

# The Effectiveness of the Stakeholders' Strategy in Combating Drugs - An Analytical Study

## OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:  
ASH-2024-12048852

Volume: 12

Issue: 4

Month: April

Year: 2025

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 25.02.2025

Accepted: 28.03.2025

Published Online: 01.04.2025

Citation:

Mahdi, Ali Maleh. "The Effectiveness of the Stakeholders' Strategy in Combating Drugs - An Analytical Study." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2025, pp. 53–66.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v12i4.8852>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

**Ali Maleh Mahdi**

Assistant Lecturer, University of Baghdad, College of Arts, Iraq

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5460-9578>

## Abstract

*This study addresses drugs and addiction as one of the most severe global issues, significantly affecting Iraqi society. Relevant parties, both official and unofficial, strive to combat this problem through laws, strategies, seminars, and workshops. Despite these efforts, drug prevalence is increasing, raising questions about the effectiveness of these entities. The research aims to assess the role of these entities and the effectiveness of the national drug control strategy, using an analytical approach. The study concludes that these entities need to improve their efforts.*

**Keywords:** Strategy, Stakeholders, Drugs

## Introduction

Drugs are a serious social scourge that has plagued all societies and is considered one of the most pressing problems that concern Iraqi society and threaten its civilization. It occupies a prominent position among health and social issues. Therefore, this topic (drugs) has received increasing attention in Iraqi research and study centers, and workshops and seminars have been held in all state institutions to highlight the harms and disadvantages of drugs on the psychological, social, economic, and physical levels for the individual, society, and the country in general. We highlight the role of these entities in demonstrating the effectiveness of their strategies to reduce spread of drugs.

## Study Problem

The study seeks to analyze the development of the problem of drug use and trafficking in Iraq, focusing on the period following 2003. The study considers this problem to be one of the major crises facing Iraqi society, given its profound psychological, social, economic, health, and political repercussions. Despite the relative improvement that Iraq witnessed at the end of the twentieth century, the situation after 2003 transformed into a full-blown crisis due to rapid changes in lifestyles, internal conflicts, widespread unemployment, and weak security. Hence research question *Have Official and Unofficial Bodies Succeeded in Reducing the Drug Phenomenon in Iraq?*

## Significance of the Study

The study of youth drug addiction is a vital issue that warrants significant attention for several reasons. First, drug addiction poses a direct threat to the physical and psychological health of youth, leading to long-term negative effects on their growth and development. Second, addiction impacts the productive and social capacity of youth, increasing the social and economic risks for society as a whole. Furthermore, this study contributes to understanding the factors that cause addiction and appropriate awareness and prevention methods, enhancing

the effectiveness of policies and measures aimed at reducing the spread of this phenomenon. By analyzing the root causes and consequences of addiction, more effective treatment and rehabilitation strategies can be developed, contributing to improving the quality of life of youth and enhancing community stability.

## Objective of the Study

To Analyze the effectiveness of the strategies of official and unofficial stakeholders in combating drugs.

## Defining Terminology

### Strategy

**Strategy in Language:** The Arabic term is equivalent to the French word “stratégie” and the English word “strategy.” The researcher believes that the origin of the word strategy goes back to the Greek word “strategos,” which means the art of leadership and battle management. This indicates that the use of strategy emerged primarily in the military field as a guide for the military commander to explore the various forces available to him to achieve victory over his enemies. One researcher believes that both Sun Tzu and Clausevit were the first to use this word in their military writings (Durand).

Strategy is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “the art used in mobilizing and moving military equipment, thus enabling comprehensive control of the situation” (Al-Maghribi).

Strategy, in terminology, is “the set of policies, methods, plans, and approaches that must be implemented.” “It is followed in order to achieve a specific goal, which is the prevention of the dangers of drugs and psychotropic substances. It is a future, long-term, and comprehensive plan that is implemented within several years. It consists of a group of ideas that confront the problem of preventing and combating drugs. This strategy includes determining the means of work, its requirements, and the directions of its path with the aim of preventing and combating them” (Al-Qaisi).

### Drugs

Drugs in the language: It is a word derived from the linguistic root (khardar), and it carries many meanings, including: “khardar means: a curtain

extended for a maid in a corner of the house, then everything behind you, from the house and the like, became a khardar. Khardar is: laziness and lethargy. It was said that khardar means: as if he is sleepy. Al-Khardir is: the listless and lazy, meaning weakness and lethargy that afflicts the drinker and affects him before intoxication. From this comes numbness of the hand and foot”.

We conclude from the above that the linguistic meaning of khardar is consistent with the concept of drugs. Drugs, in terminology, are: stimulants or sedatives that have a harmful psychological, physical, and social effect on the individual (Shaaban). Muhammad Fathi Eid believes that drugs are nothing but “a group of drugs that affect the mental activity and psychological state of the user, either by stimulating the central nervous system, slowing down its activity, or causing hallucinations or delusions. These drugs cause addiction, and their use results in many public health and social problems” (Eid). From a legal perspective, the Iraqi Penal Code defines drugs as any substance that, when consumed, poses a threat to human and societal health, causes addiction, and poisons the nervous system. The law prohibits their consumption, trafficking, cultivation, or manufacture, except for purposes specified by law. They may only be used with authorization (license). This includes all narcotic substances, including cocaine, opium, hashish, stimulants, and all hallucinogenic drugs. Sedatives and hypnotics, however, are not classified among prohibited narcotic substances, despite their disadvantages, as they facilitate addiction due to necessity (Shaaban). The researcher defines drugs as: any substance that produces a false sense of euphoria, happiness, and escape from the world of reality to a world of fantasy, whether solid or liquid, depending on the nature of the drug. This substance leads to disruption of bodily, mental, and psychological functions.

### The Concept of Stakeholders

The Supreme National Authority for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, consists of a group of specialized members, chaired by the Minister of Health, with the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior serving as Vice-Chairman. The

Authority also includes the Director General of the Department of Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Health, the National Advisor for Mental Health, and representatives from various entities with expertise in the field of narcotics. These entities include the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance/General Customs Authority, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, the Customs Police, the General Directorate for Combating Narcotics at the Ministry of Interior, and the National Security Service.

### **The Role of Official Institutions in Combating Drugs in Iraq after 2003**

Indicated that the spread of drugs represents a serious threat in Iraq. This threat was addressed by the 2017 Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law. However, it remains a major challenge due to the political and security instability since 2003. This has made it difficult to formulate effective policies to combat it, allowing drug dealers to exploit the chaos to spread drugs and exhaust the country economically and security-wise. The spread of drugs in Iraq is not limited to the poor and unemployed, but rather encompasses all economic and social classes, including women and the educated. Therefore, exceptional measures should be taken, including amending the law, protecting adolescent drug users, and developing an effective national strategy. Furthermore, research centers should be activated to issue annual reports and hold seminars to address this phenomenon (Hassoun).

The researcher believes that the problem of the spread of drugs in Iraqi society is one of the most serious challenges facing the country today. The primary reason lies in the weakness of official bodies and the loss of the state's power that previously prevailed. The government suffers from an inability to impose its control due to the lack of security and the prevalence of illegal weapons, as well as terrorism, financial corruption, and widespread bribery. Furthermore, political infighting in Iraq exacerbates the situation, as combating drugs becomes a secondary priority amid political conflicts. This leads to a lack of effective efforts to

curb the drug phenomenon. Furthermore, the weak legal framework plays a major role in exacerbating the problem. The laws related to drug smuggling, manufacturing, and trafficking are not sufficiently stringent and do not adopt a strict punitive policy. The mixing of those convicted of drug use with those convicted of trafficking leads to users becoming future dealers, which further exacerbates the drug problem and weakens the laws' ability to achieve their desired objectives. All of these factors combined contribute to the spread of drugs in Iraqi society and limit its effectiveness. The state's ability to control this dangerous phenomenon.

After 2003, Iraq transformed from a transit point for drugs to a major market for their consumption, making the spread of drugs in Iraqi society a pressing issue. According to mental health consultant Imad Abdul Razzaq, the Ministry of Health has treated 4,500 addicts since the beginning of 2022, with a significant increase in the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 30. The Anti-Narcotics Directorate has also arrested 15,000 suspects and seized large quantities of drugs, including crystal meth smuggled across borders. Security expert Safaa Al-Aasam believes that the state's weakness and negligence have contributed to the spread of this phenomenon, stressing the need to enforce the law and strengthen awareness campaigns. Given the high unemployment rate, estimated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs at 4 million unemployed, young people are increasingly vulnerable to drug abuse, leading to serious health and social problems. Stress and psychological pressure play a significant role in the spread of drug abuse. In Iraq, young people live in an environment full of economic, social, and political challenges, causing them tremendous psychological pressure. This pressure may push them to seek ways to escape or alleviate their internal pain through drug use. Furthermore, young people who feel stuck in an unstable situation or unable to achieve their goals may turn to drugs as a means of comfort or escape from their painful reality. Research on reducing drug addiction indicates that community-based drug treatment can reduce drug use and drug-related criminal behavior. A meta-analysis of 78 community-based drug treatment studies found that treatment was up to 1.8 times better at reducing

drug use than conventional alternatives. In a meta-analysis of 66 prison-based treatment evaluations, the therapeutic community and counseling approaches were 1.4 and 1.5 times more likely, respectively, to reduce recidivism. The benefits of medication for drug abuse treatment were demonstrated in a recent randomized trial in which heroin-dependent inmates began methadone treatment in prison prior to release and continued in the community after release. At 1-, 3-, and 6-month follow-ups, patients who received methadone plus counseling were significantly less likely to use heroin or engage in criminal activity than those who received counseling alone (Chandler et al.).

### **Causes of Drug Addiction may Include:**

- Weak religious commitment, staying away from places of worship, keeping bad company, and lack of free time and boredom.
- Familial causes, such as giving young people the freedom to stay up late outside the home, family and educational neglect, parental neglect of their children, and random imitations.
- Political, economic, and cultural crises have a significant impact, especially in poor neighborhoods where unemployment rates are high, leading individuals to lose hope and resort to drugs as an escape.
- Problems within the family, school, and workplace can push individuals toward addiction. An individual may suffer from a difficult life with his family or from accumulating family disputes, leading him to resort to drugs as an escape from reality.

### **Community Treatment for Drug Addiction**

Drug addiction is a complex problem that requires comprehensive treatment that includes medical, psychological, and social support. The addict is a member of society, influenced by society as well as by it. Addiction is a behavior and social phenomenon that indicates an individual's incompatibility with the social order.

To address this serious problem, several measures must be taken, including:

- Treating addicts in specialized health centers with the aim of changing their deviant behavior

and abstaining from drug use.

- Preventing the counterfeiting of prescriptions and drug trafficking by closely monitoring their distribution.
- Mobilizing the necessary resources to combat drug smuggling and trafficking.
- Conducting ongoing awareness campaigns about the dangers of drugs using various media outlets.
- Using medications and drugs to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms.
- Psychological sessions to help the addict regain self-confidence.
- Rehabilitating their personality and making them feel their human and social value.
- Encouraging them to abandon addictive behavior and lifestyle.
- Changing their outlook on life and the surrounding community.
- Help him regain his will that was stolen by drugs. Raising awareness of the bitter reality of drugs. Therefore, psychological and community treatment contributes to returning the addict to his normal life and liberating him from the crucible of addiction (Ammar).

Among the characteristics of strategy, which relate to the institution or entity, whether official or unofficial, are: "comprehensiveness, directed towards an open system, a set of decisions, time constraints, clarity and persuasion, a participatory approach, flexibility, and resource allocation, whereby the institution's resources are allocated according to the goals to be achieved" (Kilani).

As for the strategic vision, it must be comprehensive for the institution, as each institution is required to have intellectual and philosophical visions that distinguish it from other institutions. Therefore, we can define:

The strategic vision is: "The future path of the institution that defines the destination it wishes to reach, the market position it intends to achieve, and the type of capabilities and potential it plans to develop." It is also what the institution wants to be in the future, and it is linked to With its dreams and ambitions that cannot be achieved with current capabilities, even if they are possible to achieve in the long term" (Al-Salem). Hence, the researcher believes that the presence of a strategy

with intellectual visions in all institutions, whether formal or informal, is the cornerstone of building this institution and achieves significant effectiveness in its success and development, in addition to achieving an interactive and integrated relationship between the visions of the strategy and the goals and mission of this institution.

### Types of Drugs

Drugs come in different and varied forms depending on their nature and origin. They are divided into (natural, artificial, and synthetic) drugs, each of which will be explained below:

**Natural Drugs:** These are drugs taken from plant sources, whether wild or cultivated, such as cannabis, opium, qat, and coca.

**Synthetic Drugs:** These are drugs extracted from natural substances and plants, and are manufactured to be more concentrated and more harmful than natural drugs, such as morphine, which is extracted from opium, and heroin, which is derived from morphine and is considered more potent.

**Synthetic Drugs:** These are drugs that are entirely manufactured in laboratories, not extracted from any natural plant. They produce effects similar to those of natural plants, such as hallucinations and addiction. Examples of these include hallucinogens, amphetamines, and barbiturates.

### Risk and Protective Factors for Drug Use

When discussing drug risk factors, prevention programs are often designed to enhance “protective factors” and reduce “risk factors.” Protective factors refer to elements associated with a reduced likelihood of drug use, while risk factors reflect elements that may increase the likelihood of drug use. Research indicates that individuals who begin using illicit substances at an lyage may experience increased risk factors that increase the likelihood of continued problematic use later in life, making them more vulnerable to drug-related crimes.

Risk factors also include several elements, such as negative interactions with peers, unrealistic beliefs about the prevalence of drug use, inconsistent or abusive parenting, school exclusion, and feelings of low self-worth. Research has also shown that many of these factors also apply to other behaviors such

as youth violence, delinquency, school dropout, and risky sexual behaviors (Loeber et al.). Longitudinal studies have found that a 10-year-old child exposed to six or more risk factors is ten times more likely to engage in violence by age 18 than a child of the same age exposed to only one risk factor (Herrenkohl et al.). One of the most damaging effects of cities is that they create a sense of addiction to the drug, which is more than just a painkiller. It reduces the drive that makes a person interested in food or sex or affected by anger. This means that the drug creates a state of satiation in the addict, making him a pathetic and indifferent to his surroundings, making him susceptible to disturbances in thinking and sensory perception, auditory, visual, and sensory perceptions, and experiencing fits of laughter. Crying without cause, meaning imagining things that don’t exist, causes poor judgment and driving errors that can lead to accidents, mental disturbance, agitation, and aggression. This can also lead to depression, isolation, daydreaming, poor memory and concentration, academic decline, and laziness and neglect of family. Drug abuse isa social tax that impacts social and economic institutions, particularly in developing societies, leading to weak and declining production. As for the social harms, it is certain that the social effects of drug abuse and addiction are not limited to the individual addicts or users. Rather, these effects extend to the family and society alike. Among these negative effects are: “The individual’s failure to adapt to society and perform his or her role as required, which leads to deviating from social norms and causing physical harm. Numerous medical research and sociological and psychological studies have confirmed that drugs affect all of the body’s systems, causing these systems to shut down and disable, leaving the individual vulnerable to disease and, in many cases, death. Other harmful effects include family disintegration and the loss of the ability to cope with life”. Risk and protective factors can be divided into five categories or areas: individual characteristics, peer group, school, family, and neighborhood/local community, as shown in the table below:



### Key Risk and Protective Factors for Drug Use

Categories/ Domains	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disorganized society</li> <li>• Laws and norms conducive to drug use</li> <li>• Lack of access to perceived medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community cohesion</li> <li>• Community norms that do not support drug use</li> </ul>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic failure</li> <li>• Poor school commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in school activities</li> <li>• School bonding</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental attitudes supportive of drug use</li> <li>• Poor family management</li> <li>• Family history of antisocial behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family sanctions against drug use</li> <li>• Positive parental relationships</li> </ul>
Peers / Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early onset of antisocial behavior</li> <li>• Attitudes conducive to drug use</li> <li>• Peer drug use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive peer relationships</li> <li>• A network of non-drug-using peers</li> </ul>

The relationship between the number and type of risk factors significantly affects an individual's risk of becoming a drug user and engaging in deviant behavior, particularly with regard to substance use in the community. Researchers believe that neighborhoods where youth report low levels of neighborhood attachment have higher rates of juvenile crime and drug use (Arthur et al.)

### Drug Protection

#### The Role of Official Authorities in Combating Drugs

In this section, highlight some of the official authorities that have confronted and reduced the spread of drugs, using various methods employed by each authority.

#### *The Role of the Iraqi Council of Representatives and the Committee for Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances*

With the spread of the drug phenomenon in Iraq, especially among youth, the Iraqi Parliament has

intensified its efforts to combat this phenomenon in cooperation with the executive authorities. A special parliamentary committee has been formed to monitor anti-drug operations. Its responsibilities include amending the anti-drug law to increase penalties, supervising periodic checks on government employees, security personnel, and university students, and establishing an independent anti-drug administrative body reporting to the Prime Minister. According to security expert Adnan Al-Kanani, addressing the drug problem requires strict enforcement of laws, noting that some security personnel are involved in drug trafficking.

We can point out that the role of the House of Representatives in combating drugs lies in its role as the highest authority in the country, directing and managing other agencies. However, this body needs specialized research centers for this phenomenon, as well as the assistance of specialized academics, in order to take more effective measures, not limited to forming committees and approving and enacting laws. Rather, it must provide governmental and financial support to other entities that need to develop their strategies to build treatment centers, hospitals, or launch scientific projects, or expand prisons, or impose new laws that are in addition to existing laws to make them more stringent, or support needy families and reduce unemployment, etc., while continuously monitoring the strategies and plans provided by other entities to help them advance and raise their performance. This means that there must be communication and harmony between the highest authority (the Council of Representatives) and other entities to achieve what serves the Iraqi citizen in the required manner and protect them from the scourge of drugs.

#### *The Ministry of Interior's Role in Combating Drugs*

The Ministry of Interior considers drug crimes to be one of the most serious crimes threatening Iraq's stability. Therefore, they are among its security priorities. The Ministry's report indicates that young people aged 20-30 are the group most vulnerable to addiction, especially in poor areas such as Baghdad and Basra. Over the course of eight months, the Ministry has arrested 10,000 people in drug-related cases, in addition to seizing a Captagon factory in

Muthanna Governorate. The Ministry of Interior has made significant strides in combating drugs by exchanging information with neighboring countries and relevant international bodies, such as the Arab Bureau for Narcotics Control and Interpol, as well as cooperating with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The Ministry also works to enhance cooperation with neighboring countries and support agreements and memoranda of understanding related to combating drug trafficking, reflecting Iraq's commitment to combating these crimes.

The Ministry of Interior plays a key role in combating drugs by implementing effective strategies in cooperation with neighboring countries and providing the necessary intelligence and technical efforts. However, this role must be reinforced with greater efforts to control borders and implement stricter strategic plans in cooperation with the Border Ports Authority. Specialized operations against drug dealers must be intensified and the necessary government support must be provided. The Ministry must also improve the infrastructure for housing and rehabilitating addicts, and implement screening operations for early detection of drugs. It is also necessary to establish a special anti-drug agency and update penal laws to keep pace with modern trafficking methods.

### ***The Role of the Ministry of Labor, Justice, and Health in Combating the Spread of Drugs***

The Ministry of Labor, Justice, and Health play a fundamental and effective role in combating the drug phenomenon, a role clearly demonstrated in security and social practices.

The Ministry of Labor plays a key role in combating drug abuse through its oversight of social care and treatment of the causes of delinquency. The Ministry focuses on providing awareness and guidance programs under the supervision of qualified social workers. The Ministry has also established rehabilitation centers for addicts, where they oversee the treatment and rehabilitation stages in coordination with the Ministry of Health, and provide vocational training programs to ensure a sustainable income.

The Ministry of Labor has worked to raise awareness among workers about the dangers of drugs by disseminating information in the workplace

through inspection committees and training labor inspectors on how to spread awareness. It has also proposed strengthening cooperation with businessmen to clarify the impact of drugs on productivity, activating the role of professional unions in combating addiction and employing youth, and expanding mandatory medical examinations for private sector workers.

The researcher believes that despite the efforts made and reinforced by this body to combat drugs by opening rehabilitation centers for addicts, providing them with psychological treatment, and providing them with practical opportunities to eliminate unemployment, which leads to the increased spread of drugs; However, this entity is in dire need of significant government support, primarily from the Prime Minister's Office. This entity needs new plans and the development of reform approaches to protect individuals exposed to drugs, namely juveniles, and to provide them with a suitable cultural and health environment for their rehabilitation and integration into society, while also protecting homeless children and sheltering them from the streets. This entity must cooperate with other entities, especially education and upbringing, to strengthen its position to limit the spread of drugs by employing graduates of psychology, sociology, and educational guidance to work in its research centers, determine the extent of the phenomenon, and identify its causes. This entity also needs to develop sound plans to improve the situation and provide the necessary measures to limit it. Regarding the Ministry of Justice, the Parliamentary Committee confirmed and recommended, in its session held by the House of Representatives during its fourteenth session, that the Ministry of Justice establish special prisons and detention centers for drug users and provide the necessary support to the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health to establish psychological and social treatment units to treat users and addicts.

The Ministry of Justice plays a key role in combating drugs by punishing addicts and attempting to rehabilitate them. However, the Ministry needs to improve its strategies to combat the spread of drugs by tightening oversight of prisons, classifying detainees, and forming joint committees with other entities. It is also necessary to increase the number

of prisons and build psychiatric hospitals, as well as to strengthen communication with the families of addicts to support treatment. Recent statistics indicate a significant increase in the number of juveniles involved in drugs, which requires that families also address this issue.

The Ministry of Health has also played an important role in reducing the spread of drugs. The spread of drugs and their prevention through the provision of treatment for addicts, including the provision of the necessary medical and laboratory equipment to test addicts. The Ministry stated that there are future plans to expand addiction treatment centers with significant government support, indicating that the current federal government approach to combating drugs has achieved remarkable progress. For the first time in Iraq's history, the law distinguishes between addicts as victims and drug dealers. The Al-Qana Center for Social Rehabilitation was also opened in Baghdad, and the Al-Hayat Hospital for Psychiatric and Mental Illnesses in Diwaniyah. There are plans to expand addiction treatment centers to other governorates.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health established the Supreme National Authority for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, headed by the Minister of Health and the Deputy Minister of Interior. The Authority meets at least monthly. The Authority monitors and regulates all matters related to narcotics and psychotropic substances, including import, export, production, and medical and pharmaceutical uses. It also coordinates with relevant ministries and authorities, both Arab and international, to combat narcotics, determines the permitted quantity of narcotics, and encourages scientific research in the field of combating illicit trafficking. It also proposes the establishment and development of health facilities to treat addicts and provide for their basic needs.

The researcher believes that despite the significant efforts made by this authority through strategies that have contributed to reducing the spread of drugs, preventing them, and treating addicts, there is a need for additional government support. This support includes building additional health centers, intensifying oversight of pharmacists and drugstores, and conducting periodic inspections to prevent

tampering with the dispensing of medications. The phenomenon of fake and sidewalk pharmacies must also be combated, and new laws must be enacted. To effectively address these problems, Sharqi's study recommends that the Ministry of Health strengthen the establishment of special halls to treat students who may be exposed to drug abuse, with the aim of preventing the transmission of bad behaviors to them (Sharqi).

### ***The Role of Educational and University Institutions in Combating Drugs***

Educational and university institutions have an effective role in preventing and reducing the spread of drugs, as drug use is widespread among young people who are vulnerable to addiction. An educational institution is defined as: "Those institutions that bear the responsibility of raising the individual educationally and scientifically, such as the media, the family, and politics" (Ibrahim).

In light of the spread of drugs, teachers and educators bear a significant responsibility in raising students' awareness and preventing addiction. Although the primary goal of education is education and the development of knowledge and character, the relationship between mental health and the school environment is very close. Despite the importance of the academic aspect, it is also necessary to pay attention to the recreational and mental aspects of students. Awareness of the dangers of drugs and addiction must be part of the educational process to ensure the protection of students and enhance their mental and psychological health. This is achieved through:

- Practicing sports, which helps build character and instill in students a sense of self-confidence and willpower, enabling them to reject wrongdoing.
- Focus on cultural activities related to drug addiction, such as cartoons and wall magazines, and address the topic of addiction from various perspectives in short, quick messages.
- Raise awareness through school curricula and also by holding cultural seminars to educate students and provide them with accurate information.
- Organize seminars for social workers, teachers, and academics on how to detect early cases and direct them to treatment.



- Physicians can participate in counseling in schools and detect cases of addiction by asking questions of suspected students (Sharqi).

Educational institutions also play an important role in enhancing self-confidence and building students' character to face challenges such as drugs, through awareness-raising activities in cultural seminars and school curricula. However, these efforts require greater support from government agencies to strengthen preventive programs. Curricula must be developed and materials must be introduced on the dangers of drugs and addiction, while separating addicted students from others during treatment to prevent misbehavior. It is also recommended to organize seminars and joint committees with the Ministries of Health and Justice to improve preventive methods and introduce new alternatives (Sharqi).

In addition, universities play a vital role in shaping students' personalities and enhancing their skills and knowledge. As part of their responsibilities to combat social ills such as drugs, these institutions must:

- Build sound thinking models and guide students toward understanding the dangers of drugs.
- Adopt curricula that clearly explain the effects of drugs.
- Conduct scientific research on the causes and treatment of drug abuse.
- Organize scientific competitions for students and publish specialized books with prizes.
- Hold seminars and conferences to study the phenomenon, and guide women to identify abusers early and provide them with the necessary support (Abu Ali).

Despite the significant scientific efforts made by this body to reduce the spread of drugs through research and conferences, it needs additional strategies that focus on uncovering the true causes of the drug problem and developing effective solutions. It is also necessary to establish research centers in which everyone participates, and to increase field research to study the motivations for drug use. It is also necessary to include drug curricula from the basic education levels through postgraduate studies, and to establish centers to examine students accepted for postgraduate studies to ensure they are free of

drug use, as emphasized by the Ministry of Education in its recent circular. Here, too, it was limited to the postgraduate category, not undergraduate studies. Therefore, there must be periodic examinations for all students. Universities must activate the role of psychological counselors and open specialized units in each college to disseminate guidance programs that warn students against the dangers of drugs, and to activate media-based guidance research to achieve comprehensive treatment. Given that addiction's primary problem isn't its impact on the addict's health and social and psychological life, it also extends to the lack of information about drugs and the severe lack of awareness about them and the factors contributing to their prevalence among Iraqi citizens. University institutions must therefore raise awareness among youth and students to curb this phenomenon, in addition to cooperating with other ministries to implement all preventative measures.

### **Activating the Role of Non-State Agencies in Combating Drugs**

Despite the prominent role of official bodies, particularly the Iraqi Parliament, which established an important committee, the Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Committee, which played a prominent role in curbing the drug phenomenon, the work of these bodies has been insufficient to curb this phenomenon. This requires intensified efforts and expanded cooperation with non-official bodies, activating their roles, such as those of the family, setting limits on their activities from an early age, and extending them to the role of youth. Civil society contributes to motivating members of society and assisting them in achieving their goals through the programs and plans it proposes, enabling them to protect themselves from social ills. It also includes the role of places of worship, which play a vital role in educating individuals to protect themselves from the poisons of drugs.

### ***Role of the Family in Combating and Preventing Drugs***

The family is one of the most prominent institutions of education and socialization, working to instill in children a set of sound values and principles that shape their identity based on these prevailing values.

This helps prevent the occurrence of numerous social problems and deviations that can have numerous negative effects on the individual. Among these deviations is drug abuse, which threatens the social entity, its stability, and the educational process. The family has been defined as “a group of individuals connected by relationships and ties resulting from marriage, blood, and adoption. This group lives in one home, and its members are bound by cohesive social relationships based on common interests and goals”.

The family must assume responsibility for combating drugs by educating and guiding its children, and instilling in them the self-confidence to make sound decisions without being influenced by bad friends. The role of the family includes ensuring proper upbringing in physical, intellectual, psychological, religious, and behavioral aspects, to ensure a healthy upbringing for the child and make them an active member of society. Proper parental upbringing constitutes the first line of defense against social ills if children do not receive proper education. While they may not get the correct information from their parents, they may receive it incorrectly from friends and deviants. Families must be aware and cautious in raising their children to avoid experiencing drug abuse (Al-Shahri).

The family gained its importance not only from being the basic unit of the family, but also for society. This is automatically linked to the health and conditions of society. If family conditions improve, so does society, and if family conditions worsen, so does the condition of the people. Therefore, one of them considered it the “most permanent government in the world”. The family has the greatest role in combating drugs and building a healthy society. The researcher reinforces the values and behavioral principles that this entity provides to children and their proper upbringing. However, it needs to impose more restrictions and stricter strategies in its socialization to provide cultural behavioral models for society. Families should be more stringent in guiding and supervising children and keeping them away from bad company. Families should be free of problems and family disintegration so that they do not negatively influence their children’s behavior. In other words, poor family adjustment and the

absence of guidance and counseling are causes of their children’s destruction and their being pushed toward drug use. This is confirmed by the study (The Social Causes and Effects of Drugs), based on the statement: “The family’s failure in the socialization process exposes children to many manifestations of frustration and psychological conflicts and the accompanying manifestations of social adaptation, which makes them prey to drug use and addiction.” In addition, poor family relationships, disagreements between family members, and the absence of the father’s role often affect the children, given that the child learns by imitating behavioral models more than he learns by indoctrination.”

### ***Role of Youth (Friends - Peers) in Combating Drugs***

Youth are the primary focus of the Youth Empowerment Against Drug and Substance Abuse Project, through their participation in drug prevention through the positive and engaging activities they offer. This is achieved through organized youth movements against drug abuse, encouraging the participation of identified drug users through community awareness strategies and providing appropriate training to enhance self-esteem and develop interpersonal skills. The project to promote drug prevention activities among out-of-school youth aims to utilize peer group discussions to enhance available information on youth attitudes and behaviors regarding drug use and related issues, thus assisting ASOD and countries in developing more targeted prevention activities.

To activate the role of youth, a work program is being adopted that includes:

- Training youth in interpersonal skills and peer support counseling in the field of drug education.
- Promoting drug prevention activities among out-of-school youth.
- Promoting anti-drug activities in the workplace.
- Training on effective management of drug prevention education programs
- Strengthening drug prevention activities at the community level. Training on drug treatment and rehabilitation. (ASEAN)

Youth are protected from drugs through law enforcement, security, and improved social,

economic, and psychological conditions. Furthermore, youth and youth initiatives play key roles in anti-drug efforts, including raising awareness of the dangers of drug use and the consequences of drug trafficking, and advocating for policies and programs that support prevention and treatment efforts. Youth's role is achieved through:

- Awareness: Young people can educate their peers and communities about the dangers of drug use and the consequences of drug trafficking through campaigns, initiatives, activities, and other awareness-raising efforts.
- Young people can advocate for policies and programs that support prevention and treatment efforts, such as drug education and awareness programs in schools or access to drug treatment for those in need.
- Young people can be involved in developing and implementing initiatives that address drug-related issues in their communities, such as providing support and resources for individuals struggling with drug use or working to create a safe and healthy environment for young people. They can also collaborate with local authorities, community groups, and health professionals to address drug-related issues in their communities.
- Young people should act as role models and leaders, encouraging their peers to make healthy and responsible choices and working to create a positive and supportive culture in their communities. This can help build capacity within their communities.
- Young people can play a key role in leading or participating in drug research activities and efforts to combat drug use, including data collection, surveys, or focus groups. This can help identify best practices and areas for improvement.

Therefore, by strengthening the role of youth in raising awareness of the dangers of drugs through financial and governmental support, developing their strategies, enhancing their participation in society and making effective decisions, in addition to raising awareness of social and volunteer programs, and ending the phenomenon of apathy and introversion among youth.

## **Role of Civil Society Organizations in Reducing the Spread of Drugs**

Civil society and socialization have become the most prominent role in reducing the presence and spread of drugs in societies, particularly Arab/poor societies suffering from poverty and unemployment. This is achieved through the campaigns and volunteer organizations they create to help individuals achieve their goals and protect them from societal ills, particularly drugs. Civil society has been included among the "key institutions active in combating addiction." The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has emphasized that the contribution of civil society to combating addiction is essential, and that it is necessary to establish a strong partnership with civil society to confront this complex problem that threatens the very fabric of society. These organizations must cooperate to rehabilitate addicts and reintegrate them into society so that they do not relapse into drug abuse (Abu Al-Fotouh Ibrahim).

Social workers in civil society organizations are required to develop new tasks, functions, and roles within these organizations. They must move from traditional reliance on and addressing traditional youth problems to using modern methods to address contemporary issues in developing and modernizing society and its methods of professional performance. They must adopt new formulas for practicing social service in the field of drug risk prevention, and employ social service as a profession that works to bring about positive change in individuals, society, or both (Habib).

The researcher emphasizes the importance of the participation of civil society organizations in combating drugs as a fundamental factor in organizing Community prevention: These organizations contribute to supporting community members, improving their social conditions, enhancing their capabilities, and solving their problems through community activities and programs. Despite the importance of these organizations, they face challenges that prevent them from fulfilling their expected role. These challenges include the lack of health centers for treating addicts, the lack of community interest in their efforts, the inconsistency of their strategies with those of official bodies, or a lack of government support. Therefore,

these organizations must enhance cooperation and coordination with other agencies to achieve effective solutions to the drug problem. A study on “The Efforts of Official and Non-Official Institutions to Combat Drugs in Algeria” highlights the weak coordination between these institutions, which has led to lost opportunities and wasted resources. The study recommends enhancing coordination, using advanced technologies to detect and track drug smuggling, training highly qualified personnel, rehabilitating and socially reintegrating addicts, and raising public awareness of the dangers of drugs and exchanging expertise in this field. The government must pay attention to this agency and provide it with financial allocations to help it reduce the spread of social ills, including drugs.

### **Role of Religious Authorities in Combating the Spread of Drugs**

Places of worship are the first educational institutions that cultivate the human spirit and train it in sound principles and values. This is evidenced by the Prophet’s (peace and blessings be upon him) initiative to build a mosque immediately after his arrival in Medina. The importance of the mosque lies in many aspects, foremost among which is the performance of the five daily prayers, in addition to the dissemination of preaching, advice, and guidance through sermons, which have a profound impact on ensuring complete prevention of deviance toward crime. Mosques contain pulpits and preaching chairs that should be used to clarify Islam’s position on drug use and its harmful effects. The mosque, therefore, is the starting point for shaping the Muslim individual and society, with its human, social, and intellectual dimensions, due to its important role in guidance and direction.

Mosques, places of worship, and holy sites play a significant role in “strengthening religious awareness among young people, fostering cooperation between educational and other institutions, and all agencies working in the field of drug control, exchanging expertise, establishing guidance offices for students, activating the role of families and youth care, and including topics in educational curricula aimed at raising awareness of the dangers of drugs and addiction and early detection”.

The Iraqi government held a symposium on drug control in Iraq, presenting several recommendations, including “coordination between the Ministry of Interior and other organizations, including religious institutions, directing them to broadcast cultural programs to raise awareness among citizens through sermons in mosques and places of worship, and instructing parents to tighten supervision of their children and protect them from the scourge of drugs, while alerting citizens to the dangers of this drug to individuals and society, especially young people.” The researcher believes that religious institutions, whether mosques or churches, play an important role in confronting the drug problem by raising public awareness and strengthening religious deterrence. These institutions should cooperate with agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior, intensify sermons and lessons about the negative effects of drugs, and develop guidance methods to be more positive and attractive rather than relying solely on intimidation.

### **Strategies to Combat Drug Trafficking**

One of the greatest challenges facing organizations in combating drugs is its international nature. Drug trafficking is an ongoing challenge for governments worldwide. The illicit drug trade not only leads to addiction and crime, but also poses a significant threat to public health and national security. In response, governments have launched various initiatives and strategies to combat drug trafficking, often referred to as the “war on drugs.” These strategies include: International cooperation, Investing in technological intelligence, Disrupting financial networks, Strengthening legal frameworks and Focusing on demand reduction

The government’s anti-drug agency’s strategy is to enhance international cooperation and coordinate efforts to combat cross-border smuggling. This includes investing in technology to gather information and detect smuggling routes, freezing illicit funds, and effectively prosecuting drug traffickers through strict laws and severe penalties. It is also essential to focus on reducing and preventing drug demand to ensure the protection of public health and safety (Jarrett Maillet).

## Conclusion

Regarding the youth drug control strategy, it can be said that an effective strategy must adopt a comprehensive approach that includes awareness, prevention, and treatment. Awareness enhances young people's understanding of the risks associated with drugs and increases their ability to make sound decisions. Prevention includes enhancing life skills and providing positive alternatives for participation in community activities. Furthermore, treatment must be available and effective for individuals facing addiction problems, along with providing the necessary support for their reintegration into society. The integration of these elements contributes to reducing the spread of drugs among young people and supports the building of a healthier and safer society.

## Recommendations

Based on the analytical findings in Iraq, the current study reached a number of recommendations:

- Review the legislation related to combating drugs in Law No. 50 of 2017 on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances and Penal Code No. 111 of 1969 mentioned in the Iraqi facts.
- Allocate funds in the general budget to relevant ministries.
- Provide technical equipment and devices to the Director of Drug Control at the Ministry of Interior.
- Provide the Ministry with specialized personnel in psychology and sociology, with financial allocations included in the budget of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.
- The Ministry of Justice should take urgent measures in penal detention centers for drug and psychotropic substance users.
- The Ministry of Health should implement the provisions of Article 48 of the Narcotics Law No. 50 of 2017, monitor the spread of psychotropic substances in pharmacies, and control their use.
- Conduct community awareness campaigns on the dangers of drugs and their impact on health and social life.
- Provide training programs for health care and judicial system staff and workers to prepare them to deal with addiction cases.

- Establish clear anti-addiction policies, including laws and regulations prohibiting drug use and providing appropriate penalties.
- Promote and provide treatment and rehabilitation services for addicts, including psychotherapy, counseling, and social support.
- Provide preventive programs targeting youth and society at large to reduce drug use before addiction occurs.
- Work with NGOs and civil society to strengthen efforts to combat addiction.
- Support research and studies to understand the causes of addiction and develop effective methods to combat it.

## References

- Abu Al-Futouh Ibrahim, M. A. "The Role of Community Participation of Civil Society Organizations in Preventing the Dangers of Digital Drugs." *Journal of Studies in Social Work and Humanities*, vol. 47, 2019.
- Abu Ali, W. H. *The Phenomenon of Drug Abuse: Causes, Effects, Treatment*. 2016.
- Al-Maghribi, Abdul. *Strategic Management: Challenges of the 21st Century*. Nile Arab Group for Publishing, 1999.
- Al-Qaisi, T. "Preventive Strategy to Combat Drugs: A Theoretical Study." *Journal of The Iraqi University*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2023, pp. 456-67.
- Al-Salem, M. S. *Fundamentals of Strategic Management*. Wael House for Printing and Publishing, 2009.
- Al-Shahri, Mohammed Faraj. "The Role of the Family in the Drug War." *Al-Jazirah Newspaper*, 2023.
- Ammar, M. "Psychosocial Treatment of Drug Addiction." *Al-Haqiqa Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2017, pp. 466-87.
- Arthur, Michael W., et al. "Measuring Risk and Protective Factors for Use, Delinquency, and Other Adolescent Problem Behaviors: The Communities that Care Youth Survey." *Evaluation Review*, vol. 26, no. 6, 2002.
- ASEAN. "Combating and Preventing Drug and Substance Abuse, by Pratap Parameswaran." *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, 2000.



- Chandler, Redonna K., et al. "Treating Drug Abuse and Addiction in the Criminal Justice System: Improving Public Health and Safety." *JAMA*, vol. 301, 2009, pp. 183-90.
- Durand, Rodolphe. *Strategic Management Guide: 99 Key Concepts*. DUNOD, 2003.
- Eid, F. *The Crime of Drug Abuse in Comparative Law*. Arab Center for Security Studies and Training, 1987.
- Habib, S. *Generalist Practice: A Modern Perspective on Social Work*. 2016.
- Hassoun, H. D. S. *The Role of Formal Institutions in Combating Drugs in Iraq after 2003*. Al-Mustansiriya University, 2003.
- Herrenkohl, T. I., et al. "Developmental Risk Factors for Youth Violence." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2000.
- Ibrahim, Majdi Aziz. *A Dictionary of Teaching and Learning Terms and Concepts*. 2009.
- Jarrett Maillet. "The War on Drugs: Challenges and Strategies in Combating Drug Trafficking." *Mailletcriminallaw.com*, 2023.
- Kilani, S. *Contribution to Improving the Marketing Performance of Economic Institutions through the Strategic Tool: A Case Study of Saidal Pharmaceutical Complex (2000–2005)*. University Mohamed Khider Biskra, 2007.
- Loeber, R., et al. "The Development of Male Offending: Key Findings from the First Decade of the Pittsburgh Youth Study." *Studies in Crime and Crime Prevention*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1998, pp. 141-72.
- Shaaban, S. K. *Drug Crimes: A Comparative Study*. Arab Horizons Library, 1984.
- Sharqi, Nasreen Jawad. *The Role of Educational Institutions in the Prevention of Drug School Model*. 2018.

#### Author Details

**Ali Maleh Mahdi**, Assistant Lecturer, University of Baghdad, College of Arts, Iraq,

**Email ID:** ail.ali22051@coart.uobaghdad.edu.iq