

UNODC IN SOUTH ASIA: UNODC helps countries and its people to reduce illegal drugs and crime throughout the world and address justice and human security issues. It helps Member States with technical assistance, legal advice and research within the framework of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its three Protocols, the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the three UN Conventions on Drugs.

UNODC South Asia is present in Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka

The North East of India: Drug use and HIV taking its toll in the Far East of India



In September 2009, Ms Cristina Albertin, South Asia Regional Representative, UNODC travelled to the North East of India, where the United Nations has engaged with the National Aids Control Organization (NACO) in an HIV and AIDS prevention and care programme. She heard the testimonies of drug users, both male and female, who now receive support through the United Nations to cope with their lives as drug users. Some are clients of the first oral substitution treatment centre run by the Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya. The Association has attended to some 150 clients, who since 2006 have received Buprenorphine to treat their heroin addiction. The Buprenorphine treatment has helped them to lead a normal life, meaning a productive life with employment, trustful family relations and a life safe from HIV and hepatitis.

FACT FILE

North East of India: HIV Watch

- Adult HIV prevalence rate in Manipur is 1.57 %
- Adult HIV prevalence rate in Nagaland is 1.2 %
- National average of HIV prevalence rate is 0.34 % In Manipur 19.8 % of injecting drug users are HIV positive
- In Manipur 10.4 % of the population are men having sex with men (MSM)
- In Nagaland, 16.4 % of female sex workers are living with HIV/AIDS
- Prevalence rates for injecting drug users (IDUs) in the North East of India remain high above the national average of 6.9 %

Source: NACO sentinel surveillance September 2009

Bangladesh: Empowering women to deal with drug use, HIV and AIDS in their families

UNODC, with the Government of Bangladesh and civil society partners, implements a comprehensive package for female drug users and their partners who use drugs. The package includes accessible, non-judgmental and gender-sensitive services provided by mainly female staff to the women. Further, the interventions are tailored towards outreach, information dissemination, education and primary health-care services that meet women's specific needs. One of the female drug users who has been using these services, says "by visiting the centre I have learnt about health issues relating to sexually transmitted diseases. I participate in household decision making, which is a significant step. I realize that social attitudes towards women can change for the better if women themselves become the catalysts for change but not without the support of such interventions."



South Asia: Delegates from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Nepal visit Tihar Prisons, India to learn about Oral Substitution Treatment

UNODC organized a visit for delegates from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Nepal to Tihar prisons with the aim to observe the oral substitution treatment (OST) programme and help understand the modality for implementing it in their respective countries. How follow-up care of prisoners is undertaken after release to Drop in Centres (DICs) which also have OST in place, was also explained to them. UNODC launched the first OST programme in November 2008 in Tihar prisons, India, which is the largest prison complex in South Asia. The overall objective is to ensure that every prisoner has access to essential drugs, HIV and AIDS prevention and care programmes that are linked with the services available to the wider community. The OST centre in Tihar has definitely become a 'model' and reference for other countries in South Asia.

UNODC INTERNAL NEWS CORNER

South Asia: IT team travels to UNODC Regional Office Thailand

UNODC South Asia hosts the global IT team that supports UNODC field offices across the world. IT members visited the Regional UNODC Regional office in East Asia and the Pacific to provide training on how to use the program and financial information management system known as ProFi. UNODC staff and Member States use ProFi for decision making and information on all aspects of project implementation and contributions.