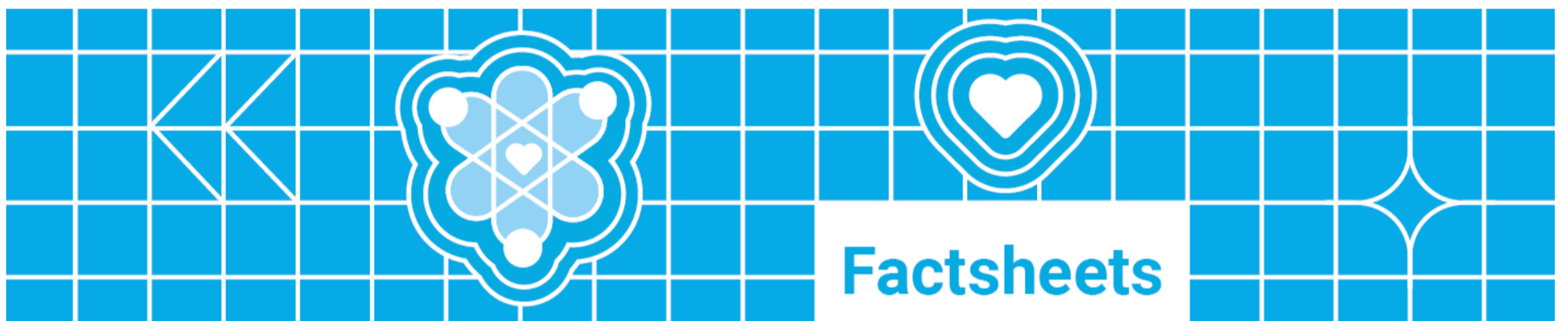


Youth Initiative

[Youth Forum](#)[DAPC Grants](#)[Friends in Focus](#)[Mandates](#)[Youth Action](#)[Resources](#)[Magazine](#)

FACTSHEETS

Get the facts and break the myths!



These factsheets offer science-based information on substance use and its prevention. They aim to dispel some of the most commonly spread misconceptions about drug use and stimulate thoughts and discussions. They also provide links to interesting articles for further reading.

We also lay down challenges that offer ideas and encouragement for creating activities in schools and youth groups to dismantle these myths, for support the health and wellbeing of the peers. Take part in our challenges and see also examples of projects created by other young people.

Accessing and disseminating science-based information, dismantling misconceptions, prejudices, ideologies - getting empowered to support the healthy lifestyles of their peers - this is what Youth Initiative means!

Globally, myths on substances, drug use, and drug dependence are widely spread and shape the perception of youth on drugs. The aim of this campaign is to provide youth with evidence-based facts on six myths. Fact sheets give youth an overview of the scientific information available and include links for them to explore the topics more. Each fact sheet is also followed by a new activity, which asks for different, creative contributions to break the myths. As we would like to encourage youth to get the facts and break the myths globally, we welcome you to read and spread these fact sheets and take part in these exciting activities!

MYTH 9: SMART DRUGS FUEL MY BRAIN AND BOOST MY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The non-medical use of prescription stimulants (NMUPS) has been frequently misportrayed as boosting intelligence. Current studies show this phenomenon is particularly common amongst college students and is on the rise in many countries. It is important to understand the trend and get the full picture of why it's not as easy to fix as it may seem.

[Fact Sheet](#)[Challenge](#)

MYTH 8: THE NON-MEDICAL USE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IS SAFE AND LEGAL

In many places, prescription drugs are the most commonly misused substance by teens after marijuana and alcohol. However, taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs in a manner not intended by the prescriber and not guided and supervised by a medical professional can be just as dangerous and unpredictable as the use of any other drugs.

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

MYTH 7: USING DRUGS HELPS YOU TO FEEL GOOD AND RELAXED

Everyone needs to find techniques to cope with stress and difficult feelings. To some, using drugs may seem like a good way to relax and feel good in general, but, especially in the long term, drug use can have quite a different impact on the well-being of the body and mind seriously compromising our health and functional capability.

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

MYTH 6: IT IMPACTS ONLY ME?

Drug use is often discussed as a very personal choice, but in reality, it does not only impact the person who is using drugs, and his or her social relations, but also the environment at large. Actually, the production of drugs can have serious detrimental consequences to the environment.

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

[Results](#)

MYTH 5: INFORMATION ON THE DANGERS OF DRUGS PREVENTS DRUG USE

It is commonly assumed, that spreading information on the danger of drugs prevents drug use, and thus supports the health and wellbeing of youth. This fact sheet aims to discuss the complex ways in which the information we receive, and all the messages we encounter via different forms of media, influence our attitudes, values, and behavior - also with regard to substance use. In fact, spreading messages on the dangers of drugs can even lead to opposite outcomes as it can increase.

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

MYTH 4: PUNISHING DRUG USERS WILL HELP TO TACKLE THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM

When looking at the kind of responses societies have on drug use, punishing drug users seems to be a commonly adopted strategy for tackling the multiple negative consequences problematic drug use is causing for societies. Other public health issues such as diabetes or mental health conditions are also not tackled by punishing the patients or blaming their parents. So why should drug-use-related disorders be any different from this?

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

[Results](#)

MYTH 3: EVERYBODY IS USING DRUGS

It is very common for youth to think that the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs among their peers is much more common than it actually is - most of the youth tend to overestimate the number of their peers that are using drugs. This fact sheet helps you to understand why the myth 'everybody is using drugs' exists and how it keeps going among your peers. It also gives you some examples of actual percentages of drug use in different regions of the world.

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Challenge](#)

[Results](#)

MYTH 2: ADDICTS MADE THE WRONG CHOICE, IT IS THEIR FAULT

In the second fact sheet, we explore the reasons why children and youth start using drugs and, in some cases, develop dependence. Here is also a [Serbian version](#) of this fact sheet, made by our Serbian youth participant.

[Fact Sheet](#)

MYTH 1: CANNABIS IS HARMLESS

See also the [results of the call for activities on Myth 1 - Cannabis is harmless](#).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

