors include ineffective parenting skills, a family history of alcohol and drug use or mental health disorders, and high levels of family conflict or violence. At the individual level, major risk factors include mental health disorders, low involvement in school, joblessness, history of abuse and neglect, and history of substance use during adolescence among others

WORRYING TREND IN CONSUMPTION OF ILLICIT BREW IN KENYA'S WESTERN REGION



Photo Courtesy: Alamy Stock Photos

The Authority has raised concerns over the growing trend in the consumption of illicit brews in Kenya's Western Region.

This was revealed during a consultative forum held in Mumias East Constituency, which brought together top National Government Administration (NGAO) and security leadership from the region.

During the meeting, NACADA Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma revealed that some drugs and counterfeit alcoholic drinks are sneaked into the country through border points in Busia and Malaba towns.

"We will soon embark on a thorough crackdown on the illicit brews and drugs in this region and we ask leaders from Western to help us in creating awareness and sensitizing the people about the dangers of using drugs and consuming illicit brews," Okioma said.

The CEO said NACADA impounded at least 80,173 litres of *chang'aa*, 3,100 litres of *kangara* and 900 litres of *busaa* in the region during a previous crackdown.

"In Bungoma, 122 premises were inspected out of which 80 were compliant while 30 were operating illegally. At least 335 people were arrested in Bungoma and 2,130 litres of *chang'aa*, 233,438 litres of *kangara*, and 14,541 litres of *busaa* were impounded as part of the measures geared towards addressing drug and alcohol abuse. In Kakamega, 132 were inspected but 101 were not compliant. Officers arrested 629 people and shut down 59 premises in a crackdown on non-compliant entities. They recovered 3,998 litres of *chang'aa*, 17,391 litres of *kangara* and 29,579 litres of *busaa*," he revealed.

NACADA said Bungoma County was leading in the sale and consumption of illicit brews with 400,159 litres, followed by Kakamega with 207,209 litres, Busia with 87,000 and Vihiga with 12,000 litres.

"We have seen this region becoming a transit point for drugs and counterfeit products and some of the substances come into the country from Busia because it is cheap," said Okioma. He urged county governments to use money collected from licensing and control of alcoholic products to create awareness and build rehabilitation centres for the affected people.

MILLIONS WORTH OF CANNABIS DESTROYED IN ISIOLO COUNTY AS CRACKDOWN INTENSIFIES



The Authority, in collaboration with the National Police Service and Judiciary in Isiolo, burnt Ksh20 million worth of bhang it has seized in the town and neighboring regions during the last six months.

The illegal drugs were set on fire at the Isiolo Law Courts Grounds, in an event witnessed by the Court's Chief Magistrate Lucy Mutai, Nacada CEO Victor Okioma, Isiolo County Commissioner Geoffrey Omoding, and County Criminal Investigations Officer Betty Chepng'eno among other top government officers.

The CEO said that most consumers of bhang are young people, who are wasting their lives away. "The war against drug and substance abuse will only be won if every member of the society plays their role well," she said.

He added that the bhang-burning exercise in Isiolo was a major victory in the fight against drug and substance trafficking and abuse, further noting that bhang has led to many mental health problems affecting many Kenyans. He lauded the police for their effort to seize bhang on transit from neighboring Ethiopia to Nairobi and other parts of the country.

While addressing journalists, Chief Magistrate Mutai noted the negative impact of bhang, particularly on young people, and emphasized the need for all members of society to play their part in the fight against drug and substance abuse.

Okioma also highlighted the harmful effects of bhang, stating that it is the most problematic drug being abused in Kenya and contributes to numerous mental health issues affecting people throughout the country.

In addition to the burning of the seized bhang, Isiolo County Commissioner Omoding announced that security officers are using technology, including drone cameras, to monitor and track suspicious activity along the Yamicha-Merti route, a known trafficking route. This increased vigilance has reportedly led to a reduction in drug trafficking cases along the route. Commissioner Omoding also stated that some of the bhang burned was seized within Isiolo town and its surroundings, and called for collective responsibility among all members of the public in the fight against drug and substance abuse.

STOP 'ALUTA SUNDAY' TO PREVENT THE COUNTRY FROM SINKING INTO ALCOHOLISM

The country is witnessing unprecedented levels of alcohol consumption, so much that clubs have now found their way into estates in urban areas.

Additionally, over the last few months, a new clubbing phenomenon has been creeping into the country and is spreading like wildfire; Aluta Sundays. The Jamaica-inspired Sunday morning carnival sees revelers flocking to nightclubs as early as 6 am to enjoy endless hours of unlimited reggae celebration.

Couple this with the fact that there are plans to introduce what is being touted as 'light beer' that can be taken together with meals, and we have a serious problem brewing. Scientifically, you will not necessarily feel alcohol's impact on your body right away, but it starts from the moment you take your first sip.

Common knowledge is such that alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways, and can affect the way the brain looks and works. These disruptions can change mood and behavior, and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination.

Those behind this craze have been quoted as justifying their position as specifically catering to reggae lovers who just won't go home or who, for lack of a better thing to do on a Sunday morning, find it fit to imbibe while enjoying their music. Never mind that most of these people are often already drunk since they move from one club to another till the wee morning hours. It is almost impractical that anyone will wake up early on a Sunday morning to go for a drink and enjoy music in a club.

According to the National Cancer Institute, there is a strong scientific consensus that alcohol drinking can cause several types of cancer. In its Report on Carcinogens, the National Toxicology Program of the US Department of Health and Human Services lists the consumption of alcoholic beverages as a known human carcinogen.

Most people assume the occasional beer or glass of wine at mealtimes or special occasions doesn't pose much cause for concern. But drinking any amount of alcohol can potentially lead to unwanted health consequences.

Ideally, since the Aluta Sunday revelers are engaged in binge drinking or even partaking copious amounts of alcohol during the night, they are at risk of serious problems arising out of heavy drinking.

If you drink heavily for a long time, alcohol can affect how your brain looks and works. Its cells start to change and even get smaller. Too much alcohol can actually shrink your brain. And that'll have big effects on your ability to think, learn, and remember things. It can also make it harder to keep a steady body temperature and control your movements.

The Aluta Sunday idea has become such a massive hit with club owners that they have created specific zones. They fail to realize that over time, drinking can also damage the brain's frontal lobe, the part responsible for executive functions, like abstract reasoning, decision-making, social behavior, and performance.

In other words, the country is staring at another enormous problem being perpetuated by those hell-bent on making profits at any cost. Some people who drink eventually develop a tolerance to alcohol. As a result, they eventually need to drink more to notice the same effects they once did.

Drinking alcohol on a regular basis can also lead to dependence, which means your body and brain have grown used to alcohol's effects.

KENYA HOSTS HEADS OF LAW AND DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN AFRICA



Leaders attending the 30th Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) meeting at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC)

Kenya on November 8 to 11, 2023 hosted the weeklong 30th Heads of National Drug and Law Enforcement Agencies in Africa (HONLEA), 2022 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) to discuss drug trends and challenges in Africa. The meeting was attended by over 150 delegates.

The meeting identified salient policy and enforcement issues; concealment methods, synthetic drug production, and trafficking; alternatives to conviction or punishment for drug-related offenses; and the role of regional cooperation platforms in facilitating the exchange of actionable intelligence.

In November 2021, Kenya was picked as the new delegate for Africa at Interpol, representing Africa at the key security organ that brings together over 195 member states. This was a great boost to the government's commitment to strengthening regional and sub-regional cooperation in addressing and countering the world drug problem. This election was largely an endorsement of the strategies that Kenya has adopted in managing crime, especially in counter-terrorism, organized crime, cybercrime and transnational crimes, as well as a vote of confidence in the Kenyan security sector on the global stage.

While delivering the keynote address on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Government, Dr. (Eng.) Kibicho reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to the three international conventions on drug abuse and all related protocols and resolutions on countering the world drug problem. "I hope that the African group will speak in one voice in the war against drug trafficking, policies and strategies to the problem," Dr. Eng. Charles Kibicho.

The meeting deliberations underscored Kenya's call on developed countries to support developing countries in the area of technology, capacity building, policy development and relevant equipment to support their unified response to specific drug problems.

According to the World Drug Report 2022 around 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs worldwide in 2020, a 26 percent increase over the previous decade. Young people are using more drugs, with use levels today in many countries higher than with the previous generation. In Africa and Latin America, people under 35 represent the majority of people being treated for drug use disorders primarily for cannabis use disorders.

The report further emphasizes the importance of galvanizing the international community, governments, civil society, and all stakeholders to take urgent action to protect people, including by strengthening drug use prevention and treatment and by tackling illicit drug supply.

Illicit drug trafficking and abuse remain a major challenge to the socioeconomic development of States across the globe. Global trends indicate an upward trend in the abuse of drugs and a shift from traditional substances to amphetamine-type stimulants, new psychoactive substances, and synthetic drugs including non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs.

Held every year, HONLEA Africa (HONLAF)- one of the five subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs – provides a platform for practitioners to discuss the regional perspective of the drug problem. The Thirtieth HONLAF was the first in-person meeting after the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 and 2020 meetings were virtual as extraordinary sessions. Nigeria was elected to host the next HONLEA, in 2023. This was the unanimous decision of the regional network at the close of the annual meeting.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION KEY IN ADDRESSING AND COUNTERING DRUG TRAFFICKING IN AFRICA



Starting today the Government is hosting the Thirtieth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in Africa (HONLEA-Africa) 2022 in Nairobi.

The weeklong meeting, being organized by the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), brings together over 100 heads of drug law enforcement agencies from across the continent.

The meeting provides the country with the opportunity to contribute to the regional cooperation initiatives which are aimed at promoting a collective approach to the challenge of drugs and trafficking.

The meeting will also provide participants with an opportunity to discuss in general how the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) subsidiary bodies could better contribute to the practical implementation of joint commitments made, in line with the previous Ministerial Declarations, ensuring that it is informed of regional and domestic concerns, developments and best practices by all stakeholders.

The dark web continues to emerge as one of the new drug trafficking routes and this was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic that saw restrictions on movement. According to the World Drug Report 2022, while the dark net markets continue to account for a very small share of drug transactions, their use has been growing over the past decade and markets are no longer restricted to Western countries as they also affect Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

On the other hand, the country has witnessed an increase in the abuse of prescription drugs for non-medical use among the youth including primary school pupils and secondary school students. Evidence also shows an expanding market for heroin use in the country beyond the traditionally known hotspots of Mombasa and Nairobi. Seizure data as well as surveillance reports have shown that heroin use is now an emerging problem in Uasin Gishu, Kisumu, Nakuru, Kiambu, and Isiolo counties.

Further, surveillance reports indicate new methods of delivery of cannabis through the use of cannabis edibles, especially in the form of confectioneries e.g. weed cookies, weed cakes, mabuyu (baobab seeds), and sweets/ candies. Most of these products are particularly attractive to young children. This trend presents an emerging challenge in the control of drugs and substance of abuse in the country.

It is clear to us that lack of harmonized alcohol and drug-related laws within the East African Community Member States is one of the challenges facing drug control efforts in Kenya. This has particularly affected enforcement efforts related to the trafficking of narcotic drugs across the Member States. It has also been complicated by inadequate joint enforcement programs within the EAC Member States to control alcohol and drug use, especially along the common borders.

Law enforcement agencies with tight budgets and personnel reductions or shortages must use their available resources carefully, targeting individuals, locations, and operations that promise the greatest results and the best chances for success in this fight.

It is for this reason that the HONLEA meeting accords us an opportunity to share with our counterparts from the continent as we also learn from them. The main goal at the end of the conference is to come up with commitments that will inform our collective strategy in the fight against drugs and trafficking moving forward.

Need someone to talk to on drugs and alcohol?

Call NACADA's



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HELPLINE 1192**