



National Council on Drug Abuse

“PROJECT SQUEAKY”

Primary target group -Vulnerable youth age 5 -14

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A DEMAND SIDE
COMMUNICATION INTERVENTION
PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Funded by the government of



The United States of America

RATIONALE

The National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) recognises that the increased transshipment of illicit addictive substances through Jamaica is likely to exacerbate the residual effect problem because of greater accessibility and availability of these substances. On the demand side, we anticipate the need for a more aggressive prevention strategy, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. Recent studies and data from Treatment and Rehabilitation centres indicate that there is need for public education that is targeted at children beginning as early as five years old. We have identified the critical age band as 5-14 years old. And because family support, positive peer pressure and educational attainment are protective factors against drug experimentation leading to addiction, we have deduced the need to focus on low literacy groups that lack parental guidance and support systems within this age cohort.

We propose a public education programme that delivers information using low literacy formats. A mascot is to be developed as an integral part of the information delivery process. Outputs will have practical application-exercise books, rulers, pencils, crayons, comic page and t-shirts. The universal aspects will include audio public service announcements (PSAs, one(1) video PSA and road shows to heighten public awareness within targeted communities.

This approach to public education relies on tested communication practices. The targeted group will require visuals and other support material to spark interest and aid learning. This project will fill a gap in present public education strategies. The present increase in activities associated with the illicit drug trade adds urgency to the need to implement this Public Education Programme to which we have assigned the name-“Project Squeaky.”

Problem

There is a need to increase information penetration to vulnerable low literacy groups within the age cohort 5-14. Present public education programmes do not meet this critical need . Funding is now required to introduce the necessary innovations and produce the outputs necessary.

Elements of the Project Squeaky.

Mascot development

Children respond well to mascots or cartoon like characters. A Competition will be arranged to develop the mascot and assign a name. This character will grab attention and be able to deliver the prevention information. Could be used during road shows and other NCDA related events.

Reading material

One page comic sheet to be coloured. This will feature the mascot responding to various questions on the subject of drug abuse and prevention.

Support material and prizes

Crayons, pencils, cups, exercise books, t-shirts, laminated posters, bearing the image of the mascot and a message.

Universal aspects

Audio PSA- 1- minute suitable for time signal or weather update

Video PSA- 3- minute dip for television featuring the mascot.

Bumper stickers

CONCLUSION

This public education initiative was conceived against the backdrop of an escalating problem that has the potential to increase drug abuse. Effective prevention strategies are now needed to ameliorate a situation which if uncontrolled, will prove destructive to the Jamaican society.