



**SHISHUKUNJ MUN**

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# **Study Guide**

**United Nations Office on Drug  
and Crime**

**Agenda: Addressing the World Drug Problem**

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## Letter from the Bureau

Distinguished delegates,

It is our pleasure and honor to welcome you to the 5th iteration of the Shishukunj International Model United Nations Conference, on behalf of the entire Executive Board and the Secretariat. To make these 3 days a memorable and enriching experience for all of you will be our priority at all times.

This comprehensive study guide will help you get up to date with the current world drug problem.

It's imperative for you as delegates to realize that this is the opportunity for your country's school of thought to propose the solutions to this imminent crisis and solve this once and for all. Hence, it only makes sense for your country's bureaucratic representation to be vocal in committee which will ensure quality and productivity of debate.

As the Bureau presiding over the Council, we are ecstatic to take part in this international meet as to not only debate but solve the agenda at hand and look forward to unanimity and consensus.

Regards,

Aaheli Roy: Co-Chairperson; Rudra Khandelwal: Co-Chairperson; Muhammad Ibrahim Khan:  
Rapporteur

## Introduction

A drug cartel is an illicit consortium of independent organizations formed to limit competition and control the production and distribution of illegal drugs. Drug cartels are exceptionally well-organized, economically stable, efficient and cruel. Since the 1980s, they have controlled worldwide narcotics trade.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Mexico was known primarily as a supplier of marijuana. However, as U.S. efforts in Colombia slowed the flow of drugs from South America, Mexico emerged as a source of cocaine. The Tijuana, Juárez, Gulf and Sinaloa cartels were responsible for shipping hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine into the United States.

Under the leadership of Joaquín Guzmán Loera—commonly known as El Chapo (“Shorty”), the Sinaloa cartel emerged as one of the world’s most powerful drug cartels in the early 21st century; according to various reports at the time, it accounted for the majority of illegal drugs in the United States. The Sinaloa cartel amassed power through murder, bribes, and innovative smuggling techniques, notably the use of tunnels. In the early 2000s, the Mexican government, aided by U.S. officials, intensified its efforts to crack down on cartels, imprisoning numerous leaders. The resulting turf battles sparked unprecedented violence in Mexico.

In 2014, more than a decade after he had first escaped from prison, Guzmán was recaptured and sent to the maximum-security Altiplano federal prison. The following year, he escaped once again, before he was recaptured for the final time in 2016. If his capture had any effect on the violence in Mexico, it wasn’t immediately positive: 2017 was the deadliest year in modern Mexican history, with a total of 23,101 homicides. Targeting leaders had fractured the cartel landscape, and new gangs were rushing in to fill the gaps.

In 2018, a DEA report found that drug overdoses in the US had hit record highs, and that cocaine and heroin use was on the rise. Moreover, under the leadership of El Mayo and Guzmán’s sons, Iván and Alfredo, Sinaloa has continued to operate.

What is changing in Mexico is the nature of violence. In the past several years, violence has become more localised in small gangs and contract criminals with shifting affiliations. This has corresponded with a rise in narcomenudeo, small-scale street trafficking and other forms of crime, including petrol theft.

Civil liberties groups, journalists, and others have criticized the Mexican government’s war with the cartels for years, accusing the military, police, and cartels of widespread human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial killings, and forced disappearances. More than sixty-six thousand people have disappeared since 2006, primarily at the hands of criminal organizations such as the cartels, though government forces also play a role. Efforts to find the missing and prosecute those responsible have often been stymied by cartel-related violence, government incompetence and corruption, and other factors.

In recent years, vigilante groups known as “**autodefensas**” have sought to fill in where security forces have failed to protect communities from criminal groups. They have become a formidable force against the cartels in states including Guerrero and Michoacan. However, some vigilantes have committed rights abuses, including the recruitment of child fighters; allegedly maintained ties to cartels; and even turned to organized crime themselves.

Justice in Mexico has tried to emphasize that the problems of organized crime and violence in Mexico are highly consequential, complex, and interconnected. And, thus far, President López Obrador’s efforts to address organized crime have been mixed, at best, and by most accounts have fallen far too short.

The idea that economic factors are at the root of Mexico’s violent crime epidemic is a compelling notion, but it oversimplifies the challenge at hand. An effective strategy to combat organized crime, therefore, necessarily relies on thwarting criminal actors at all levels: not just those at the top while keeping in mind the complex interactions among the various criminal organisations and the choices and strategies that past and current governments have employed to combat them.



## History of the Mexican drug cartel

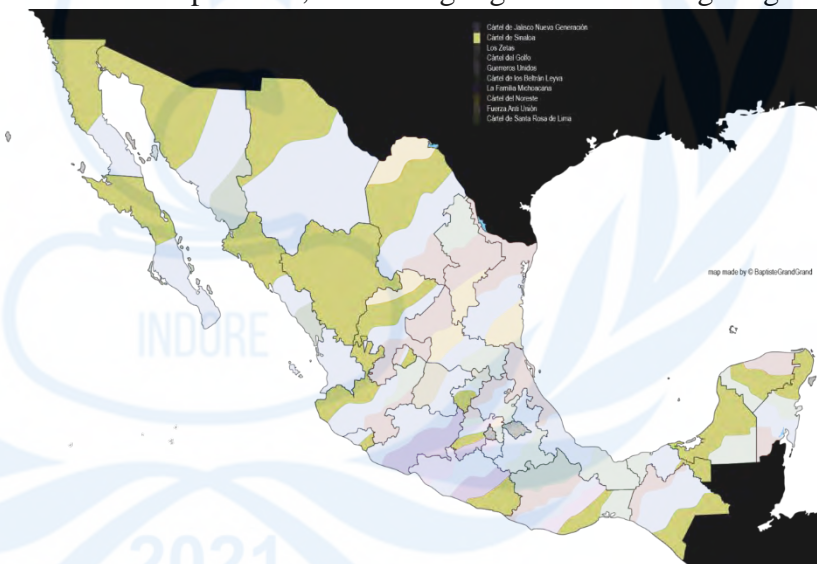
### Fall of the Guadalajara cartel

In the early 1980s, The Guadalajara cartel was a worldwide crime organization that is among the most-powerful drug-trafficking syndicates in the world. However, the downfall of the cartel began after the cartel was accused of the 1985 torture and murder of a U.S. drug enforcement agent. As the U.S. and Mexican forces cracked down on the syndicate, by the end of the decade it had broken into various groups, one of which was based in Sinaloa. That state was long involved in the illegal drug industry as home to marijuana and poppy crops, and it was also the birthplace of numerous drug traffickers, who became the leaders of the cartel.

Simultaneously, the influence of the Colombian cartels was declining, partly because of the deaths of various drug lords, notably Pablo Escobar. After the U.S. crackdown on drug trafficking in the Caribbean region, Mexico became the preferred route for transporting drugs into the United States. As Mexico gained popularity as a drug route, the strength of its criminal organizations grew, especially that of the Sinaloa cartel. The cartel used innovative methods of smuggling, notably through tunnels, and extensive use of bribes to expand their authority.

As the Mexican government intensified its efforts to arrest involved drug lords, they eluded capture, but the leaders of some cartels were imprisoned, weakening organizations and giving rise to splinter groups. In the ensuing turf battles, a wave of unprecedented violence swept through Mexico. After the fall of the Guadalajara cartel, the Sinaloa notably gained territory from both the Tijuana and Juárez cartels, solidifying its position as one of the world's most-powerful drug syndicates. By the early 21st century the cartel had operations in more than 50 countries but was particularly dominant in the United States.

According to reports at the time, it was responsible for the majority of illegal drugs—notably marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and meth—that were smuggled from Mexico into its northern neighbour, and in 2015 U.S. officials claimed that Sinaloa controlled the drug markets in almost every state. Estimates of its annual revenue ranged from \$3 billion to \$39 billion.





## US Ties with the Mexican Drug Cartels

During World War II, the U.S. sought to acquire an alternate source for opium to make morphine. Mexico was considered the ideal country, agriculturally and otherwise, and therefore a partnership developed. The United States, in all its hypocrisy, urged Mexico to curb the drug trade while purchasing opium from Mexico at the same time. The resulting period of government sanctioned opium trade gave rise to a new breed of opium and narcotics farmers in Mexico.

After World War II ended, the U.S. no longer needed the opium but farmers in Mexico continued to produce drugs. Mexican operations became more secretive and highly lucrative. Rather than fight against this, the Mexican and U.S. governments supported this and set up various institutions for the same. For e.g. An investigation by El Universal has found that between 2000 and 2012, the U.S. government had an agreement with Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel that allowed the organization to smuggle billions of dollars of drugs into the U.S. in exchange for information on rival cartels.



## Corruption in Military, Law Enforcement, and Governors

The Mexican federal government's law enforcement agencies are notorious for corruption. The DFS, PJF, and Anti-Narcotics Prosecution Office (FEADS) were all organizations created to supposedly crack down on drug trafficking and investigate matters of national security, but numerous members have been found in collusion with drug cartels. Many officers in these agencies were placed in enormously risky, but powerful positions to extract money from drug smugglers while still appearing to do their jobs. The lucrative nature of these positions made them subject to intense competition, where potential candidates fought for advantages with drug lords and politicians. Corruption was made easier by the fact that it was difficult to distinguish

between law enforcement and criminals, as the majority of agencies did not wear official uniforms and their legal statuses were purposely left vague.

For the DFS, years of working with cartels for government-sanctioned operations inevitably produced high levels of corruption motivated by personal gain. Drug kingpins such as Felix Gallardo enjoyed the protection of the DFS. These drug lords carried their own DFS badge and worked closely with the DFS chief to achieve their needs.





## Significance to Local and International Economies

After years of growth, drug cartels have become powerful enough to be a principal player in world markets. By the time the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was in place, drug money had become an integral part of Mexican economy. Nearly 70 percent of South American cocaine funneled through Mexico by the 1990s. Mexico produced 80 percent of marijuana and 30 percent of the heroin imported into the United States. All of this equated to over \$7 billion in annual earnings for Mexico and billions in revenues for drug traffickers.

Cartel influence has become a quandary for Mexico because of the positive and negative effects on economy. On the negative side is the exodus of businesses and skilled workers. On the positive side, the illegal Effective criminal justice responses to trafficking drug trade has directly employed- albeit for corrupt purposes- hundreds of thousands of people with jobs ranging from farmer to banker and journalist.

Considering the number of people employed and the amount of money generated, a collapse of the drug trade could be equivalent to a financial collapse of Mexico. Drug cartel influence on economy is significant because it contributes to the decision making of top officials in government, who recognize the important role drug money plays in the big picture.

Mexico's problems are not limited to its borders. They have direct and indirect consequences on its neighbors. The global drug trade has an estimated value of more than \$400 billion, and Mexican cartels take \$30-40 billion of that pie.

On the U.S. side, violence and corruption has increased among officials along the border. Evidence of cartel presence in scores of U.S. cities emphasizes the high demand for drugs such as cocaine and

marijuana. More than 23 million Americans use drugs on a monthly basis, and about half of all high school students have used illegal drugs at least once. A national study conducted by the Research Triangle Institute estimates that drug use in the U.S. causes tens of billions in lost productivity for American businesses.

**Table A. Global Drug Market Annual Values (US\$)**

Market	Value
Cannabis	\$183 billion to \$287 billion
Cocaine	\$94 billion to \$143 billion
Opiates	\$75 billion to \$132 billion
ATS	\$74 billion to \$90 billion
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>\$426 billion to \$652 billion</b>

## The Situation in Latin America

Mexican cartels have been expanding their operations into countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Guatemalan troops have been battling well-equipped cartel armies since 2011, as cartels aggressively ramp up production and sales of drugs in that region.

Violence, crime, and corruption has increased in Latin American as a result of Mexican cartel influence. This is particularly true in Guatemala, where a weak criminal justice system combined with rampant corruption makes it difficult for the government to combat drug activity.

In Colombia, cartel violence has cost over 15,000 lives over the last 20 years.



## **Effective criminal justice responses to trafficking**

### **The Role of the Criminal Justice System**

The obligations placed on States by the Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, particularly those under article 5, necessitate the use of domestic criminal justice systems and measures to prevent and combat trafficking. Those persons that commit the crime of trafficking in persons, as defined in the Protocol, must be subject to criminal offences under domestic law. In this way, criminal justice systems are responsive to trafficking, and are the avenue through which those offenders can be punished.

However, criminal justice systems can also play an effective, pre-emptive, role in responding to trafficking, by preventing further commission of the crime and reducing overall levels of offending. Prevention is one of the purposes of the Protocol against Trafficking in Persons.

### **Rights of Victims to Justice and Protection**

Victims of trafficking must be afforded due protection to encourage them to testify against traffickers and to ensure their rights are respected throughout criminal justice procedures. In many jurisdictions, laws must be amended, or new provisions enacted, to ensure that victims, who frequently fear or experience intimidation and reprisals from traffickers, are protected effectively. In addition, laws must take specific account of the special needs of victim witnesses, including children.

There are numerous steps that States should take to ensure victims' rights and protection are respected during criminal justice processes. These include the provision of legal aid and assistance where appropriate to victims. As observed by the UN Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems, an effective legal aid system can reduce the amount of time victims (and offenders) spend in the trial process, can reduce re-victimization and reoffending, and can also 'contribute to the prevention of crime by increasing awareness of the law'.

Broadly speaking, victims should be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity. As stated by the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, victims of crime (including victims of trafficking) must be 'entitled to access to the mechanisms of justice and to prompt redress, as provided for by national legislation, for the harm that they have suffered'. Among other things, their views should be respected, their privacy must be ensured, and any unnecessary delays should be avoided throughout criminal justice procedures.



## **Challenges to an Effective Criminal Justice Response**

The current low levels of prosecutions and convictions of human traffickers may be attributed to numerous factors.

Law enforcement agencies in many countries lack the training, experience and resources to investigate complex, transnational organized crime. In many of these countries, laws criminalizing trafficking are relatively new and investigators simply lack the expertise and experience to effectively investigate this class of crime. Some countries may also lack the financial capacity to provide training, adequate funding for technology and the comparatively expensive operating costs of investigating cross-border crimes.

Many victims are reluctant to take part in criminal trials. Numerous factors feed into this reluctance, including, fear of reprisals by traffickers and their associates, irregular status and fear of deportation, mistrust of authorities, shame, and a perception that their trafficker's actions are not criminal or wrong. Others may simply want to go home and restart their lives, rather than stay for potentially lengthy periods in a country where they experienced exploitation and abuse. Victims are more likely to assist authorities where they feel safe and their needs are met.

Some victim testimonies do not appear to be candid, straightforward and unwavering, but rather seem to be inconsistent, irrational, unpersuasive or clearly untruthful. In some cases, there is no other credible evidence to corroborate testimony. Where victim testimonies suffer from these issues, it makes successful prosecution of traffickers more difficult.

## **Improved Prevention and Care**

### **Education and Raising Public Awareness and Drug Use Prevention**

Drug use prevention programmes are effective when they respond to the needs of a community, involve all the relevant sectors and are based on scientific evidence; effective programmes should also incorporate strong monitoring and evaluation components. Such programmes are also cost effective.

Evidence-based family skills training programmes have been found to be the most effective way to prevent substance use among children and adolescents. These programmes target the whole family and offer skills-building for parents on monitoring and supervision of children's activities, communication and setting age appropriate limits.

Schools have been an important setting for UNODC to reach many children and adolescents with prevention activities. Evidence-based drug education based on life skills that offer personal, social, resistance and communication skills, as well as information about the short-term effects of drugs through a series of session offered by trained teachers.

### **Treatment, Care and Rehabilitation of Drug Use Disorders**

Drug dependence is considered a multi-factorial health disorder that often follows the course of a relapsing and remitting chronic disease. Given the individual and socio-economic burden inflicted by drug dependence, the effective treatment and rehabilitation of patients is of significant public health importance.

According to the 2021 World Drug Report, over the past year, around 275 million people have used drugs, up by 22 per cent from 2010. By 2030, demographic factors project the number of people using drugs to rise by 11 per cent around the world, and as much as 40 per cent in Africa alone. Yet only one in eight problem drug users have access to drug dependence treatment services - thus pointing to the large gap in service provision that still remains to be closed.

As drug dependence often follows the course of a relapsing and remitting chronic health disorder, it is critically important, that individuals with drug use disorders receive nothing less than what is expected for any other chronic disease.

### **Services for Children Exposed to Drugs at a Very Young Age**

Young people's brains are growing and developing until they are their mid-20's. This is especially true of the prefrontal cortex, which is used to make decisions. Taking drugs when young can interfere with developmental processes occurring in the brain. It can also affect their decision-making. They may be more likely to do risky things, such as unsafe sex and dangerous driving.

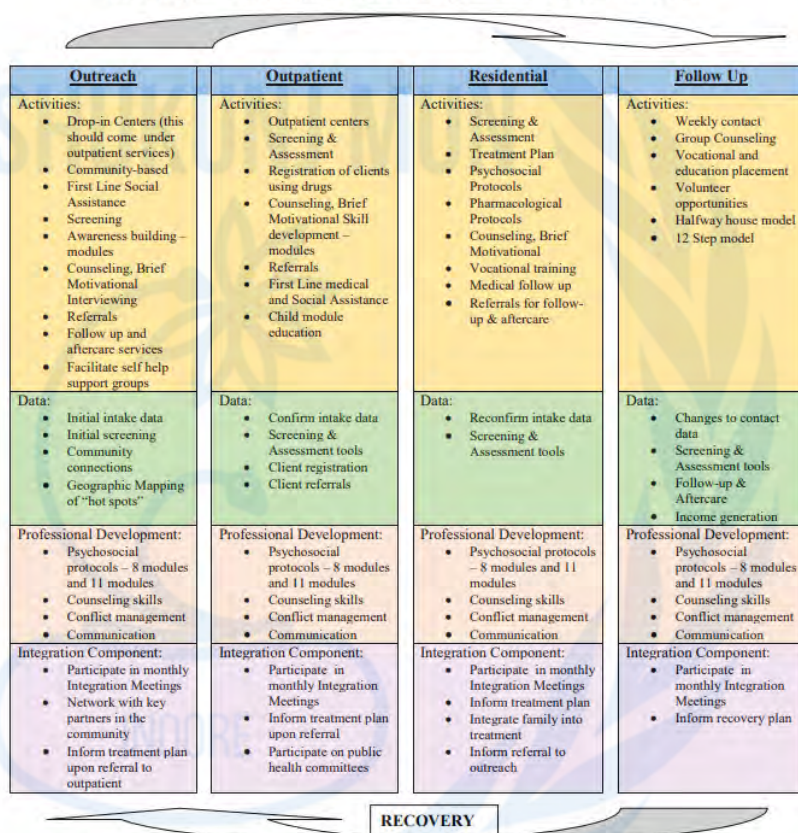
UNODC's Children's Project was developed to promote a worldwide coordinated response to children and adolescents at risk of using drugs, and youth affected by drug use dependence.

The project goals include:

- 1.Addressing the health and social consequences for children
- 2.Preventing drug use
- 3.Treating drug dependence
- 4.Facilitate their re-integration and contribution to the larger community.

The program 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, particularly children and adolescents at risk and/or those affected by drug use dependence and its health and social consequences.

Below is a general service systems model of the implementation of the Children's Project:

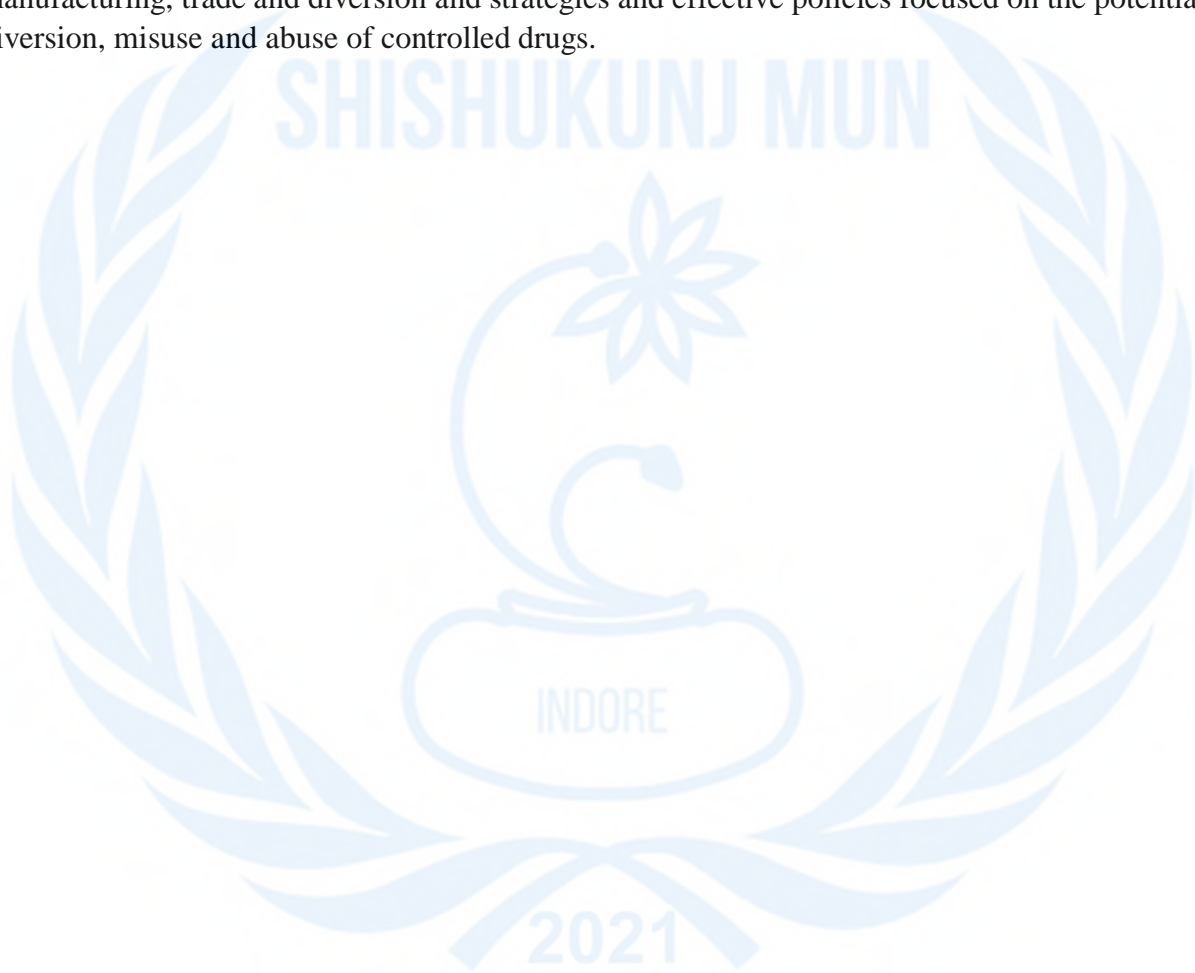




## **Access to Controlled Drugs for Medical Purposes**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) along with the World Health Organization (WHO) is leading a coordinated global response to improve the access to and availability of controlled drugs for medical purposes. The aim is to increase the number of patients receiving appropriate treatment for conditions requiring the use of that specific medication, while controlling the abuse and diversion of those substances.

The unodc assists member nations in implementing relevant and balanced laws and policies, measures to ensure availability of controlled medications, measures to reduce illicit manufacturing, trade and diversion and strategies and effective policies focused on the potential diversion, misuse and abuse of controlled drugs.



## **Questions a Resolution Must Answer**

What measures can be taken to reduce the influence of drug cartels on the economies of countries as a whole without affecting the livelihood of the large number of people occupied in drug trafficking?

What effective investigation and prosecution initiatives can be taken by the UNODC and member nations to enhance the criminal justice system with regard to drug trafficking?

How can law enforcement authorities be provided with adequate investigative powers and techniques to enable effective investigation and prosecution of suspected traffickers?

How can the risks of developing drug use disorders be reduced in Countries other than the one which have been reached by the Children's Program (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan)?? How can the effect of complex environmental factors such as poverty, trauma, stress and illiteracy be mitigated on children to help reduce their exposure to drugs?

How can the glorification of the drug scenario as a whole, by the media in forms of T.V. shows, movies, books, etc., be reduced?

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