

Young broadcasters use the air waves for HIV/AIDS and drug prevention

Peer education is based on the principle that people are more likely to listen to information if it comes from someone they can identify with and respect. UNODC, UNAIDS and other United Nations agencies in Brazil, along with their partners in the Ministry of Health's National Programme on STDs/AIDS and the National Anti-drug Secretariat, are using this idea to strengthen communication and mobilize youth to prevent drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

A three-day workshop for 35 young radio broadcasters from different parts of Brazil was held in Salvador (Bahia), in November 2003. National experts discussed the links between drug use and HIV/AIDS, and issues such as stigmatization, gender and risk behaviour. As part of the workshop, five media programmes for radio were produced, including radio spots, news shows, debates and soap operas.

"Radio is a medium that reaches all Brazilians, especially young people, no matter their social status. We're trying



Photo: UNODC/Luiz F. Godinho.



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to use radio as a strategic partner to fight HIV/AIDS and drug abuse", says Luciano Milhomem, UNAIDS Brazil communication consultant.

Back in their hometowns, the young radio broadcasters deal more confidently with drug abuse and HIV/AIDS issues. "Due to a lack of information, young people are extremely vulnerable to drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Now, I'm using the information received at the workshop to better discuss these topics in my show", affirms 21-year-old João Felipe Terena, who runs a radio programme for native Indians in the city of Campo Grande.

"I'm far more confident to talk about drug and HIV/AIDS prevention to my listeners. The booklets and fact sheets given during the workshop provide

reliable information on these subjects", says 22-year-old Bruno Penteado, who works at a community radio station in Heliópolis, one of the poorest parts of São Paulo.

The workshop also created a virtual network where the young broadcasters can exchange information and experiences.

Facts and figures support the youth focus of the workshop—of the 258,000 AIDS cases in Brazil, 12 per cent involve people 13-24 years old. Injecting drug use accounted for 21 per cent of the country's AIDS cases between 1980 and 2002.

A CD-ROM containing the radio programmes and relevant technical content will be released in 2004.