**Submission to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

June 2023

**Submitted organisation:**

Students for Sensible Drug Policy is an international grassroots network of students and young people, led by students and young people who are advocating for policy reform on the local, national, continental and global level. We promote youth civic engagement as a critical tool in reforming drug policy and develop leaders who advocate for change, based on justice, liberty and compassion. SSDP mobilizes and empowers young people to participate in political processes. Our members operate locally and are connected globally to reduce the harms of counterproductive policies–in particular, those that directly harm students of all ages and youth–and to represent the rights and interests of this population.

**Recommendations**

1. Decriminalise the use of use and possession of drugs. The criminalisation of drug use has resulted in the violation of rights of people who use drug and hinders their right to basic services like health, education, and housing. However, decriminalisation laws and policies should make special provision for young PWUDs to ensure that they are included in provisions and not classified as ‘minors’, like in alcohol and tobacco policies which exclude young PWUDs.
2. Ageism and exclusionary programming and processes in health and harm reduction should be addressed.
3. Removal of punitive actions in education for example, randomised drug testing
4. Implementation of fact-based drug education as recommended by the UNODC in the UNODC Drug Prevention Guidelines
5. The inclusion of the youth voice in policy and programme development, design and implementation at all levels. Young people radically influence drug patterns and without their involvement in policy developments we are guaranteed to fail in addressing the drug use issue.
6. Youth engagement efforts must be informed by intersectionality and lived experiences of young PWUDs across key populations.
7. Implementation of comprehensive youth-focused harm reduction services
8. Implementation of tailor-made harm reduction services for women who use drugs.
9. Mobilisation of resources and adequate funding to support youth engagement and youth-based services and initiatives.
10. Better coordination between Vienna and Geneva