

The Drug Situation in Saint Lucia

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Background

Geography

Area: 619 sq. km. (238 sq. mi.).

Terrain: Mountainous.

Climate: Tropical.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--St. Lucian(s).

Population (2006): 166,014.

Ethnic groups: African descent 90%, mixed 6%, East Indian 3%, European 1%.

Languages: English (official); a French patois is common throughout the country.

Unemployment (2006): 15.7%.

An Overview

- § Saint Lucia is for the most part a trans-shipment point to America and Europe
- § The Most used/abused substance is Alcohol followed by Marijuana
- § Crack cocaine is smoked in abundance by many indigent and homeless persons
- § A comparison of SIDUC data showed that St. Lucian students report higher levels of Alcohol use in the Caribbean and the second highest in Marijuana use.

An Overview....cont'd

- § Currently, data collection on Drug related matters are poor. (if they exist at all)
- § Many key agencies do not keep accurate records
- § Many incidents involving drug use are not recorded to reflect that
- § Many agencies consider it a burden to provide data to anyone
- § Resistance exists in some areas as a result of internal matter in SAACS

Agencies Involved in Drug Control and Prevention

- § Ministry of Education
- § Criminal Investigation Unit (RSLPF)
- § Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Detox. And Rehab. Centre
- § Chief Pharmacist
- § Crown Prosecution
- § Golden Hope Mental Hospital
- § Victoria Hospital
- § Customs and Excise
- § Bordelais Correctional Facility
- § Central Procurement
- § C.D.A.R.I.

The Role of SAACS

- § The Substance Abuse Advisory Council Secretariat is the central agency created to oversee all aspects of drug control and prevention
- § SAACS duties include gathering and disseminating data on the drug Situation in Saint Lucia
- § Information gathering has been ad-hoc and painstaking at times
- § Recent administrative issues have compounded our difficulty in doing our job
- § Slow and steady growth in SAACS will be reflected in better data collection and programme implementation