

CHILDREN MATTER | RIGHT TO A DRUG-FREE CHILDHOOD

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Trends | Influence | Storytelling | Safe spaces

12th - 14th November 2026

Kochi Marriott Hotel, Cochin, Kerala, India



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

FOURTH WAVE
FOUNDATION



Organisers



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime



FOURTH WAVE
FOUNDATION

Strategic Partners





"The Forum reminds us that effective prevention is more than evidence-informed; it is evidence-driven and youth-powered, ensuring that young people have a seat at the table where decisions are made."

Kristian Hölge

Regional Representative
UNODC Regional Office for South Asia

"Drug demand reduction and the new media challenges need to be addressed with a new lens on prevention, and CMF 2026 focuses on these topics. This conference will work to shape a shared civil society guideline for Drug Demand Reduction in a Digitally Connected World

Diana Vincent

Founder Director,
Fourth Wave Foundation
Executive Director- Children Matter Forum



"Young people have the power to shape safer, healthier, and more resilient futures. Real change begins when youth choose to lead, inspire one another, and become the voice of hope and responsibility within their own communities."

Billy Batware

Program Officer, UNODC. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) Austria

Delegates and Speakers

The 3-day forum will have national and international delegates and speakers:

- Civil Society Members
- Policy Makers
- Educators Practitioners
- Government Representatives
- Prevention-treatment-recovery Professionals
- Media Professionals. Youth Leaders

CHILDREN
MATTER

CHILDREN
MATTER





60
Countries

200
Delegates

50
Youth

Theme

Day 1 theme - Mapping the Threat: Children, Misinformation & the Digital Drug Trade

Day 2 theme - Building Resilience: Digital Safety, Awareness & Protective Ecosystems for Youth + Cultural Evening

Day 3 theme - Shared Responsibility: Media, Storytelling, Policy & the Way Forward

6 listed tracks as guidelines for speakers:

Trafficking & Dark Web | Digital Safety | Youth and conversations that Matter | Health & Consumerism | Media & Content Responsibility | Policy & Way Forward.

Speakers



Kristian Hölge

Regional Representative
UNODC Regional Office
for South Asia



Roberto Moro

Secretary,
Secretariat of
Comprehensive Policies
on Drugs - Argentina



Billy Batware

Program Officer,
UNODC - Austria



Esbjörn Hörnberg

Executive Director,
Movendi International -
Sweden



Dr. Pall

Rikhardsson

Chief Executive Officer
Planet Youth - Iceland



Dr. Edit Schlaffer

Founder and Chairperson
of Women Without
Borders (WwB)



Shane Varcoe

Executive Director,
Dalgarno Institute -
Australia



Christopher Schmitz

Therapist and Clinical
Supervisor - Denmark



Dominic Fernandez

Head, Corporate & Advocacy,
Singapore Anti Narcotics
Association (SANA) - Singapore



Diana Vincent

Founder and Director
Fourth Wave Foundation -
India



Vasanthi Srinivasan

Advisory Board Member,
Fourth Wave Foundation



Swarup B R

Advisory Board Member,
Fourth Wave Foundation



Akira Fujino

President,
Drug Abuse Prevention
Centre - Japan



**Benjamin
Westhoff**

Investigative
Reporter - USA



Rogers Kasirye

Executive Director,
Uganda Youth
Development Link -
Uganda



**Joanna Travis-
Roberts**

Executive Director at
ISSUP - International
Society of Substance Use
Professionals



Cressida de Witte

Secretary General,
World Federation Against
Drugs - Sweden



Maik Dünnbier

Director of Strategy
and Advocacy, Movendi
International - Sweden



Carlton Hall

President and CEO,
Carlton Hall Consultancy
- USA



Berenice Santamaría

Consultant with the
International Delegation
of the Proyecto Hombre
Association - Spain



**Dr. Rafael
Kropiunigg**

Director of Research
of Women Without
Borders (WwB)



Shelton Pinheiro

Executive Creative Director,
Stark Communications



C C Joseph

Executive Director,
Fourth Wave Foundation -
India



Ashwin Mahesh

Advisory Board Member,
Fourth Wave Foundation



Raja Shanmugam

Advisory Board Member,
Fourth Wave Foundation



C Balagopal

Advisory Board Member,
Fourth Wave Foundation

Youth Drug Prevention in the Digital Age

Despite global safeguards, drug use among children and youth is rising in the digital age, the risk has multiplied.

Young people are facing normalisation and glorification of substance use.



Social Media is a major driver

CHILDREN
MATTER



Children spend an average of 8 HOURS A DAY ONLINE. Meanwhile, 76% of social media posts portray substance use positively. THIS SHAPES THEIR BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIOURS. Social determinants of health among youth are increasingly shaped by access to online information.

A Call to Action

- To embrace evidence-based digital prevention approaches.
- To ensure that digital environments support positive development and healthy choices.
- To empower youth as partners in prevention.
- To engage digital content creators, digital marketers, and online communities to foster responsible content and counter harmful norms.
- To re-engage young people in a focused way to address growing issues like health, social safety, trafficking, and crime caused by substance abuse through an intergenerational model of support and accompaniment.



Aim of the Forum

- Establish the need for sensible media approaches to address the risk of normalisation of substance use and crime among children and young people.
- Advocate for the creation of substance abuse free environments for children globally, with special emphasis on digital ecosystems.
- Strengthen civil society responses in curating online safety and promoting positive youth behavioural health.





**To
know
more**



visit: www.fourthwavefoundation.org/children-matter-forum

Email: conference@fourthwavefoundation.org

Fourth Wave Foundation (Project VENDA®)
Panthaplackal House, Cheriyaumaroth Lane,
Mamangalam, Palarivattom, Ernakulam, 682 025.
Phone - +91 628 256 9231
www.fourthwavefoundation.org



United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime

