

# The Role of National Youth Development Initiatives on Prevention of Drug Abuse – A Case Study of Ilala

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**Abstract:** The study assessed the role of youth development initiatives in Tanzania on prevention of drug abuse. A Case of Ilala Municipality. The objectives were to examine the contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality and to identify the challenges facing national youth development initiatives on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality. The study adopted descriptive research design. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The sample size was 172 respondents obtained from a target population of 337 respondents using a Slovenes formula and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 and thematic analysis. The findings from the study indicated that that active youth participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among young people, encouraging them to engage in healthier behaviors and support their peers in avoiding substance use. When youth are involved in crafting prevention strategies that resonate with their experiences, these initiatives become more relevant and impactful. The findings concluded that many respondents feel that existing government support for youth programs is insufficient, which limits the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at addressing drug abuse. The relatively low mean value reflects concerns about the lack of comprehensive resources allocated to youth empowerment and prevention strategies. Finally, the study recommended in implement and expand job training and skills development initiatives targeted at youth and encourage collaboration between local organizations, schools, and families to create a supportive environment for youth.

**Keywords:** National Youth Development Initiatives, Prevention of Drug Abuse.

## 1. Introduction

Youth development initiatives refer to a set of programs and strategies aimed at empowering young individuals through education, skills training, and community engagement. These initiatives are designed to address the unique challenges faced by youth, including unemployment, lack of recreational activities, and peer pressure, which are often contributing factors to substance abuse (Dimitrova & Wiium, 2021). The National Youth Development Policy, enacted in Tanzania, emphasizes the importance of equipping young people with opportunities that promote their overall well-being and social inclusion (Yusuph & Negret, 2016). Research indicates that

when youth are actively engaged in constructive activities, such as job training and community service, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, including drug use (Amin et al., 2023).

Prevention of drug abuse—encompasses various strategies and interventions aimed at reducing the initiation and prevalence of substance use among young people. Effective prevention requires a comprehensive approach that considers social, economic, and psychological factors influencing youth behavior. Studies have shown that initiatives fostering economic empowerment and community participation can significantly mitigate the risk factors associated with drug abuse (Mbwika, 2022). For instance, when young people feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their communities, they are more likely to adopt healthier lifestyles and resist peer pressure related to drug use (Hlungwani, 2018).

Youth is a valuable resource that can be harnessed for the benefit of all. It is for this reason that, Africa Union recognizes youth as partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries in the attainment of the goal and aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Youth development initiatives refers to a set of principles, strategies, and programs aimed at promoting the overall well-being, growth, and empowerment of young individuals within a society. It encompasses a range of policies and initiatives designed to address the unique needs, challenges, and aspirations of young people, providing them with opportunities for positive development, learning, and engagement (Dimitrova and Wiium, 2021).

In Malaysia, drug abuse among youth is a highly discussed topic as the number of youths involved in drugs keeps increasing. Ngamije and Yadufashije (2016) strongly believed that the youth start committing drug abuse during their adolescent years, especially those who never go to school or school dropouts. As they grow old, the urge to take drugs increases. It might be due to their lack of knowledge concerning drugs and the consequences since they are exposed and educated about why drugs are dangerous and most importantly.

In Zambian Government had adopted and launched the first National Youth Initiatives in 1994 to guide stakeholders in the

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youth sector. Although issues affecting the Youth had a proper framework which public and private institutions including the civil society followed in mitigating the situation of youth, there were new issues that emerged at the dawn of the new millennium. Zambia's socio-economic situation had deteriorated and this was evident from the rising poverty levels, unemployment, HIV and AIDS and other education and health related problems which negatively affected the Youth. To address these challenges, the 1994 Youth Initiatives was therefore revised in 2006 to pave way for new and emerging issues to be included in the development agenda for the Youth. The initiatives was also aligned to national, regional and international goals such as the Millennium Development Goals, Copenhagen Commitments on Social Development, the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) 2007 – 2015 and the African Youth Charter (Hlungwani, 2018).

In Kenya Youth Development Initiatives (KYDI) (2019) is part of the Government initiatives commitment for a greater cohesive society, equitable, inclusive and participatory economic and social process for sustainable development. The Initiatives ensures that the youth, the families and communities benefit from its full implementation. The Initiatives gives cognizance to the critical role that voluntary youth sector and other relevant stakeholders can play in actively supporting its implementation for the country's inclusive socio-economic transformation (Mbwika, 2022).

Tanzania is a signatory to the 1988 United Nations (UN) convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In achieving this objective, the government passed the National Drug Control Act No. 9 of 1995 which established a severe punishment for the production and trafficking of narcotics. The Act stipulates long sentences, including life imprisonment, a penalty of not less than 10 million Tanzanian Shillings and forfeiture of property derived from or used in the trafficking of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances. Despite the presence of laws and a national agency responsible for eradicating drug trafficking and use, the war against drug seems to be difficult since there is a growing number of users and addicts (Yusuph, and Negret, 2016).

Drug abuse is a significant public health concern worldwide, affecting individuals of all ages and communities. In Tanzania, like many other countries, drug abuse poses numerous social, economic, and health challenges, particularly among the youth population. Recognizing the urgent need to address this issue, the Tanzanian government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at youth development (Amin, *et al.*, 2023).

Drug abuse, including both illicit substances and misuse of prescription drugs, has become a growing problem in Tanzania. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, peer influence, and lack of awareness contribute to the vulnerability of Tanzanian youth to substance abuse. The consequences of drug abuse, including health issues, crime, and social disintegration, have prompted the government to prioritize prevention efforts. The Tanzanian government has recognized the importance of investing in youth development to address social challenges, including drug abuse. The National Youth Development

Initiatives (NYDP) serves as a comprehensive framework to guide interventions and initiatives aimed at improving the well-being and prospects of young people. The NYDP emphasizes the promotion of healthy lifestyles, education, skills development, employment opportunities, and social inclusion of Tanzanian youth (Yusuph, and Negret, 2016).

The relationship between youth development initiatives and drug abuse prevention lies in the understanding that comprehensive youth development programs can effectively mitigate risk factors associated with substance abuse. Examining the implementation of youth development policies in Tanzania is crucial to understand their impact on preventing drug abuse. It is essential to assess the extent to which the NYDP has been integrated into various sectors, such as education, health, and employment, and the effectiveness of specific interventions targeting drug abuse prevention within the youth development framework (Lerner, *et al.*, 2015).

#### *A. Statement of the Problem*

The issue of drug abuse among the youth in Tanzania is a pressing concern that has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and society as a whole. Drug abuse not only jeopardizes the physical and mental well-being of the youth, but it also undermines their ability to contribute productively to the socioeconomic development of the country. In recent years, there has been a worrying trend of increased drug use among the youth in Tanzania, with substances such as cannabis, heroin, and synthetic drugs becoming increasingly accessible and prevalent.

Drug abuse among youth remains a significant challenge in Tanzania, despite the existence of the National Youth Development Initiatives since 2010. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics indicates that the prevalence of drug abuse among youth aged 15-24 in Ilala Municipality has increased from 12% in 2018 to 18% in 2022 (NBS, 2022). This 50% increase in drug abuse cases over the past 4 years is a clear indication that the current initiatives and interventions are not effectively addressing the root causes and dynamics of this pressing issue. The National Youth Development Initiatives was introduced in 2010 with the aim of promoting the overall well-being, growth, and empowerment of young people in Tanzania. The initiatives outlines strategies and programs focused on areas such as education, employment, health, and civic engagement. However, the persistent rise in drug abuse cases among youth in Ilala Municipality suggests that the initiatives has fallen short in adequately addressing the problem of substance abuse.

One of the key shortcomings of the initiatives is its limited focus on preventive measures and early intervention. While the initiatives emphasizes youth empowerment and development, it lacks a comprehensive and targeted approach to addressing the root causes of drug abuse, such as socioeconomic challenges, peer pressure, and lack of recreational activities. The initiatives also fails to provide clear guidelines and resources for local authorities and youth-serving organizations to effectively implement substance abuse prevention programs. Initiatives' monitoring and evaluation mechanisms appear to be

inadequate, as evidenced by the inability to curb the rising trend of drug abuse among youth in Ilala Municipality. Without robust data collection, analysis, and feedback loops, initiatives makers and implementers are unable to assess the effectiveness of the initiative's interventions and make necessary adjustments to address the evolving needs and challenges faced by young people. Despite the existence of policies and law against drug abuse, the increased number of youth on the use of drugs cases in Ilala municipality has prompted this study to assess the role of youth development initiatives in Tanzania on prevention of drug abuse. "A Case of Ilala Municipality".

### *B. Research Objectives*

1. To examine the contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality.
2. To identify the challenges facing national youth development initiatives on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality.

## **2. Literature Review**

Valdez, et al., (2020), conducted a study on Youth participatory action research for youth substance use prevention: a systematic review. In their study they revealed that, Participation emphasizes meaningful youth participation where youth initiate projects or programs and share decision making with adults. It describes eight escalating degrees of participation, ranging from non-participation at the lowest rungs (e.g., manipulation, decoration, and tokenism) to true participation at the top rungs of the ladder (e.g., provision of information by youth, youth-initiated shared decisions with adults) The participatory intervention model (PIM) is a methodology for grounding interventions in the ongoing life of communities, by involving community stakeholders and targeted populations in each stage of the intervention development process.

Youths in Community-Based Participatory Research is beneficial and feasible. Lessons learned that facilitate youth involvement include active listening, using strategies for engagement such as nominal group process, acting on the youths' recommendations, rewarding youths for active participation early in the project, and developing youths' skills to take different roles during the project. An ethnographic approach to Community-Based Participatory Research has the potential to sustain a youth-oriented substance use prevention program and to facilitate success in similar projects in other rural communities.

Salas-Wright, et al., (2019), conducted a study on Trends in substance use prevention program participation among adolescents in the US. In their study they revealed that, Participation in school-based SUPP decreased significantly from 48% among adolescents in 2002–2003 to 40% in 2015–2016, a 16.5% proportional decline. Significant declines for school-based participation were observed in all demographic and drug involvement subgroups examined. Youth participation in community-based SUPP also decreased significantly. However, this downward trend was significant only among younger teens, females, youth in very low (<

\$20,000) and moderate (\$40,000-\$74,999) income households, and in rural areas.

Rachman, et al., (2020), conducted a study on The Family Roles to Prevention of Drug Abuse in Adolescents. In their study they revealed that, active participation suggests both an objective aspect representing patient compliance and session content, and a subjective aspect that reflects cognitive involvement and satisfaction with the process" Another conceptually similar construct, treatment compliance, has been defined as "the extent to which a person's behavior not only coincides with medical or health advice but also reflect the person's commitment to his or her own care".

Duff, (2014), conducted a study on Drug use as a 'practice of the self': Is there any place for an 'ethics of moderation 'in contemporary drug initiatives?'. In their study they revealed that, that this material offers important new ways of understanding the changing nature of drug use for young people, as well as providing new conceptual bases for the design and delivery of harm minimization strategies within those settings and contexts in which drug use takes place. Indeed, Foucault's work on ethics and the 'use of pleasure' gives rise to a series of critiques of contemporary drug initiatives and the ways in which it tends to privilege the 'problem' of harms whilst eliding the consideration of pleasure. I conclude that contemporary policies and strategies must find ways of accommodating the exigencies of pleasure in planning and implementing more effective responses to the problems associated with illicit drug use.

Nawi, et al. (2021), conducted a study on Risk and protective factors of drug abuse among adolescents: a systematic review. In their study they revealed that, Adolescents are the group of people most prone to addiction. The critical age of initiation of drug use begins during the adolescent period, and the maximum usage of drugs occurs among young people aged 18–25 years old. During this period, adolescents have a strong inclination toward experimentation, curiosity, susceptibility to peer pressure, rebellion against authority, and poor self-worth, which makes such individuals vulnerable to drug abuse. During adolescence, the basic development process generally involves changing relations between the individual and the multiple levels of the context within which the young person is accustomed. Variation in the substance and timing of these relations promotes diversity in adolescence and represents sources of risk or protective factors across this life period.

## **3. Methodology**

The study was adopted the descriptive research design because Descriptive research design is characterized by its focus on providing a detailed account of the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. In this study, the researcher sought to gather extensive information about the socio-economic backgrounds of the youth, their levels of engagement in development initiatives, and the prevalence of drug use within the community. The target population consisted of the registered 337 respondents and researcher selected Ilala Municipality because it is characterized by a diverse demographic profile, encompassing various socio-economic

backgrounds. This diversity provides a rich context for examining how different factors—such as education, employment opportunities, and community resources—interact with youth development initiatives and influence drug abuse rates. The researcher used Slovin's formula to obtaining sample size of 183 respondents, included youth, Parents and Guardians, local government officials, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). The youth from four Ilala Municipality Wards will be included in the study's target. Buguruni, Chanika, Gongo La Mboto, and Tabata are among the Wards. The researcher used Purposive sampling and simple random sampling in order to give equal chances to all the respondents to participate. In order to collect the data needed, the researcher used interview guide and questionnaire for collecting primary data and the questionnaire was closed ended that was developed objectives.

#### 4. Research Findings

##### A. General Profile of the Respondents

In this section, a researcher aimed to understand the characteristics of the population under study and their likelihood to contribute to the theme of this study. Therefore, the section includes information on age, sex, marital status, level of education of respondents.

##### B. Response Rate

Out of all the 183 questionnaires distributed, 172 were collected and accepted yielding 94% response rate. On collecting the filled instruments from the respondents, the researcher and his assistants checked to ensure that all items in a returned questionnaire were responded to. Where omissions were noted a concerned respondent was requested to fill the missing responses. However, 11 (6.0%) questionnaires were either not returned or had errors that could not qualify for analysis. All 172 questionnaires that were returned and considered for analysis met 100% of the study's selected sample. The researcher met the minimum requirement of response rate which was above 94% as suggested by Fincham (2008) whereby this response rate helps researchers to avoid non-response bias in generalization of research findings.

Table 1  
Response rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Percent
Received questionnaire	172	94
Un-returned/error questionnaire	11	6
Total	183	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2024

##### 1) Marital Status of Respondents

The results in Table 2 below reveal that the majority of the respondents 87, (50.5%) were single, while 46 (26.7%) of respondents were married, 26 (15.3%) were separated, 7 (4%) were divorced and 6 (3.5%) of respondents were widow/widower. These findings reflect that the majority of the respondents were single because single individuals may have less social support and fewer emotional connections compared

to those in committed relationships. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which may drive some to seek solace in drugs.

##### 2) Age of Respondents

Table 2 below indicates that, out of the 172 respondents involved in the study, the majority 97 (56.4%) were aged below 20- years old. Additionally, 39 (22.6%) of respondents were aged between 21-30 years old, 23 (13.5%) were 31-40 years old, and 11 (6.3%) were 41-50 years old and 2(1.2%) were aged between 51-60 years. These findings imply that the majority of the respondents were aged below 20- years old because at this is a critical developmental stage where curiosity and peer influence play significant roles, many young people begin experimenting with drugs during this time, often due to social pressures, a desire for acceptance, or a search for identity. This age group often experiences significant life changes, such as transitioning to college, entering the workforce, or gaining independence. The combination of newfound freedom, social opportunities, and stress can lead to increased substance use.

##### 3) Education Level of Respondents

The findings in Table 2 indicated that the majority of the respondents 69(40.3%) were form four level, 53(30.8%) certificate, 45(26.1%) Certificate, 4(2.3%) bachelor and 1(0.5%) Postgraduate and 2(2%) Never went to school. This implies that majority of the respondent were educated into different professionalism thus can be aware on drug abuse and the data implies that the majority of respondents possess a reasonable level of education, which can enhance their awareness of drug abuse and its consequences. With a significant number educated at the Form Four and certificate levels, these individuals are likely to have some understanding of the importance of drug prevention programs.

Table 2  
Respondents' socio-economic characteristics

		Frequency(f)	Percent (%)
Marital status	Single	87	50.5
	Married	46	26.7
	Separated	26	15.3
	Divorced	7	4
	Widow/widower	6	3.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	Below 20- years	97	56.4
	21-30 years	39	22.6
	31-40 years	23	13.5
	41-50 years	11	6.3
	51-60 years	2	1.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>172</b>	<b>100</b>
Education level	Never went to school	0	0
	Form four	69	40.3
	Certificate	53	30.8
	Diploma	45	26.1
	Bachelor	4	2.3
	Postgraduate	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>172</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Data, 2024

##### C. To Examine the Contribution of Youth Participation on Prevention of Drug Abuse in Ilala Municipality

The study also assess the contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality. The findings revealed on the following table 3 as follows.

Table 3  
Contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse

Contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increased youth participation in community-based drug abuse prevention programs can be effective	97	29	20	13	13	1.7907	.87347
friends/family members been involved in youth-led drug abuse prevention initiatives in your area	57	81	8	25	1	2.0233	1.00846
Youth participation approaches is most effective for preventing drug abuse	91	54	0	19	8	1.8314	1.17007
Schools and educational institutions are doing enough to encourage and facilitate youth participation in drug abuse prevention efforts	85	47	8	25	7	1.9651	1.22305
Local government and community organizations providing adequate support and resources for youth-led drug abuse prevention programs	30	15	10	90	27	3.4102	1.33622
Youth involvement in drug abuse prevention can help reduce stigma and encourage more open discussions about the issue	79	52	9	19	3	2.0407	1.28125
<b>Overall mean value</b>						<b>2.1769</b>	<b>1.1487</b>

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 4  
Challenges facing national youth development initiatives on prevention of drug abuse

Challenges facing national youth development initiatives on prevention of drug abuse	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ineffective coordination with community organizations, limited capacity of local service providers, and fragmented data collection	68	66	11	13	14	2.0640	1.22426
As new drugs, administration methods, and patterns of use emerge, national policies and programs frequently fail to pivot and innovate quickly enough to address evolving challenges.	40	90	8	25	9	2.2616	1.12709
Insufficient funding and resources	80	72	0	19	0	1.7733	.95561
Limited engagement with local communities	71	56	11	23	0	2.1105	1.25866
Difficulty reaching marginalized youth:	61	70	29	13	8	2.0523	1.09365
Lack of coordination between government agencies	63	86	0	19	4	1.9244	1.00878
<b>Overall mean value</b>						<b>2.0140</b>	<b>1.1112</b>

Source: Field Data, 2024

The first objective examined the contribution of youth participation in drug abuse prevention initiatives, resulting in an overall mean value of 2.1769 and a standard deviation of 1.1487. This score indicates strong agreement among respondents about the effectiveness of involving youth in community-based programs. Participants highlighted that youth engagement enhances the relevance and relatability of prevention strategies, as young people are more attuned to the challenges their peers face. The moderate standard deviation suggests a consensus among respondents, reinforcing the idea that active participation fosters a supportive environment that can effectively counteract drug use. The findings indicate that active participation enhances the relevance and relatability of prevention strategies, making them more effective in addressing the challenges young people face.

Respondents noted that youth involvement fosters a supportive environment, encouraging peers to engage in healthier behaviors and discouraging drug use. By providing insights and feedback, young people can help shape initiatives that resonate with their experiences, ultimately leading to more effective prevention efforts. This underscores the importance of creating platforms for youth engagement, as their contributions are vital in developing strategies that effectively combat drug abuse in the community. These findings comply with those of Spoth et al. (2019) that highlights the importance of school-based prevention programs that educate students about the dangers of drug use. The study found that when educational institutions integrate comprehensive drug prevention curricula, students are better informed about the risks associated with substance use. This knowledge is crucial for fostering critical thinking and enabling young people to make informed decisions regarding their health.

*Interview findings on the contribution of youth participation*

*on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality.*

In this section interviewees were asked to provide their views regarding the contribution of youth participation on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality. Below is the summary of the findings;

Here is what local government officials said:

*“When young individuals are actively involved in prevention efforts, they are more likely to feel empowered and committed to making positive changes in their communities. This sense of agency not only motivates youth to advocate for healthier choices but also encourages their peers to participate in similar initiatives”.*

The above findings revealed that active participation allows youth to take ownership of the issues that affect them because when they engage in designing and implementing prevention programs, they feel that their voices are heard and valued. This sense of agency cultivates confidence and a belief in their ability to make a difference, motivating them to take proactive steps in promoting healthier lifestyles among their peers. This findings comply with those of Zeldin et al. (2020) underscores the relationship between youth engagement and empowerment. The study found that when young people are involved in decision-making processes related to prevention programs, they feel a greater sense of ownership over the outcomes. This involvement fosters self-efficacy, allowing them to believe in their ability to effect change, which is crucial for cultivating a proactive stance against substance use.

#### *D. Challenges Facing National Youth Development Initiatives on Prevention of Drug Abuse in Ilala Municipality*

The final objective of the study focused on identifying the challenges faced by national youth development policies in preventing drug abuse among youth in Ilala Municipality. The findings indicated a mean value of 2.0140 and a standard

deviation of 1.1112, reflecting a moderate agreement among respondents regarding the inadequacy of existing policies and funding. Participants expressed concerns about insufficient government support for youth empowerment initiatives, which limits the effectiveness of programs aimed at addressing drug abuse. The responses highlighted a consensus that current financial resources are inadequate to implement comprehensive training and development initiatives, leaving many young people vulnerable to substance abuse. This objective underscores the critical need for robust initiatives frameworks that prioritize youth development and allocate appropriate resources.

By addressing these challenges, policy makers can enhance the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention strategies, ensuring that young people have access to the support and opportunities necessary to lead healthier lives. The findings suggests that many respondents feel that existing government support for youth programs is insufficient, which limits the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at addressing drug abuse. The relatively low mean value reflects concerns about the lack of comprehensive resources allocated to youth empowerment and prevention strategies. Additionally, the standard deviation indicates a consistent sentiment among respondents about these challenges, emphasizing a collective call for improved funding and initiatives support. Overall, the findings highlight the need for a more robust national youth development initiatives framework that effectively addresses the vulnerabilities faced by young people. Strengthening these policies is crucial for fostering an environment where youth can thrive and be less susceptible to drug abuse. These findings comply with those of Hughes and Carver (2023) found that budget constraints also limit access to necessary services, such as counseling and support programs. When organizations cannot fund these essential services, individuals may be left without the support they need to address substance use issues. This lack of access can exacerbate the challenges faced by communities in combating drug abuse.

*Furthermore, interviews were conducted to identify the challenges facing national youth development initiatives on prevention of drug abuse in Ilala Municipality*

Here is what community-based organizations (CBOs) said:

*“National policies often lack alignment with local realities due to many policies are designed without sufficient input from community stakeholders, leading to strategies that may not address the specific needs and challenges faced by youth in Ilala. This disconnect can result in programs that are ineffective or irrelevant, making it difficult to engage young people meaningfully”.*

The above findings shows that policy makers may not fully understand the unique dynamics and circumstances of local communities. When policies are developed at a national level without engaging local stakeholders such as community-based organizations, youth groups, and families they risk overlooking critical factors such as socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and prevalent drug use patterns. This lack of context can lead to initiatives that are out of touch with the realities youth encounter daily. These findings align with those of Pineda et al.

(2021) highlights that national policies tend to be broad and may not consider the unique contexts of diverse communities. When policy makers do not engage local stakeholders—such as families, schools, and community organizations—the resulting strategies may overlook critical factors influencing youth substance use. The study found that community-informed policies are more likely to resonate with local populations and effectively address their specific challenges.

## 5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

### A. Summary

The findings indicate that active participation enhances the relevance and relatability of prevention strategies, making them more effective in addressing the challenges young people face. Respondents noted that youth involvement fosters a supportive environment, encouraging peers to engage in healthier behaviors and discouraging drug use. By providing insights and feedback, young people can help shape initiatives that resonate with their experiences, ultimately leading to more effective prevention efforts.

Participants expressed concerns about insufficient government support for youth empowerment initiatives, which limits the effectiveness of programs aimed at addressing drug abuse. The responses highlighted a consensus that current financial resources are inadequate to implement comprehensive training and development initiatives, leaving many young people vulnerable to substance abuse. This objective underscores the critical need for robust initiatives frameworks that prioritize youth development and allocate appropriate resources.

### B. Conclusions

The findings indicate that involving young people in community-based programs significantly enhances the effectiveness of prevention strategies. With a favorable mean value reflecting strong agreement on the importance of youth participation, the study underscores that young people are not just beneficiaries of these programs; they are crucial stakeholders in their design and implementation. Active youth participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among young people, encouraging them to engage in healthier behaviors and support their peers in avoiding substance use. When youth are involved in crafting prevention strategies that resonate with their experiences, these initiatives become more relevant and impactful. Respondents highlighted that government funding for programs aimed at preventing drug abuse is often limited, resulting in underfunded initiatives that fail to meet the diverse needs of young people. This lack of financial support perpetuates cycles of poverty and vulnerability, making it increasingly difficult for youth to access the opportunities necessary for personal and professional growth. Additionally, the research pointed to disconnect between initiatives formulation and the realities faced by young people in the community.

### C. Recommendation

1. Establish youth-led committees to actively participate

in designing and implementing drug abuse prevention programs. This will ensure that initiatives are relevant and resonate with the youth's experiences.

2. Foster collaboration between local organizations, schools, and families to create a supportive environment for youth. Organize community events that promote healthy lifestyles and provide alternative recreational activities.
3. Launch educational campaigns focused on the dangers of drug abuse, targeting schools and community centers. Utilize social media and local influencers to reach a wider audience.
4. Ensure that information about treatment and rehabilitation services is readily available and accessible to youth. This could involve setting up outreach programs in schools and community hubs.
5. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of youth development initiatives and drug abuse prevention programs. This should include regular feedback from participants to inform ongoing improvements.

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