



Drug Information Network Project

Training Workshop for National Coordinators of Drug
Information Networks

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(OID)

Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
Kingstown, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, October 6-8, 2008

Introduction to CICAD

- n CICAD was created more than 20 years ago and currently serves the 34 member states of the OAS (Organization of American States)
- n CICAD's core mission is to strengthen the human and institutional capabilities and harness the collective energy of its member states to reduce the production, trafficking and use and abuse of drugs in the Americas.



Introduction to the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs

- n The 'OID' was created in 2000
- n It is the statistics, information and research unit of CICAD
- n It operates at the hemispheric level (hence 'inter-American')
- n Its mission is to build a drug information network for the Americas

The OIG's Mission

- n To help promote and build a drug information network for the Americas that offers objective, reliable, up-to-date and comparative information so that member states can better understand, design and implement policies and programs to confront the drug phenomenon in all its dimensions.

FUNCTION OF THE OI

- ∅ TO ASSIST MEMBER STATES TO IMPROVE THEIR CAPACITY TO COLLECT AND ANALYSE DRUG STATISTICS
- ∅ TO ASSIST MEMEBER STATES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DRUG SURVEYS AND OTHER STUDIES

FUNCTIONS OF THE OI

- ∅ PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL DRUG OBSERVATORIES AND THE USE OF STANDARDISED DATA AND METHODOLOGIES

FUNCTIONS OF THE OI

- n To generate drug information that is objective, reliable, up-to-date, and comparable
- n So that member states will be better able to understand, design and implement policies and programs to deal with illegal drug issues



The Importance of Drug Information Networks

Importance of Drug Information Networks

- n A drug information network for the purposes of this project is defined as a group of people who, representing either themselves or an agency, collect, analyze and disseminate information on drugs for the purpose of monitoring trends, developing policy, and implementing appropriate programs and responses.

Importance of Drug Information Networks cont'd

- n Central and Southwest Asia (Central Asian Epidemiology Work Group)
- n European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
- n Surveillance System for Epidemiological Addictions (SISVEA) in Mexico
- n South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU)
- n Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU)
- n USA Community Epidemiology Working Group (CEWG)

Description of Project

Description of Project

Goal:

- n To improve the participating countries' performance in the making of drug policy, design and implementation of responses and programs, and the evaluation of outcomes through the use of timely, valid, and reliable information.

Description of Project

Specific Objectives:

- n To establish drug information networks in five (5) countries. This is also the main objective.
- n To improve the availability, quality and timeliness of information related to drug production, trafficking, use, and the consequences thereof in the participating countries.
- n To improve the level of participation and performance in the MEM

Major Activities

- Identify the coordinators for the networks in each country.
- Carry out a two-day regional training workshop for the coordinators in the most cost effective location.
- Develop and publish a data protocol for the DINs
- Undertake Needs & Resources Analyses in participating countries
- Publish Needs & Resource analysis report
- Carry out a one-day sensitization meeting in each country for information network members
- Prepare report of meeting outcomes

Major Activities cont'd

- Gather data from network member using a data gathering protocol
- Review of data by coordinators and CICAD Process and analyze data
- Draft network report
- Review of reports by stakeholders
- Publish Network Report
- Convene a meeting of stakeholders and to discuss the implications of the report for policy and practice in each country
- Draft, publish and disseminate final project report and evaluation

Objectives of the Workshop and Roadmap:

Objectives of the Workshop and Roadmap

- n To introduce participants to the concepts that underpin national drug information networks
- n To teach the steps that are required to establish a DIN.
- n To examine the elements of a DIN and to see how they work together.
- n To provide a set of tools for network coordinators to establish and maintain a network in their respective countries
- n To discuss the experiences of other countries' information networks



Development of a national drug information network

Elements of a Drug Information Network

- n A coordinator
- n An interactive network of professionals and agencies
- n A standardized way of collecting and reporting information
- n A network meeting, at least once a year, where members discuss their data in the following context:
 - Identifying existing drug use and drug trafficking patterns
 - Identifying important changes in drug use or drug trafficking
 - Discussing the implications of the data for policy and practice
- n Present their data to policy makers and to the general public where possible
- n An annual report
- n A dissemination plan for important publications

Data Sources

n Existing Data

- Hospital admissions, emergency dept logs, public health reports, coroners and medical examiners' records, Treatment center records
- Drug related Crime stats (arrests, seizures, prosecutions, convictions) from police, customs and other law enforcement

n General Surveys (Households)

n Special population surveys (school students, prisons, universities, out of school youth, treatment centers, emergency rooms, drug users)

n Rapid Assessments

n Key Informant Interviews, focus groups

Data Sources cont'd

NB

When starting an information system in a country where existing data sources are not developed, key informants can still provide unstructured reports from their own experience. For example, in some African countries, the initial network meeting received reports from treatment specialists, doctors and community workers on the nature of the drug problem in their particular area.

Remember!

The two main Network objectives to keep in mind are:

- n Obtaining knowledge about the drug problem
- n Further developing and strengthening the network

Also try to observe the following key features of a network:

- n It should be comprehensive: including diversity with the representation of a number of perspectives, such as treatment, law enforcement, health policy and research;

Remember!

- n It should be small enough to allow presentation of information and discussion of findings;
- n It should be flexible enough to allow the inclusion of additional expertise
- n It should be led by a coordinator who will organize meetings, agendas and reporting. Meetings can be chaired by different members of the network from time to time
- n It should be committed to meeting on a regular basis and at least once a year, preferably twice a year depending on the dynamic nature of the drug problem.

Step 1 – Information Needs and Resources Analysis

- n this is a way to create an inventory of potential data sources and provides the tools to assess these data sources. The Coordinators should carefully examine what each potential network member brings to the table in terms of data and information, research abilities, ability to communicate, and ability to contribute.

Step 2 – First network meeting

- n This meeting is extremely important since it will serve to introduce members to the raison d'être of the network. It will also introduce them to the way the network will function, what the inputs and outputs will be, and what the products will be used for.

Some more advice about this first meeting:

- n Start small. Be selective about who you invite to attend. It is better to start with a small manageable group, and then add persons as other sources are identified...or to change members as the need arises.
- n Have clear attainable objectives for the meeting. Avoid trying to do too much during this first meeting
- n Establish an agenda in coordination with other participants so that they feel invested from the beginning
- n Give each participant a role to play and a contribution to make.

Objectives of the first meeting should be to:

- n Identify known and potential sources of data and information. Selected participants can be asked to describe particular data sets and to prepare and briefly present data from their sources of data
- n Review the types of data sources (indicators) to determine if they are available in your country. If yes, then steps should be taken to identify agencies and individuals who can provide access to these sources
- n Assign participants to follow-up activities after the meeting. These activities will most likely be the collection of data or to acquire further information on data sources
- n Determine how the information from meetings should be recorded, reported and disseminated. This is extremely important because the product that this network 'trades' in, is information. premature and unnatural death.
- n Identify potential sources of support (political, financial) for the network, and use them.

Subsequent meetings

Subsequent meetings should also be short since members of the network will most likely be busy people, but sufficient time should always be allocated for:

- n Every participant with data to present his or her findings
- n After each presentation or group of presentations, discussion of what the data or information shows.
- n Follow-up on issues that may have been raised at earlier meetings
- n Discussion of the agenda, date, time, and place of next meeting

Step 3 – Collection and analysis of data & Information

What type of data or information should a network collect?

- n Treatment center data
- n Arrests, seizures, and other law enforcement data
- n Drug use statistics from surveys and other research
- n Hospital emergency room data
- n Forensic Science labs
- n Public Health data
- n Expert opinion

Step 4 – Publication of Annual report

- n If you do not publish and disseminate the findings of your network, it can easily become useless, and die a natural death

Further steps

Once the network is up and running, then the following steps can be considered as the network matures:

- n Further standardization of data
- n Expanding or changing membership
- n Upgrading data systems for network members
- n Developing a web-based data system
- n More publications (newsletters, research reports, etc)



Short Group Exercise:

Group Exercise

List all of the known sources of data in your countries and compare notes. At the end you will need to present a list of the data sources that are common to all of your countries and the ones that are unique.

Discussion: Can we standardize data across all countries?



Development of a national drug information network cont'd

Needs and Resources Analysis

- n Establish the baseline information available on drug use in each country
- n Determine which data sources are available to contribute to an integrated drug information network
- n Determine what resources already exist in each country that can be used to support a network
- n Identify priority infrastructure and training needs in order to develop the network
- n Establish communication between relevant stakeholders who will be part of the network
- n Involve all relevant agencies and individuals in the development of the network

Structure of the inventory

- n Step 1 - Identifying relevant individuals and institutions
- n Step 2 – Assessing information and resources available
- n Step 3 – Identifying resources and needs
- n Step 4 – Strategic Analysis
- n Step 5 - Writing the report of the information, needs and resources analysis

Step 1 - Identifying relevant individuals and institutions

- n Government departments of health and welfare
- n National drug councils and authorities
- n Universities and research centers
- n Non-governmental organizations that have contact with illicit drug abusers
- n International agencies that may be involved with substance use or related issues (for example CICAD, UNODC, WHO)
- n Drug treatment centers
- n Outreach services for at-risk groups (such as street people, sex workers or youth)
- n Police headquarters and local police stations
- n Prisons and the judicial system
- n Hospitals and emergency rooms
- n Psychiatric facilities
- n Ambulance service
- n Forensic laboratories and coroners
- n Customs Depts.

Step 2 – Assessing information and resources available

- n How is the data collected?
- n What is the coverage of data collection (that is, age, gender and geographic area)?
- n What sampling methods were used to obtain the data?
- n How are the data recorded (computer database, written records, log book etc.)?
- n How up-to-date are the data?
- n How frequently is the data entered into a central database and collated?
- n What data categories are kept in the records (for example, age, gender or drug type)?
- n What age group is covered by the data?
- n How are data reported and disseminated?
- n What are the barriers to data collection; collation and dissemination?
- n What resources are needed to develop data collection activities?

Step 3 – Identifying resources and needs

- n (a) People available to partake in a network;
- n (b) Data sources that could contribute to a network;
- n (c) Expertise and technical skills that are needed to develop the data collection;
- n (d) Universities and research institutes that could offer technical support to epidemiological activities;

Step 4 – Strategic Analysis

The purpose of this section is to prioritize developments needs and establish a set of realistic goals for developing a network. It is better to set achievable goals than set ambitious goals that cannot be realized. The three suggested sub-steps are:

- n Analysis of the data
- n Analysis of the network, and
- n Development of a strategic plan

Step 5 - Writing the report of the information, needs and resources analysis

Finally, a report that can serve as a resource for guidance, information and discussion needs to be drafted.

Contents of Needs Analysis Report.

Definitions of Data Elements

- n **Prevalence:** Prevalence may be defined as the proportion of people within a defined population residing in a defined geographic area who are diagnosed as having a specified health condition or problem in a given time period.
- n **Incidence:** Incidence may be defined as the proportion of people within a defined population residing in a defined geographic area who are newly diagnosed as having a specified health condition or problem in a given time period.

Definitions of Data Elements

Time Periods: In general drug abuse researchers use four time periods when reporting about drug use:

- n **Lifetime** refers to the use of a specific drug at least once in a lifetime
- n **Annual** refers to the use of a specific drug at least once in the prior year (12 months)
- n **Current** refers to the use of a specific drug at least once in the prior month (30 days)
- n **Daily** refers to the use of a specific drug 20 or more times within the prior month

Definitions of Data Elements

Drug categories:

- n Cannabis type: Includes marijuana and hashish
- n Opiates: Include heroin, opium and other opiates (e.g. morphine, fentanyl, and buprenorphine)
- n Cocaine: includes powder (salt) cocaine, crack cocaine and other forms of cocaine
- n Amphetamine type: Includes amphetamine, methamphetamine and Ecstasy-type amphetamines

Definitions of Data Elements

Drug categories:

- n **Sedatives and Tranquilizers:** Includes legally manufactured barbiturates and benzodiazepines
- n **Hallucinogens:** Includes lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and other hallucinogens
- n **Solvents and inhalants:** Includes a range of volatile substances such as gasoline/petrol, adhesives, aerosol products (e.g. paint sprays, air fresheners, and computer equipment spray), cleaning agents etc.
- n **Other drugs:** Includes any illicit substance that does not fall within the above categories.

Definitions of Data Elements

Age Categories :

Using standardized age categories helps compare trends for different groups over time both across and between populations located in different places.

- n Adults: 15 – 64 years
- n Youth: 15 – 24 years
- n Adolescents: 15 – 16 years

Definitions of Data Elements

Other important elements include:

- n Source of data
- n Method of drug use
- n Gender
- n Ethnicity
- n Units of Measurement (e.g. kg, lb)



Arthur Pierre

Establishing a database

Information that is obtained by the network will appear in a variety of formats. It is important that one format for the presentation of survey and agency-based data be used by network members. For example:

UNODC Manual 57 - 58



Esther Best

Network meetings and the Interpretation of data

The network meetings are the most important component in any integrated drug information network. It is here that the data are presented and discussed.

Network meetings and the Interpretation of data

Whoever is in charge of the meetings (the chair), must ensure that he or she:

- n Convenes the meeting and either develops the agenda or assigns this role to another network member
- n Makes sure that all members keep on schedule
- n Makes sure that each member has their data in the appropriate format
- n Allows only a few minutes for questions after each individual report

Network meetings and the Interpretation of data

- n Discourages discussion of the data presented until after all presentations are completed
- n Summarizes the key findings that were presented
- n Encourages discussion of the findings
- n Asks about other corroborating or additional information that is needed and assigns network members to access this information and to present it at the next meeting
- n Ensures that a proceedings report is prepared after each meeting
- n Ensures that the report is disseminated in a timely fashion (like before the subsequent meeting)
- n Continuously updates the dissemination list.

Network meetings and the Interpretation of data

- n It is important for network members to understand that they are expected not only to report their data, but to bring some level of analysis to the meeting.
- n It would also be useful if from time to time, specially invited guests are invited to participate in network meetings.
- n The frequency of meetings should depend on the maturity of the network. In the beginning, the network will probably meet regularly to get itself up and running. Once established, the network should meet about twice a year minimum and a national report should be prepared at the end of every year.



Dr. Jim Hall

Recent drug studies in participating countries



Roles and Responsibilities of Network Coordinators

Roles and Responsibilities of Coordinators

- n Attending the regional training workshop
- n Conducting the needs and resources assessment analysis
- n Preparing the needs and resources analysis report
- n Facilitating the first drug information network meeting
- n Each country will convene a meeting of the national drug information network which should be the first meeting for most of you I think. Here is a draft agenda that you can use as is or adapt to suit your needs.

Roles and Responsibilities of Coordinators

n Preparing a meeting report

- It is important to document the proceedings at every network meeting, but it is especially important to document proceedings of the first meeting because this is where the agencies and individuals have to be on the same page in terms of the purpose of the network and the role that they play.
- The format of the report will be yours to choose, but it is important that it reflects the comments of the participants and any decisions reached.

Roles and Responsibilities of Coordinators

- n Collection, analysis, and compilation of data
 - On a case by case basis, we could consider providing some technical support for this.
- n Supervising the preparation of a country report.
- n We are going to look at the format for this later today

Preparation of Workplans and Discussion: Project activities, timetables, technical and financial support

Should we develop and publish standardized indicators?

Standardized indicators?

- n Should we develop a standard format for our drug info systems?
- n How do we determine the minimum data set?
- n Should this be a separate activity?
- n A number of standardized data collection tools already exist
- n So we do not have to start from scratch

Standardized indicators?

- n MEM indicators
- n SIDUC protocols
- n CICDAT indicators
- n Other countries (e.g. Grenada
GRENDIN indicators)

Guidelines on Preparing National Reports

Annual Report Format

Examples of information generated from information networks
(EB, AP, JH)

Expected Outputs from each participating country

- n Needs and resources analysis report prepared
- n Establishment of information network
- n Initial Network Meeting convened
- n Data collection and analysis
- n Annual (interim) Network reports from each country

Conclusions

- n The OIG/CICAD has done and is doing a lot of work in the Americas
- n Despite the many challenges, concrete results are beginning to emerge
- n The next step, acting on these results to set policy and influence practices, is being tackled in a variety of ways

Thank you for your
attention

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