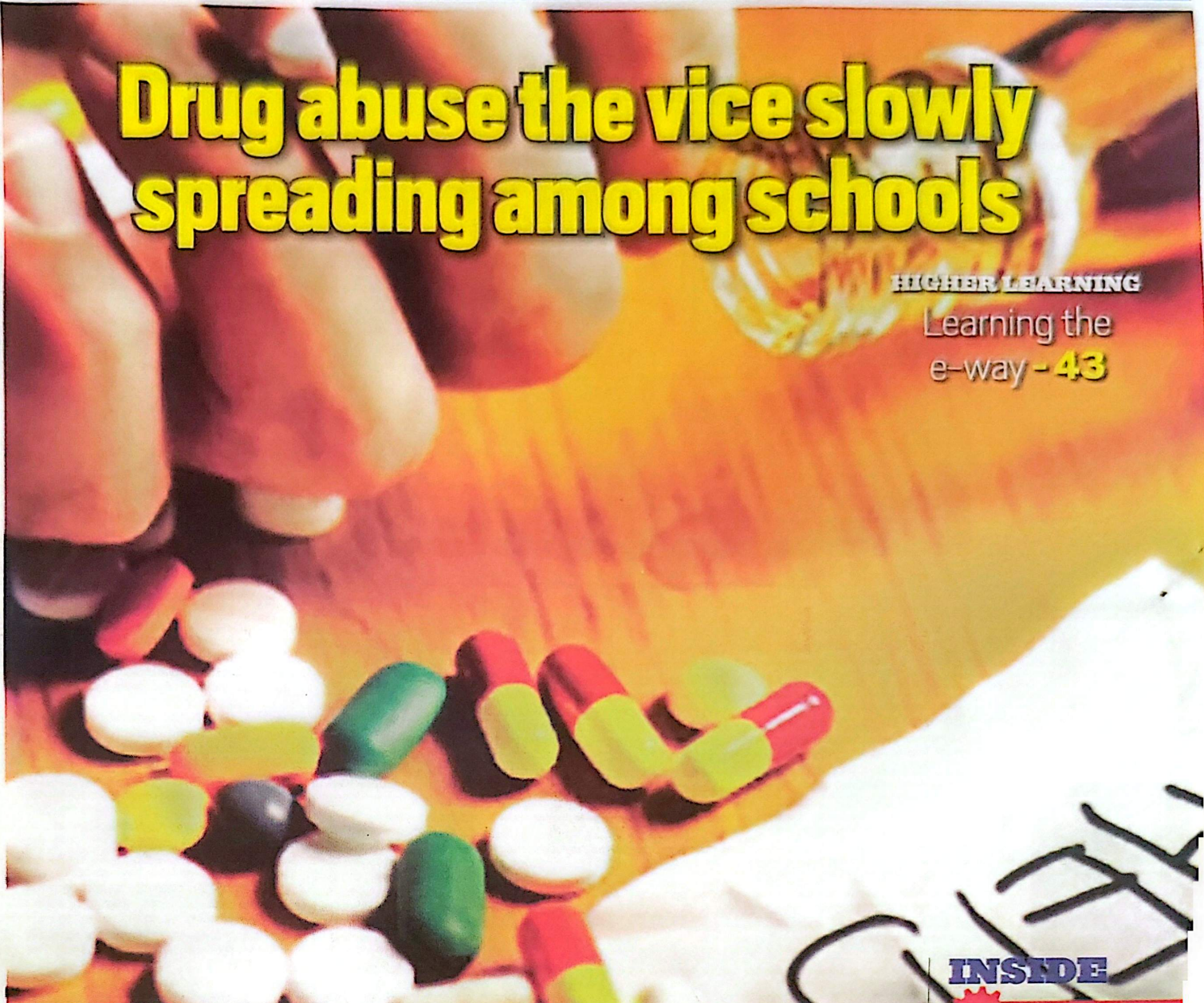


Drug abuse the vice slowly spreading among schools

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students include Kuber, Alcohol, marijuana ,cocaine.

At the age of 18, David Mwanje smoked marijuana for the first time after being persuaded by friends at school. "They would always laugh at me whenever I refused to take it and call me

a weakling. But one day I decided to take it to prove that I was not as weak as they thought," he says.

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Mwanie says the moment he inhaled the drug, he felt like he could do anything. "I felt like a different person and from then, I started smoking. It every day for the next eight years because it gave me courage I didn't have. I couldn't respect teachers because I felt I was superior. It was during that time that I dropped out of school and joined my friends who had formed a music band," he adds.

Oscar Wamala a former addict says they did drugs because it would make them look superior to the other boys who were not smoking. "We also wanted to emulate the international rappers (musicians)" says Oscar.

As a result he got attacked by many diseases. He adds that drugs embarrassed him where at some point he got high over marijuana and went to the girl's dormitory where he was arrested and later got to jail.

Tinah Namayanja a third year student at Makerere University says the first time she tested drugs was at a house party and she didn't know. She laments that the marijuana was put in a cake and after eating it they blaked out.

Many times people at these house parties have to drink cocktail drinks that are mixed with many drugs in them. She says they often ended up dead asleep and sometimes they couldn't know what would go on after that.

Mr Richard Lubega, the deputy headmaster of Naalya SS Bweyogerere says the rate of drug abuse in schools is now very high. We know about these behaviors in our students and we are trying to crack them down.

However the students prove to be ahead of us. They sneak in these drugs in schools through sugar, powdered milk and in other many forms. The most commonly used in our school is Kuber. They mix it in hot water and take it as tea and others put it below their tongues. I have heard of some who smoke marijuana but I have not witnessed it.

According to Barnabas Okuku who is a warden at a school in Kawempe, there many reasons that drive these children into drug abuse and the first being Peer pressure. They are now influenced by their friends. The Pressure from academics, where the education system seems to be taking a toll on our students and they can end up using drugs and alcohol as a means of escape.

Parents are not supervising their children. Parents especially in urban areas are busy working and offer little time to their children. In addition, the lack of community ownership in these urban areas leaves children with a gap to explore the use of drugs and alcohol.

Easy accessibility to drugs.

Drugs like kuber are very accessible to the young people especially with the new laws controlling alcohol consumption. The use of prescription medications like codeine and diazepam commonly occur.

Lack of role models in society. Nowadays role models for teenagers and young adults exalt the use of alcohol and drugs which in turn make it look "cool".

Barnabas adds that Social media has also done a lot to promote these drugs. Teenagers with mobile phones



There are many reasons that drive students into drug abuse, including peer pressure. FILE PHOTO

Drug abuse slowly spreading among schools

have easy access to new forms of media that exalts the use of alcohol and drugs.

"The problem is turning out to be a very complicated phenomenon in that the students no longer take the drugs in their raw form. They are no longer taking the traditional ones," the deputy head teacher of Busaana SSS, Mr Paul Bwaniki, says.

He added: "You may find a student chewing and you cannot tell whether they are chewing drugs. So the ignorance of the administrators is not doing us any good."

He, however, says the drug problem

is mainly faced by foreign students, especially those from Tanzania and Kenya, who "feel like they are out of prison" when they come to study in Uganda.

The problem has been heard in many school circles but the Ministry of Education officials say they cannot establish its magnitude because schools do not also reveal these cases for fear of tarnishing the names of

the school."

According to senior consultant psychiatric Joseph Kibuuka from serenity center that deals with alcoholics and substance abuse says the cases that they receive are majorly teens who are school going.

"Out of ten cases, we get five who are students says Mr Kibuuka. This is a very worrying number. However most of them narrate their stories

and the main cause of their indulgence into this vice is peer pressure.

They meet people from different backgrounds and they teach each other different behaviors. We have ever encourage parents to be very vigilant in teaching these students the true behaviors that they should carry in society. This will be the only quick solution to drug abuse especially in schools.

EXPLORE YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS

Once you've committed to recovery, it's time to explore your treatment choices. As you consider the options, keep in mind:

No treatment works for everyone. Everyone's needs are different. Drug addiction treatment should be customized to your unique situation. It's important that you find a program that feels right.

Treatment should address more than just your drug abuse. Addiction affects your whole life, including relationships, career, health, and psychological well-being. Treatment success depends on developing a new way of living and

addressing the reasons why you turned to drugs in the first place. For example, your drug dependency may have developed from an inability to manage stress, in which case you'll need to find healthy ways to handle stressful situations.

Commitment and follow-through are key. Drug addiction treatment is not a quick and easy process. In general, the longer and more intense the drug use, the longer and more intense the treatment you'll need. And in all cases, long-term follow-up care is crucial to recovery.

There are many places to turn for help. Not everybody requires medically

supervised detox or an extended stint in rehab. The care you need depends on a variety of factors, including your age, drug-use history, medical or psychiatric conditions. In addition to doctors and psychologists, many clergy members, social workers, and counselors offer addiction treatment services.

As you seek help for drug addiction, it's also important to get treatment for any other medical or psychological issues you're experiencing. Your best chance of recovery is through integrated treatment. This means getting combined mental health and addiction treatment from the same treatment provider or...

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**THE NUMBER OF PERSONS
IN MILLIONS AGED 12
OR OLDER WHO NEEDED
TREATMENT FOR AN ILLICIT
DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE
PROBLEM LAST YEAR**