

NACADA QUARTERLY



A Publication of the National Authority for Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse



TOUGH MEASURES TO CURB INFLUX OF CANNABIS FROM SHASHAMANE IN ETHIOPIA INTO KENYA

**Your Days are Numbered:
Unscrupulous Alcoholic Drinks Manufacturers**

Beyond treatment and rehabilitation to employee wellness programs

Please don't drink sanitizers



NACADA has been awarded the 2nd Runners up during this year's Financial Reporting (FiRe) Award in the Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) under the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).



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CEO's Message



While this month marks the one year since COVID-19 caused disruption in most of our lives, it also marks one year of adapting through many obstacles. We have pushed through the uncertainty and learnt how to move forward. We have met countless opportunities to reflect what we are doing and move forward with a sense of purpose, hope and gratitude.

At NACADA, we have embraced this time of change to make a difference in our own way. We continue to do our best in responding to the unprecedented challenges that we have been experiencing.

One of the greatest milestone that we have achieved is that we have finally launched an inpatient program at the Miritini Rehabilitation Centre. In addition, we concluded a successful recruitment and induction program for staff at the Centre. We strive to transform the centre into a regional centre of excellence on drug control and management.

In this time, we have also learnt that technology can still allow us to engage despite containment

measures aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19. We have carried out successful media campaigns on areas of alcohol and drug abuse. Currently, we are exploiting the huge potential accorded to us by social media platforms where we are engaging various stakeholders on the same issues and influencing them positively. Our training and capacity building activities have also gone online and we are now able to cater for interested parties, either public or private sector.

Repeatedly, human ingenuity has unfailingly demonstrated the ability to persevere, adapt and flourish. Knowing this gives us confidence that both our organization and the world will rise again. That we have a chance to do more than return to normal. We can and should pursue a better normal.

As the year progresses, we will examine what has worked and what has not at the organization and individual scale. Acknowledge where we need to improve, assess how our strategy has fared and how quality and our programs have helped respond and thrive under the strain of extraordinary circumstances.

In this edition, you will read more about what NACADA is doing to help create a better normal for our people, our partners and our country. Guided by the fundamentals of resilience and hope that have helped us overcome previous crisis and emerge stronger.

**Victor G. Okioma, EBS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Editor's Note



Dear readers, we are in our third quarter of the financial year. We are all trying to keep safe from the Corona virus pandemic while figuring out the surprises it keeps throwing our way.

This edition chronicles some of the activities that we have been able to carry out amidst this difficult period. For instance, a multi-sectoral security team led by our Chief Executive Officer held a high-level security meeting in Meru County.

For the first time, the Authority scooped a prestigious award in this year's edition of the Financial Reporting (FiRe) Award, 2021. This is a firm manifestation of the organization's steadfastness in pursuing financial reporting excellence.

It further cements the strong fiscal management adopted by top management in a bid to ensure prudent use of public resources. One of our Directors, Ms. Farida Rashid, has also penned an eye opening article on the often overlooked relationship between violent extremism and drug abuse among the youth in the country.

Early in March, we celebrated the International Women's Day and in keeping true to the celebration, read about our new Director for Public Education, Advocacy, Rehabilitation and Regional Coordination Ms. Yvonne Olando. She is a true embodiment of the strength of a woman at the top most decision making organ within the Authority.

Enjoy the read!!!

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Tough measures to curb influx of Cannabis from Shashamane, Ethiopia into Kenya

By Simon Mwangi

The Authority has raised a red flag over a sharp increase of bhang smuggling from Ethiopia into Kenya. The smugglers continue to transport cannabis from Ethiopia to the Coastal region in large quantities without getting nabbed, a situation that has alarmed NACADA and Regional County Commissioners.

Speaking in Meru County during a meeting with Regional Commissioners and various security agencies from North-Eastern, Eastern, Coastal and Central Regions, the Authority noted that cartels have been smuggling the drugs from Ethiopia through Moyale past Meru to the Central region and onwards to Nairobi and finally the Coast region.

The high-level Security meeting was attended by the four Regional Commissioners, the Anti-Narcotics Unit (ANU), Military and Police Commanders among other high-ranking security officers.

NACADA Chief Executive Victor Okioma noted the meeting was meant to review strategies used to curb trafficking and finding out new routes currently used in smuggling the drug to Kenya. He termed cannabis trafficking as a challenge to the country asserting that the smugglers have been inventing new techniques and adopted new transportation routes in a bid to avoid arrests by police officers.

"The traffickers are very good at responding to efforts by the security operations, so they come up with new concealment methods and new routes every time operations are launched," said Mr. Okioma. The Chief Executive Officer added that the meeting would enable the four regions affected by bhang trading to come up with regional specific initiatives to counter the smuggling. He further revealed that security agencies deliberated on the need to engage the community and media in a campaign to curb the trafficking. Speaking during the same meeting, the North Eastern Regional Commissioner, Nicodemus Musyoki Ndalana admitted that his territory has been a transit route for the smuggling, however, also

quickly adding that the region has few consumers of the drug.

"We have arrested various smugglers in Garissa and Wajir County which become obvious routes when things become hot in Eastern and Central regions. Our area has become like the easiest alternative route for transporting the drugs but through meetings like these we have seen a lot of improvement and found out ways of sharing information" said the Regional Commissioner.

Ndalana said security agencies would find ways to seal the smuggling routes to curb transportation of the Cannabis to the Country. "I have learnt of new routes that I even did not know existed in the North-Eastern region but we are going to work on sealing them," he added.

His Central Region counterpart, Wilfred Nyagwanga, termed his area as a transit route for the smuggled drug. Nyagwanga observed that the traffickers use the Nyeri, Thika and Kiambu as one of the routes during transportation. According to him, school children have emerged to be among large consumers of cannabis. "We shall continue partnering and working closely with the Judiciary to ensure that culprits face the full wrath of the law." said Nyagwanga. He called on citizens to support and help police officers in nabbing drug traffickers through volunteering information.

In June last year, the government deployed elite squads to Isiolo to monitor activities of drug dealers behind the trafficking of the Ethiopian bhang into the country. It is believed that transit points of the bhang are in Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu and Meru before the haul reaches Nairobi and thereafter distributed to other parts of the country. Apart from Moyale, other border points used by the mules to smuggle in Ethiopian bhang include Sololo, Uran, Forolle and Dukana.

The author is an accomplished development communication specialist. He is currently the Manager Corporate Communications, NACADA.

Violent extremism and drugabuse among the youth in Kenya :The Paradox

By Farida Rashid



Ms. Farida Rashid, NACADA Board Member (fourth from left) during a training of Community Leaders in Mombasa County in partnership with Kenya Muslim Women Alliance and the Mvita Anti-Drug Coalition

Over the last decades, research has accumulated strong evidence that violent extremism and drug abuse as it is with other forms of deviant behavior seems to be attracting the youth. Young people and teenagers are the most vulnerable and at risk group to radical influences due to the fact that they are the most energetic and dynamic social group. Another risk factor for young people to become involved in extreme activities is drug addiction.

Extremism and drug addiction have common grounds. Being global in nature, both phenomena have destructive character and serious consequences on humankind since they both affect the mind and the livelihood of the individuals. Extremist organizations are also deemed to be funded through drug trafficking. This clearly shows that drug abuse and extremism are interconnected and ought to be addressed as one. In addition, the war against drug abuse and extremism requires a multi-sectoral approach and partnership.

The current drug situation in Kenya is characterized by an increase of drug use among young people. It is no longer an urban phenomenon but now involves rural population. There is also a decrease in the age of initiation of drug use to as early as four (4) years (NACADA, 2019)

Al-Shabaab has also been one of the main violent extremist groups in East Africa for several years. It has inspired the creation of several affiliated jihadist groups and autonomous networks.

Based on the position that radicalization is a process and not a one-time event, it is possible to intervene to prevent problems that may arise. It is appropriate to develop and implement evidence-based prevention initiatives that can be included in the education system. Furthermore, drug addiction is one of the risk factors for experimenting with extremism, it worth using a public health approach to counter the extremist ideology to safeguard youth and children.

Education in itself plays an important role in helping young people distance themselves from extremism and drug abuse. Developing new socially significant projects countering extremism shall also help reduce the chances of radicalization. Since drug abuse is considered to be one of the risk factors for experimentation with extreme behavior it is paramount to reduce the rate of drug use amongst the vulnerable and at risk populations to extremism by empowering them for a better tomorrow.

The Author is a Director, NACADA Board and renowned anti-drugs activist. She is also the current Chairlady of the Kenya Muslim Women Alliance (KEMWA).

Taking care of mental well-being of Kenyan crime journalists

By Rebecca Adeli



CEO of NACADA (Centre) with the chairperson of CJAK and some of the members during a consultative meeting

The Authority has partnered with the Crime Journalists Association of Kenya (CJAK) in a collaboration that will see NACADA provide continual counselling services to frontline media workers covering crime related occurrences.

Speaking during a courtesy call by CJAK's top leadership, NACADA's Chief Executive Officer Victor Okioma underscored the need for the partnership, underpinned by the uniqueness attached to crime reporting.

"In your line of work you come across many stigmatizing situations which if left unchecked may end up having a lifelong impact on you. It is for this reason that the Authority shall continually provide counselling services to you and your members with a view to helping you better deal with the myriad of stigmatizing situations encountered in the line of duty," he said.

Speaking during the same meeting CJAK's Vice Chairperson Mel Myendo, a veteran Kenyan broadcast journalist, reiterated the importance of the partnership noting that most of their members suffer trauma out of the sometimes gory scenes they witness while on the beat.

"We are grateful to NACADA for agreeing to partner with us. We knocked on your doors because we are aware of the enormous role you play in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse in the country. Seeing that most of our members are exposed to scenes that would easily trigger mental health issues, we thought of partnering with you in this. We are looking at sensitization forums and counselling sessions for our members which we believe will go a long way in adding value to their work," observed Mel.

Journalists are often first responders and eyewitnesses to violent news events. Trauma reporting can take its toll, resulting in mental health effects. Addressing the solution requires understanding the problem. Common coping mechanisms include disconnecting from work in various ways, purging emotions, talking about trauma, and remembering their jobs' higher purposes. Suggestions include humanizing the newsroom and teaching about trauma reporting.

Members of CJAK decried the notable rise in the cases of substance use disorders in the country observing that since journalists form part of the society they are not spared the wrath. This, they added, is further buttressed by the fact that the reporters are exposed to what would amount to triggers that can see them slowly sink into depression.

Besides counselling it was agreed, in the 2nd February meeting, that periodically the Authority will be embedding members of CJAK into some of its operations to enhance their access to leads and sources of crime related stories.

"We need this partnership even more than you do because of the rising cases of drug trafficking across the country. One of the biggest problems we have had to deal with as an Authority is drug supply suppression. This is because there are many routes used to transport the contrabands and illicit drugs into and across the country. Help us reveal the drug dealers as they continue to expose our children and youth to substance use." added the CEO.

The author is a communication attaché at NACADA



Banking on Public Education to popularize and enforce ADCA 2010

By George Argwings Kasera

Despite the potentially lethal damage that heavy drinking can inflict on the body, social consequences can be just as devastating. Experimenting with alcohol is very common especially amongst the youth, despite it being illegal and risky. Worse is that, it is not easy to draw the line between social drinking and addiction.

In 2010, the Government of Kenya put in place measures to regulate the availability and consumption of alcohol under the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act – ADCA 2010 –which sets rules about how and where alcohol may be sold, whilst prohibiting sale and or consumption by persons under the age of 18 years.

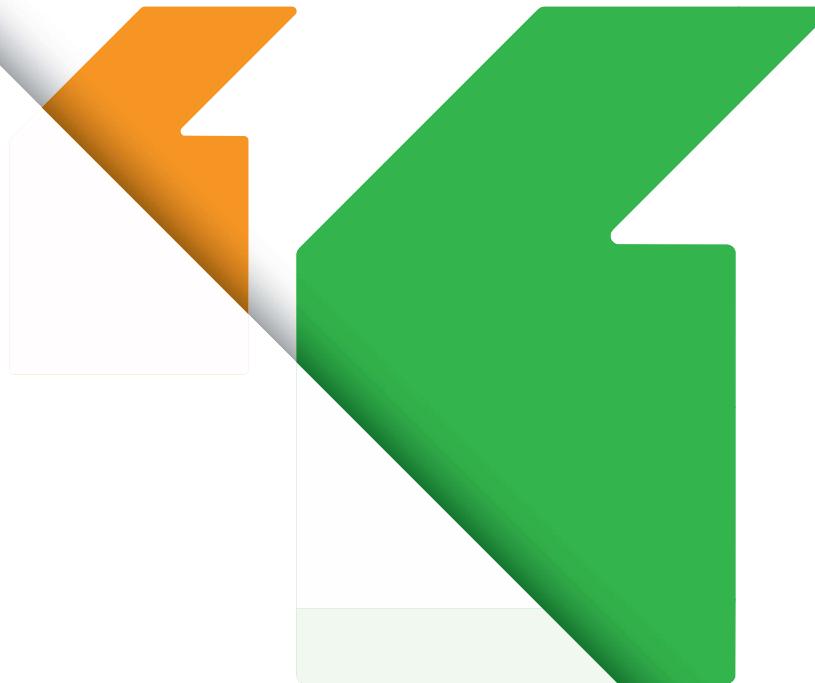
The government (through NACADA) has continually put in place measures to educate the public on such laws by involving key players and stakeholders in the industry through special forums. Since the beginning of 2021, the NACADA Western Regional Office embarked on a rigorous exercise not only to create awareness on the various provision of ADCA 2010 to members of public, but also to educate bar owners through their allied associations. The Western Regional Office has held several meetings in Kakamega County in which bar owners were invited to learn and share their perspectives on some of the problems bedeviling the industry

During these meetings they were taken through ADCA 2010 and related laws such as the Tobacco Control Act 2007 and In as much as some bar owners felt that if properly coordinated, the move to enforce ADCA 2010 especially in Kakamega would be a noble idea, a few others felt that the legislation was nothing but a government's trick to wipe out their businesses.

The educational forums with bar owners have been very beneficial as traders got to learn about the law and will also have follow up surveillances through a multi-agency team to ensure compliance with the law.

"We will not be reckless enough to let our people fall mindlessly into the gnawing jaws of alcoholism. As a government agency, we shall do all within our means to regulate the alcohol industry in a bid to protect our future generations. And I will not shirk from shutting pubs and bars if they do not comply with the law" Ms. Sarah Koske -Regional Manager at the NACADA Western Region

The author is a change agent with profound desire for community empowerment . George is a Public Education and Advocacy Officer, NACADA Western Region Office.



Your Days are Numbered: Unscrupulous Alcoholic Drinks Manufacturers

By Pauline Maina





Members of the National Alcohol Control Committee at A&L Hotel, Machakos County on 12th March 2021

"We must agree we have a problem that needs

immediate action," President Uhuru Kenyatta during a meeting with legislators from central Kenya at State House Nairobi in July 2015.

The President stated that the country was in a drinking crisis fueled by availability and accessibility of cheap, illicit alcohol, with dire warnings of an entire generation being lost to booze. So alarmed that he ordered the assembled legislators, the police and the citizenry "to move from door to door closing all outlets selling the illicit drinks."

In cognizance of this, the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government gazetted the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Control of Potable Spirits and Combat of Illicit Brews. One of the key functions of the Taskforce was inspection of premises manufacturing alcoholic drinks and make recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary on alcoholic drinks related matters.

However, one of the challenges that the Inter-Agency Committee experienced was that some of the Government agencies were not represented in the committee. It was on this note that the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government gazetted the National Alcohol Control Committee on 27th November 2020 with an expanded mandate and membership. The committee is mandated to ensure consumer protection from illicit and adulterated alcoholic beverages in Kenya. This Committee replaced the Inter- Agency Taskforce on Control of Potable Spirits and Combat of Illicit Brews.

The committee is anchored in the letter and spirit of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, 2010 whose purpose is to provide for the control of production, sale and use of alcoholic drinks in order to protect the health of the individual. The appointment accentuates the Government

of Kenya commitment ensure that manufactures of alcoholic drinks operates within the legal, policy and standards frameworks and mediates settlement of any inter-governmental disputes concerning alcoholic drinks. It is also tasked amongst other functions, to recommend to the Cabinet Secretary formulation of standards, policies, laws and regulations on alcohol control for adoption at national and county level.

The committee membership is drawn from representatives from State Department of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade & Enterprise Development, State Law Office, Council of Governors, Directorate of Public Prosecution, Kenya Bureau of Standards, Kenya Revenue Authority, Anti- Counterfeit Authority, Government Chemist, National Intelligence Service, Criminal Investigation Directorate, National Police Service and NACADA. The Committee shall be chaired by the Principal Secretary for the time being responsible for National Security and NACADA shall serve as the Secretariat.

Speaking during the inaugural meeting, Mr. Victor Okioma, CEO NACADA noted that the Committee has an enormous task in the wake of increased sale of illicit and sub-standard alcoholic drinks in Kenya and unscrupulous dealers who are also targeting minors.

"This Committee should be vigilant and embrace the multi-faceted approach to weed out illegal products in the market and most importantly protect consumers of illicit alcoholic drinks. In addition, there is need to pool resources from all the agencies represented in the principle of one government".

The Author is a consummate Senior Office Administrator in the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, NACADA

Women in Leadership :An Exclusive Interview with Ms.Yvonne Olando.

Over a century ago, International Women Day (IWD) was started to promote women's rights and their overall contribution to humankind. But even though there is still a lot to be done, it is very important to recognize women who have made it to the top in a highly competitive world. In line with this year's theme #ChooseToChallenge, NACADA is celebrating an outstanding young Clinical Psychologist, Yvonne Olando. Yvonne is the Director Public Education, Advocacy, Rehabilitation and Regional Coordination at NACADA.

In a tête-à-tête interview with our Communication Officer, Ms. Caroline Kahiu, she shares her experiences as a young woman executive, what it takes to get to the top, and the future that awaits the field of substance use management in Kenya.



1. In your own words, who is Yvonne Olando?

My name is Yvonne Olando. I am currently the Director Public Education & Advocacy, Counseling & Rehabilitation and Regional Coordination at NACADA. I am a mother to a teenager, daddy's girl and grew up with four brothers. My mother is my rock, my role model and my biggest cheerleader. I have worked in the counseling world, where I have been in different functions from lecturing, mental health substance use management and psychosocial support services. I have also good stints in tobacco cessation, curriculum development and training. I am also the Assistant Treasurer Clinical Psychologists Association of Kenya.

I am a PhD candidate and possess an MSc in Clinical Psychology, Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology, a Graduate certificate in Global Tobacco Control and an ICAP III International accreditation in Universal Treatment Curriculum.

2. Who are some of the people that have influenced you growing up and also played in shaping who you are?

My mother has had a great influence in my growing up and shaping who I am today. She has instilled in me the spirit of hard work, confidence and boldness in everything I do. I owe a lot to that character modelling in the formative stages of my life and career.

I also have these three ladies in my life. We have known each other since primary school. If one of us is need, we stop everything and support each other unconditionally.

My mentors have no room for pity parties. They panel beat me and ensure that I do not lose focus. If you allow me to name a few- Prof Mark Huffman, Northwest University USA, Dr. Ahmed Ogwell, Director Centre of Drug Control Africa and Prof. Wangari Kuria from the University of Nairobi. Prof. Kuria has held my hand from the first day I venture into lecturing.

3. How is your day-to-day like in the office?

It is still quite early for me to conclusively say what I do on a day to day basis; as it seems quite transitionary.

Some of the responsibilities I can say I have embarked on include: strategic leadership and coordination of ongoing programs, reviewing guidelines, exploring fundraising and partnership opportunities and utilizing every opportunity to learn from my colleagues.

4. What is your vision for NACADA as Director Public Education Advocacy and Rehabilitation ?

I see the Authority becoming a global influencer in shaping agendas surrounding substance abuse prevention and treatment.

To set up a Centre of Excellence in Africa on substance use control and management. We will champion and share best practices and pursue innovative opportunities.

Establish partnerships that will help improve the health and livelihoods of thousands of our clientele.

5. What influenced you to pursue a career in Psychology?

It is intriguing how I ventured into psychology. Back in the days, while playing *kalongo longo* (role playing a family), I was always the one who people brought their issues to. I was the mediator and could always negotiate for an amicable way out in the “family.”

It was then seamless to join and be trained in Peer Counseling both at primary and secondary school. My interaction with Student Campaign Against Drugs (SCAD) shaped my career choice and more so in substance addiction matters.

It was at that point that I knew that I had to do something more. I needed the professional skills and knowledge to do more.

What can I say? The Universe listens! My Undergraduate admission was to study Guidance and Counselling but I wanted a broader focus and opted to study Psychology and since then there was no turning back. Human behavior and interactions is one of the most intriguing and fulfilling area of study.

After completing my Bachelor's degree, I enrolled for a Masters in Science in Clinical Psychology and now I am a PhD candidate pursuing Clinical Psychology at the University of Nairobi, School of Medicine.

6. How has your wide experience shaped your approach to substance use programming ?

I have been exposed globally to the issue of substance abuse. And what is clear is that the impact is the same. What I have learnt is the need to focus on the clients. Giving autonomy matters.

Respecting that no single program will work for everyone. And the impact of having a well trained workforce. Need to readily avail information and services to people before the problem presents.

7. What excites you about this job?

The opportunity to work with a team that can impact the lives of millions positively. The opportunity to give others a second chance at enjoying life.

8. What worries you about what is ahead in this field?

The quickly changing innovations of creating substances of abuse, the modes of consumption; which means there is no time to sit back. We have to keep thinking ahead and creatively so as to curtail the new strategies before they unfurl.

9. What books are you currently reading? Favorite quote?

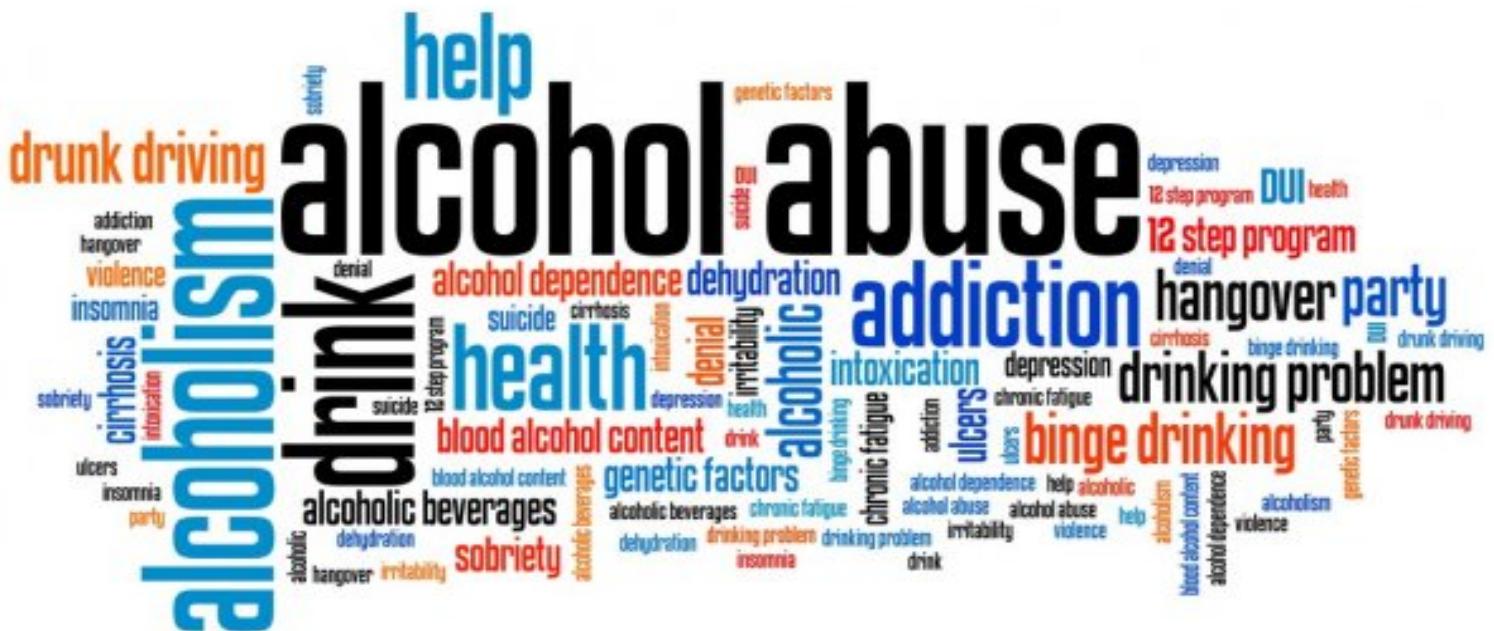
As you can see my office is slowly turning into a library. It is the same scenario in my house. You can never go wrong with reading. Currently, I am reading- *Getting to Yes, Negotiating an agreement without giving in* by Roger Fisher and William Ury and *Suddenly family* by Christine Flynn.

My favorite quote... Man Must Live from 'A Man of the People' by Chinua Achebe

10. What advice would you give to young women?

If you have a dream, a vision, a goal, stick with it. The Bible tells us in Habakkuk 2: 2-3 to “Write the vision and make it plain.”

**Write your vision down and add to it daily.
Surround yourself with people who are positive and not afraid to tell you the truth and advice you that the direction you are going is not a good one. Everything in life will not come easy, and you will have challenges; but #ChooseToChallenge and believe you can achieve it. Get a mentor and most importantly keep learning!**



Don't be cheated :Alcohol and alcoholism can lead to addiction and death

By Simon Mwangi

Most times the terms alcoholism and alcohol abuse are Á **Alcoholism**

used interchangeably and in some instances there are those who use them as synonyms. However, there is a huge difference between the two. While it is critical to point out that they loosely refer to individuals who have problems with alcohol, it is also essential to note that while one may appear to be less disastrous by its sheer definition, the disastrous effects of alcohol to the human body are well documented.

For starters, alcohol abusers can be defined as those who continue to drink despite recurrent health, interpersonal, social and legal problems as a result of their alcohol use. A good example would be those among us in society who are always in trouble with the authorities anytime they imbibe because of one reason or the other. Once they stop their drinking the drama with law enforcement also takes a back seat.

Drinking alcohol too much or too often, or being unable to control alcohol consumption, can be a sign of a larger problem. People who abuse alcohol drink too much in a sitting and their drinking habits often result in risky behavior and poor judgment. Generally, alcohol abusers are not dependent on alcohol.

Alcohol abusers may deny a problem, but there are ways to recognize the problem in some of them. People who abuse alcohol may drink often and experience school, family or work problems because of their imbibing. However, they may downplay it or even lie about the amount of alcohol they consume so as not to be judged.

While both alcohol abuse and alcoholism can have adverse effects on a person's life, understanding the differences between the two helps to understand the severity of addiction and the best course of treatment. Alcohol abuse can cause damage to a person's body, mind and spirit. Additionally, it's not uncommon to see alcohol abuse turn to alcoholism with sustained use. However, unlike someone suffering from alcoholism, a person with an alcohol abuse problem is able to learn from negative consequences and change their behavior. Clearly laying out the path of alcohol abuse can inspire and encourage a person to change their destructive habits.

Alcoholism.

Alcoholism, also referred to as alcohol dependency, is a chronic disease characterized by the consumption of alcohol at a level that interferes with mental and physical health. The biggest difference between alcohol abuse and alcoholism is that the latter is a disease that affects all areas of a person's life. It is influenced by environmental and genetic factors, and because it is prolonged it persists for a lifetime.

Many people suffering from alcoholism continue to drink even when they develop health problems related to the habit. Loved ones sometimes notice a problem before the person does and it is thus important that the person dependent on alcohol acknowledges their problem.

This is the only way through which treatment can be successful as the person will take it seriously and most likely benefit from the addiction management offered.

Alcohol abuse and alcoholism may also run in families. However, genetics doesn't automatically guarantee a problem with alcohol. The exact causes of alcohol abuse and alcoholism are often unknown. Over time, alcoholics build up a tolerance for alcohol, meaning they need to consume larger quantities so as to feel the effects. Whenever such people stop drinking, they begin to experience withdrawal symptoms such as cravings, anxiety, shakiness, headaches, nausea, and irritability. Most times, in order to avoid experiencing withdrawal symptoms, an alcoholic will continue to drink.

The treatment for alcohol abuse and alcoholism focuses on helping those affected learn ways to control the disease. Most of those who recover from alcoholism have to abstain from liquor because drinking in moderation becomes a challenge for them. Abstinence for this group is often the only way to manage the disease.

Treatment involves, among other things, helping people understand their alcohol dependency and any problems in their life. It also involves a firm commitment to staying sober or practicing healthier drinking habits. Recovery from alcohol dependence can be a long process.

Treatment for alcohol abuse often includes therapy, learning new coping skills, and finding healthy ways to manage stress. Even people who complete treatment are at a risk of relapse.

It is therefore important to recognize warning signs and seek help whenever concerns about a relapse are raised. Sustained therapy and support help minimize this risk.

*The author is an accomplished development communication specialist .
He is currently the Manager Corporate Communications, NACADA.*

Role of communication in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse

By Emma Kadi

One of the biggest problems affecting the world is drug abuse. Globally, an estimated 900,000 deaths from injuries are attributed to alcohol (WHO 2018). Drug abuse has destroyed the vitals of the society thus nibbling the quality of human resource of a country. Drug abuse is the use of prescribed or un prescribed drugs for purposes other than those for which they are meant to be used: leading to social, physical, emotional, and job-related problems.

After the re-opening of schools on 4th January 2021, there has been an alarming increase of drugs abuse in learning institutions. Drugs such as cocaine, heroin, Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), hash, crack, opium and marijuana are taken by learners for stimulation and recreation purposes. This continued use of drugs for stimulation and recreation can lead addiction and even death.

There has been a correlation between the recent school unrests and substance abuse in learning institutions. This is a worrying trend across the entire country. Furthermore, risky social behavior has been proven to be caused or aggravated by substance abuse as well. Whose role is it to stop this trend?

Research on substance abuse prevention programs indicates that effectiveness is greater when multiple intervention approaches that address a specific issue among the target population are employed. The field of communication provides unique perspectives that can be applied to increase awareness on the dangers of drug and substance abuse thus reducing the rate of this abuse among the target population.

A study on factors affecting public relations performance in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse in the country shows that some of the factors harboring the success of public relations practices include: government policies, public relations programming and stakeholder relations among others.

These factors can however be corrected if effective communication, government support and adequate funding are put in place for the success of the campaign. Effective communication is very important in the campaign against drugs and substance abuse. Therefore, it needs to be reinforced between parents, teachers and students.

Communication and public relations programs are an integral part of the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse. For positive outcomes, there is need to develop and implement evidence based targeted programs and interventions such as the Life Skills Program and Media Based Intervention programs. Prevention efforts should also involve parents and the messages well curated for the different age groups of the learners.

The author is an Assistant Office Administrator at NACADA Head Office and has ambitions of becoming a Public Relations Practitioner. She is currently studying Public Relations at the University of Nairobi.

workplace wellness

Beyond treatment and rehabilitation to employee wellness programs

By Caroline Kahuu

Just over two decades ago, the Government of Kenya introduced Performance Contracting Management. All Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) were required to sign and implement annual Performance Contracts (PCs). That not being enough, the MDAs were required to submit verifiable evidence that was used to grade the best performing institutions. One of the areas that the MDAs were required to mainstream in their PCs was alcohol and drug abuse control programs.

As the lead agency mandated to spearhead this role, NACADA developed and disseminated activities and programs that each MDA was required to undertake each year. One of the key deliverables was identification and rehabilitation of employees or their immediate family members with severe alcohol and drug abuse problems. This was the genesis of a long tradition of programmes to address the problem of substance abuse at the workplace.

One of the major problems in combating alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace and in society lies in the widespread acceptance of the social consumption. It is also very difficult to dissuade employees to take alcohol or smoke during their leisure times. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the nature and costs of the problem has deepened, more progressive studies have been conducted and organizations have placed a much greater emphasis on the development of broad consensual partnerships at the workplace and beyond designed to achieve a real improvement in the situation.

Promoting and supporting employees' wellbeing is a necessity for achieving a productive, engaged, and healthy workforce. This, therefore, calls for an effective wellness workplace program.

An effective wellness program supports employees' physical and emotional well-being by addressing key personal issues.

Why is an Employee Wellness Program important?
Ideally, wellness programs should offer services that address a range of personal issues that may interfere with the employee's well-being and engagement at work. Evidence-based research informs that wellness programs should:

- Offer counseling for mental illness or substance use issues, interpersonal relationships, legal problems and financial difficulties;

- Connect employees to relevant information and resources to support personal health and improved work/life balance; and
- Provide training for managers and supervisors to address existing organizational concerns.

In general, wellness programs should improve the functionality within the workplace by reducing absenteeism, accidents, violence occurrences, turnovers, improve healthcare costs, individual and team performance.

How can organizations improve wellness programs?

As organizations continue to adopt evidence based programming such as wellness programs, there is need to step up the utilization through:

- Conducting baseline survey or assessment to identify the health factors to help determine the specific services that best fit the specific organization. There is no magic bullet intervention that fits all organizations;

- Integrating the wellness program with employee benefits and make sure that it is easy for employees to find resources associated with wellness programs. For example, organize talks with service providers such as nutritionists to help identify risk factors associated to non-communicable diseases

- Educate the employees about the services offered in the wellness programs. Provide continuous sensitization forums in an environment that will help reduce stigma associated with issues such as mental health, substance use disorders and other illnesses. Continuous reassurance employees that all wellness interventions are provided in utmost confidentiality.

In conclusion, in implementing the establishment and operationalization of a wellness program, emphasize on the benefit to the employees, their families and the workplace environment. Participation and awareness of the employees in the development and implementation plays a paramount role in the success of the wellness programs.

The Author is an experienced development communication professional. She is currently the Communications Officer, NACADA.

Don't Drink Hand Sanitizer

- Alcohol content too high to be safe
- Ethanol is denatured, sometimes with toxic chemicals
- May contain poisonous isopropanol or methanol
- Contains other inedible ingredients
- Can cause alcohol poisoning, blindness, organ damage
- Potentially lethal



sciencenotes.org

By Jepherson Mkaya

Drinking hand sanitizer is a ticking bomb!

The COVID-19 intricate has put us under a new normal. Wearing masks, cleaning hands with soap, maintaining physical distance and regularly sanitize your hands. Perplexing as it may seem, people are guzzling hand sanitizers either to "kill" the COVID-19 virus or taking a swig of this alcohol-based gel to get high. Reports by the media indicate that what was initially a potent weapon in the fight against the coronavirus has now become an agent of death and destruction in schools, as students are also using it to burn dormitories and school property.

Aside from the obvious health concerns, hand sanitizers do not taste good. Which begs the question: **Why are people drinking hand sanitizers?**

Children drink it by accident after finding it in the home or a parent's purse or bag but the danger doesn't just lie in the accidental ingestion by young children. On the flip side, a quick YouTube search will reveal videos of teenagers getting drunk on hand sanitizer. This is because it is cheap, widely available and there is no age limit for purchase, so it has become a popular choice for those not of legal drinking age.

It's less common for adults to deliberately ingest hand sanitizer, unless they are in an institution like a hospital or prison where alcohol is not allowed, are trying to commit suicide, or are alcoholics who can't obtain alcohol any other way or are trying quench their thirst.

One appeal of drinking hand sanitizer may simply be that it's easier to conceal, either from parents or from one's boss. If someone sees a little bottle of hand sanitizer, nobody's going to think twice but if they see a minibar bottle of vodka, it will raise questions.

Whether it's ingested accidentally or as a substitute of alcohol, hand sanitizers are bad news to our systems. The products contain a stronger concentration of alcohol than beer, wine and hard liquors. Most sanitizers have an alcoholic content of between 60%-95%! Drinking sanitizers may cause both temporary and permanent blindness, alcohol poisoning, difficulty in breathing, headache, weakness, drowsiness, nausea, drunkenness, eye irritation, loss of consciousness, seizures, damage to your nervous system, liver damage, coma and death. Sanitizers containing methanol can dehydrate the skin, causing dry skin, and can result in dermatitis to the affected region.

The author holds a Bachelor's Degree in Cooperative Management from Chuka University. He currently supports the Coast Regional Office in the Administration Department.

Renewed hope for persons with Alcohol and Drug problems Rift Valley

By Rebecca Adeli



Chief Executive Officer, NACADA Mr. Victor Okioma (far left) signs the MoU as the NACADA Corporation Secretary Mr. Daniel K'Onyango (standing) and the Director Bomet Liquor Board Mr. Richard Terer (far right)

The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bomet County Government on February 23, 2021 establish and operationalize a treatment and rehabilitation center as well as to enhance alcohol and drug abuse management programs.

The major thrust of this MoU is to promote partnership between the Authority and the county government in the areas of public education and advocacy, capacity building, awareness creation, outreach programs, and the establishment of a treatment and rehabilitation center. The first of its kind, the center is to be located at Koiwa in Konoin Sub- County will serve residents of Bomet and the neighboring counties.

From the surveys carried out, alcohol and drug abuse problems are on the rise across the country. Speaking during the signing of the MoU, Mr. Richard Terer revealed that alcohol and drug use has escalated among children and youth. "Our concern is the upsurge of use amongst our children who have been at home since March 2020 and that is why we are here. We need interventions that will delay or avoid initiation into alcohol and drug use among our children. Without this, our nation's future is bleak"

NACADA appreciates this initiative in addressing the challenges associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

The Memorandum of Understanding reflects the mutual relationship between the county government and NACADA. As the lead agency in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse, we stand ready to support Bomet County in the areas of shared priorities," said Mr. Victor Okioma, CEO NACADA.

"As a County Government, we welcome this important initiative which formalizes and strengthens the existing relationship with NACADA. We look forward to continuing to build on this cooperation in the interest of enhancing the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse. We shall urge other counties to collaborate with NACADA in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse. It is important that counties put more emphasis treatment and rehabilitation of persons suffering from substance use disorders." Richard Terer, Director Liquor Licensing.

Persons suffering from alcohol and drug abuse problems are encouraged to seek treatment as soon as possible as this is a disease just like any other ailment. For tele-counseling and guidance on rehabilitation facilities in Kenya, please call our toll-free number 1192 during official working hours.

The author is a communication attaché at NACADA



Entrenching organizational knowledge management in the Covid-19 Era

By Caroline Kahiu

COVID-19 has transformed the world. We are now accustomed to virtual meetings and physical distancing while face masks are part of our outfits. Workplaces are no longer businesses as usual. People are working in shifts, working remotely and working from home. The scale of collaboration between departments and organizations has never been this great. In view of this COVID-19 era norm, organizations need to embrace and commit to knowledge management (KM).

Knowledge Management is a discipline that improves the efficiency of organisations by leveraging on people, processes, technology and organisational culture to better identify, create, store, share and apply knowledge. Poor or no KM practices compromise quality, waste time and resources, duplicate efforts and jeopardize organisational processes. Conversely, good KM practices ensure that the right knowledge is availed to the right people at the right time. It also fosters innovation, continual improvement, creativity and duplication of best practices thereby encouraging a culture of trust and shared responsibility.

I recently attended a training that focused on improving organisational performance, creativity and innovation and sharing lessons learnt for continual improvement. Here is what I learnt regarding tools that organisations can deploy in their delivery of results during these unprecedented times.

Knowledge Sharing

Sharing knowledge is the conduit through which information moves from point A to B. However, most organisations do not document or share knowledge hence it remains tucked away in the head of staff who often move to new assignments and tasks or it is forgotten. As such, knowledge sharing is important in preserving institutional memory, distributing the latest and important information, as well as peer organisational learning.

Strengthening Communications

Communication is a balancing act where an organization's staff are actively engaged in decision-making processes, their opinions matter and efforts are appreciated. This keeps everyone focused on the mission and the organisational strategic vision. As such, organisations need to leverage on people to identify, create, store and apply knowledge. This enables staff autonomy to work in their new work spaces enabling find-ability and discover-ability of information.

Investment in Digital Technology

KM is done through various techniques such as weekly compass, communities of practice and knowledge mapping. It facilitates open, honest and free conversations to explore tacit (unspoken) and explicit (documented) knowledge that exists in an organization to meet customer needs and expectations. Organisations need to map out existing knowledge, gaps, needs and what needs to be digitized to meet the demands of customers and situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Digitization is an ongoing process and organisations should invest time and resources to actualize it.

A key point from the training is that knowledge management does not just happen by default. It requires sustained investment in a high-trust organisational culture, guided by a clear strategy and deliberate execution. Establishing a sound KM culture is an integral part of strategy. Thoughtfully identifying, creating, storing, sharing and applying knowledge will help embrace the unprecedented test of the post-COVID-19 era.

The Author is an experienced development communication professional. She is currently the Communications Officer, NACADA.



Ms. Yvonne Olando has joined the Authority as the Director of Public Education and Advocacy. Ms. Olando brings vast knowledge and experience in drug demand reduction evidence-based interventions and programs. She will lead the public education and advocacy, counseling and rehabilitation and regional coordination departments. Ms. Olando is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Nairobi. She holds an MSc in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nairobi and a Bachelors in Social Sciences (Psychology Major) from Moi University.



Dr Kevin Wamula has joined the Authority as the Centre manager at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre. He holds a Master of Medicine degree in Psychiatry and a Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery Degree (MBChB) both from the University of Nairobi. He is a professional member of Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC), Kenya Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) and the Kenya Psychiatric Association (KPA). He has worked as doctor for more than 10 years in both the public and private sectors. He has also spent considerable time working amongst the marginalised communities and has a passion for alleviating the pain and suffering of those afflicted with problems of Addiction and Mental Health Disorders.



Ms. Janet Mlongo Beja has joined the Authority as a Counsellor at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre. She is a Certified Addiction Counselor ICAP I. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Counseling Psychology.



Dr. Erick George Oondo Omondi has joined the Authority as a Pharmacist. He is a registered Pharmacist with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Kenya. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy from Kenyatta University and a Certificate in Leadership and Mentorship from the same institution.



Ms. Charity Mwendwa Kiria has joined the Authority as a Laboratory Technologist at the Miritini Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre. She holds a degree in medical laboratory sciences from JKUAT.



Ms Tabitha Mumbua Kasuku has joined the Authority as a Counsellor at the Miritini Treatment and rehabilitation Centre. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Medical Psychology from Moi University and Certificate in CITI training program in Human Subject Research.



HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

who.int/epi-win

Do's →



Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is



Ensure the colored-side faces outwards



Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose



Wash your hands before touching the mask



Inspect the mask for tears or holes



Avoid touching the mask



Remove the mask from behind the ears or head



Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it



Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin



Wash your hands after discarding the mask

Don'ts →



Do not wear a loose mask



Do not touch the front of the mask



Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask



Do not Use a ripped or damp mask



Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose



Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others



Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

EPI-WiN

World Health Organization

Need Help With Alcohol and Drug Abuse?

**OUR HELPLINE 1192 IS OPEN
EVERYDAY 8AM TO 5PM
FOR FREE**



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