



CHILDREN MATTER | RIGHT TO A DRUG-FREE CHILDHOOD

INTERNATIONAL FORUM REPORT

16-18 Nov 2022
Trivandrum Kerala India



fourthwavefoundation.org



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WORLD FEDERATION
AGAINST DRUGS



www.wfad.se



Pictures of all the children from around the world who through a video welcomed the participants of the CHILDREN MATTER FORUM



Children Matter Forum advocating children's right to a drug-free childhood was organised by the World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Fourth Wave Foundation - Project VENDA. A multilateral community of 365 member organisations and over 400 individuals in 62 countries, WFAD shares a common concern that illicit drug use is threatening the existence of stable childhoods, families, communities, and government institutions worldwide. Also co-organising the Forum was the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which has been, for decades, helping make the world safer from drugs, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism, and Project VENDA. An initiative of the Fourth Wave Foundation, works in Kerala, India to effectively contain and manage the issue of substance abuse among children and teenagers by creating S.A.F.E. (Substance Abuse Free Environments). To achieve this end, Project VENDA brings together stakeholders, policymakers, and law enforcement agencies to ideate and commit to creating roadmaps for short and long-term goals toward creating a drug-free society. The Forum commenced on the 16th of November at Thiruvananthapuram. The three-day forum aimed at establishing the need to create Substance Abuse Free Environments for children around the world, advocating the relevance of primary prevention in national drug policies to protect children, and domesticating the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) with children as a priority and sharing best practices.

314
participants

40
online participants

03 *days*

60 *countries*



The program agenda, key themes, and topics discussed during the forum were designed to address issues and solutions at regional and country levels. The general feedback suggests that the forum helped understand the perspectives on prevention, care & recovery, and various best practices. The forum also examined challenges like the stigma associated with recovery, legalisation debates, and gender perspectives in dealing with the world drug problem.

The response by the local print and online media was very encouraging. Many speakers were interviewed, and the media coverage during the conference published opinion articles and best practices stories. The local press rendered due attention to the conference agenda all three-day making the conference message reach the target audience of youth and local communities by spreading the message of a prevention approach in solving the issue of Narcotics and drugs in our communities and among youth.



WELCOME TO CHILDREN MATTER FORUM





Introduction : Children Matter - International Forum
Mr. Raja Shanmugam, Advisory Board, Fourth Wave Foundation - India



Host - Welcome address
Mr. C.C. Joseph, Director, Fourth Wave Foundation - India



Keynote Address - World Drug Problem and the future of Children
Ms. Amy Ronshausen, International President, WFAD - USA



World Drug Report focus on youth and child focused prevention strategies
Mr. Marco Teixeira, South Asia Representative, UNODC - Portugal



International collaboration of civil societies

Mr. Esbjörn Hörnberg, Executive Director, Movendi International - Sweden



Right of a Child and Article 33 UNCRC - Need for a prevention approach

Ms. Regina Mattsson, Secretary General, WFAD - Sweden



Paradigm shift in evidence-based prevention - future trends and challenges

Mr. Matej Košir, Director, Institute for Research and Development - Slovenia



Welcome Address
Mr. Raja Shanmugam, Advisory Board, Fourth Wave Foundation - India



Presidential Address
Ms. Kumari Shibulal, Chairperson, Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiative - India

CHILDREN MATTER JOURNAL RELEASE



FELICITATION OF PARTNER DELEGATES



Mr. Marco Teixeira, South Asia Representative, UNODC - Asia



Ms. Amy Ronshausen, International President, World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD)



Educating and empowering young people to advocate for their rights and development - Drugs and transnational crime in a child's world & Role of civil society
Mr. Billy Batware, Program Officer, UNODC - Austria



Project VENDA - Kerala Model of drug policy programs focused on children
Mr. C.C. Joseph, Director, Fourth Wave Foundation - India



Panel : Global Drug Policy Advocacy efforts focused on children
Mr. Johnson J. Edayarammula, Director, ADIC - India

Mr. Shakya Nanayakkara, Chairman, National Dangerous Drugs Control Board of Sri Lanka (NDDCB)

Ms. Kavita Ratna, Director of Advocacy and Fundraising, The Concerned for Working Children - India

Ms. Sumnima Tuladhar, Executive Director, CWIN - Nepal

Dr. Arun Kandasamy, Professor of Psychiatry, Centre for Addiction Medicine, NIMHANS - India



Increasing the number of problem solvers - Community led approach to drug demand reduction
Dr. Ashwin Mahesh, Advisory Board, Fourth Wave Foundation - India



Rehabilitation and social cohesion of children - Reducing stigma and the gender perspective
Ms. Emily Hennessy, Associate Director of Biostatistics, Recovery Research Inst - USA



Policy to Implementation: Advocating for a community-based multidisciplinary approach & evidence-based prevention interventions for children, youth, and women
Ms. Chantelle Pepper, Chair, Western Cape Substance Abuse Forum - South Africa



The role of the family and school in working with children and students
Dr. Edit Schlaffer, Founder and Chair, Women Without Borders - Austria



Understanding the needs of children whose primary caregivers use drugs
Ms. Monica Barzanti, Head of International Relations, Community San Patrignano - Italy



The Fierce Urgencies of Now! Changing the conversation about the power of prevention, commercialisation, and inequity in a time of global crisis

Mr. Carlton Hall, President and CEO, Carlton Hall Consultancy - USA



The Icelandic Model

Ms. Margrét Lilja Guðmundsdóttir, Chief knowledge officer, Planet Youth - Iceland



Panel : Right to a drug free childhood

Fr. Dr. Kuriakose Augustine, HOD, Don Bosco Arts and Sciences College - India

Dr. Atul Ambekar, Professor, National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, AIIMS - India

Dr. Harvey Milkman, Professor Emeritus, Metropolitan State University of Denver - USA

Mr. Mousa Daoud, Director, The Jordan Anti-Drugs Society - Jordan

Mr. Rogers Kasirye, Executive Director, Uganda Youth Development Link - Uganda



Group Discussion : Drafting of action plan - Right to a drug-free childhood
 Animator - Mr. Billy Batware, Program Officer, UNODC - Austria
 Group leads - Mr. Raja Shanmugam, Ms. Regina Mattson, Dr. Edward Edezhath,
 Fr. Dr. Kuriakose Augustine



Panel : Need for prevention protocol for drug supply & demand reduction
 Dr. Edward Edezhath, Advisory member, Project VENDRA - India

Ms. Priyanka G IAS , Director, Department of Women and Child Development, GOK - India
 Mr. Richard Antony, India Location Leader, EYGDS - India
 Dr. Dharav Shah, Director, Ugravedan Foundation - India



Panel : The cannabis conundrum - World marketing targeting children

Ms. Regina Mattsson, Secretary General, WFAD - Sweden

Ms. Amy Ronshausen, Executive Director, Drug Free America Foundation - USA

Mr. Billy Batware, Program Officer, UNODC - Vienna

Mr. Carlton Hall, President and CEO, Carlton Hall Consultancy - USA



Don't Normalise - influence of digital & visual media

Mr. Swarup B R, Advisory Board, Fourth Wave Foundation - India

Mr. Manoj K Das, Managing Editor, Asianet News - India

Mr. Joe A Scaria, Former Senior Assistant Editor, The Economic Times - India

Ms. Jisha Surya, Special Correspondent, News9 - India



Project VENDA - youth lead community interventions

Mr. C.C. Joseph, Director, Fourth Wave Foundation - India

Drug-free childhood - Multistakeholder collaboration

Mr. C. Balagopal, Chairman of the Board, Federal Bank - India



Panel : Role of Stakeholders in advocating for a drug-free childhood

Mr. G. Vijayaraghavan, Founder CEO, TechnoPark - India

Mr. S.D. Shibulal, Founder, Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiative - India

Mr. T.P. Sreenivasan, Former Ambassador of India - India

Ms. Lida Jacob, IAS, Former Principal Secretary, GOK - India





Presidential Address
Mr. S.D. Shibulal, Founder, Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiative - India



Chief Guest Address
Mr. Alphons Joseph, Music Director and Playback Singer



S.A.F.E. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2022



Esbjörn Hörnberg
Executive Director, Movendi International - Sweden



Dr. Edit Schlaffer
Founder and Chair, Women without Borders - Austria

The Kerala Youth Forum was organised along side the Children Matter Forum where the youth had a youth capacity-building program organised by The Colombo Plan Drug Advisory's (DAP) Youth Forum that focused on promoting youth leadership in drug demand reduction by fostering youth engagement and youth-led initiatives.

This rare and unique opportunity were extended to different institutions and organisations across the country wherein 49 youth participants between the age group of 16-22 years of age, including youth leaders, took part in the capacity-building program. The youth were trained on a pre-prepared module with various substance use prevention topics, such as:

- Science of addiction and prevention.
- The role of youth and how to influence prevention in their communities.

- Skill building in substance use and misuse prevention.
- Enhancing leadership qualities and skills to lead substance use prevention programs in their communities.

Towards the end of the youth forum training, the 48 youth participants signed a declaration where they committed to leading a healthy life and serving as role models for other young people in their communities, working towards the creation of evidence-based prevention interventions and demanding meaningful engagement in substance use prevention strategies and policies. This declaration was made in front of delegates from different parts of the world and from various areas of work to the Children Matter Forum to work towards creating a substance abuse free environment for children.



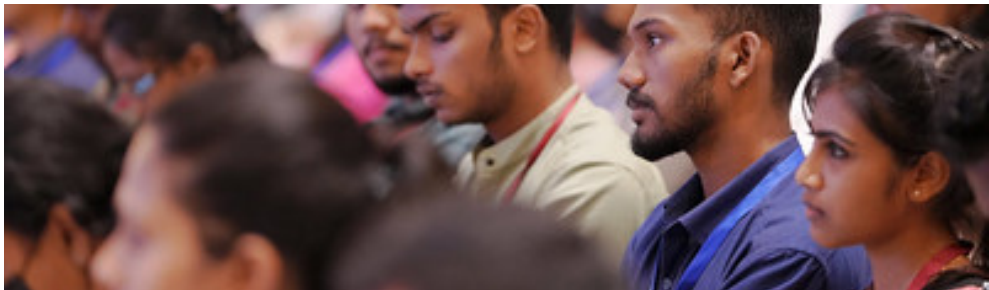
(SUBSTANCE ABUSE FREE ENVIRONMENT - TEAM YOUTH)

On the final day of the Children Matter International Forum, youth representatives from colleges across Kerala gathered along with the national and International delegates of the Children Matter Forum as part of the S.A.F.E.TY 2022 (Substance Abuse Free Environment - Team Youth). The final day of the Forum aimed at bringing together stakeholders and university students from Kerala along with delegates from the Children Matter Forum to create multi- stakeholder road maps for a substance abuse free environment. A group of youth comprising student representatives from all the 14 districts of Kerala will be pioneers of awareness, prevention and care in their respective districts.

The team was a balanced group with representatives from major academic disciplines inclusive of Medical, Engineering, Travel and Tourism, Arts and Sciences, Journalism, Management Studies, and Social Work. The young people got the opportunity to meet subject experts from around the world and hear about best practices and youth initiatives across the globe. The youth participation was crucial to the conference as they are to be the natural advocates of creating a substance abuse-free environment for children across the state of Kerala, ensuring drug-free childhood for the children's future.

114
participants

31
colleges





The CHILDREN MATTER installation was handmade by the Project VENDA team. Each tile in the installation were childhood photographs of the Project VENDA team.

The intent was to showcase their experience of working with teens and young adults. This artwork is an expression of their childhood in retrospect of how things would have been different if someone cared enough to see from their point of view. The installation had to be viewed from a certain vantage point; from the point of view of a child literally and figuratively to experience the artwork to the fullest. It welcomed the viewer to see the world from a child's 'point of view'.



Life has a way of rewarding us experiences that turn into stories. Stories that fill us with conviction, with purpose. With hope.

During the breaks at the CHILDREN MATTER FORUM, participants were given the opportunity to listen to stories shared by catalysts of Project VENDA. Stories - their own and ones that have shaped who they've become. Stories from the grassroots of the work we do. That inspire us everyday to do what we do - For the Children.

AN EVENING OF FUN ACTIVITIES



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