



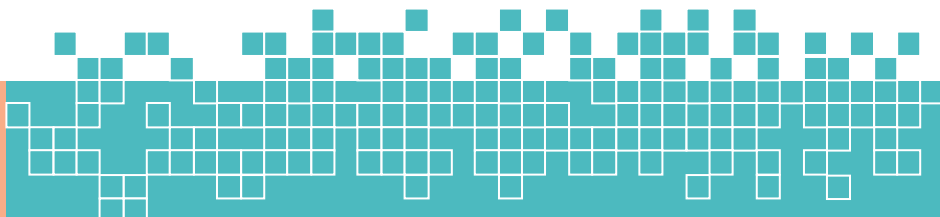
Report on the Drug Abuse Sensitization March – May 11, 2024

Introduction

On May 11, 2024, the Sustainable Communities Network (SCN) and Youth in Actions Against Drugs (YAAD) organized a drug sensitization march to raise awareness about the dangers of Kush and other illegal drugs. The march covered the communities of Cole Farm, Murray Town, and Aberdeen. This report details the event's organization, key activities, speeches, challenges, success stories, and future plans, including the monitoring and evaluation of drug abuse in the community.

Preparation and Planning:

YAAD, under the leadership of CEO and founder Mr. Sullay Costello Kamara, requested SCN's collaboration to address the escalating issue of drug abuse in our communities. SCN, led by the Director of Operations Mr. Thomas Nyamawa, responded positively and created a Terms of Reference (TOR) to formalize the partnership. The signing of the TOR marked the official start of the collaborative efforts to organize and execute the sensitization march.





YOUTH IN ACTIONS AGAINST DRUGS

In Collaboration with (YAAD)

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
NETWORK (SCN)**



HELP STOP

DRUGS ABUSE
& Other Illicit Substance
EVERY FAMILY IS AFFECTED
Sierra Leone First

Planning and Strategy Development

Key steps in the planning process included:

1. **Strategic Meeting:** Senior executives from YAAD and SCN met to develop strategies for organizing the sensitization march.
2. **Police Clearance:** YAAD obtained the necessary Sierra Leone Police clearance to ensure the march was conducted legally and safely.

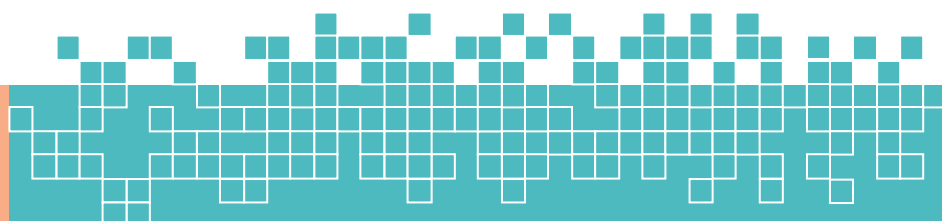
3. **Collaboration T-Shirts:** Custom T-shirts featuring both YAAD and SCN logos were designed to promote unity and visibility.
4. **Community Engagement:** Stakeholders from the Cole Farm community, including SCN Digital Platform Centre (DPC) trainees, SCN volunteers, local community members, teachers, and students from secondary schools in the area, were contacted and invited to participate.

Execution of the Sensitization March

Participants, including community members from Cole Farm, Murray Town, and Aberdeen, along with students from Collegiate Secondary School and Vine Memorial Secondary School, gathered at Murray Town Junction at 8:00 AM. The march covered a 5.5-kilometer route to Kallon Car Park in Aberdeen Beach. During the march, banners displaying anti-drug messages were prominently featured, and megaphones were used to communicate with onlookers. The event proceeded peacefully, and all participants safely reached the final destination. The march ended at 12 noon.

Participants included:

- **Community Stakeholders:** Key figures from Cole Farm who played a vital role in mobilizing local residents.
- **SCN Digital Platform Centre Trainees:** Young trainees who actively participated in spreading awareness.
- **SCN Volunteers:** Volunteers who assisted in organizing and executing the march.
- **Secondary School Students:** Students from Collegiate Secondary School and Vine Memorial Secondary School.
- **NDLEA Representatives:** Members from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.
- **Teachers and Community Members:** Educators and residents from Cole Farm, Murray Town and Aberdeen.





The march featured the following activities:

- **Banners and Megaphones:** Participants carried banners and used megaphones to announce and sensitize onlookers about the dangers of illegal drugs.
- **Peaceful Conduct:** The march was conducted peacefully without any incidents, and all participants arrived safely at the final destination.
- **Public Announcement System:** A PA system was used throughout the march to amplify the messages.
- **March Security:** Sierra Leone provided security throughout the sensitization march.

Key Speeches and Highlights:

At Kallon Car Park, several speakers addressed the crowd:

- **NDLEA Representative:** Discussed the health implications of drug abuse.

- **Physical Health Risks:** NDLEA representative Mr. Samuel Dugba provided detailed information on the health risks associated with drug use, particularly focusing on Kush. He explained how drugs like Kush can cause severe physical health problems, including respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and neurological damage.
- **Mental Health Effects:** The discussion also covered the mental health implications of drug abuse, such as addiction, depression, anxiety, and psychosis. The representative emphasized that these mental health issues can lead to a downward spiral, affecting all aspects of an individual's life.
- **Community Health Impact:** Mr. Dugba highlighted how widespread drug abuse can have detrimental effects on community health, increasing the burden on healthcare systems and reducing overall community well-

Importance of Community Involvement:

- **Grassroots Participation:** SCN and YAAD executives highlighted the essential role of community involvement in the success of the sensitization march. They stressed that the participation of local stakeholders, community members, and students was crucial in spreading the message effectively.
- **Empowerment Through Engagement:** By involving community members directly, the march empowered them to take ownership of the fight against drug abuse. The executives noted that community-driven initiatives are more sustainable and impactful as they resonate deeply with local populations.
- **Educational Outreach:** The executives emphasized the importance of involving educational institutions, as the youth are particularly vulnerable to drug abuse. The participation of students from Collegiate Secondary School and Vine Memorial Secondary School was highlighted as a key aspect of the march's success.
- **Creating Awareness:** Community involvement ensured that the message reached a broad audience. The march, with its banners, megaphones, and PA system, engaged onlookers and passers-by, extending the reach of the sensitization efforts beyond the immediate participants.





Challenges and Success Stories

Challenges:

- **Time Management:** Ensuring that all participants gathered on time was challenging. Despite efforts to communicate the schedule, some delays occurred.
- **Traffic Management:** Managing vehicular traffic along the route required significant coordination. Volunteers and the Sierra Leone Police worked together to ensure the safety of participants and minimize disruptions.

Success Stories:

- **Positive Reception:** The march was well-received by onlookers and community members, who expressed appreciation for the awareness campaign.
- **Encouraging Feedback:** Participants and onlookers provided positive feedback, encouraging more such initiatives in the future.
- **Refreshments:** Water and snacks were served to participants, ensuring they remained hydrated and energized throughout the event.

- **PA System:** The public announcement system was effectively used to communicate key messages and maintain coordination during the march.
- **Engagement:** The continuous use of the PA system kept participants engaged and motivated throughout the march. It also helped maintain the event's momentum and focus.
- **Information Dissemination:** The PA system was used to provide real-time information and updates to participants, enhancing coordination and ensuring a smooth progression of the march.



Monitoring and Evaluation of Drug Abuse

To effectively monitor and evaluate drug abuse in the community, the following strategies will be implemented:

1. **Community Surveys:** Regular surveys will be conducted in the affected communities to gather data on drug usage trends, community perceptions, and the effectiveness of awareness campaigns. These surveys will include questions

about the prevalence of drug use, types of drugs commonly used, and the demographic profiles of users.

2. **School Engagement:** Partnerships with local schools will be strengthened to monitor student behavior and provide ongoing education about the dangers of drug abuse. School counselors and teachers will be trained to identify signs of drug use and provide appropriate interventions.
3. **Collaboration with Authorities:** Continuous collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) will be maintained to track drug-related incidents, and rehabilitation efforts. This partnership will help in gathering accurate statistics and formulating effective strategies to combat drug abuse.
4. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing feedback mechanisms for community members to report observations and concerns related to drug abuse. Hotlines and online platforms will be created for anonymous reporting, ensuring community members feel safe to share information.
5. **Data Analysis and Reporting:** Collected data will be regularly analyzed to identify patterns and trends in drug abuse. Comprehensive reports will be generated and shared with stakeholders, including community leaders, schools, and law enforcement agencies, to inform and adjust intervention strategies.



Future Collaborations

SCN and YAAD plan to continue collaborating on future illegal drug sensitization and rehabilitation initiatives in partnership with NDLEA. The success of this march has set a strong foundation for ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse in the communities.



Conclusion

The drug sensitization march on May 11, 2024, was a successful event that effectively raised awareness about the dangers of Kush and other illegal drugs. The collaborative efforts of SCN and YAAD, along with the support of community members, stakeholders, and students, ensured the message was well-received by the public. The positive impact and feedback from this event highlight the importance of continued community engagement and collaboration in addressing drug abuse issues. With ongoing monitoring and evaluation, SCN and

YAAD aim to sustain their efforts and make a significant impact in preventing drug abuse in the communities. The coverage by major media and TV stations, AYV and SLBC, further amplified the reach and impact of the sensitization campaign.

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