

IN PEMBA AND MONTEPUEZ

CDD trains young people from Cabo Delgado in resilience to drug trafficking and consumption

- As part of the Project for Building Youth Resilience to Drug Trafficking and Consumption, on 17 and 18 August, the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) held a training of trainers on “Building Youth Resilience to Drug Trafficking and Consumption”. The training took place in Pemba City and Montepuez District, and was attended by more than 50 young people, all activists from CDD Youth Hubs.





The training aimed at providing the youth with knowledge about drugs, the contours of global and local drug trafficking and consumption, and how adolescents and youth can cope with social pressures to prevent drug use, as well as gain some skills in facilitating thematic sessions for their peers.

The sessions were dynamic, which allowed a lively discussion between men and women

and a better understanding of the issues. The methodology used was trainee-based, with several group activities.

The training was facilitated by Luís Job Motombene who, in addition to conceptual issues on drugs, addressed four (4) themes, namely drug trafficking and routes; drug use and harm reduction; drug policies and the Mozambican drug legislation; and prevention of drug use and community systems for effective prevention.

1. drug trafficking and drug trafficking routes

This session addressed issues related to the main producers and traffickers of drugs, namely coca plants and heroin. It also addressed how production centers smuggle drugs

to consumer markets, including the routes used for drugs produced in Afghanistan and Colombia to reach Mozambique, especially Cabo Delgado.

2.. Drug Use and Harm Reduction

The trainer shared information on the situation of drug consumption in the world through updated data from the World Drug Report 2021, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Annual Report on the Evolution of Illicit Drug Trafficking and Consumption in Mozambique 2020, published by the Central Office for Drug Prevention and Combating (GCPCD).

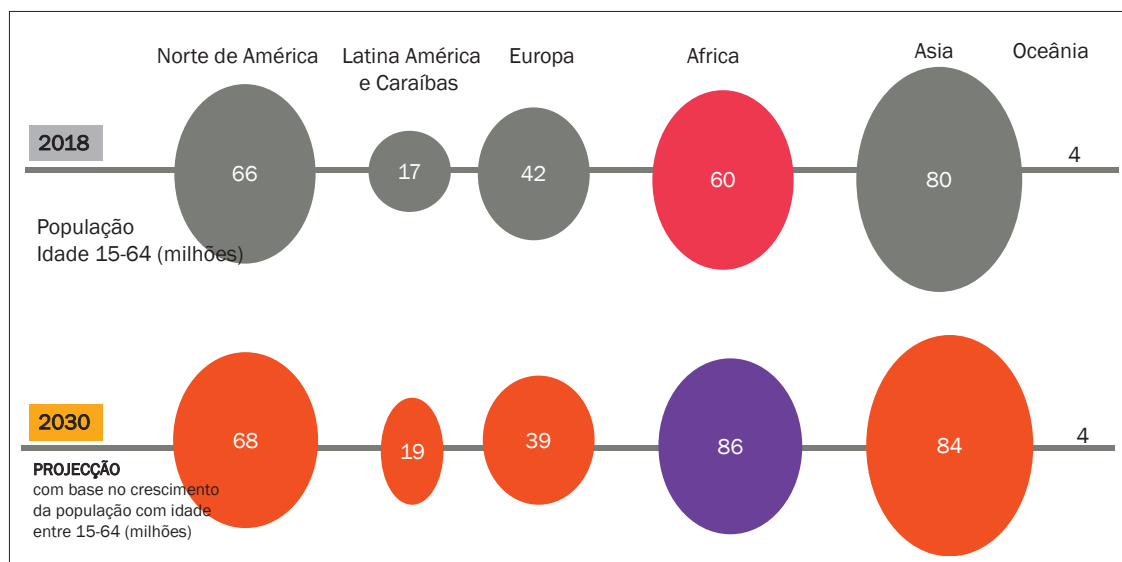
Data published in both reports show that drug use, especially of heroin among adolescents and youth, has increased in Mozambique. This is a situation that challenges

everyone to do something to curb the growing tendency of adolescents and youth to use psychoactive substances.

According to the United Nations (UN) projection, the number of drug users in Africa is expected to increase by 40% by 2030.

With these data, it is clear that Africa will be the continent most affected by the problem of drug trafficking and consumption in the coming years, which calls for a profound reflection on the actions that must be taken by governments and civil society in order to reverse this growing trend.

Fig.1. Drug use situation in 2018 and projection by 2030.



3. Drug policy and drug legislation in Mozambique

This session discussed the “Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation for an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Combat the World Drug Problem”, which was adopted by the United Nations member states at the 2009 session of the Committee on Narcotic Drugs (CND).

The Political Declaration set 2019 as a target date for states to eliminate or significantly and measurably reduce the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and use of internationally controlled substances.

From the assessment made in 2019, after a decade of implementation of the Drug Policy, it is apparent that the commitments and targets set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action have not been achieved and in many cases there have been counterproductive policies. These findings were made in the civil society shadow report shared by the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), published in 2019 and shared during the 62nd session of the United Nations Committee on Narcotic Drugs and Drug

gs (CND) held at the United Nations Offices on Drugs and Crime headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Regarding the Mozambican law on drugs, Law 03/97, of March 13, practice shows that after 24 years, many articles of this legal device are outdated, a situation that makes its revision necessary to strengthen coordination and intervention mechanisms and make adjustments in relation to national legislation. Furthermore, there is a need to remove some aspects that conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique, the Drug Pre-

vention and Fight Against Drugs Policy, as well as the National Strategy on Illicit Drugs and Other Psychoactive Substances (ENS-DIOSP), in order to make the implementation of the United Nations Conventions on the matter more effective.

In relation to criminal prosecution, administrative and treatment measures, drug trafficking is punished more severely, with longer prison sentences of up to 20 years, while consumption is punished in an almost symbolic way, always with the assumption of encouraging the consumer to adhere to treatment.

4. Prevention of drug use and community systems for effective prevention



It was explained to participants during the session that a program to prevent drug use is designed to strengthen the capacity of youth leaders and peer educators to become skilled and confident in acquiring and transferring knowledge, skills, and practical experience, as well as serving as informed resource points for their peers and their communities.

Trainees commit to being agents of change and vehicles for delivering anti-drug messages

The trainees recognized the importance of the training, especially since they are witness-

es to the harmful effects that drugs create in young people and they were unanimous in the need to disseminate the knowledge acquired during the training through peer education in schools, community radios and other communication platforms.

Ermelinda Paulino Garcias, activist of the Youth Hub in Pemba, said that after the training, she would like to work in the field to transmit the knowledge acquired to young people. "(...) We should be CDD trees so that we can transmit what we have learned. The training is important because many young

people in Pemba do drugs.

Gildo Somar, another member of the Youth Hub in Pemba, said he would like the opportunity to hold lectures in schools and in the community about drugs, but also using digital media to reach more young people. "I think we should go out and meet young people and convey the message that they should not get involved in drugs, that they should not be the means of consuming and selling drugs. As empowered youth I would really like us to do these activities to free some

young drug users."

Jossante Isidro Gabriel, from the Youth Hub in Montepuez, also stressed the need to spread the messages to other young people. "We already had a basic knowledge about drugs, but the training awakened more knowledge in us. As social activists, we must transmit knowledge to other people through lectures and programs on the radio so that the message reaches more people, especially young people, who are the most affected by drugs."



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