



## ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER APR 2024

### Dear Partners and fellow Advocates

This month, we are happy to announce the appointment of three new members to the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA). NCADA also unveils its new logo.

We also highlight CNB's community outreach efforts, shedding light on the role of officers in educating the public about the dangers of drugs.

Check out the two-day anti-drug event organised by ACJC students, under the guidance of a Youth Anti-Drug Advocate, featuring booths and activities aimed at raising awareness on drug prevention.

Continuing our collaboration with the Singapore Prison Service, we present 'Caught in The Middle', a personal account of a sibling's unwavering support and challenges in caring for a brother grappling with drug addiction.

In the second of our three-part cannabis series on the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) report 2022, we examine the policy and legislative models of cannabis control adopted by various countries.

To make it easier for you to spread the anti-drug message, from this month, we will share bite-sized information from our Preventive Drug Education package.

Happy reading!

We value your feedback and inquiries on our programmes and activities. Please feel free to reach out to us at **[cnb\\_community\\_partnership@cnb.gov.sg](mailto:cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg)**.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support in our mission for a drug-free society!

The National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) is pleased to unveil its new logo, which replaces the previous logo that has been in use since NCADA was set up in 1995.



The new NCADA's logo symbolises the Council's vision of uniting Singapore Against Drug Abuse.

The letters 'N' and 'C' in white signify an open and clear commitment to engage and rally the community to navigate difficult conversations on the issue of drugs together.

The green & white anti-drug ribbon firmly wrapped around the letter 'D' (Drug) represents NCADA's central mission to champion advocacy and build affinity for the drug-free cause.

NCADA is also pleased to announce the appointment of three new Council Members, namely Dr Adrian Loh, Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim and Mr Ngien Hoon Ping, with effect from 18 Mar 2024. Welcome to the NCADA team! We look forward to their contributions as we work together towards our shared goal for a drug-free Singapore.



**Dr Adrian Loh**  
**Senior Consultant Psychiatrist**  
**Promises Healthcare**

Dr Adrian Loh is a psychiatrist in a group practice who had worked in the public sector as a psychiatrist, as an Aviation Medicine Physician in MINDEF, in the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) and various general hospitals. He is a Visiting Consultant at the IMH and also has a teaching appointment with the National University of Singapore.



**Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim, J.D.**  
**Head of Programme for Youth Work**  
**and Professional Life Coaching**  
**Singapore University of Social**  
**Sciences**

Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim is a registered psychologist who sits on the board of a few psychological intervention centres in Singapore, and provides direction for their clinical practices. He has been working with young people and their families for two decades.



**Mr Ngien Hoon Ping**  
**Group Chief Executive Officer**  
**SMRT Corporation Ltd**

Mr Ngien Hoon Ping held various senior leadership positions in MINDEF and the civil service. He serves the community as the Chairman of the Citizens' Consultative Committees at Buona Vista Community Centre.



Community outreach is a key strategy in CNB’s mission to educate the public on the dangers of drugs and the importance of drug prevention. CNB officers are deployed at these events to engage members of public on the issue of drug prevention, thereby enhancing public awareness and understanding of CNB’s mission and efforts.



Feeling inspired by our CNB officers? You can also join us to learn about the harms of drugs and drug prevention at the upcoming community roadshow!

Event Name	Venue	Date and Time
Children Let’s Have Fun Together – Fun Camp 2024	Nee Soon East Community Club	25 May 2024 (Saturday), 9am – 5pm

CALL for VOLUNTEERS

Interested in sharing the drug prevention message? Email us at **CNB\_Community\_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg** if you are keen to help out at any of our roadshows and events!





## ADVOCACY/ANTI-DRUG PROJECT AT ANGLO-CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE

On 18 and 19 April, a group of Anglo-Chinese Junior College (ACJC) students, led by Anti-Drug Advocate (ADA) Jaylen Chua and supported by ADA Anne Megan Kong, held an anti-drug event in their school. The event, supported by CNB, consisted of several booths and activities aimed at spreading awareness on drug prevention in ACJC. Over the two days, approximately 500 students participated in the event, where they learned about the common types of drugs abused and their harmful effects. Additionally, students wrote encouraging messages on boards to promote a drug-free environment and took part in a poster design competition, with winning posters displayed proudly on campus.



"Waiting For You", an initiative by the Singapore Prison Service features a compilation of stories written from the perspectives of the drug abusers' family members and loved ones. In this edition, we share with you "Caught in the Middle" – a personal account of the challenges faced by a sibling as he supports his brother struggling with addiction and incarceration for nearly five decades.

## Caught in the Middle

I sensed something different about my brother when he was released two weeks ago. He has been in and out of prisons for almost 50 years. In fact, he had spent more time in prisons than outside, given his fast relapses. This time round, I had the feeling he would really change. Maybe age has made him wiser. Maybe my endless nagging has finally paid off. I have always told him "If you choose to lead your life like that then it is up to you"; "If you want to die faster then please take more drugs"; "This time if you go in you will die inside". It is not that I enjoy cursing him, I just want him to be aware of the consequences. After all, he is already 67 years old, with heart issues and two strokes.

My brother is now living with me after his release. Looking at him sitting on the wheelchair, I cannot help but feel a mixture of emotions –sad, angry, frustrated, happy and relieved. I wonder how different his life would have been without drugs. He could have become a captain. He was lucky and had the opportunity to travel to a few countries during his work as a sailor. We would have celebrated our birthdays together as we shared the same birth dates. How exceptional is it for siblings to share the same birth dates? The rare opportunity to celebrate our birthdays together in 2014 was the happiest memory I had with him.

During his absence, a lot has changed within our family. Our mother and sister had passed away. It was my mother's biggest wish to have him beside her when she took her last breath. Sadly, he was not around. Imagine the heartbreak and yearning she had to take with her. The relationships between him and our other siblings became distant too.

Even though he played his role as a brother by buying things for us, his repeated incarcerations angered and disappointed the family. My sister chased him out of the house when he lost his temper under the influence of drugs. He would destroy things around the house and all he seemed to care about was using drugs.

I cannot help but think how different my life could have turned out if my brother were never involved in drugs. For one, I would not have had to witness my mother's prolonged suffering; a mother who lived a life fraught with disappointments and worries for him. She instructed me to look after my brother, for she was afraid that her death would mean that my brother would forever be alone. How could I defy a loving mother's wishes? I visited my brother monthly in prison. It was exhausting as I work night shifts. I resented the long journey to prison in exchange for short visits. However, I pressed on as I wanted to bring him his favorite magazines and show him that I am here for him. I also wanted to know how he was doing.

Family relationships suffer huge blows when there is an addicted person in the family. Overtime, negative feelings build up and bitterness creeps in. This happened in my family too. I noticed how awkward it was for my siblings in my brother's presence. They avoided speaking to him. Despite my explanations that we are all connected by blood and that we are humans who make mistakes, my siblings would counterargue that our brother was incapable of change. They had also accused me of siding with him excessively. I wish this distance between my brother and siblings can be bridged; if only he showed them that he can change.

I am also sandwiched between my son and my brother. My son once reported him to the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) when he caught his uncle using drugs. Although I knew that my son did it with good intentions, I could not help but feel upset that he did not give his uncle another chance. When I invited my brother to move into my home, my son decided to move out. It is emotionally draining to be constantly caught in the middle, yet I cannot choose one over the other as I care deeply for both. I am leaving my inheritance to my brother because I am worried that he would have no means to care for himself if something were to happen to me. I cannot imagine how my son would react if he found out, but I hope he understands my position. I am tired of trying to appease everyone and being the sole supporter for my brother.

Looking at my brother now gives me a huge sense of peace as I know that for now, he is safe from drugs. Simple things such as seeing him enjoy his television programmes, eating the food I prepare and being here to listen to my rants are sufficient to bring me immense happiness. I wish that these simple joys are enough for my brother too. He has nothing else to worry about as I will continue to do my best to support him. Ma, as you look down from above, please know that I have fulfilled your wishes by being here for your beloved son, my dear brother.



# READ/POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE MODELS OF CANNABIS CONTROL ADOPTED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES

In the second of a three-part series, the INCB Report 2022 examined the policy and legislative development relating to the use and control of cannabis. While most countries still consider cannabis use illegal and remain committed to its prohibition for non-medical or scientific purposes, a growing number of Governments are pursuing various strategies to allow and regulate the non-medical supply and use of cannabis (e.g. non-prosecution of minor offences, decriminalisation and legalisation).

Part 1 in March’s newsletter examined the key challenges of cannabis legalisation and Part 3 in May’s newsletter will highlight the impacts of cannabis legalisation.

### RATIONALE FOR LEGALISATION

Based on the assumption that the current drug control system has failed to effectively counter the global and domestic drug problem, arguments put forth by advocates and Governments that have legalised recreational cannabis include the following:

To better protect public health (e.g. allowing the establishment of strict product safety and product quality requirements).	To be able to limit availability and thus reduce <u>youth</u> access and consumption.
To facilitate prevention measures (e.g. making it easier for individuals who use drugs to talk about cannabis-related problems, and seek support and treatment).	To uphold the human right to consume potentially harmful drugs (i.e. the country should <u>not</u> interfere with what is arguably a civil right).
To reduce or even eliminate the illicit drug market and related crimes, create a safe supply chain, and thus undermine criminal organisations.	To generate significant tax revenues and create new jobs in the legal economy.
To reduce the stigmatisation of people who use drugs and reduce inequalities with treatment within the criminal justice system (i.e. since drug use would no longer be criminalised).	To avoid unnecessary incarceration and overcrowded prisons, and allow for the reprioritisation of law enforcement resources (i.e. by reducing costs associated with prohibition).

### CASE STUDIES OF LEGALISATION

**CANADA (2018)**  
Legal access to cannabis and regulation of its production, possession, distribution, and sale of cannabis provided through the Cannabis Act.

**UNITED STATES (as of Nov 2022)**  
19 states, the District of Columbia, and 2 territories have adopted laws on the recreational use of cannabis. Under the US federal law, the possession and distribution of cannabis remains a federal offence.

**MEXICO (2018)**  
Supreme Court ruled that the law prohibiting the recreational use of cannabis was unconstitutional (i.e. adults having the fundamental right to decide their recreational activities without interference from the country).

**MALTA (2021)**  
Adopted the Responsible Use of Cannabis Act, which allows persons over the age of 18 to grow up to 4 cannabis plants at home per household.

**URUGUAY (2013)**  
Cannabis regulation bill signed into law (i.e. legalised the production, distribution, sale, and consumption of cannabis and its derivatives for non-medical purposes).

**JAMAICA (2015)**  
Amended its Dangerous Drugs Act to remove criminal penalties for personal use and possession of up to 57 grams of cannabis, and for possession of any quantity for religious purposes.

**SWITZERLAND (2020)**  
Amended the Federal Act on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances to allow for pilot projects in which cannabis would be sold for non-medical consumption purposes. The project began in 2022.

**THAILAND (2022)**  
Cannabis removed from Category 5 of the new Narcotics Code and legalised for use (except for cannabis extracts or hemp containing more than 0.2% of delta-9-THC). The exact regulatory framework for cannabis production and sale has not yet been clarified by Parliament.

**SOUTH AFRICA (2018)**  
Constitutional Court ruled that adults may (for their personal consumption) use, possess, and cultivate cannabis in any private place.

## LEGALISATION MODELS FOR NON-MEDICAL CANNABIS USE

Depending on the rationale endorsed, policy goals and regulations, there exists a wide range of diverging legalisation models. Broad areas of similarities and differences across models include the following:



From strictly regulated models centred around the country to less regulated models with a greater emphasis on market forces, the role of the central government and degree of control differs across legalisation models.



Across the legalisation models, all governments share the common goal of protecting the youths.



Many governments have made efforts to strengthen their prevention programmes, often with a focus on the youth and adolescents.



The legal threshold for personal possession of cannabis varies widely across countries.



The legal and regulatory frameworks for the production and distribution of cannabis and its products differ greatly.



Some legalising countries regulate the content and quality of legal cannabis products.



Almost all legalisation models allow for the cultivation of cannabis at home, within certain limits.

## LEGALISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DRUG CONTROL CONVENTIONS

All legalisation models, however, explicitly allow for the non-medical use of cannabis and are thus inconsistent with the legal obligations incumbent upon countries to the international drug control conventions.

Some arguments made by Governments to justify legalisation include:

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Legalisation is still in compliance with the conventions (i.e. to preserve the health and welfare of humankind and respect human rights principles) as enshrined in international human rights instruments, which takes precedence over the drug control conventions.

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In reality, there is no conflict of norms between the international drug control conventions and other international human rights instruments. By limiting the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes, the conventions are aimed at protecting the right to life and health.

“

With safeguard clauses referencing countries' domestic constitution and legislation, the drug control conventions provide a certain flexibility and thus room for regulations allowing the use of controlled substances beyond those set out in the conventions.

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This is not true. While the safeguard clauses were intended to allow for flexibility in specific cases, it should be noted that the sections\* of the conventions that limit the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes are not subject to a safeguard clause.

“

In countries with a federal structure, there is the issue of whether the federal Government may be held accountable if a federated entity implements legalisation (i.e. violating the conventions) when the federal Government does not have the power to compel the federated entity to fulfil the treaty obligations.

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There is no uncertainty. A country's obligations to the conventions remain unchanged. As explained in the "Commentary on the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961", the lack of authority under a federal constitution would not free a party from the obligations contained in the international drug control conventions. The manner in which a country organises itself to implement the international obligations is a matter of internal law.

Scan the QR code for the full report:



\* Article 4(c) of the 1961 Convention as amended; and Article 5, paragraph 2, of the 1971 Convention.

## #DIDYOUKNOW/PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION (PDE) INFORMATION PACKAGE

Among the many resources that you can find on CNB's website is a handy Preventive Drug Education Information Package. Comprising a handbook, a deck of powerpoint slides and a list of commonly asked questions and answers, the package is to help members of the public understand the global and local drug situation and Singapore's approach to tackle the drug problem. Over the next few months, we will be sharing bite-sized snippets from the package here to help you share with your family, friends, colleagues and others, when speaking on the anti-drug cause.

### Why Singapore is Tough on Drugs



Singapore aims to create a drug-free society where our people can work, live and play safely.

Our strict laws ensure harmful drugs are kept out of the easy reach of most people, especially youths, while enforcement efforts are focused on tackling drug supply and dismantling syndicates. Our approach may be seen as tough, but it places the welfare of the abuser and society at the centre of our policies.

As an open and well-connected country, Singapore is not immune to external influence and the worldwide movement for the legalisation and decriminalisation of cannabis. Singaporeans may grow to be more accepting of drugs as a lifestyle choice.

But it is not just a personal choice – drug abuse bears repercussions at both an individual and societal standpoint.

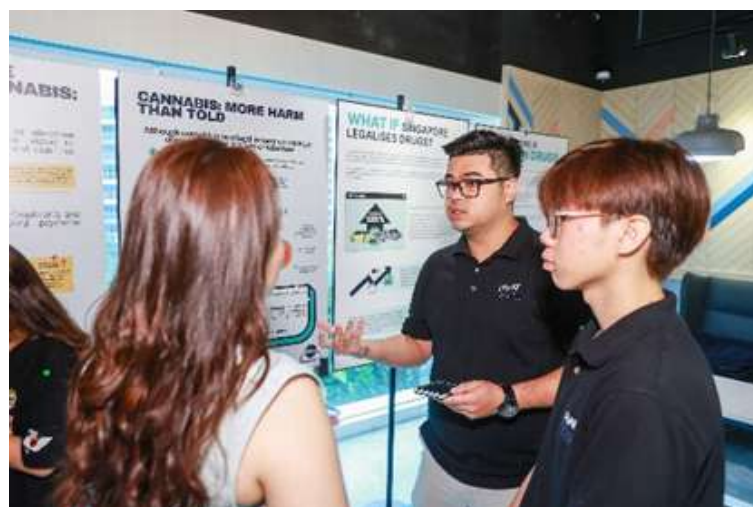
It is thus important to reinforce the national consensus of zero tolerance towards drugs.

Scan the QR code for  
the full content:



<https://go.gov.sg/pde-infokit>





The DrugFreeSG Videography workshop held on 20 April 2024 attracted 67 students and teachers. Guest speakers Josiah Ng and Kyle Ong shared tips and pointers on developing relevant skills while CNB officer Ritar shared her ground experience, which will help participants create their best work for the competition!

Participants also had an engaging dialogue session with Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development.

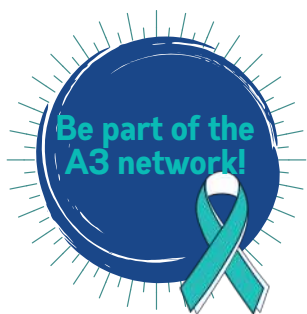
We hope all participants had learned valuable tips on filmmaking and got their burning questions answered. All the best to our participants as they work on their video productions for the upcoming DrugFreeSG video competition!



For those who missed the workshop, fret not! You can still *showcase your craft and create awareness* of the harms of drug abuse through the power of storytelling!

Deadline closes on **30 Aug 2024**! Find out more at [www.drugfree.sg](http://www.drugfree.sg) or email [contact@drugfree.sg](mailto:contact@drugfree.sg).

# HELP US SPREAD THE ANTI-DRUG MESSAGE



The **Anti-Drug Abuse Advocacy Network (A3 Network)** is a volunteer scheme jointly administered by the NCADA and CNB. The A3 Network, which is under the umbrella of the Home Team Volunteer Network comprises various groups of people who identify with, support and promote the anti-drug cause\*.

*\*Volunteers under the Network do not represent CNB and NCADA, nor are they spokespersons of CNB and NCADA during or outside the term of deployment.*

Help us grow the A3 Network by telling your friends about us and the volunteering opportunities with CNB. Scan the QR codes for more information about the different schemes, or drop us an email at [cnb\\_community\\_partnership@cnb.gov.sg](mailto:cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg)



Scan here to find out about the A3 Network and different advocates schemes



Anti-Drug Advocate Programme for youths aged 17 - 25 years old

Scan below to find out about the **Virtual Heritage Gallery** that you can access at your convenience. Access PDE resources from our **PDE Handbook online**:



Scan here for the virtual heritage gallery



Scan here for the PDE Handbook

Drop us an email at [CNB\\_Community\\_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg](mailto:CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg) if you would like to add your colleagues and friends into our mailing list or if you wish to unsubscribe.

If you come across drugs, or what you suspect to be drugs, you should call CNB hotline at **1800-325-6666**. Kindly note that airtime charges apply for mobile calls to 1800 service lines and calls are free of charge only if made from regular land lines.

For more information, please visit the CNB website at [www.cnb.gov.sg](http://www.cnb.gov.sg)

Connect with us:

