

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND SUBSTANCE USE: A MANUAL



Create, use and evaluate  
educational materials  
and activities

Edited by  
Maristela G. Monteiro



WHO Department on Substance Abuse  
World Health Organization

Mentor Foundation



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## Participants

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<b>Kushlani Amarasuriya</b>	Alcohol and Drug Information Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka
<b>Bing Baguioro</b>	Children's Laboratory Theatre for Drama in Education, Quezon City, Philippines
<b>Claudius Ceccon</b>	Centro de Criação de Imagem Popular, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
<b>Clifford Cohen</b>	Animation, Topanga, USA
<b>Raquel Flores</b>	Edex Kolektiboa, Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain
<b>Donald Kaminsky</b>	Project Alternatives, Tegucigalpa DC, Honduras
<b>Juan Carlos Melero</b>	Edex Kolektiboa, Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain
<b>Manoel M. Pablos</b>	Audio Visuales Educativos, Cochabamba, Bolivia
<b>Emil Parvu</b>	Princess Margarita of Romania Foundation, Bucarest, Romania
<b>Leanne Riley</b>	NSW Drug and Alcohol Directorate, Sydney, Australia
<b>Eugênio Scannavino</b>	Projeto Saúde e Alegria, Santarém, Brazil

## Secretariat

---

**Maristela G. Monteiro** Medical Officer, WHO Substance Abuse Department, Geneva, Switzerland

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**Centro de Criação de Imagem Popular (Popular Image Creation Center)  
Rio de Janeiro · RJ · Brazil**

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# Preface

The WHO Substance Abuse Department aims to foster and disseminate low-cost, effective, community-based, and culturally appropriate strategies for young people at risk from, or affected by the use of alcohol, tobacco and other psychoactive substances. Such strategies are needed especially in developing countries, where resources are scarce and often do not meet the needs and problems of the local community.

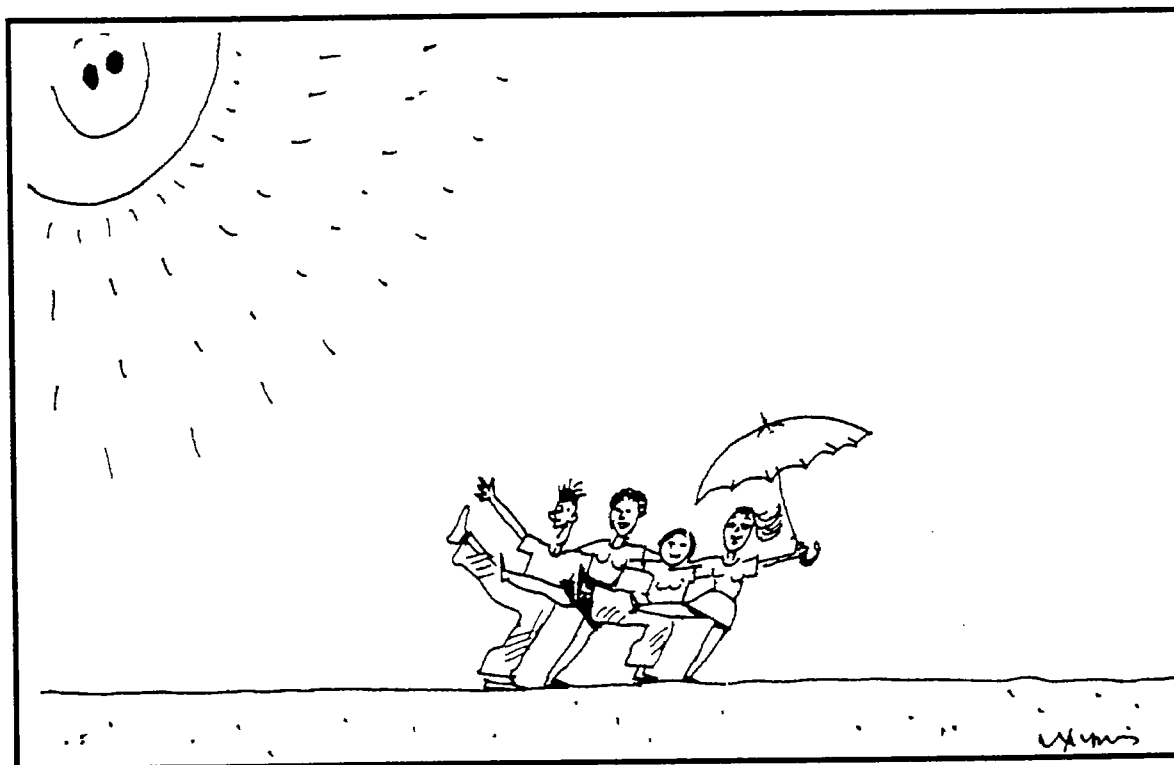
Health education activities must be appropriate to the needs, values, and culture of the target population. The most effective way of developing materials using these activities is to involve young people in their design, utilization, dissemination, and evaluation.

Resultant discussions with young people will help to promote healthier behaviour and prevent substance use problems.

This manual reflects this participatory approach. The need for such a tool was suggested by the participants of the meeting on the Street Children Project held in Geneva, Switzerland, in April 1994. They called attention to the urgent need for a simple, straightforward, and easy-to-use guidebook to help health workers without extensive training or sophisticated resources to produce educational resources on issues related to substance use.

Subsequently, two WHO-sponsored meetings were held in Bilbao, Spain: the first on 7 to 11 November 1994, and the second on 5 to 9 February 1996, with the support of the MENTOR Foundation and The Government of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. The first draft was prepared during the former meeting and the final manuscript was revised for field testing in the latter meeting. Field testing was carried out in Bolivia, Brazil, Honduras, the Philippines, Romania, Spain and Sri Lanka.

It is hoped that these guidelines will encourage local organizations, community leaders, parents, health workers, and street educators to deal with issues related to alcohol, tobacco, and other psychoactive substances in a non-judgemental way, which in turn will help young people to seek advice, help and treatment without fear. The WHO Substance Abuse Department would be pleased to receive comments from readers concerning content, format, and any suggestions for improvement.



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