

## WFWP Austria's program: UN Global Initiative for Prevention of Drugs Crime

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WFWP Europe - Women's Federation for World Peace added 8 new photos to the album: WFWP Austria, UNODC Program 'Family First', Vienna, 8 Aug 2018.

WFWP Austria invited Dr. Wadith Maalouf, Global Program Coordinator, Division of Operation, Drug Prevention and Health Branch Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section – to give a presentation entitled: UNODC GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR PREVENTION OF DRUGS CRIME AND VIOLENCE: "Prevention that works: Healthy and safe development of Children and Youth"

Dr. Maalouf had previously also introduced other encouraging programs that strengthen family ties and improve communication.

He followed our invitation to talk to a mixed audience of close to 30 people, including 3 representatives of embassies, leaders and initiators of NGOs, and other guests who listened attentively despite the hot summer evening.

UNODC is headquartered in Vienna but operates in all regions to make the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism. Besides the HQ in Vienna and liaison office in NY and Brussels, there are 20+ field offices in: Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Columbia, Egypt, India Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, USA, Uzbekistan und Vietnam.

It was very interesting what Dr. Maalouf said about drug prevention programs generally: 'Until now drug prevention was mostly thought to be intellectual information about the dangerous consequence of Drug and substance abuse, the 'frightening off' of people through this information. It has shown not to be very effective.'

He talked about a paradigm shift in prevention of substance abuse:

It has been found that there is a certain age where the risk is most high, around 13- 17 years of age, after that the risk drops down to almost zero.



He explained how important it is to emotionally support children and youth in their development and different stages of life, and how this can help to reach their developmental goals which brings more satisfaction into their life. This will in turn most efficiently diminish the risk of drugs and substance abuse.

Dr. Maalouf suggested that prevention could even start as early as in the prenatal phase and including supporting the parents emotionally during this stage of life, ideally even until the child is 3 years of age.

Such programs would also be protective against many other problems that youth could be facing besides diminishing the likelihood of getting into substances abuse.

He even mentioned a program that was done 60 years ago and still shows a positive result with the 2nd and 3rd generation.

Dr. Maalouf gave an overview of the different programs that have been developed to be used in different settings: for example, a 2-page collection of educational advice for highly traumatised families distributed in food packages in refugee camps.

Or it could be a program for a few hours or a curriculum over the course of several weeks. Parents and children were invited to participate together in this program.

None of these programs ever missed to produce a positive result!

The audience showed great interest during the QandA session that followed the talk.

The guests enjoyed the snack buffet which provided more opportunities to getting to know each other and sharing experiences.

Reported by Renate Amesbauer  
WFWP Austria