

PSST...

DO YOU WANNA BUY  
SOME ILLEGAL DRUGS,  
PEOPLE, ANIMALS  
AND PLANTS?

# THE TRAFFICKING TRAP



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- Works on the principles of non-formal education and offers opportunities that are educative, participative, empowering and designed to promote equality of opportunity.
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- Engages the community in critical analyses of local and global influences on their lives and their larger communities.
- Raises awareness of globalisation within an historic context, and encourages an understanding and appreciation of diversity locally and globally.
- Encourages an insight into the relationships and links between the personal, the local and the global and ensures that these are based on equity and justice.
- Insists that the peoples and organisations of the North and South are seen as equal partners for change in an interdependent world.
- Encourages active citizenship by giving people the opportunity to participate in actions, and build alliances, that seek to bring about change locally and globally.

**Global Bits** is printed three times a year providing information and ideas for exploring global issues and how they impact on communities in both Aotearoa New Zealand and all around the world. Its accompanying poster contains additional activities suitable for use by youth workers and other community educators.

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## Theme of this issue

There is nothing new about taking drugs. What is new, however, is the staggeringly vast multi-million dollar black market that has arisen to supply illegal drugs all around the world.

And it's not just the trafficking of *drugs* that is sweeping the globe, but the trafficking of *people*, *animals* and *rare plants* as well. Everything is up for grabs... no drug too dangerous; no life too sacred.

But stemming the flow is fraught with difficulties – these markets are highly profitable for those involved, and many are prepared to protect them with their lives (or, more often, the lives of others). Governments, corporations, warlords, drug barons... everyone has an agenda about illegal trafficking – and often the very measures put in place to prevent such acts create the most damaging and inflammatory consequences of all.

For millions worldwide, the pain and suffering from trafficking leaves lives and habitats in ruin, and a cycle of poverty, violence and sickness that makes all of us poorer in this global age.

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## ...Illegal drugs...

You're out for the night with a group of friends, having a quiet drink or two, when someone produces a joint, or maybe something even more potent. No one hurt, you might say... everyone's entitled to his or her own personal choice. But have you ever stopped to think about the bigger picture? Not just about the effect such drugs have on short and long term functioning and health – that's a whole big issue in itself. Or the fact that, in most countries in the world, this little 'session' is against the law.

But what about where these drugs come from? Or who is controlling the market in illegal drugs? Who is policing prohibited drugs and why? Or what some of the consequences might be for the farmers, manufacturers, traffickers, pushers and societies in general, as a result of rising drug use?

After all, nothing exists in a vacuum. That illegal trip someone makes to a tinny house is just one little step in a chain that links to the lives of millions of other people right around the world.

It's a consumer chain, where every link involves the production or distribution of a product.

In this case it's drugs. But it could just as easily be trade in human beings, guns, body parts or the rarest of plants. The thing is, any little escapade into drug taking puts the user firmly into the shoes of a *consumer*. It's all about buying and selling... bongs for bucks. And it's not just the odd bit of under-the-table cash. The world of illegal drugs is *big business*.

In the year 2000, for instance, this trade in illegal drugs was estimated to be worth *US\$400 billion* – more than the total GDP of 88% of the world's countries – and more than it would cost to feed everyone on the planet over the same period of time! Offset this with the annual cost of the US's *War on Drugs* ringing in at a staggering \$35 billion, and those drug-related cash registers are working overtime!

It's when we dig even deeper beneath the facts and figures of the illegal global drug trade – at the issues of who is growing or making the drugs, who is using them, who is controlling them and who is fighting this trade – that an even more complicated picture emerges. The politics of power and control can be seen at work here, counter-balanced against that most basic of human drives: the need to put food on the table to feed one's kids. For those trying to eek out a living at the bottom of the economic pile, the rewards of illegal drug trafficking can seem too good to resist.

**Part of the problem is that drugs are the ideal black market product.** Heroin and cocaine are particularly attractive products to traffickers – easy to smuggle, non-perishable, and far more profitable than whisky! And the profit margins are huge. According to a UN report, what starts as freshly harvested opium in Central Asia at \$90 per kg can end up as heroin sold on the streets of New York for \$290,000. Coca leaves sold by a Colombian farmer for \$600 may end up retailing at \$110,000 in the form of cocaine powder.<sup>1</sup>

These figures reflect some of the many imbalances emerging from our newly globalised world. With reductions in transport costs, the explosion of sea, air and surface connections, mass movements of people, and the gradual unification of the world's

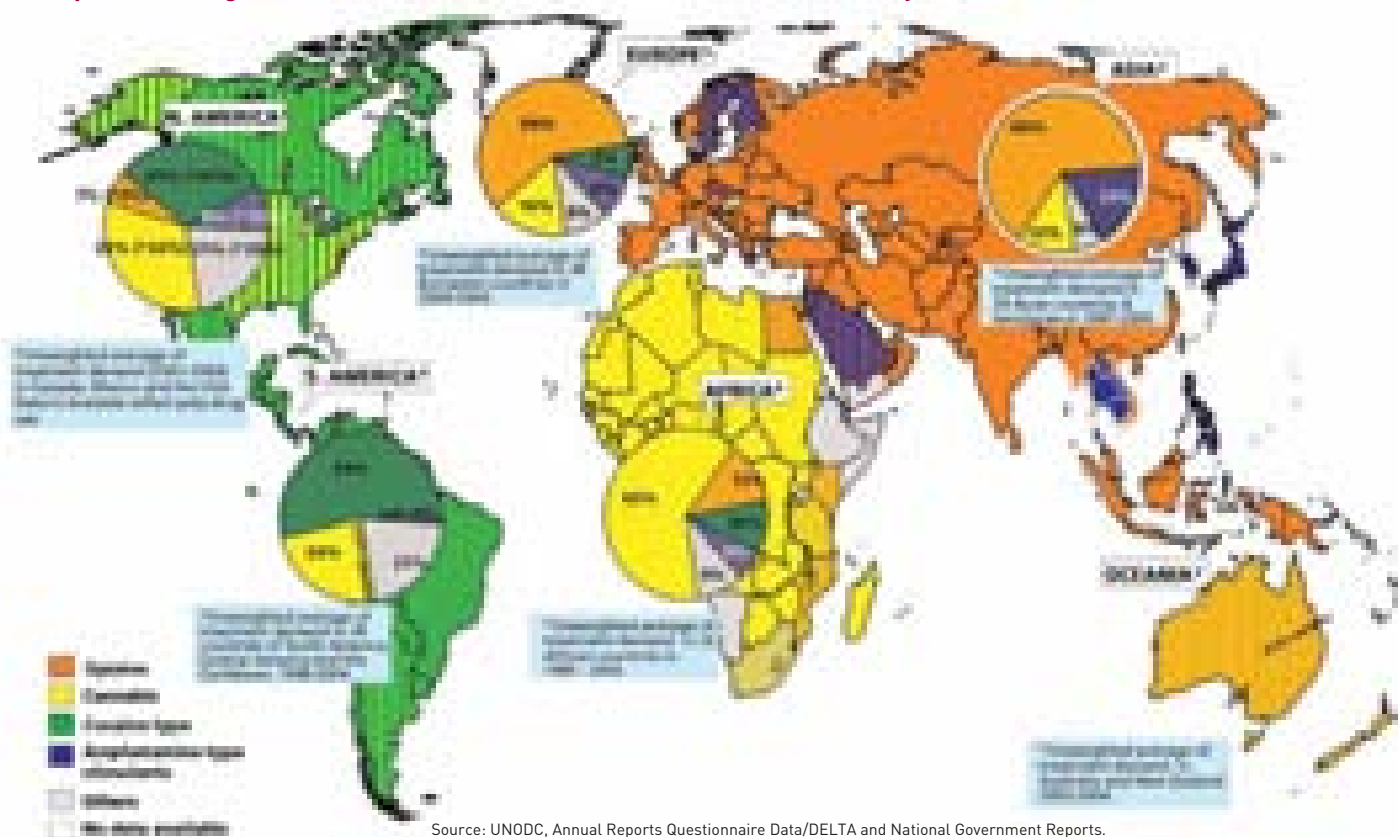
Let's get this stated right up front: drugs can cause enormous pain and suffering to those caught in their web...

It's a consumer chain, where every link involves the production or distribution of a product.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Buckley, editor, *The Age of Drugs: sense, substance and society*; Understanding Global Issues 108

## Global Trends

### Main problem drugs (as reflected in treatment demand) in 2004 (or latest year available)



### Current World Illicit Trafficking





Archaeological evidence has shown that both opium and cannabis (marijuana) were known to human societies at least 6,000 years ago. Alcohol use has been part of culture throughout recorded history and in almost every part of society. Herbs that were known to alter mental state have been used by religious devotees in many different countries. Smoking tobacco, once limited to the Native Americans, has spread across the globe. And caffeine, considered by many to be a milder stimulant, is used by billions.

**“Drugs are as much a part of life as bread and butter”**

Richard Buckley; Understanding Global Issues, Issue 135.

In short, there is nothing new about taking drugs. What *is* new is the criminalisation of certain forms of drug-taking and the vast black market that has developed to supply illegal drugs to users worldwide.<sup>2</sup> And the kinds of drugs being trafficked are changing as the market dictates, with chemically produced substances such as ‘P’ (methamphetamine) making dangerous inroads.

### What’s this got to do with us?

Plenty! With cannabis recognised as the most commonly used illegal drug in the world:

- an estimated **162 million people** used it in 2004, equivalent to 3.9% of the global population age 15-64;
- In relative terms, cannabis use is most prevalent in Oceania (that’s us folks!) followed by North America and Africa;
- In Aotearoa New Zealand alone, cannabis is the third most popular recreational drug after alcohol and tobacco (excluding caffeine);
- A 1998 National Drugs Survey<sup>3</sup> showed that 43% of males and 27% of females aged 18 to 24 years had used cannabis in the preceding 12 months;
- Most of those who stated that they had tried cannabis had been introduced to the drug at between 14 and 18 years of age.

And, according to a report released by Massey University<sup>4</sup>:

- In 2001 *one in ten* Aotearoa New Zealanders aged 18-29, or about 100,000 people nationwide, used an Amphetamine Type Stimulant (such as ‘P’) in the preceding year;
- About one-third of these were frequent users (i.e. monthly or more often);

- The level of amphetamine use among 15-19 year olds may now be higher in Aotearoa New Zealand than in Australia... [and if news reports are anything to go by, this trend has only worsened over time].

With such a significant number of people using these drugs, the market for them is reaching explosive proportions. In fact, by 2004 the trade in ATS drugs in Aotearoa New Zealand had reached *an equivalent dollar value to the cannabis trade* (estimated in 2001 at *NZ\$190 million*<sup>5</sup>) and may have effectively *doubled* the total dollar value of the illegal trade in drugs in Aotearoa New Zealand in less than ten years.

With figures like this being bandied around, it puts the illegal drug market well and truly onto the economic radar. This is no longer a case of growing the odd ‘pot’ plant on the kitchen windowsill – the Massey report confirms that, in the case of ‘P’, the proceeds are likely to be concentrated among a relatively small number of local organised criminal gangs who were instrumental in the introduction of ATS manufacture here.

### What about the rest of the world?

In the UK, the government estimates<sup>6</sup> that:

- there are about **1.5 million regular users** of Class A drugs (heroin, cocaine, LSD, magic mushrooms etc.) in England and Wales alone;
- ‘Problem users’ (essentially some 280,000 heroin and cocaine addicts) account for over 90% of the annual cost to society in crime,

law enforcement, health damage, anti-addiction treatment and welfare etc.

Meanwhile, in the US, mandatory minimum sentencing for possession of even small quantities of cannabis or crack cocaine (whose use is most prevalent in poor urban areas) has resulted in more young African American men being put in prison than in college.<sup>7</sup>

All up, according to the UN’s World Drugs Report 2000, about **180 million people worldwide use illegal drugs regularly** – with the great majority of them choosing cannabis in one of its forms.

But while cannabis continues to be the most widely produced, trafficked and consumed illegal drug worldwide, in 2000-2001 the UNODC<sup>8</sup> estimated that about 15 million people abused opium and heroin globally. And cocaine (second to heroin in terms of treatment demand) is reported to be abused by about 14 million people in the world.

The combination of customer demand and huge profit margins has made the trade of illegal drugs one of the most powerful world industries. Drug trafficking, reckoned to account for 8% of all global trade, has given organised crime immense power and wealth. The scale of this trade destabilises and corrupts politics, business and financial markets.<sup>9</sup>

No question, then, that this is a high risk, high return market... and it continues to grow ever more complex and catastrophic, trapping millions in its web.



**Did you know that ‘P’ (methamphetamine) is an Amphetamine Type Stimulant (ATS) – a group of synthetic illegal drug types which also includes ecstasy?**

<sup>2</sup> Source: Taking Drugs – A Universal Social Habit; UGI Briefing 135; Richard Buckley.

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Drug Statistics – Health Information Service 2001 <http://www.nzhis.govt.nz/publications/drugs.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *The Socio-Economic Impact of Amphetamine Type Stimulants in Aotearoa New Zealand*; Dr. C. Wilkins, J. Reilly, E. Rose, D. Roy, Dr M. Pledger and A. Lee. Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation, Massey University, Auckland 2004.

<sup>5</sup> *Drug and Alcohol review*, Vol. 24. No. 3, May 2005 Wilkins, C; Reilly, J; Pledger, M; Casswell, S.

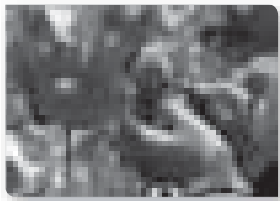
<sup>6</sup> According to the 2001 *UK Drugs Situation Report*, prepared by DrugScope for the UK Government

<sup>7</sup> UGI Issue 135 p 13

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<sup>9</sup> UGI Issue 108 p13

# The Long History of Drug Use



50,000 YEARS AGO – A Neanderthal burial site in Iraq is found to contain remains of the herbal stimulant *ephedra*, while Paleolithic cave art across Europe and Africa suggests artists had experience of hallucinogens (or possibly migraines!)

**10,000BC** – Earliest agriculture. Some evidence that the first crops included psychoactive plants such as mandrake, tobacco, coffee and cannabis.

**6000BC** – Native South Americans begin cultivating and using tobacco.

**5000BC** – The Sumerians (in ancient Mesopotamia) use opium, suggested by the fact that they have an ideogram for it which has been translated as HUL, meaning 'joy' or 'rejoicing'.

**4200BC** – Opium poppy seed pods found in a burial site at Albuñol near Granada, Spain.

**4000BC** – Wine and beer making in Egypt and Sumeria.

**3500BC** – Bronze-age vessels show evidence of wine consumption in eastern Mediterranean.

**3000BC** – Cannabis cultivation in China and Asia; evidence of cannabis smoking in Eastern Europe.

**2000BC** – Coca residues found in the hair of Andean mummies.

**2000BC** – Earliest record of prohibitionist teaching, by an Egyptian priest, who writes to his pupil: "I, thy superior, forbid thee to go to taverns. Thou art degraded like the beasts."

**1000BC** – Central Americans erect temples to mushroom gods.

**800BC** – Distillation of spirits in India.

**430BC** – Greek historian Herodotus records recreational cannabis smoking among the Scythian people of the Black Sea.

**AD625** – Mohammed orders his followers to abstain from alcohol.

**1000** – Opium is widely used in China and the Far East.

**1450** – Widespread use of coca leaves by Inca peoples.

**1493** – The use of tobacco is introduced into Europe by Columbus and his crew returning from America.

**1519** – Spanish courtier Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes brings tobacco plants to Europe.

**1525** – Paracelus (1490-1541) introduces laudanum, or tincture of opium, into the practice of medicine.

**1613** – John Rolfe, husband of the princess Pocahontas, sends the first shipment of Virginia tobacco from Jamestown to England.

**1650** – The use of tobacco is prohibited in Bavaria, Saxony, and Zurich (but the prohibitions are ineffective.) Sultan Murad IV (of the Ottoman Empire) decrees the death penalty for smoking tobacco.

**1691** – In Luneberg, Germany, the penalty for smoking tobacco is death.

**1762** – Thomas Dover, an English Physician, introduces his prescription for a '*diaphoretic powder*', which he recommends mainly for the treatment of gout. Soon named "*Dover's Powder*", this compound becomes one of the most widely used opium preparations during the next 150 years.

**1792** – The first prohibitory laws against opium in China are introduced. The punishment decreed for keepers of opium shops is strangulation.

**1800** – Napoleon's army, returning from Egypt, introduces cannabis into France.

**1805** – German chemist Friedrich Sertürner separates morphine from opium.

**1839-1842** – The First Opium War. The British force upon China the trade in opium, a trade the Chinese had declared illegal.

**1856** – The Second Opium War. The British, with the help of the French, extend their powers to distribute opium in China.

**1859** – German chemist Albert Niemann perfects isolation of cocaine from coca leaves.

**1868** – In the world's first piece of anti-drug legislation, the UK Poisons and Pharmacy Act makes it illegal to sell opium and other drugs without a licence.

**1886** – Recipe for Coca-Cola patented, including coca leaves and caffeine-rich kola nuts.

**1887** – Amphetamine synthesised in Germany.

**1893** – In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Act is created – the basis of the alcohol licencing system still existing here today.

**1898** Heroin is synthesised in Germany, widely lauded as a "*safe preparation free from addiction-forming properties.*"

**1906** – Coca leaves removed from the recipe for Coca-Cola.

**1912** – The first International Opium Convention meets in The Hague, and recommends various measures for the international control of the opium trade. Subsequent Opium Conventions are held in 1913 and 1914.

**1912** – MDMA (later known as Ecstasy) is synthesised by pharmaceutical firm Merck.

**1920** – The US State Dept. of Agriculture publishes a pamphlet urging Americans to grow cannabis as a profitable undertaking.

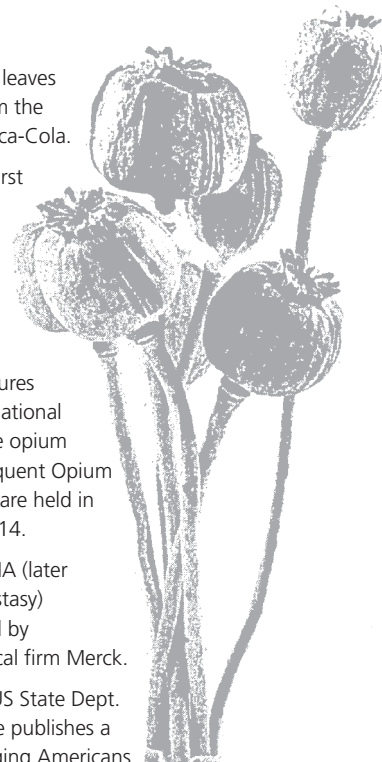
**1920-33** – Prohibition in the US. Alcohol was also illegal in Finland from 1919 to 1932 and in various Canadian provinces at various times between 1900 and 1948.


**1933** – Swiss chemist Albert Hofmann synthesises LSD and accidentally discovers its hallucinogenic effects. He later takes what he believes is a tiny dose and discovers LSD's astonishing potency.

**1941** – Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek orders the complete suppression of the poppy; laws are enacted providing the death penalty for anyone guilty of cultivating poppy, manufacturing opium, or offering it for sale.

**1951** – According to UN estimates, there are now approximately 200 million cannabis users in the world, with the major places being India, Egypt, North Africa, Mexico and the US.

**1955** – The Shah of Iran prohibits the cultivation and use of opium, creating a flourishing illegal market for the drug. (In 1969 the prohibition is lifted, growing under state supervision resumes, and more than 110,000 people receive opium





from doctors and pharmacies as “registered addicts.”)

**1956** – The US Narcotic Drug Control Act is enacted; it provides for the death penalty, of recommended by a jury, for the sale of heroin to a person under 18 by one over 18.

**1961** – The UN agrees on the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which urges member states to take action against opiates and cocaine.

**1971** – The UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances urges banning of synthetic drugs such as amphetamines and LSD.

**1971** – President Nixon declares that “America’s Public Enemy No. 1 is drug abuse” and launches his “War on Drugs” – which continues as US policy to this day.

**1971** – Turkey’s president decrees that all poppy cultivation and opium production will be forbidden from the autumn of 1972.

**1975** – Netherlands licenses sale of cannabis in coffee shops.

**1978** – MDMA starts being widely used as a recreational drug; initially called “empathy” but quickly becomes known as “ecstasy”.

**1990** – President Bush Snr. proposes a 50% increase in the “War on Drugs” spending.

**1994** – The War on Drugs in the US incarcerates 1 million Americans a year, about 225,000 for possession of cannabis (the fourth most common cause of arrest in the US.)

**1998** – US invasion of Panama (code-named *Operation Just Cause*) sends in 25,000 troops to help eradicate coca, and accuses Gen. Manuel Noriega (Panama’s head of government) of drug trafficking. This military action is later extended to Colombia as well – including aerial fumigation to destroy crops.

**2000** – About 180 million people worldwide use illegal drugs regularly – with the great majority of them choosing cannabis in one of its forms.

**2001** – Just weeks after the attack of the Twin Towers, the US pledges a further \$1.5 million to eradicate poppy crops under the guise of ‘humanitarian aid’. Until this point the Taliban had been working to destroy crops, but after the US invasion of Afghanistan, they use the crops to help fund their counter operations.

**2003** – A Canadian court case sets a precedent for the defacto decriminalisation of small amounts of cannabis. A Swiss bill to legalise and tax cannabis is narrowly defeated.

**2004** – Russia makes possession of all drugs in amounts for personal use a civil rather than criminal offence, subject to fines.

**2004** – UK reclassifies cannabis to Class C. Punishment measures and arrests are not applied unless circumstances considered ‘aggravated’.

Sources: *Timeline: Drugs and Alcohol*, 11:10 04 September 2006, NewScientist.com; *A history of drug prohibition*, Transform Drug Policy Foundation; *Prohibition*, from An Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 1966; *War on Drugs*, Wikipedia.



**“Controlling the population in the US is a big problem. In fact, it’s the biggest problem: How do you control your population? Well, one way to control them is by having a foreign enemy... so new enemies have been concocted: international terrorists, Hispanic narco-traffickers, Islamic fundamentalists and so on – whoever you want. None of these are credible threats...”**

Noam Chomsky, Debt, Drugs and Democracy, NACLA Report On The Americas.

**It’s not just the US’s War on Drugs** that has turned countries such as Columbia and Afghanistan into ‘narco-states’, and corrupted countries from Mexico to Turkey with illegal drug money... the whole international financial system has been tainted by the filtering of a trillion dollars of drug money since WWII<sup>10</sup>.

**It has been argued that the Cold War played a large part in the spread of global drug trafficking.** While the Vietnam War introduced thousands of American soldiers to cheap heroin, the CIA were doing deals with anti-communist drug barons in South-East and Central Asia and in Latin America.

**There seems little doubt that drug trafficking has been used to finance guerrilla or terrorist operations,** including those of the IRA, ETA (in Northern Spain), Hezbollah (in Lebanon), the anti-Soviet *mujaheddin* in Afghanistan in the 1980’s and, more recently, al-Qaeda.<sup>11</sup>

**Not all accusations are so clear-cut, however.** Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the country’s opium crop wasn’t seen as a major source in terms of global drug trafficking and heroin production. But with that invasion, the CIA stepped in – supporting local warlords who were funded by trafficking. By the end of the 1990’s, 70% of the world’s heroin was sourced there. Yet, although the UN reported in the beginning of 2001 that drug exports from that region had fallen by 94% because (despite all its other faults) the Taliban had banned drugs, we still heard British Prime Minister Tony Blair boasting, “*We will bomb their poppy fields.*” What he neglected to mention was that there weren’t any poppy fields in Taliban controlled areas to bomb.<sup>12</sup>

**In the name of zero tolerance,** the US government has imposed trade sanctions, terminated aid programmes and used its enormous economic muscle to force the major Latin American coca producers – Colombia, Bolivia and Peru – to

eradicate thousands of acres of coca fields and force peasants to forsake coca for ‘legitimate’ crops. Yet coca production in all three countries *has expanded to record levels*, and since 1990, Colombia and Peru have branched off into poppy production for heroin as well.

**Instead of dampening demand for illegal substances, it has been argued that drug prohibition has stimulated demand by glamorising drugs** – turning them into something forbidden, dangerous and, therefore, more exciting. This drives prices up, which leads to huge profits for individuals or organisations willing to face the customs agents, border patrol officers, drug-sniffing dogs, and hefty penalties (including, in some countries, the death sentence) to traffic them.

**Neo-liberal economic policies** (such as “free trade”) pushed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other financial institutions since the 1970’s have also been said to help to fuel the drug trade. Rather than encouraging Latin American (and other) countries to get out of the drug business and into more ‘legitimate’ economic activities, the inequitable profits created by neo-liberalism has forced these countries to fall back on the one activity which continues to give them some economic advantage. By putting the squeeze on ‘legitimate’ activities and driving up unemployment, neo-liberalism generates thousands of recruits for the drug trade – coca growers, day labourers, smugglers, enforcers etc.

And by throwing millions of people out of work (and sometimes off their land), the financial crashes in Bolivia, Peru and elsewhere have swollen the ranks of those willing to work as coca growers and traffickers. “*Before long the region [Colombia’s Guajira Peninsula] was displaying the classic symptoms of an over-heated drug economy – flashy cars, impoverished Guajiro Indians suddenly flush with cash, and Wild West shootouts in the streets of coastal cities like Riohacha and Santa Marta.*”<sup>13</sup>

**However, only 1%<sup>14</sup> of the money ultimately spent by drug abusers is earned as farm income in developing countries,** while the other 99% is earned at various other points along the drug trafficking chain. Half to two-thirds of the profits are, instead, paid out in developed countries where most illegal drugs are used (for instance, Afghanistan’s opium now accounts for 90% of the heroin on the streets of the UK and 75% globally.) Yet, despite these dismal percentages, the approximate 4 million people who depend on income from the cultivation of opium and coca still find the risks better than the alternatives: where one plot of land planted in wheat will earn a farmer \$100, the price leaps to \$3,000 – \$4,000 for the same plot of land planted out in opium poppies.

Still, these risks are *huge* – with many farmers caught up in the terrors of criminal middlemen and losses from government eradication programmes. Switching to a more legitimate crop would be a god-send... but only if the price was right. In the end, it’s the need to put food on the table that motivates these farmers – and who can blame them? It falls on governmental and global financial practices to provide the leadership in turning this escalating drug war around. All that’s needed now is the *will* to change.

<sup>10</sup> *The International War on Drugs*, p 12, UGI Briefing 135

<sup>11</sup> *Drugs and Crime*, p 12; *The Age of Drugs: Sense, substance and society*; UGI Briefing 108

<sup>12</sup> Michael C. Ruppert; *The Lies About Taliban Heroin*; [http://www.copvicia.com/stories/oct\\_2001/heroin.html](http://www.copvicia.com/stories/oct_2001/heroin.html)

<sup>13</sup> NACLA Report on The Americas Vol. XXX, No 6.

<sup>14</sup> According to a report by the International Narcotics Control Board in 2003



## Case Study: Columbia

### KEY CONCEPTS:

War On The Poor  
Money Trap  
Continuing Conflict

According to the CIA's World Factbook, *"Colombia is the world's leading coca cultivator, with 144,000 hectares in coca cultivation in 2005 – a 26% increase over 2004. In 2005, aerial eradication dispensed herbicide to treat over 130,000 hectares, but aggressive replanting on the part of coca growers means Colombia remains a key producer."*

What this picture doesn't show is that for many years the US has been attempting to stamp out the drugs business in Colombia, most recently through the \$7.5 billion *Plan Colombia* (1999-2005).

They talk of *"undermining the narcotics industry, while at the same time advancing democracy and strengthening security..."*<sup>15</sup>

Three billion US dollars have been poured into military aid (80% of the US's \$4.7 billion aid to Colombia) and for the aerial fumigation (*eradication*) programme of illegal crops, resulting in a humanitarian crisis:

- displacement of people
- loss of food crops
- diseases
- environmental damage and contamination

Meanwhile, some members of the Colombian security forces, who receive aid and training from *Plan Colombia*, are involved in supporting or tolerating abuses by right-wing paramilitary forces against the population and left-wing organisations. But, despite the enormous financial investment, *Plan Colombia* has had little impact on the supply and price of drugs. Cocaine and heroin prices are lower than ever, and the number of users has not decreased significantly.

**Money trap...** An effective alternative development plan has not yet been put into action to lessen the negative impact of the forced eradication. And the hard line approach doesn't provide a practical alternative for landless and other peasants, who turn to coca cultivation due to a lack of other economic possibilities. In addition they have to deal with the turbulent civil conflict between the state, guerrillas and paramilitaries.

Aerial spraying and the promise of alternative development do not convince peasant farmers that it is useless to grow coca. Given the extreme poverty, malnutrition and neglect in which millions

**"The United States has been at war in Colombia for over 50 years. It has, however, hesitated to explain precisely who it is fighting. Officially, it is now involved there in a "war on terror". Before September 2001, it was a "war on drugs"; before that, a "war on communism". In essence, however, US intervention in Colombia is unchanged: this remains, as it has always been, a war on the poor."**

George Monbiot: To Crush The Poor; Guardian Unlimited [www.monbiot.com](http://www.monbiot.com)

of Colombians live, they cannot be expected to stop taking advantage of coca's profitability.

**Conflict...** The country has been ravaged by over 40 years of violent conflict involving outlawed armed groups, drug cartels (alliances) and gross violations of human rights. Colombia is one of the most violent countries in the world, deterring investors and tourists alike.

The main left-wing rebel group is the FARC, who frequently recruit children as soldiers and informants, usually by force. An estimated 20-30% of FARC combatants are under 18 years old (and many as young as 12 years old), with a total of around 5000 kids. Children who try to escape the ranks of the guerrillas are punished with torture and death.

At the other end of the political spectrum there are illegal right-wing paramilitary groups, sometimes in the pay of drug cartels and landowners, and backed by elements in the army and the police. These groups have kidnapped and murdered human rights workers, journalists, peasants suspected of helping left-wing guerrillas, street children, and other marginalised groups.

Media workers face intimidation by drug traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitary groups. More than 120 Colombian journalists were killed in the 1990s, many for reporting on drug trafficking and corruption.

Alongside politically-motivated killings are drug-related crimes (including kidnapping), which have become the most common cause of death after cancer.

US military aid to Latin America has increased by 24% since September 11, 2001, an increase justified under the banner of the 'War on Terror.' In Colombia, the US mission shifted from an exclusively anti-drug focus to anti-terrorist or counter-insurgency action, a change that made it possible to introduce the concept of *narco-terrorism*.

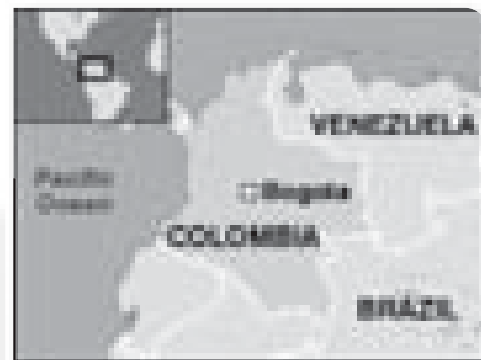
Meanwhile, four million hectares of the most productive land – 48% of the country's total – are now in the hands of drug traffickers, making the country a 'narco-estate'.

In terms of income and human development, Colombia is poorer today than it was ten years ago. A sustained, long-term commitment aimed at correcting those problems (through such measures as providing secure, sustainable alternative income opportunities) would have better results for both citizens and drug enforcers.<sup>16</sup>



**Digging deeper...** It has been suggested that a reason for the US interest lies in the fact that, as of 2004, Colombia is the fifteenth largest supplier of oil to the US and could potentially rise in that ranking if petroleum extraction could be conducted in a more secure environment. From 1986 to 1997 there were nearly 79 million barrels of crude oil spilled in pipeline attacks. Damage and lost revenue were estimated at \$1.5 billion, while the oil spills seriously damaged the ecology.

**What do you think?**



<sup>15</sup> Quoted from US deputy assistant secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs in May 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Kim Rooke, Global Education Centre

## ➤ Garrotting The Gangs

“Criminals have always thrived when official markets have been unable to provide the goods that people want. The money made from black market opium in 19th century China helped to develop the power of triad gangs and their overseas networks... Prohibition [of alcohol] in 1920s America gave a huge boost to organised crime by handing over to the bootleggers all trade in beer, wine and spirits. Though the experiment in alcohol prohibition was called off in 1933, the gangs were handed an even more lucrative trading monopoly when prohibitory laws on ‘narcotics’ were enacted.”

Richard Buckley, editor, *The Age of Drugs: sense, substance and society*; Understanding Global Issues 108

### Gangland goodies...

The fact that most of the world’s illegal drugs are sold through organised gangs or cartels is hardly news. Even in Aotearoa New Zealand, key informants<sup>17</sup> have confirmed high levels of involvement by organised criminal groups (particularly those who are dealing in the importation, manufacture and sale of ‘P’ and other Amphetamine Type Substances such as:

- ‘Asian triads’, who are identified as the main importers of methamphetamine and its ingredients;
- Gangs such as the ‘Mongrel Mob’, ‘Black Power’ and the ‘Tribesmen’ have all been identified as the groups most often involved in the local P/ATS trade, with the ‘Hells Angels’ and ‘Headhunters’ also commonly mentioned.

Cannabis sales have long been the main income for many gangs (and for many poor rural communities with little else in the way of ‘tradable’ employment) but now, as mentioned earlier, the estimates of the dollar value of the illegal markets for amphetamine and ecstasy suggest that the combined value of these markets approaches the dollar value of the entire illegal market for cannabis in Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>18</sup> (estimated in 2001 at NZ\$190 million.)

### From addict to criminal...

With increased demand for these newer and more expensive ‘highs’ comes added pressure for individuals to fund their habits. It has been shown that:

- One third of the frequent ‘P’ users interviewed in Aotearoa New Zealand had also sold it;
- About one in five had manufactured or exchanged ‘P’ for stolen property at some stage;
- About 40% of the frequent ‘P’ users had earned income from illegal activities in the last six

months<sup>19</sup> – with drug dealing the most common type of illegal activity (the average dollar amount earned from illegal activities was \$24,000.)

Competition among drug dealers and traffickers is intense – due to the potential profits at stake – and, because disputes between criminals can not be resolved through legal means, participants at every level of the illegal drug industry often compete with one another through violence. Some statistics<sup>20</sup> have shown that a large percentage of murders recorded are the result of the drugs trade.

### The role of the United Nations... Global Gangbusters?

Given the global nature of drug trafficking and use, the fight against drugs now needs to be equally global – with a consistent co-responsibility among countries.

The United Nations has responded to this call for greater global unity over drug trafficking with three conventions:

- **Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)**
- **Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)**
- **Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)**

### Reducing opium poppy cultivation in Asia

In the area of Palavek in Laos, opium cultivation has nearly been eliminated. In 1989, the UN International Drug Control Programme, the Lao Government and the villagers embarked on a project to develop new sources of income. Crops with a high profit, such as asparagus and coffee, were introduced, and simple irrigation schemes were developed which yielded more rice. New roads were built, allowing access to markets. Education that related to the real life of the people, such as sewing and agriculture, was introduced, and health care and access to drinking water were improved. Six years after the project started, opium production dropped from 3.5 tonnes to 100 kilograms annually. The incidence of malaria, the main cause of death and disability in the area, was reduced from 48 per cent to 4 per cent, and the number of drug abusers dropped by 50 per cent.

Source: UN General Assembly, Special Session on the World Drug Problem, 8-10 June 1998

<sup>17</sup> *The Socio-Economic Impact of Amphetamine Type Stimulants in Aotearoa New Zealand*; Dr. C. Wilkins, J.Reilly, E.Rose, D.Roy, Dr M. Pledger and A. Lee. Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation, Massey University, Auckland 2004.

<sup>18</sup> As above

<sup>19</sup> According to the report cited above

<sup>20</sup> According to the article ‘Illegal drug trade’ – Wikipedia

These conventions seek to limit the possession, use, trade, distribution, import, export, manufacture and production of drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes, and provide measures to halt the activities surrounding drug trafficking. Initially targeting drugs made from opium, coca and cannabis, they have responded to the increase in synthetic drugs as these began to enter the markets in significant amounts.

In 1998 the UN General Assembly endorsed the UN's *International Drug Control Programme*. Member states committed themselves to "eliminating or reducing significantly the illicit cultivation of the coca bush, the cannabis plant and the opium poppy by the year 2008". However, trends indicate a total failure of this objective, and many people argue that the use of prohibition and punishment as the main weapons in the fight against drug trafficking may be the wrong approach.

### Alternative Development

For local farmers, the day to day reality in illegal crop growing areas (such as isolation, underdevelopment and poverty, as well as lack of markets, ethnic unrest, marginal land and absence of basic infrastructure) have led UNODC<sup>21</sup> to develop a concept of *alternative development* to address the broader socio-economic situation of the farmers and their overall quality of life.

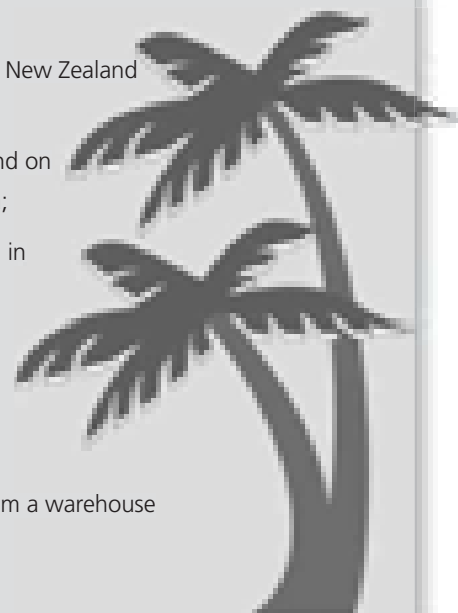
The key idea behind *alternative development* lies with supporting specially designed rural development opportunities to replace the illegal cultivation of drugs with more permanent socially acceptable (and economically uplifting) alternatives (see *Reducing opium poppy cultivation in Asia*).

Whether this is supported by individual countries and proves achievable, remains to be seen.

### Focus on the Pacific

The increasing globalisation of illegal drug culture and economies is clearly illustrated by the findings of a 2006 report from the Australian government<sup>22</sup>, which looked at the impact of global crime networks at work in the Pacific region. Findings revealed:

- Global crime networks target areas of least resistance. The diverse cultural, educational and social structures of the Pacific Islands (also geographically isolated and sparsely populated) aided traffickers to flourish there. Also mentioned was the poor governance, corruption and a lack of law enforcement capacity in many Pacific Island nations – making them more attractive to transnational crime networks.
- Corruption in the Pacific remains a major issue, with suggestions made that organised crime networks may target those working in the public and private sectors where conditions of service and payment are low. A recent report<sup>23</sup> argues that Chinese organised crime groups have infiltrated and corrupted senior members of the Papua New Guinea police force, who turn a blind eye to the operation of illegal businesses, the siphoning of money out of the country, the corruption of government officials, and attempts to kill officials.
- Evidence of the presence of drugs in the Pacific Islands is available. For instance:
  - In 2000, 350 kg of heroin bound for Australia, New Zealand and Canada was seized in Suva;
  - In 2002, 74 kg of methamphetamine was found on a ship in Singapore bound for Fiji and Australia;
  - In 2003 2.5 kg of pseudoephedrine was found in scuba tanks shipped to Brisbane from Fiji;
  - In June 2004, 5 kg of crystal methamphetamine, 700 litres of liquid methamphetamine and sufficient chemicals to produce an additional 1000 kg of methamphetamine were seized from a warehouse in Suva, Fiji.



<sup>21</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<sup>22</sup> *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice*; No. 308: *Transnational crime in the Pacific Islands : real or apparent danger?* Rob McCusker March 2006



Since the 1960's most countries have made it illegal to use or supply drugs considered harmful (such as cannabis, heroin, cocaine, ATS etc.) But, with the number of addicts rising along with prison rates, many are now calling for a fundamental change in the way drug use is classified and controlled. Whatever your views on this, the debate is complicated further by the fact that legally available alcohol and tobacco are seen by many as the real problem drugs, with the WHO<sup>24</sup> stating that *"alcohol is estimated to cause about 20-30% of oesophageal cancer, liver cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, homicide, epileptic seizures, and motor vehicle accidents worldwide"*. They also likened the health impact of tobacco to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, predicting that cigarette smoking will be responsible for 10 million deaths a year by 2030, mostly in the developing world.

### Those who want CONTINUED PROHIBITION of drugs point to:

- The health risks.** Possible immediate harmful health effects include: altered awareness, reduced motor control, poisoning, and death by overdose. There are broader long term health impacts as well, such as the effects of drugs on mental health, educational performance and standards of living. Concerns also include links between health problems and specific prohibited drugs: direct problems such as increased accidents (falls, car accidents); physical addiction and substance cravings; potentially fatal diseases such as HIV/AIDS, bronchitis and Hepatitis C (due to IV drug use); psychosocial problems with increased risk of depression, paranoia and psychosis, and the consequences of increased domestic (and other) violence.
- The cost to society.** For instance, short and long term healthcare provisions, prevention campaigns, harm reduction programmes, addiction treatment, public nuisance and third party damage, absence from work and lost productivity, crime committed by drug users while 'under the influence' (or to subsidise their habit), and the vast costs associated with identifying/ arresting/ prosecuting/ incarcerating/ reintegrating into society people involved in the drug trade. Contrary to the costs of alcohol and tobacco use, there is no income from tax to subsidise such costs to a society.
- Personal economic consequences,** with problem users tending to spend a considerable proportion of their day-to-day budget on drugs. While those wanting to see continued prohibition may be criticised for 'nanny state' attitudes (in wanting to protect users from self-harm) there also exists a genuine risk that users might be tempted to 'max out' on their drug spending, putting families at further risk. For instance, PRYDE<sup>25</sup> Australia claims that there was a 56% increase in cannabis use by 14-19 year olds in South Australia after decriminalisation there.

- The potential for more addicts and drug pushers** (attracted by profits) if drugs are legalised. There is also a fear that the same advertising tactics used by the tobacco and alcohol industries would be applied to other drugs, with an increase in sales – allowing such companies to profit off the addiction of their customers (as with alcohol and tobacco). They also fear that more addicts would equate to more crimes.
- The financial benefits for developing countries.** Experience from legal trade in comparable Third World agricultural products (chocolate, coffee, pineapples, bananas) suggests that developing countries are unlikely to receive a fair share of profits from the global demand for their domestically grown products, and would be exposed to price variations. Some consider that, while imperfect, illegal drug production is the 'least worst' option in terms of providing employment and ensuring more equitable revenue streams.

### Those who want DECRIMINALISATION AND/ OR LEGALISATION of drugs point to:

- The increasing lobby for partial or complete legalisation /decriminalisation.** In 2002, 108 members of the European Parliament proposed fundamental reforms to international drugs policy, contending that the drug prohibition policies evolving from the UN Conventions were *"the true cause of the increasing damage that production of, trafficking in, and sale of illegal substances are inflicting on society, on the economy and on public institutions, eroding the health, freedom and life of individuals."*<sup>26</sup>
- The unnecessary 'criminalising' of a third or more of all young people,** by treating occasional use of illegal drugs as a prisonable offence. Decriminalisation advocates look to the high rates of incarceration among certain groups and question the racial ethics of some drug legislation (see sidebar).
- The issue of individual freedoms and rights.** Advocates say that governments' right to curtail the freedom of individuals ought to be limited to actions that *cause harm to others*. Preventing citizens from the risk of self-harm is seen as intolerable, leading to bans on all forms of potentially dangerous pursuits from rock-climbing to drinking whisky. They argue that a free society needs to be able to tolerate a certain amount of risky behaviour – be it extreme sports, occasional drunkenness or drug use.
- The dangers of total prohibition.** Advocates for legalisation claim that *"the only way societies have been able to control the transactions of items in great demand was by controlling its legal commerce, and never through total prohibition. Prohibition forces the commerce underground and makes it invisible. It never stops it. Supply inevitably meets demand. Always."*<sup>27</sup>
- Increasing calls for the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal reasons.** This argument is gaining increased public support in many countries – with benefits including easing of pain of terminally ill patients, as well as those with other chronic pain conditions. It has also been claimed as potentially beneficial for people suffering from Multiple Sclerosis, and for chemotherapy and AIDS patients (where it can help increase appetites and counter nausea.) In fact even back in Queen Victoria's day, her physician described cannabis as *"one of the most valuable medicines we possess."* Many countries are now reviewing their policies to consider the limited legalisation of cannabis for medicinal use, including in Aotearoa New Zealand, and there is also increasing support for removal of criminal status for all personal use of cannabis.
- The reduction of the profits and monopolies** now enjoyed by dealers and traffickers, by controlling the sale of drugs. Advocates claim that, *"virtually overnight, the price of formerly controlled substances would plummet.*

<sup>24</sup> World Health Organisation

<sup>25</sup> Parents Reaching Youth through Drug Education

<sup>26</sup> Page 14, UGI Briefing 135



*All street crime, money laundering, gang violence, (etc.), and the corresponding corruption in law enforcement that involves drugs, would disappear. The power of organised crime and drug cartels would decline drastically, with beneficial ripple effects throughout society. The greatest improvement will be seen in impoverished communities. Street dealers will be gone. So will be mandatory minimum sentences, that have led to lengthy and costly (to the taxpayers) incarceration of non-violent offenders, that has exacerbated the breakdown of families and communities.*"<sup>28</sup> Based upon past experience (prohibition of alcohol), advocates accept a slight and temporary rise in drug abuse would be expected from decriminalisation, but many believe this would eventually decline and level off, partly due to more robust and better-funded prevention programs (from the billions of dollars saved from drug enforcement no longer needed), and also because studies indicate there's a percentage of 'addictive personalities' who will seek out drugs whether they're legal or illegal. This claim, however, is highly debated – with many pro-prohibition campaigners (and most law enforcers) claiming drug use would increase significantly under decriminalisation.

- **The health benefits**, with addicts having to register with the government and encouraged to detoxify (more of a possibility when the threat of legal punishment is removed). At the same time, the substances available to addicts would be less potent and free of harmful contaminants, because they would be regulated and monitored. Pharmaceutical companies would no doubt get in on the game as well, producing safer alternatives to wean abusers off the most addictive and psychoactive substances. Again, the billions formerly spent on drug enforcement have been suggested as a means of funding all this.

### Case Study: US... War on drugs - or war on race?

Although African Americans comprise only 12.2% of the US population and 13% of drug users, they make up 38% of those arrested for drug offenses and 59% of those convicted of drug offences. The higher arrest rates for African Americans and Latinos do not reflect a higher abuse rate in these communities but, rather, a law enforcement emphasis on inner city areas where drug use and sales are more likely to take place in open-air drug markets and where treatment resources are scarce.

Once arrested, people of colour are treated more harshly by the criminal justice system than whites. The best-known example of the inequality in sentencing is the disparity between crack cocaine and powder cocaine sentences. Crack and powder cocaine have the same active ingredient, but crack is marketed in less expensive quantities and in lower income communities of colour. *A five gram sale of crack cocaine receives a five-year federal mandatory minimum sentence*, while an offender must sell *500 grams of powder cocaine* to get the same sentence. In 1986, before the enactment of federal mandatory minimum sentencing for crack cocaine offences, the average federal drug sentence for African Americans was 11% higher than for whites. Four years later, the average federal drug sentence for African Americans was 49% higher.

And with the increase in private prisons, where the prisoners are required to work in the manufacture of goods (for no pay), there is talk\* of this level of incarceration and exploitation of African American labour as the newest incarnation of slavery.

The racial disparities in drug arrests and convictions have had a devastating effect on families. Of the 1.5 million children who had a parent jailed in 1999, African American children were nearly *nine times* more likely to have a parent jailed than white children and Latino children were *three times* more likely to have a parent jailed than white children.

Sources: Race and the Drug War <http://www.drugpolicy.org/communities/race/> ; \* Letter To The President (The streets get political), DVD Directed by Thomas Gibson, narrated by Snoop Dogg (2005).

<sup>27</sup> *It's Well-Past the Time To Decriminalize Drugs*; Gary Krasner; 19/06/04; <http://www.cfic.us/>

<sup>28</sup> *It's Well-Past the Time To Decriminalize Drugs*; Gary Krasner; 19/06/04; <http://www.cfic.us/>

**Environmental disaster!** One of the lesser known side-effects of the exploding drug trade is the environmental damage caused by drug cultivation and processing. The expansion of coca (the active ingredient in cocaine) cultivation, production, and trafficking in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia has resulted in the destruction of, at an absolute minimum, 2.4 million hectares of fragile tropical forest in the Andean region over the last 20 years. This is more than all the native forest still growing in Aotearoa New Zealand today<sup>29</sup>.

### The local consequences for this include:

- Devastation of soils, water, and biodiversity, which can delay the introduction of substitute crops for years;
- Fields often left abandoned after two or three growing seasons due to low fertility, with new fields cleared deeper in the forest because of the need for concealment from authorities. This practice accelerates deforestation, and destroys timber and other resources that would otherwise be available from more sustainable uses of forestland;
- Environmental degradation and natural resource exhaustion, particularly soil erosion and downstream siltation, from intensive farming practices on already fragile tropical soils;
- Deforestation, caused by drugs cultivation in highland water catchment areas, increases the severity of floods and droughts. It also can reduce local water supplies downstream of heavily deforested areas because of increased groundwater runoff and increased siltation of streams.<sup>30</sup>

### Chemical dumping: by-product of the drug industry...

The environmental impact of the drug trade cannot be measured solely in terms of the hectares or square kilometers affected, however. The very act of refining raw coca leaves into finished cocaine creates huge environmental damage because of the reckless disposal of large amounts of toxic chemicals used in the process.

A study conducted by the DEA<sup>31</sup> in 1993 of cocaine production in the Chapare region of Bolivia showed that production of one kilo of cocaine base required the use of three litres of concentrated sulfuric acid, 10 kilos of lime, 60 to 80 litres of kerosene, 200 grams of potassium permanganate (an oxidising agent), and one litre of concentrated ammonia (bleach). But the enforcing of environmental laws is highly dangerous – with biologists and officials often held at bay by the always-present threat of violence.

### And then, of course, there's good old-fashioned plant trafficking...

Corrupt collectors remain a major threat to the very existence of some plant species. For while most

plants, including most orchids and cacti, available in the legitimate marketplace have been artificially grown by nurseries, a large number still find their way into trade, taken directly and usually illegally from the wild. For some specialist collectors, there is considerable prestige attached to owning wild, as opposed to artificially grown, plants.

The scale of this trade is reflected in the 7 to 8 million cacti trafficked globally and in the trade of orchids (of which there are up to 25,000 different types – many of them threatened, endangered or extinct).

How lucrative the illegal trade can be is illustrated by some of the prices rare plants fetch on the international black market. A rare orchid can bring up to US\$10,000, with rare cacti close behind at US\$7,000. Although smugglers serve only a small number of orchid collectors, they do great environmental damage. For example, as China has opened itself up more to outsiders, it has become popular with smugglers, as it contains many species never before seen in the West. The Chinese environment is being ravaged by smugglers, aided by the desperately poor peasantry, who assist the smugglers in their work for a meager amount of money.

And no group of plants is being plundered more rapidly than cycads. Of the world's 298 cycad species, more than half are endangered, vulnerable



Cycas inflorescence

or extinct. In Southern Africa, the epicenter of the cycad crisis, two-thirds of all species face extinction.<sup>32</sup>

These cases put our whole bio-diversity at risk – where the act of one person digging up a plant in deepest Africa can have consequences for the entire balance of the planet.

One person, one act, multiple consequences... this, as with illegal drugs, is the common theme in the world of trafficking.

### Smuggler admits guilt!

A high profile plant expert and businessman in Queensland, Australia, was sentenced in June 2002 to three years' probation and a US\$25,000 fine for his role in a million-dollar rare plant smuggling ring. Peter Heibloem, after months of proclaiming his innocence, entered into a plea agreement and pleaded guilty to one federal charge of conspiracy to smuggle merchandise into the US, in exchange for 11 other charges being dropped.

Heibloem, author of *The Cycads of Central Africa*, was charged, along with 11 others from four continents, in one of the largest rare plant smuggling investigations in US history. The estimated value of the cycads and orchids smuggled in this case totalled more than US\$840,000.

### Local scientists in alleged plant smuggling racket!

A multi-million rupee racket in the smuggling of rare plants from Sri Lanka has been exposed, with detectives checking the involvement of university scientists and officials. The medicinal and toxic plants, some of them growing only in the forest reserves of Sinharaja and Pallakelle, have been smuggled through agents and NGOs in Sri Lanka to companies in the US and Japan, detectives said.

Five university academics, who have allegedly smuggled these plants in the guise of long term international research, have been nabbed by Customs. Over five hundred medicinal and toxic plants are reported to have been smuggled out.

<sup>29</sup> Almost a quarter of New Zealand's 8.1 million hectares of land area is in native forests. Source: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealandInBrief/Economy/3/en>

<sup>30</sup> The Andes Under Siege: Environmental consequences of the drug trade; US Dept. of State's Bureau of International Programmes July 2001

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

<sup>32</sup> Source: *Modern Battle to Save Ancient Plants* Don Boroughs, *National Wildlife* Feb/Marc 2003, vol.41 no.2

***Animal trafficking, the third largest illegal trade in the world after drugs and arms, is a US\$20 billion business.***

While animal trafficking has escalated dramatically in recent years, it is not purely a 21st Century phenomenon. Five hundred years ago, when Europe began colonising the world, voyagers returned with unknown animals as evidence of having discovered new continents. These animals drew attention and curiosity in Europe, and were soon exhibited and traded in the streets. The possession of wild animals was a symbol of power, wealth, and nobility. This status and curiosity fuelled the creation of a profitable business.

Today, the jungles of Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil, and other fragile ecosystems of Central America, Mexico, Argentina and Paraguay, have become the main sources of wild species trafficking to the European Union, the world's leading destination for reptile skins, parrots, and boa and python snakes, and the second for monkeys.

Last year in Mexico, more than 206,828 animals and plants intended for illegal sale were confiscated by authorities. That figure is 110 times higher than the total for 2001, according to Mexico's Federal Prosecutor for Environmental Protection.

Demand for exotic pets, rare foods, trophies, and traditional medicines is driving tigers, elephants, rhinos, exotic birds and many other species to the brink of extinction, threatening global biodiversity. For instance, a Komodo Dragon has a street value of US\$30,000 – with only 5,000 still estimated be left in the wild, while African Ivory can be sold for up to US\$750 per kilo. More than 23,000 elephants (or 5%) were killed by poachers in 2006 (with an estimated yield of 240 tons of ivory).

This trafficking comprises of four main markets:

- **Collectors and private zoos** – although collectors and private zoos hold illegally extracted animals, many in fact have government authorisation to operate. Private collectors are generally extremely wealthy individuals who maintain collections for reasons of vanity;
- **Biopiracy**, which takes advantage of loopholes in many laws and accords, extracts chemicals from animals for research and production of medicines. For instance, the venom of the nigriventer spider is sought after for research into new and more effective pain killers, with a value of up to US\$4,000 a gram, while the market value for hypertension drugs uniquely derived from one Brazilian snake species is US\$500 million;



- **Pet animals** are the third market. Boas, turtles, macaws, marmosets, and many other creatures are captured; the few that survive end up in private homes in the US, Europe, Asia, or elsewhere;
- **Fauna products** make up the fourth category, consisting of parts of animals, such as reptile skins or bird feathers, which are used as ornaments and in crafts that cater to the fashion market.

## Brazil

Brazil is estimated to account for up to 15% of illegal animal trafficking globally. In Brazil alone, approximately 38 million animals are taken every year, posing a deep threat to regional and global biodiversity. The trade is as wasteful as it is massive, with nine out of ten animals dying while being captured or transported, often in horrendous circumstances.

This level of animal trafficking is threatening Brazil's biodiversity at an alarming rate. Over the past 10 years, the official list of Brazilian animals threatened by extinction has nearly doubled. Today, over 600 species are on this 'death row' – with animal trafficking playing a significant role in the growth of this list. Many species run the risk of disappearing all together as a result of their illegal trade.

Sources: *Taking Animal Trafficking Out of the Shadows*, Dener Giovanini; *Animal Trafficking – A cruel billion-dollar business*, Francesca Colombo; the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Washington, DC; 26 innovations / spring 2006.

## Aphrodisiac anteater threatened with extinction

**By Alex Spillius in Bangkok**

Surging Chinese demand for the meat and scales of the pangolin, or scaly anteater, as an aid to sexual performance and long life is threatening the animal with extinction, conservationists believe.

Thailand, long notorious as a centre for the trafficking of drugs, weapons and people, has emerged as a hub for smugglers taking the 3-ft pangolins from Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia and sending them to China. There, they end up in cooking pots and traditional medicine shops. The animal's heavy scales are also used for guitar plectrums.

The number of pangolins confiscated by Thai officials has rocketed from 1,944 in 2001 to 10,763 in the first seven months of 2002 according to a report by the Thai Forestry Department.

Some 1,200 frozen pangolins hidden in a consignment of fish bound for Vietnam were seized in Malaysia in April 2002, and last autumn their Hong Kong counterparts found nearly three tons of pangolin scales in a container believed to be bound for mainland China.



## The fact that slavery – in the form of human trafficking – still exists in the 21st century shames us all.

Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Lastly, although perhaps at the forefront of all trafficking crimes dealt with in this issue so far, comes the appalling crime of *human trafficking*.

While most of us think that slavery is a dark and shameful shadow in our colonial pasts, human trafficking still sees some 2.5 million people throughout the world recruited, entrapped, transported and exploited every year.<sup>33</sup> The UN and other experts estimate the total market value of illegal human trafficking at *US\$32 billion* (almost as much as the annual US expenditure on the *War on Drugs*) – about \$10 billion is derived from the initial “sale” of individuals, while the remainder represents the estimated profits from the activities or goods produced by the victims of this barbaric crime.

From Himalayan villages to Eastern European cities, people – especially women and girls – are attracted by the prospect of a well-paid job as a domestic servant, waitress or factory worker. Traffickers recruit victims through fake advertisements, mail-order bride catalogues and casual acquaintances.

Upon arrival at their destination, victims are placed in conditions controlled by traffickers while they are exploited to earn illegal revenues. Many are physically confined, their travel or identity documents are taken away and they or their families are threatened if they do not cooperate. Women and girls forced to work as prostitutes are blackmailed by the threat that traffickers will tell their families. Trafficked children are dependent on their traffickers for food, shelter and other basic necessities. Traffickers also play on victims’ fears that authorities in a foreign country will prosecute or deport them if they ask for help.<sup>34</sup>

Human trafficking is a global problem – all of us are morally responsible for the plight of millions of people who originate from more than one hundred countries, and who are handled as commodities and exploited in an ever-larger number of destination countries.<sup>35</sup>

**Human trafficking differs from people smuggling.** In the latter, people voluntarily request a smuggler’s service for fees and there may be no deception involved in the (illegal) agreement. On arrival at their destination, the smuggled person is either free, or is required to work in a job arranged by the smuggler until the debt is repaid. On the other hand, the trafficking victim is enslaved, or the terms of their debt bondage are fraudulent or highly exploitative. The trafficker takes away the basic human rights of the victim. Victims are sometimes tricked and lured by false promises or physically forced. Some traffickers use coercive and manipulative tactics including deception, intimidation, feigned love, isolation, threat and use of physical force, debt bondage, other abuse, or even force-feeding with drugs to control their victims.

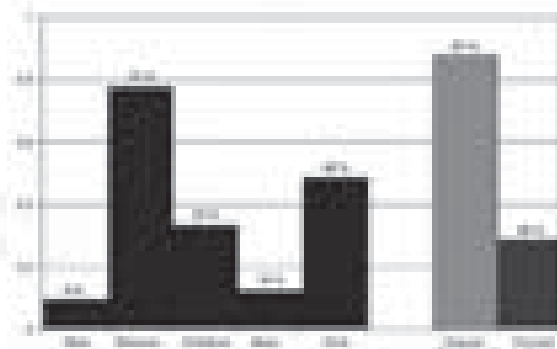
The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reports<sup>36</sup> that people from 127 countries are exploited in 137 nations – with estimates<sup>37</sup> that approximately 80% of these are women and girls and up to 50% of these are minors.

**Trafficked people usually come from the poorer regions of the world**, where opportunities are limited, and are often from the most vulnerable in society, such as runaways, refugees, or other displaced persons, (especially in post-conflict situations, such as Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina), although they may also come from any social background, class or race. People who are seeking entry to other countries may be picked up by traffickers, and – typically – misled into thinking that they will be free after being smuggled across the border. In some cases, they are captured through slave raiding (surprise attacks on settlements to kidnap people for slavery), although this is increasingly rare.<sup>38</sup>

Russia is a major source of women trafficked globally for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is also a significant destination and transit country for persons trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation from regional and neighbouring countries into Russia, and on to the Gulf states, Europe, Asia, and North America. It is estimated<sup>39</sup> that 20% of the five million illegal immigrants in Russia are victims of forced labour, one of the many forms of trafficking.

There have been reports of trafficking of children and of child sex tourism in Russia, although the majority of child trafficking cases are in Asia. In Thailand, NGOs have estimated that up to a third of prostitutes are children under 18, many trafficked from outside Thailand.

In the Western world, Canada in particular has a major problem with modern-day sexual slavery. In a 2006 report the *Future Group*, a Canadian humanitarian organisation dedicated to ending human trafficking, ranked eight industrialised nations and gave Canada an F for its “abysmal” record treating victims. The report, titled “*Falling Short of the Mark: An International Study on the Treatment of Human Trafficking Victims*”, concluded that Canada “*is an international embarrassment*” when it comes to combating this form of slavery.<sup>40</sup>



**Reported profile of victims and the purpose of human trafficking at the global level** (Note that the sum of percentages is over 100 because one source can indicate more than one offender nationality.) UNODC 2006.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Database on Human Trafficking Trends

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

<sup>35</sup> Executive Summary, *Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns*; UNODC, April 2006

<sup>36</sup> as above

<sup>37</sup> The US State Department

<sup>38</sup> Source: *Trafficking in Human Beings*; Wikipedia.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/wmeero/738456c77d801ec74eddb40555109d00.htm>; <http://gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Russia.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Check this report out at: <http://www.oas.org/atip/canada/Fallingshortofthemark.pdf>



## According to Save The Children, an estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year worldwide.

Evidence<sup>41</sup> reveals the existence of small and cohesive criminal gangs abducting children to be sold on to others for sexual exploitation. Such groups maintain a high level of secrecy regarding their activities, more in fear of community outrage than the threat of law enforcement. For instance, cross-border networks engaged in the recruitment and/or abduction of children for forced labour in the border areas with Pakistan include relatives and respected members of the community acting as recruiters, thereby often winning the trust and consent of unsuspecting parents. These include sophisticated networks based in major Pakistani cities engaged in the trafficking of young boys to the Gulf States for various forms of forced labour.

Humanitarian organisations such as *Save The Children* work to prevent child trafficking, and have successfully reunited many trafficked children with their families. Such a case is that of Isata (not her real name), aged 9, who used to live on the streets of Koindu, Sierra Leone. A woman called Mama Kula forced Isata into domestic work for over two years, and beat her. Isata was also in danger of being trafficked to Liberia – a man tried to kidnap her from the street. Isata was eventually rescued by Koindu's *Child Welfare Committee*, formed by *Save The Children*. They recently traced Isata's mother and reunited mother and daughter. *"There was a deal between Mama Kula and my mother. Mama Kula promised to send me to school, but when I came here I didn't go, I only did domestic work."*

*My mother sent me to school. I like to learn. When I was cleaning pots she'd [Mama Kula] take a stick and beat me on my back, and if I did anything wrong she would not give me food that day."*

Such case studies of children wrenched from their families and horrendously abused abound. Unpublished research for a UNODC<sup>42</sup> human trafficking project in Nigeria details the exploitation of Nigerian children trafficked for a number of purposes. For instance:

- Three young girls hawked wares in Gabon and did domestic chores – one of the victims described the ordeal as "round-the-clock with little feeding." When the victim in question reminded her exploiter of promises to send her to school, she was beaten. When she showed signs of tiredness after a long day of work, she was hit with objects.
- Members of the UNODC survey team were taken to a plantation where trafficked children were used as labourers. The female victims were sexually violated by other male victims and supervisors. Some of the female victims were already mothers. Many of the child victims reported that they were subjected to beatings by their mistresses/masters. One female victim was stripped naked, beaten with a wire cane, locked up and forced to eat her faeces by her mistress. She was rescued by her brother who had come to visit her. Her mistress had told her brother she

was out on an errand until she shouted that she was locked up.

According to Antonio Maria Costa, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the main challenge in the fight against human/child trafficking is to reduce demand, whether for cheap goods manufactured in sweatshops, or for under-priced commodities produced by bonded people in farms and mines, or for services provided by sex slaves.

There is also the need to target the criminals who profit from the vulnerability of people trying to escape from poverty, unemployment, hunger and oppression. *"Traffickers are evil brokers of oppressed people whom they deliver into the hands of exploiters. They capitalise on weak law enforcement and poor international cooperation,"* she said.

Costa believes that member states (who are subject to UN protocols) need to *"protect the trafficking victims, taking particular care to address the special needs of women and children. Such assistance is often lacking. Even worse, rescued victims are often re-trafficked because legislators and enforcement officials, despite their best intentions, sometimes produce and have to implement flawed laws that can put these same victims back into the clutches of their exploiters. A global problem like this requires a global response."*



<sup>41</sup> From the UNODC

<sup>42</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



### The Community Action On Youth And Drugs

#### The Community Action On Youth And Drugs

was developed as a result of considerable community concern about illegal drugs, particularly as highlighted by the media, and the Ministry of Health's commitment to reduce drug-related harm to young people and their communities.

CAYAD's aim is to develop community action initiatives in order **to reduce drug related harm in youth, and increase community ownership and capacity to address this health issue** and it has, as its objectives:

- To work in partnership with a range of community stakeholders and agencies to promote effective policies and practices to reduce harm associated with the use of illicit and other drugs to youth;
- To increase informed community discussion and debate about issues related to drug use, and increase community capacity to positively address these issues;
- To promote positive whanau responses to substances that threaten the well being of youth, their families and communities;
- To reduce supply of drugs to young people;
- To develop local capacity in areas such as education, employment and recreation to support young people and provide them with better life opportunities.

The initial pilot CAYAD projects were developed in 1997, based on evidence indicating that the greatest potential for successful public health strategies was to develop a comprehensive and integrated community action approach. Due to the positive results from the pilots, it was decided to expand the provision of CAYAD services into other areas.

Between 2003 and 2005 an additional 18 CAYAD sites were established, building on the knowledge and experience gained from the original sites (five of which continue to operate, with a total of 26 sites still operational.) These are a mix of rural and urban, based with public health units, local councils and Māori provider organisations.

#### Focus on CAYAD Otautahi in Christchurch:

The *Waipuna Youth and Community Trust* successfully tendered for the Ministry of Health contract and are excited to be involved in supporting CAYAD in Christchurch. *Waipuna* looks forward to working within the community and watching this service grow and develop, to meet the particular needs of Christchurch.

The projects they are currently working on include:

- > Developing parenting skills around drug harm to youth;
- > Implementing drug-free policies and more alcohol-free and drug-free events with a range of sports clubs in Christchurch;
- > Increasing the positive portrayal of youth through media;
- > Empowering a group of young people to have autonomy over developing projects, with the goal of reducing drug harm to youth.

Over the next two years they will be working on a total of nine projects all together, and are looking forward to developing relationships further with communities and service providers.

If you would like to know more about CAYAD Otautahi, please visit their website page on [waipunatrust.org.nz](http://waipunatrust.org.nz) or to find out more about a CAYAD team in your area please contact:

CAYAD Otautahi on (03) 386 2159 or via email [leanne@waipunatrust.org.nz](mailto:leanne@waipunatrust.org.nz)



Wiremu Gray and Leanne McTear

## Useful Websites and Resources

### Books:

**The Drugs Challenge:** Winners and losers in an endless war; UGI Briefing 135 (Understanding Global Issues) (2005).

**The Age of Drugs:** Sense, substance and society; Understanding Global Issues No. 108 ((2002).

**Illicit Drugs and Development;** Development Bulletin No. 69 Feb 2006. Features: current trends in illegal drugs; patterns of drug use in Asia and the Pacific; links between conflict, drug trafficking and poverty; globalisation and the drugs trade; drug reduction policies; alternative development approaches; harm minimisation; illegal drug use and HIV/AIDS.

### Multimedia

**Letter to the president: 'the streets get political...'** DVD; QD3 Entertainment Inc.; 2004; This film takes a look at a variety of issues affecting the urban community including the Crack Conspiracy, censorship, racial profiling, police brutality, poverty, prison for profit and the NYPD Hip Hop Task Force. By exploration of rebel music with a cause, it examines the role that Hip Hop culture has played in the Black Civil Rights Movement in the USA.

### Websites

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html> The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime official website, including their *World Drug Report 2006*, which presents a comprehensive overview of the global illegal drug situation. The analysis of trends, some going back 10 years or more, is presented in Volume 1. Detailed statistics are presented in Volume 2. Taken together, these volumes provide the most up-to-date view of today's illegal drug situation.

<http://www.newscientist.com> is described as the ultimate science and technology website. It includes a global network of specialist correspondents who provide comprehensive coverage of science and technology news and in depth special reports on the most fascinating and important topics in science.

<http://www.justfocus.org.nz/articles/2006/10/10/drugs-nobodys-winning-the-war/> an article by Phoebe Borwick and Amy Donohue.

<http://www.cawtglobal.org/cawt/public/> The Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking is a voluntary public-private coalition seeking to address the growing threats to wildlife from poaching and illegal trade.

<http://www.savethechildren.net> Save the Children fights for children's rights, delivering immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

### Glossary:

**Amphetamine** A synthetic stimulant drug that affects the central nervous system and speeds up the messages going from the brain to the body. Also known as "speed".

**Barbiturate** A depressant derived from barbituric acid, for example, amobarbital, pentobarbital, phenobarbital and secobarbital. Used as anti-epileptics, anaesthetics, sedatives, hypnotics, and less commonly, as anti-anxiety drugs. Increasing dosage produces progressive central nervous system depression, ranging from mild sedation to anaesthesia.

**Cannabis** A depressant and a hallucinogen that comes from the hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*. Marijuana, hashish and hashish oil come from this plant. The active chemical in cannabis is THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol).

**Coca leaves** The leaves of the coca bush (*Erythroxylon coca*) that are traditionally chewed or sucked in Andean cultures. Coca paste is the product of the first step in the process of extracting cocaine from coca leaves.

**Cocaine** A powerful central nervous system stimulant used to produce euphoria. Most commonly comes in the form of a white, odourless powder called "cocaine hydrochloride". The powder is extracted from the leaves of the coca bush.

**Crack** A very pure form of cocaine obtained by heating cocaine salt combined with baking soda (freebasing) and sold in the form of small crystals or rocks.

**Decriminalisation** Drug policy whereby possession of a drug for personal use is treated as a misdemeanour rather than a criminal offence. Often applied to substances considered to be less likely to cause dependence.

**Designer drug** A substance that has been synthesised by changing the structure of an existing drug to create a new substance. Sometimes done to avoid the legal consequences associated with the drug being copied/alters. The term was first used in the 1980s to refer to MDMA (ecstasy).

**Drug** A chemical substance that affects the processes of the mind or body.

**Ecstasy** A street term for a range of drugs that are similar in structure to the synthetic stimulant MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine). The chemical structure of MDMA is related to stimulants (amphetamines) and some hallucinogens. Drugs sold as "ecstasy" often contain a range of drugs such as amphetamine, amphetamine derivatives, caffeine, aspirin, paracetamol, ketamine, in addition to, or in place of MDMA.

**GHB** Gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a drug that has a depressant effect on the brain and central nervous system. It was originally developed as an anaesthetic but was withdrawn due to unwanted side effects. GHB is used as a "party drug" and has been used to facilitate sexual assault.

**Heroin** Heroin is a depressant that affects the brain by slowing down the activity of certain chemicals. This drug belongs to a group called narcotic analgesics or opioids.

**Ice** Street name for crystalline methamphetamine. It is a powerful, synthetic stimulant drug that is more potent than other forms of amphetamines.

It is more pure than the powder form of methamphetamine ("speed").

**Ketamine** An hallucinogenic dissociative anaesthetic that is used in surgery and veterinary medicine. It causes amnesia (memory loss) and analgesia (pain-relief). Low doses produce stimulant effects; medium to high doses produce possible out-of-body or near death experiences.

**LSD** Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) is a hallucinogenic drug, which is synthesised from ergot, a fungus that grows on rye and various other grains.

**MDA** Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDA) is an amphetamine similar to ecstasy. It is more hallucinogenic than MDMA and its effects last almost twice as long.

**MDMA** See Ecstasy

**Methadone** A synthetic opiate often used to treat heroin dependence. When given in an adequate dose to opioid dependent individuals, methadone tends to reduce desire to use heroin and other opiates, eliminates opioid withdrawal, and blocks the euphoric effects of the other opioid drugs.

**Methamphetamine or 'P'** A stimulant drug, also called speed or amphetamine. Also found as a colourless crystalline solid, sold under a variety of names, such as 'P', crystal meth, crystal or ice.

**Narcotic drug** A chemical agent that can induce stupor, coma, or insensitivity to pain. The term usually refers to opiates or opioids, which are sometimes referred to as narcotic analgesics.

**Opiate** One of a group of alkaloids derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) with the ability to induce analgesia, euphoria, and, in higher doses, stupor, coma, and respiratory depression. The term opiate excludes synthetic opioids such as heroin and methadone.

**Opioid** The term applied to alkaloids derived from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) and synthetic drugs that interact with the same specific receptors in the brain. These substances have the capacity to relieve pain, and produce a sense of well-being (euphoria). Heroin, methadone, codeine, morphine and opium are opioids.

**Opium** The crude mixture obtained by the air drying of the juice that oozes from incisions made in the ripened seedpod capsule of the opium poppy, *Papaver somniferum*. It contains a number of important alkaloids such as morphine, codeine, and papaverine.

**Psychoactive substances** Drugs that affect a person's central nervous system; they alter brain activity, and can change the way a person thinks, feels or behaves

**Prohibition** The act of prohibiting or the condition of being prohibited; A law, order, or decree that forbids something.

Source: Australian Drug Information Network [http://www.adin.com.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=240](http://www.adin.com.au/content.asp?Document_ID=240)

## About the Global Education Centre



Global Bits is produced by the community youth arm of the Global Education Centre (GEC), a programme of the Development Resource Centre (DRC) – a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation governed by a charitable trust. We are core funded by NZAID Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti (The New Zealand Agency for International Development). The DRC's vision statement is *change for a just world and its mission is informing and educating to empower people to take action to create a just world.*

The Global Education Centre (GEC) provides services to the formal and non-formal education sectors, and the youth and community sectors on global education through its Schools and Community Youth programmes. GEC provides training and resources to teachers, teacher trainees, students, youth workers and community groups. Services include workshops, youth advocacy, Global Issues magazine, teaching resources, a website including fact sheets and links, and a free lending library.

GEC's sister programme at the Development Resource Centre is Dev-Zone, a resource centre focused on international development and global issues. They operate a free library, manage a comprehensive website, and publish a magazine Just Change. Services include answering quick enquiries, email updates, information projects, and literature searches on a variety of development topics. Dev-Zone works with the development and human rights sector, as well as students and the general public.



The Global Education Centre is core funded by NZAID – Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti

## JUST FOCUS

Just Focus is a new project for young people, by young people, focusing on issues that affect us in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific, and globally. The goals of the project are responsible global citizenship and change for a just world.

Just Focus is committed to the full participation of young people to inform and develop the project's content, style and direction.

Just Focus connects a community of young people and provides a way to:

- **Be active** in becoming informed about issues facing the world today.
- **Discuss** these topics with other like-minded young people.
- **Provide inspiration** and tools to take action.

There are three main parts to the project:

### The Just Focus website

The website supports an online community of young people. It's a way to:

- **Connect** with others around NZ, the Pacific and globally
- **Gain information** about issues
- **Express yourself** through the forum, articles or art.

### Local groups

Groups are being set up in the main centres around Aotearoa New Zealand. This is a way for young people to:

- **Meet regularly** face-to-face to discuss and work on issues.
- **Gain skills and knowledge** through workshops and activities.

### Youth Hui

'Global Camps' offer a chance for people throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific to get together for training, discussion, campaign building and having some fun.

For more information, email: [info@jusfocus.org.nz](mailto:info@jusfocus.org.nz)

Or check out the site!

Just Focus has been made possible by the Global Education Centre ([www.globaled.org.nz](http://www.globaled.org.nz)) who continues to administer and oversee the coordination of the project.

**Just Focus**  
YOUTH FOCUS FOR A JUST WORLD

[WWW.JUSTFOCUS.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.JUSTFOCUS.ORG.NZ)