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INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION **CICAD**

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

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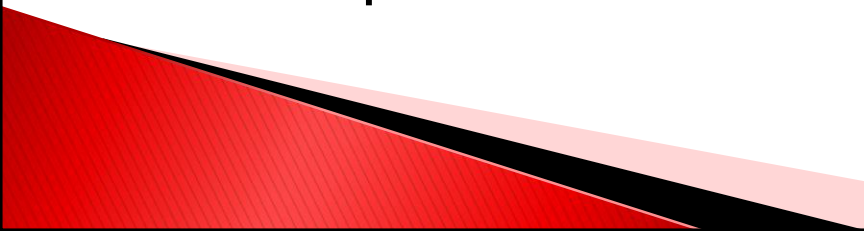
**ADDRESSING THE DRUG PROBLEM FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE: INVOLVING THE NATIONAL
DRUG COMMISSION IN ADDRESSING THE DRUG PROBLEM FROM A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE
ESTHER BEST, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Addressing the Drug Problem from a Public Health Perspective: Involving the National Drug Commission in addressing the Drug Problem from a Public Health Perspective

**Esther Best – Manager
National Drug Council – Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago**

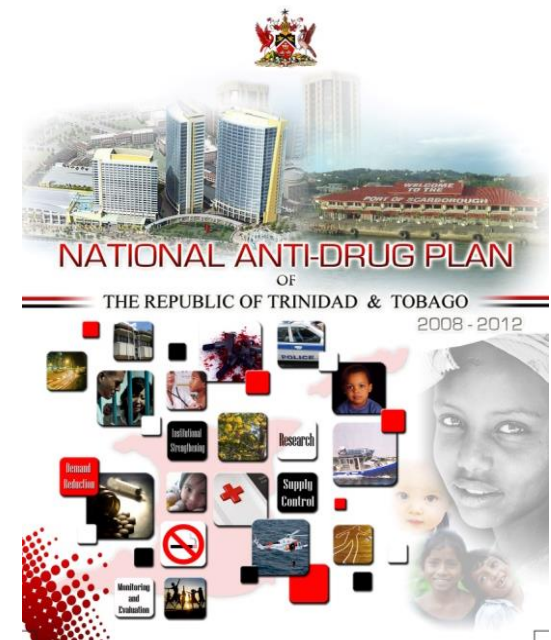


Trinidad and Tobago's Location

- ▶ Traditional location labelled – Transit Country
 - ▶ Reality – High level of demand
 - ▶ Late 1980's explosion in drug use – Crack Cocaine
 - ▶ Resultant increase in treatment services
 - 1990 – 4 T&R Services and the Mental Hospital
 - 2014 – 14 T&R and 3 facilities located at the Hospitals
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What is the Public Health Approach in Addressing the Country's Drug Problem

- ▶ Trinidad and Tobago incorporated the Public Health Approach in its Policy Documents
 - Inclusion in the National Anti-Drug Plan 2008–2012
 - Institutional Strengthening
 - Demand Reduction
 - Acknowledged the drug problem as a health issue
 - Harm Reduction



Public Health Approach Cont'd

- ▶ The National Policy 2014 and Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago 2014 – 2018
 - Acknowledges drug addiction as a Health Issue
 - Promotes Harm Reduction
 - Promotes Alternatives to Incarceration
 - Promotes the establishment of Institutionalized Standards of Care
 - Supports the expansion of innovative prevention approaches
 - Supports the on-going strengthening of Treatment and Rehabilitation Services
 - Makes provision for increased research – Current priority Study on Marijuana

Key Institutions Involved

- ▶ **At the Policy Level – All agencies represented on the National Drug Council**
 - Overarching Policy input
 - Office of the Prime Minister
 - Supply Reduction and Control Measures
 - Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
 - Strategic Services Agency
 - Financial Intelligence Unit
 - Customs and Excise Division
 - Legislative
 - Office of the Attorney General
 - Demand Reduction
 - Ministry of Health – National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme – NADAPP – National Demand Reduction Agency
 - Rebirth House – T&R
 - National Council on Alcohol and other Addictions
 - Ministry of the People and Social Development
 - Tobago House of Assembly
 - Business Community
 - International Cooperation
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Key Institutions Cont'd

▶ At the Operational Level

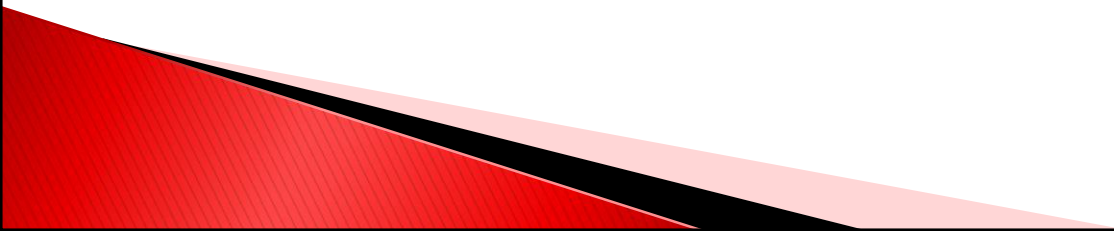
Ministry of Health –

- National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme – National Demand Reduction Agency
- Health Education Unit – Responsible for Tobacco prevention education – Developed a National Tobacco Policy
- National Council on Alcohol and other Addictions
- Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres
 - Non Government Agencies
 - Government run Treatment and rehab
 - Government and NGO collaboration – Tobago's First T&R Centre
- Support Groups – Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous

▶ Collaboration

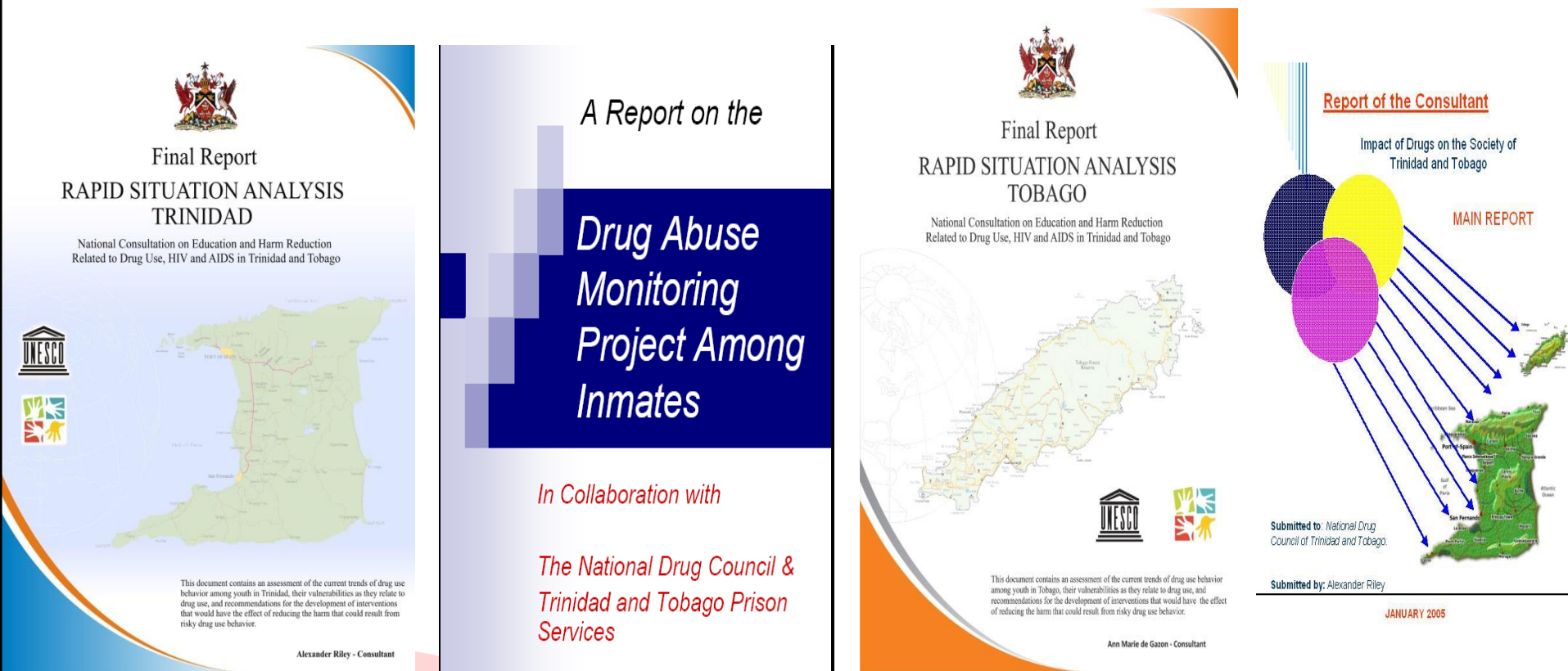
- Red Cross – HIV/AIDS Unit and other HIV/AIDS NGO's

Need for Empirical Data

- ▶ Secondary School Surveys
 - ▶ Prison Studies
 - ▶ Programme with UNESCO to evaluate the impact of public education campaigns
 - ▶ On-line Survey of young people 11–21
 - ▶ Development and Implementation of the National Drug Information Network
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Achievements – Research

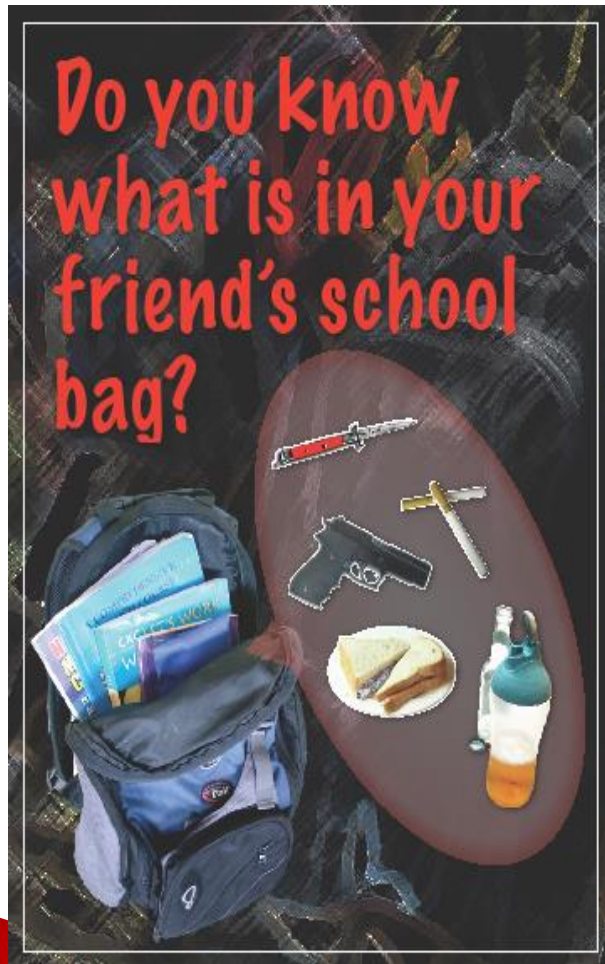
Results of Qualitative and Quantitative studies on drug use in Trinidad and Tobago



Some Prevention Initiatives

- ▶ Increased Prevention Programmes based on empirical data
 - Moved away from paper based prevention
 - Interactive Prevention programmes
- ▶ Demand Reduction
 - Myths and Facts
 - Drugs in Schools
 - Breathalyser animation
 - Alcohol animation
 - Development of a Pre-School Programme

Prevention Messages



Drugs in Schools

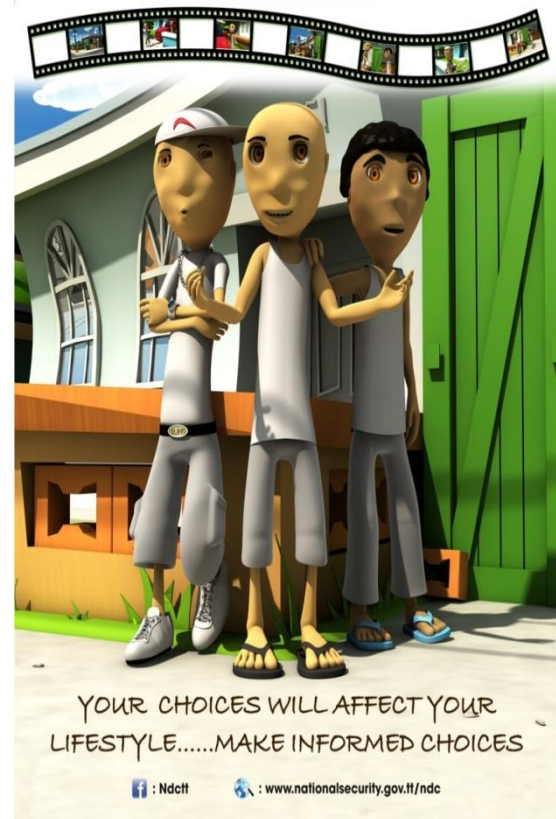
A short movie about
the awareness of
Drugs in our
schools.



YOUR CHOICES WILL AFFECT YOUR
LIFESTYLE.....MAKE INFORMED CHOICES



An Animation on Drug and Alcohol Awareness



Supply Reduction Public Education

- ▶ Supply Reduction
- ▶ This is an area of great pride for us
- ▶ Message balances Law enforcement with the Health Consequence
- ▶ Support from the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to promote and ensure public exposure

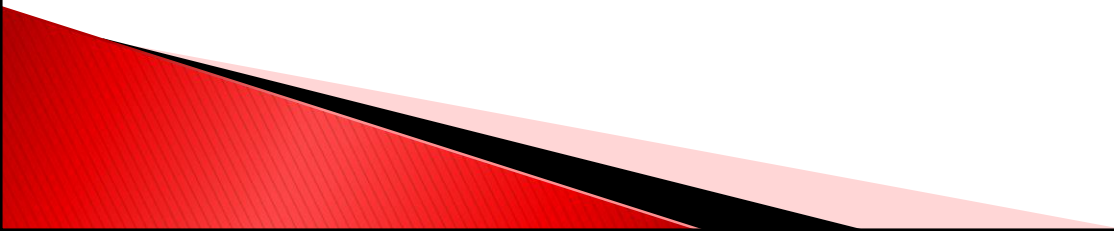


Health Issues Associated with Supply Reduction

- ▶ Protecting the health of our officers
 - Undertake eradications and burning of Marijuana plants
 - Protection from things like trap guns in the areas of cultivation and also inhalation of the smoke from the plants
 - Storage of Cocaine and other exhibits
 - Often in sealed airless rooms with a property officer responsible for retrieving and verifying the exhibits
 - Handling of exhibits expelled by persons who were trafficking drugs by ingesting – “Swallowers”
 - There are health and safety issues in this area



Evaluations

- ▶ The Implementation of the National Drug Plan was independently evaluated and Key Achievements were noted as well as areas for improvement.
 - ▶ An evaluation of the Eva Goes to Foreign Programme found that in the first 18 Months of the programme there was a 75% decrease in new arrests in England – This is attributed to the Programme in addition to a number of other initiatives
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- A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner of the slide, consisting of a red triangle pointing upwards and to the right, with a black diagonal line intersecting it.

Some Additional Treatment Programmes

- ▶ **Drug Treatment Courts**
 - Active engagement of T&R facilities and other services
 - Alignment of the public health services drug treatment services and the mental health
- ▶ **Drug Treatment in the Prison System**
 - Pilot Therapeutic Community in Prison
 - Additional Treatment programme in preparation for release and reintegration

Treatment Programmes Cont'd



- ▶ Implementation of the Pilot of the PROCCER programme
 - Critical training and certification offered to treatment providers
 - Drafting of Training Modules for Adolescent Treatment Providers – Specialized PROCCER track
- ▶ Expansion of the programme to the entire Caribbean
- ▶ Standardized data collection form for treatment organizations to facilitate data collection
 - Need to ensure that all agencies have the capacity to collect the data

Challenges Nationally

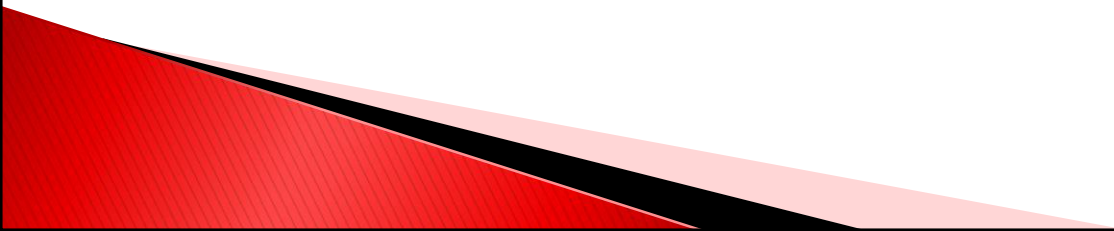
- ▶ Need for increased programme evaluation – Some evaluation is undertaken but it needs to be more structured
- ▶ Need for finalization and approval of the policy for the implementation of standards for the monitoring of treatment and rehabilitation providers –
 - The document is drafted, but needs to be revised and edited.
 - Its implementation will allow for improved monitoring of the services provided to persons with addiction problems
- ▶ On-going public sensitization on the fact that Drug Addiction is a disease
- ▶ Increased support for NGO's which provide critical services in treatment and rehabilitation
- ▶ Upgrading of skills and facilities for the NGO's which provide Treatment and Rehabilitation Services
- ▶ Need for improved data collection from Treatment and Rehabilitation providers

CARICOM Activities



- ▶ Regional Drug Demand Reduction Strategy
 - Implementation of a number of programmes under the 9th EDF
- ▶ Social and Economic Cost of Drugs – 2010
 - Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago
- ▶ Regional Standards of Care document
- ▶ Alternatives to Custodial Punishment prepared by the Legal Services of the CARICOM Secretariat
- ▶ Work Plan of the 10th EDF recognizes the health issue and seeks to build capacity to address a number of issues.

There is much work to be done

- ▶ Recognition that there is much to be undertaken both Regionally and Nationally
 - ▶ Anticipation of continued good relations with CICAD
 - ▶ Appreciation to CICAD for their on-going support in the Caribbean
 - ▶ Anticipation of the implementation of the 10th EDF
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Thank You !!!!!