

2023



ANNUAL REPORT

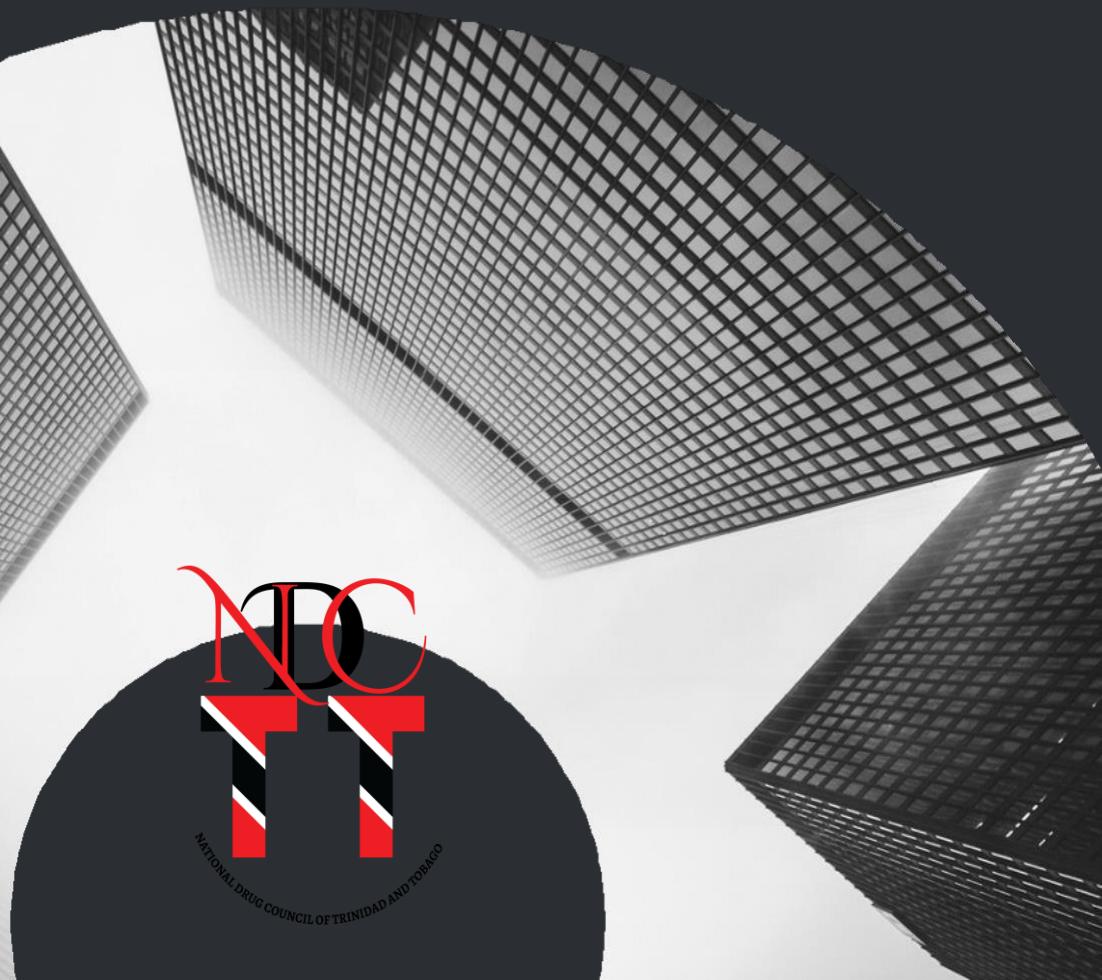


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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ADAPP | Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme |
| AML/CFT | Anti-Money Laundering/Combatting the Financing of Terrorism |
| CAPA | Crime and Problem Analysis Branch |
| CD | Central Division |
| CGIU | Criminal Gang Intelligence Unit |
| CICAD | Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission |
| CSO | Central Statistical Office |
| COPOLAD | Cooperation Programme on Drugs Policies |
| DIN-TT | Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago |
| DUI | Driving Under the Influence |
| ED | Eastern Division |
| EWS | Early Warning System |
| FIUTT | Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago |
| FSC | Forensic Science Centre |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GET | Gang Enforcement Team |
| HTU | Human Trafficking Unit |
| ITAC | Integrated Threat Assessment Centre |
| LSD | Lysergic acid diethylamide |
| MDMA | Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine |
| NADAPP | National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme |
| NDC | National Drug Council |
| NDIS | National Drug Information System |
| NED | North Eastern Division |
| ND | Northern Division |
| NPS | New Psychoactive Substances |
| OAS | Organization of American States |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| POS | Port of Spain |
| PROCER | The Training and Certification Program for Drug and Violence Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation |
| STR | Suspicious Transaction Report |
| SAPTC | Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Centre |
| SAR | Suspicious Activity Report |
| SD | Southern Division |
| SIU | Special Investigations Unit |
| SUD | Substance Use Disorder |
| SWD | South Western Division |
| TD | Tobago Division |
| TIU | Terrorism Investigation Unit |
| TTCG | Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard |
| TTDF | Trinidad and Trinidad Defence Force |
| TPPS | Trinidad and Tobago Police Service |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| TTFSC | Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre |
| TTPrS | Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| USC | University of Southern Caribbean |
| UTC | Universal Treatment Curriculum |
| UWI | University of the West Indies |
| WD | Western Division |
| WINAD | Women's Institute for Alternative Development |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| YTRC | Youth Transformation and Rehabilitation Centre |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT) Annual Report provides an overview of the drug situation in the country, as it relates to both demand and supply reduction activities. It reflects a compilation of data gathered from several agencies involved in the prevention and control of drug use and trafficking and aims to improve our understanding of the drug situation in Trinidad and Tobago.

This annual report highlights a number of interlinked elements which assists in the analysis of the drug situation in Trinidad and Tobago. The DIN-TT remains the primary source of statistical information on the use of illegal drugs, and drug-related activities. This Report provides analysis and describes general changes over a five year period (2019 to 2023) where the data was available. More specifically, it focuses on calendar 2023, based on what was provided by reporting agencies.

In 2023, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) recorded a total seizure of 1697kgs and 667kgs of cannabis and cocaine respectively. This however, represented a 66% increase in the seizure of cannabis from 2022, and a corresponding 97% increase in the seizure of cocaine. In addition, it is important to note that through the Early Warning System of Trinidad and Tobago, it is reported that in addition to the traditional cannabis and cocaine, the country is now seeing a diversification and therefore detection of New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) coming into the country. Some of the most prevalent NPSs detected thus far include:

- MDMA
- Ketamine
- Synthetic Cathinone
- Methamphetamine

The eradication of illicit crops remains an important tool for decreasing the production of illegal drugs and preventing them from entering Trinidad and Tobago and other drug markets. In 2023, the Crime and Problem Analysis Branch (CAPA) recorded the eradication of twenty one (21) fields and the destruction of three thousand, three hundred and seventy seven (3,377) cannabis plants.

Between 2019 and 2023 a total of ten thousand and forty four (10,044) arrests were made for narcotic offences, most of whom committed crimes with respect to the possession of cannabis. For each narcotic offence, a higher number of males were arrested as compared to females. In addition, the most prevalent narcotic was cannabis as it relates to arrests amongst males and females for both possession and trafficking.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the period 2019 to 2023, a total of two thousand nine hundred and sixty five (2965) persons were convicted for narcotic and narcotic related offences. Of this total number of convictions, 98% were males and 2% were females.

The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (ADAPP) continues to coordinates drug abuse prevention and demand reduction initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago. NADAPP continued its strategic focus on capacity building in the drug demand reduction sector and focused on strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders through targeted training sessions. This approach allowed for greater impact over time and better leveraging of resources across the sector. While ADAPP continued to deliver substance abuse prevention awareness at schools in Tobago and at the community level with a focus on education and training in 2023.

The subsequent chapters of this Report provides greater details of the data collected and analyzed from the stakeholders of the DIN-TT. By highlighting key trends, it aims at informing policymakers, and stakeholders in their efforts to develop evidence-based strategies and interventions. The DIN-TT continues to emphasize the importance of accurate, relevant and valid data from agencies involved in drug control in Trinidad and Tobago.

ABOUT THE DIN-TT

The DIN-TT is a component of the National Drug Observatory (NDO), which is a national drug monitoring system. “A NDO is an organization that aims to provide for its home country factual, objective, reliable and comparable information concerning drugs and drug addiction, and their consequences.”(Pernell Clarke, CICAD) Thus, an NDO is part of a broader system that combines a concerted and balanced national drug coordination mechanism, which oversees the various stakeholders implementing a national drug strategy with a national drug information system that integrates specialized and more general sources of information and expertise, as well as routine surveillance programmes and ad hoc surveys on targeted groups.

See Appendices 1-3 for the DIN-TT Organizational Structure, Membership of the DIN-TT Technical Committee and Stakeholders of the DIN-TT

The DIN-TT is the mechanism through which data on the extent, distribution and volume of the national drug problem is collected from drug control stakeholders and analysed. In addition to providing insight to the different aspects of the national drug problem, the DIN-TT brings together institutions and individuals working in the areas of drug prevention, education, control, and law enforcement to exchange drug-related information, collaborate and support each other’s efforts. It forms part of the ongoing efforts to promote a better understanding of the nation’s drug problem and develop workable and sustainable policies and programmes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIN-TT

The objectives of the DIN-TT include:

- To harmonize the exchange of drug-related statistical information sourced from stakeholders;
- To guide and inform the development of primary prevention, public education, and treatment programmes and policies; and
- To stimulate further discussions on drug demand reduction or drug supply reduction policies and challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Country Profile

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a sovereign twin-island nation located in the Lesser Antilles Archipelago in the south eastern Caribbean Sea. The nation lies northeast of the South American nation of Venezuela and south of the island nation of Grenada. It shares maritime boundaries with Barbados to the northeast and Guyana to the southeast. The country covers an area of 5,127 square kilometers (1,980 sq. miles) and consists of two main islands, Trinidad and Tobago, as well as numerous smaller landforms. Trinidad is the larger and more populous of the two islands.

According to the last Population and Housing Census, conducted by the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago (CSO) in 2011, the population of Trinidad and Tobago was 1,328,019, with 1,267,145 persons residing in Trinidad and 60,874 in Tobago.² At that time, the life expectancy in Trinidad and Tobago ranged from a low of 67.7 years in Port of Spain, to a high of 76.8 years in Tobago.³ The CSO indicated that the average household size is 3.3 persons.

The Trinidad and Tobago Human Development Atlas (CSO and UNDP, 2012) indicated that in 2010, nationally, the labour force participation rate, that is, the proportion of the population aged between 15 to 64 years who are employed and/or who are seeking employment, fluctuated across municipalities. Overall, the labour force participation rate was higher for males than females across the country, recorded at 72.4% and 51.5% respectively.

Educational achievements also seemed to be positively influenced by geographic location and gender. In 2010, the proportion of the population attaining at least a secondary school education ranged from 22.6% in Sangre Grande to 57.4% in San Fernando. Nationally, the percentage of females with at least a secondary school education was higher than that for males with a similar level of education; 43.1% of the female population had at least a secondary education, as compared with 36.4% of males.

The percentage of children between the ages of six (6) to sixteen (16) years with at least a primary or secondary education was high across all administrative areas, with the country recording a primary and secondary education attainment rate of 91.4%.

INTRODUCTION

The lowest primary and secondary education attainment rate was recorded for Rio Claro/Mayaro (with a rate of 57.6% for males and 72.9% for females).

Trinidad and Tobago is an industrialized country, whose economy is largely dependent on revenues from the exportation of oil and natural gas. It has a small but rapidly growing tourism industry concentrated predominantly in Tobago, and a relatively competitive manufacturing and service industry which operates largely from Trinidad. In 2021, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Trinidad and Tobago was 24.46 billion US dollars, which represents only 0.01 percent of the world's economy.⁴ Trinidad and Tobago has a multi-sectoral approach to drugs, which encapsulates legislative, policy and economic initiatives that sustain varied drug-related agendas. Thus legally, there are a number of existing laws to control the supply and demand of drugs, such as the Dangerous Drugs Act (Chapter 11:25) as amended, 2019 and the Tobacco Control Act (Chapter 30:40), 2009, which are the foremost pieces of legislation. The country also has a National Drug Policy that articulates the official position of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinidad and Tobago National Drug Policy

The National Drug Policy of Trinidad and Tobago 2021 and Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021 to 2025 was approved by Cabinet in February, 2021. The Trinidad and Tobago National Drug Policy 2021 outlines the official position of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to address the challenges of drug trafficking as well as the use and misuse of licit and illicit substances. The Policy, firmly anchored within the national sustainable development pillars, provides a balanced, comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to this complex issue. It establishes a robust framework within which the institutions charged with the responsibility for drug control continue to be engaged in robust, collaborative national and international cooperation efforts to reduce illicit drug trafficking and associated criminal activities, as well as licit and illicit substance use and misuse.

The Policy includes initiatives which are aligned with the United Nations Conventions on the subject. The National Drug Policy of Trinidad and Tobago 2021 and the accompanying Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago 2021-2025 reflect a coordinated approach that is aligned to regional, hemispheric and international drug policies. The Policy document and Operational Plan comprise five main areas of strategic focus which have the following stated goals:

INTRODUCTION

Control Measures:

To establish and execute appropriate strategies that empower relevant authorities to apply counter measures that reduce the occurrence of drug trafficking and its related illicit activities.

Supply Reduction:

To facilitate and improve law enforcement activities while advancing strategies geared toward ensuring sustainable, efficient interdiction and reduction in the supply of illegal drugs.

Demand Reduction:

To improve the physical, mental, social, spiritual and economic health and well-being of citizens through systemic multi-disciplinary approaches to prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Research:

To facilitate the availability of timely, accurate and relevant information that would enable evidence based decision making.

Institutional Strengthening and International Cooperation:

To develop, strengthen and maintain appropriate institutional mechanisms that facilitate the effective and efficient coordination, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of the National Drug Policy and its associated interventions.

Legal Framework

In Trinidad and Tobago the legislative framework for drug control includes the following:

Dangerous Drugs Act

The Dangerous Drugs Act (Chapter 11:25), 1991 (as amended by Act 24 of 2019) defines dangerous drugs as narcotics or anything containing such a drug or psychotropic substance and prohibits the cultivation, manufacture, possession and trafficking of these substances, unless appropriately authorized. The Dangerous Drugs Act also addresses the issue of precursor chemicals and it bans pharmacists from supplying dangerous drugs, unless appropriately instructed.

In December 2019, the Government amended the Dangerous Drugs Act to decriminalize the cultivation and possession of small quantities of cannabis and also included MDMA and other New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs). The Bill was proclaimed as law on December 23, 2019.

INTRODUCTION

The Bill decriminalizes the possession of not more than thirty grammes of cannabis or not more than five grammes of cannabis resin and to create offences, which restricts the use of cannabis in specific instances. It also enables a person who has been convicted for the possession of not more than thirty grammes of cannabis or not more than five grammes of cannabis resin to apply through his Attorney-at-law to the Commissioner of Police to have that offence expunged from his criminal record and to apply for a pardon. It increases the penalties for the possession of and trafficking in dangerous drugs. It also includes new dangerous drugs, including, MDMA (ecstasy), lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and ketamine, where the possession of more than the specified amount would be deemed for the purpose of trafficking.

Tobacco Control Act

The Tobacco Control Act (Chapter 30:40) 2009 was introduced to regulate, monitor and control tobacco use, as well as to promote public awareness of the hazards of this substance. Under this Act, the violation of non-smoking areas is a criminal offence and offenders are liable, on summary conviction, to a fine of \$10,000 and up to six months in prison. Additionally, the Act criminalizes the importation, manufacture, sale, distribution and supply of non-tobacco items or objects which imitate tobacco products, as well as the improper labelling of tobacco products. Upon conviction, persons sentenced under this Act could face up to \$500,000 in fines. Moreover, it provided for the establishment of a Unit in the Ministry of Health, to spearhead tobacco control and sensitization initiatives. In addition, the Unit would act on behalf of the Minister to consider and evaluate license applications.

Proceeds of Crime Act

The Proceeds of Crime Act (Chapter 11:27) 2000 (as amended by Act 10 of 2009), authorizes the confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking along with the assessment of the proceeds of drug trafficking. This Act also instructs that material be made available to assist with the investigation of the benefit from drug trafficking.

Financial Intelligence Unit Act

The Financial Intelligence Unit Act (Chapter 72:01) 2009 (as amended by the Miscellaneous Provisions Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, Proceeds of Crime, Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago, Customs and Exchange Control Act, 2018), provides for the creation and staffing of the Financial Intelligence Unit. It also stipulates the functions and powers of this Unit. In addition, it offers a legislative framework for the implementation of the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on money laundering and the financing of terrorism and for related matters.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Services Agency Act

The Strategic Services Agency Act 24 (Chapter 15:06) 1995 (as amended by Act 4 of 2016) facilitates the establishment of the Strategic Services Agency. It also specifies its function as a key Agency in combating serious crime which includes but is not limited to terrorist acts, terrorist financing, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals, dangerous drugs, corruption, money laundering, smuggling, and transnational crime.

Pharmacy Board Act

Section 23(1) of the Pharmacy Board Act 1960 (as amended), criminalizes the retail of any glandular product, toxoid, serum, vaccine or bacteria for human use by any person other than a pharmacist or authorized person. This Act also stipulates that any person, other than a pharmacist or an authorized individual, who dispenses a prescription, prepares or compounds drugs for retail shall be guilty of an offence.

Pesticide and Toxic Chemicals Act

The Pesticide and Toxic Chemicals Act, No.42; 1974 (as amended) forbids the manufacture, importation, exportation, sale, use and storage in marketable quantities; or transportation of a controlled product, unless the product is registered.

Economic Analysis

It is necessary to have an understanding of the economic costs of the drug situation in Trinidad and Tobago in order to develop policies that reduce same. However, attempts to calculate the financial cost of drug prevention, education, control and law enforcement initiatives are hindered by data limitations in many areas. Nevertheless, DIN-TT stakeholders contend that an analysis of the economic consequences of drug abuse and illicit trafficking is inextricably linked to policy choices and associated expenditure. While accounting for the real dollar cost of the drug-situation in Trinidad and Tobago is challenging, it is clear that it affects the spheres of health, public safety, crime, productivity and governance.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Security are the two main stakeholder Ministries with responsibility for drug-related matters in Trinidad and Tobago. In the 2023/2024 Trinidad and Tobago National Budget allocation, the Ministry of Health was allocated 6.6 billion dollars (TT), whilst the Ministry of National Security obtained 3.9 billion dollars (TT). Of these allocations, agencies and departments under these Ministries that are responsible for drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction receive allocations for the financial year to implement their respective work plans.



CHAPTER 1:

SUPPLY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the case of illegal drugs, supply reduction efforts generally involve attempts to disrupt the manufacturing and distribution chains, through civilian law enforcement and military agencies. In Trinidad and Tobago cannabis is the only known locally-produced illicit drug. Production is concentrated on small farms in the heavily forested and mountainous regions. Local producers compete with imports from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Guyana, and Venezuela. Other illicit drugs (primarily cocaine) are trafficked through the country by transnational organized crime groups operating in Trinidad and Tobago, exploiting the country's close proximity to Venezuela and vulnerabilities at ports of entry. The main destination for these substances is the European market.

In 2023, Trinidad and Tobago's Police Service seized 1697 kg of Cannabis, a 66% increase in the total amount of cannabis seized from 2022. While a total of 667 kgs of Cocaine was seized, an increase of 97% in the total amount of cocaine seized in 2022.

POLICIES AND COORDINATION

The most fundamental drug enforcement agency is the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) which is mandated to enforce all laws and regulations.

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU), a branch of the TTPS, is a key stakeholder in the national drug supply reduction effort and it is responsible for the detection and disruption of drug trafficking networks. In addition to the TTPS, there are other crucial agencies that have a significant role in drug supply reduction in Trinidad and Tobago. These include:

- The Customs and Excise Division, of the Ministry of Finance, which has responsibility for protecting the ports of entry, society and the environment;
- The FIUTT of the Ministry of Finance, which has regulatory responsibility for, *inter alia*, anti-money laundering, which often implicate drug dealers and criminal narcotics cartels;
- The Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, which assists in the prevention of trafficking of narcotics and other illegal goods, including our territorial waters;
- The Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU) of the Ministry of National Security, which engages in real time intelligence sharing amongst law enforcement agencies; and
- The Strategic Services Agency (SSA) of the Ministry of National Security whose primary purpose is to guide the formulation and implementation of national policies on illicit trafficking of dangerous drugs and related criminal activities.

NARCOTIC SEIZURES

According to the data reported by the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Branch of the TTPS for the period 2019 to 2023, and as shown in the diagram below, there were fluctuations in cannabis seizures. 2022 recorded a total of 582kg of seized cannabis, accounting for the smallest amount of cannabis seized for the period.

Though there was a notable 83% decrease in cannabis seizures from 2021 to 2022, 2023 recorded a 66% increase in the total number of cannabis seized. Similar trends were identified for cocaine seizures as there were also fluctuations over the five year period. From 2021 to 2022, there was a 90% reduction in the total amount of cocaine seized, while 2023 recorded an increase of 97% in the total amount of cocaine seized. This fluctuation can be attested to the Covid-19 pandemic in addition to the decriminalization of cannabis which formed part of the Dangerous Drug Amendment Act in 2019.

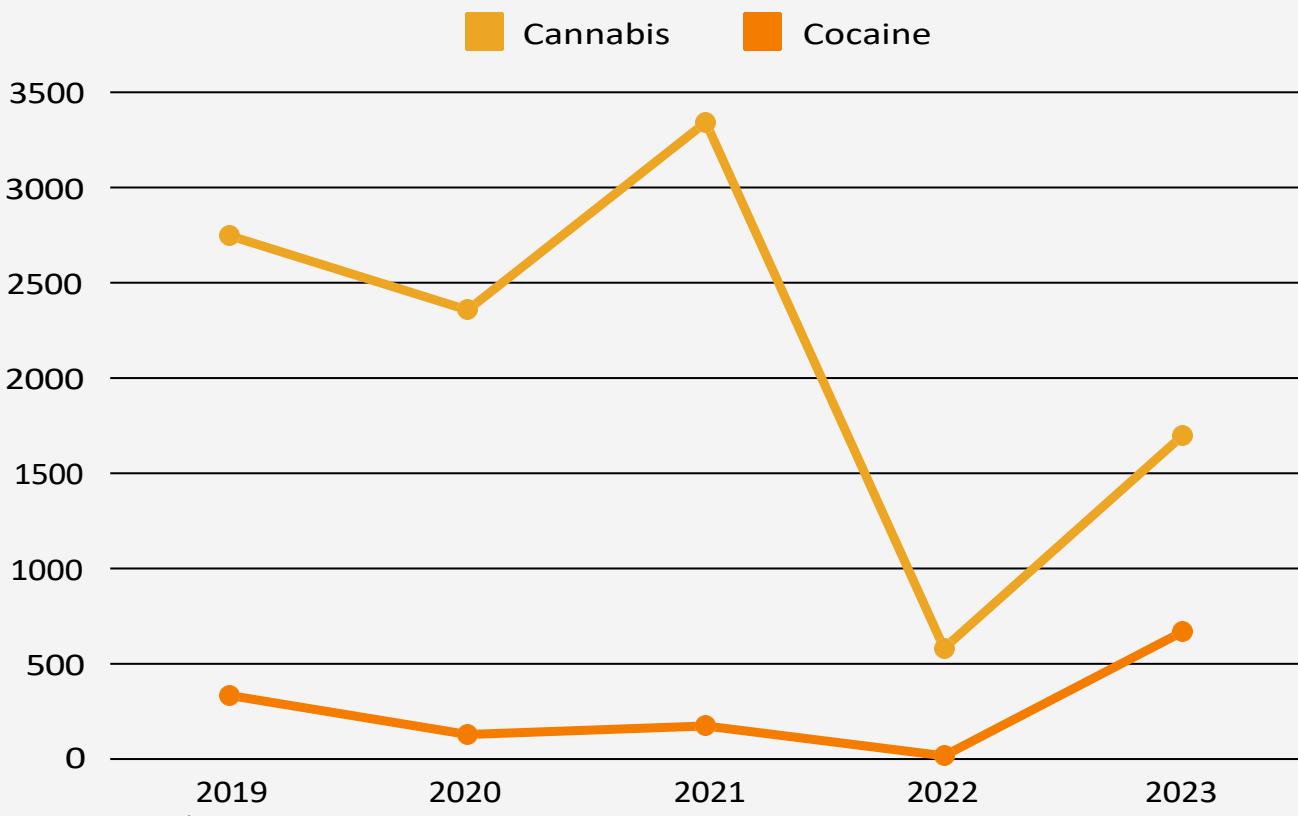


Figure 1: Trends in Narcotic Seizure 2019 to 2023
Source: CAPA

CANNABIS SEIZURES

The seizures recorded by the different Police Divisions reflect variations over the five years under review. The largest seizures were recorded in the ED in 2019 and 2021, ND in 2020, WD in 2022 and the SD in 2023; while the lowest seizures were recorded in POS for 2019 to 2021, the SWD in 2022 and the NED in 2023.

| Division | 2019 (kgs) | 2020 (kgs) | 2021 (kgs) | 2022 (kgs) | 2023 (kgs) |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| POS | 24 | 44 | 12 | 10 | 44 |
| SD | 260 | 174 | 421 | 23 | 766 |
| WD | 124 | 149 | 30 | 139 | 150 |
| ND | 149 | 1016 | 137 | 119 | 126 |
| CD | 59 | 135 | 253 | 25 | 82 |
| SWD | 896 | 263 | 494 | 8 | 303 |
| ED | 904 | 472 | 1649 | 131 | 93 |
| NED | 229 | 47 | 245 | 41 | 31 |
| TD | 102 | 58 | 101 | 86 | 102 |
| TOTAL | 2747 | 2357 | 3342 | 582 | 1697 |

Table 1: Cannabis Seizure Reported by Division
Source: CAPA

CANNABIS SEIZURES

The largest seizures were recorded in August for the years 2019 and 2020. However, in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the largest seizures were recorded in December, July and September respectively. The smallest seizures were recorded in November, February, October, August and December in 2018 to 2023 respectively.

| Month | 2019 (kgs) | 2020 (kgs) | 2021 (kgs) | 2022 (kgs) | 2023 (kgs) |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| January | 78 | 109 | 71 | 32 | 73 |
| February | 433 | 12 | 672 | 107 | 13 |
| March | 135 | 86 | 94 | 10 | 64 |
| April | 180 | 262 | 128 | 29 | 72 |
| May | 271 | 77 | 201 | 21 | 219 |
| June | 128 | 180 | 119 | 31 | 69 |
| July | 100 | 21 | 263 | 121 | 28 |
| August | 872 | 1068 | 433 | 7 | 24 |
| September | 76 | 121 | 156 | 21 | 808 |
| October | 293 | 171 | 18 | 38 | 110 |
| November | 11 | 33 | 23 | 67 | 215 |
| December | 170 | 217 | 1165 | 99 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 2747 | 2357 | 3342 | 582 | 1697 |

Table 2: Cannabis Seizure Reported by Month
Source: CAPA

COCAINE SEIZURES

The seizures recorded by the different Police Divisions reflect variations over the five year period. The Divisions that recorded the largest total seizures were the SWD, WD, SD, ED and SWD in 2019 to 2023 respectively. However, the lowest amount of total cocaine seized were recorded in the NED, CD, POS Division, NED and SWD over the period 2019 to 2023.

| Division | 2019 (kgs) | 2020 (kgs) | 2021 (kgs) | 2022 (kgs) | 2023 (kgs) |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| POS | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| SD | 1 | 4 | 87 | 0 | 2 |
| WD | 10 | 83 | 1 | 0 | 168 |
| ND | 29 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| CD | 27 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| SWD | 201 | 6 | 75 | 0 | 430 |
| ED | 1 | 25 | 10 | 10 | 48 |
| NED | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| TD | 64 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 334 | 129 | 174 | 17 | 667 |

Table 3: Cocaine Seizure Reported by Division
Source: CAPA

COCAINE SEIZURES

During the period 2019 to 2023 the highest total cocaine seizures were recorded in the months of April (2019 and 2020), August (2021) and October (2022 and 2023). Unlike Cannabis seizures, where seizures were recorded almost every month, for the period 2019 to 2023 Cocaine seizures were recorded on average of six months each year.

| Month | 2019 (kgs) | 2020 (kgs) | 2021 (kgs) | 2022 (kgs) | 2023 (kgs) |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Jan | 1 | 27 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Feb | 46 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| March | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| April | 206 | 88 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| May | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 171 |
| June | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| July | 64 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Aug | 1 | 0 | 123 | 0 | 47 |
| Sep | 0 | 0 | 39 | 0 | 2 |
| Oct | 11 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 439 |
| Nov | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dec | 0 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 334 | 129 | 174 | 17 | 667 |

Table 4: Cocaine Seizure Reported by Month
Source: CAPA

SEIZURES OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

It is important to note that through the Early Warning System of Trinidad and Tobago, it is reported that in addition to the traditional cannabis and cocaine, the country is now recording an increase in detection of New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) coming into the country. Some of the most prevalent NPSs detected thus far include:

- MDMA
- Ketamine
- Synthetic Cathinone
- Methamphetamine

These were mainly seized through courier services entering the country.

The Early Warning System (EWS) through its stakeholder representatives was able to make representation to lobby for an amendment to the Second Schedule of the Dangerous Drugs Act to include a list of psychotropic substances. In December 2019, the Government amended the Dangerous Drugs Act to decriminalize the cultivation and possession of small quantities of cannabis. This amendment also saw the inclusion of Methyleneoxy methamphetamine (MDMA) and other New Psychoactive Substances (NPSs) to the schedule of dangerous drugs. Therefore, new penalties against possession and distribution of other substances such as LSD, MDMA and ketamine.

| YEAR | SEIZURES | NPS DETECTED | QUANTITY |
|------|----------|--|--|
| 2018 | 7 | MDMA | 190 Pills |
| 2019 | 22 | MDMA Methamphetamine Ketamine Synthetic Cathinone | 5350 Pills 23 Pills 2 small baggies 1 Pill |
| 2020 | 11 | MDMA Methamphetamine | 1834 Pills 6211 Pills |
| 2021 | 0 | | |
| 2022 | 5 | Ketamine MDMA Methamphetamine MDMA Ketamine | 76 small baggies 138 Pills 302 Pills Details Pending Details Pending |
| 2023 | 1 | MDMA | Details Pending |

Table 5: NPS Seizures
Source: EWS Working Group

ERADICATION EXERCISES

The eradication of illicit crops remains an important tool for decreasing the production of illegal drugs in Trinidad and Tobago and entering other drug markets. One of the key strategies used for conducting eradication exercises in Trinidad and Tobago is inter-agency collaboration and intelligence sharing. The table shows a comparison of the amount and type of cannabis eradicated in 2019 to 2023.

Of the total number of eradication exercises conducted in 2023, the Eastern Division recorded the largest number of fully grown cannabis plants destroyed accounting for one thousand, three hundred and twenty eight (1,328). However, the largest amount of cannabis seedlings eradicated was recorded in the Tobago, accounting for 250 kg.

| Type of Seizure/Eradication | Total Amount Eradicated 2019 | Total Amount Eradicated 2020 | Total Amount Eradicated 2021 | Total Amount Eradicated 2022 | Total Amount Eradicated 2023 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cured Cannabis | 4371.2 kg | 2kg | 582 kg | 4.5 kg | 20.40 kg |
| Fully Grown Cannabis Plants | 398,425 Plants | 73,685 Plants | 17,303 Plants | 6,915 Plants | 3377 Plants |
| Cannabis Fields | 68 Fields | 33 Fields | Data Unavailable | 17 Fields | 21 Fields |
| Cannabis Seedlings | 83,140 kg | 191643 kg | 4612 kg | 1284 kg | 540 kg |

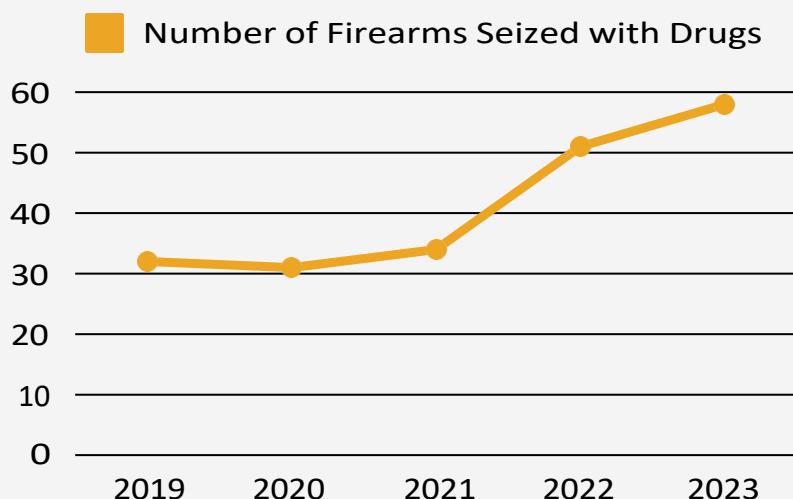
Table 6: Eradication Exercises Conducted
Source: CAPA

FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SEIZED WITH DRUGS

The nexus between firearms and illicit drugs is well recognized both locally and internationally, and is of significant concern to policy makers, law enforcement and those who work within the drug-control field. Drugs and firearms are linked in many discernible ways, including:

- The illegal drug trade is customarily controlled through firearms violence;
- Firearms are used to safeguard shipments, intimidate rivals, amass or enforce debts, preserve territory, resolve disagreements, silence informants and reward underlings;
- Illegal drug procurers use firearms as protection during drug transactions;
- Consumers of illegal drugs commit crimes, often facilitated by firearms, to obtain funds to buy drugs;
- Illegal drug users commit crimes facilitated by firearms while under the influence of drugs;
- Illegal drugs and firearms are often bartered - firearms for drugs and drugs for firearms; and
- Illegal drugs and firearms are commonly trafficked along the same routes and by the same persons.

This makes data with respect to firearm and drug seizures all the more significant. According to data received by CAPA, during the period under review, it appears that the most prevalent drug found with firearms and ammunition was cannabis.



While the number of firearms seized from 2019 to 2021 remained constant, from 2021 to 2022 there was a 33% increase and a 45% increase in the number of firearms seized with drugs when compared from 2022 to 2023.

Figure 2: Number of Firearms Seized with Drugs
Source: CAPA

FIREARMS SEIZED WITH DRUGS

| Division | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| POS | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| SD | 3 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| WD | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| ND | 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 11 |
| CD | 10 | 5 | 7 | 27 | 5 |
| SWD | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| ED | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| NED | 5 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| TD | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 32 | 31 | 34 | 51 | 28 |

Table 7: Number of Firearms Seized with Drugs by Division

Source: CAPA

In 2019, 2021 and 2022, the CD recorded the highest number of firearms seized with drugs. While in 2020 and 2023, the ND recorded the highest number of firearms seized with drugs.

There was an average of three (3) firearms seized with drugs every month for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. However, in 2022 and 2023 there was an average of four (4) and two (2) firearms seized with drugs every month respectively.

| Month | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Jan | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Feb | 0 | 0 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| March | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| April | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| May | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| June | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| July | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Aug | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Sep | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Oct | 3 | 3 | 1 | 23 | 0 |
| Nov | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
| Dec | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 32 | 31 | 34 | 51 | 28 |

Table 8: Number of Firearms Seized with Drugs by Month

Source: CAPA

AMMUNITION SEIZED WITH DRUGS

| Division | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| POS | 0 | 0 | 32 | 0 | 7 |
| SD | 10 | 211 | 41 | 24 | 31 |
| WD | 24 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 4 |
| ND | 11 | 3 | 263 | 19 | 115 |
| CD | 227 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 12 |
| SWD | 10 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| ED | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| NED | 1 | 150 | 0 | 20 | 8 |
| TD | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 287 | 367 | 365 | 74 | 178 |

Table 9: Number of Rounds of Ammunition Seized with Drugs by Division

Source: CAPA

There was variation in the seizures recorded in the different Police Divisions, with the CD, SD, ND (2021 and 2023) and SD recording the largest of rounds of ammunition seized during the period 2019 to 2023 respectively. It is notable that for 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023 there were no ammunition seizures in the TD, however for the year 2021, there was a total of nine (9) rounds of ammunition seized with drugs in the TD.

Months which represented the largest quantity of seized ammunition for the period 2019 to 2023:

April 2019 recorded a total of one hundred and forty four (144) rounds. In May 2020, a total of three hundred and fifty three (353) rounds of ammunition was seized accounting for 97% of the ammunition seizures in 2020. Similarly, in November 2021, a total of three hundred (300) rounds of ammunition was seized, accounting for 82% of the ammunition seizures in 2021.

| Month | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Jan | 0 | 7 | 33 | 3 | 0 |
| Feb | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| March | 1 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| April | 144 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 10 |
| May | 0 | 353 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| June | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 45 |
| July | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| Aug | 105 | 0 | 8 | 15 | 0 |
| Sep | 20 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 7 |
| Oct | 14 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 27 |
| Nov | 0 | 0 | 300 | 5 | 11 |
| Dec | 1 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| Total | 287 | 367 | 365 | 74 | 178 |

Table 10: Number of Rounds of Ammunition Seized with Drugs by Month
Source: CAPA

However, in 2022 June recorded 27% of the total number of ammunition seized in that year, accounting for the month with the largest number. In 2023, both June and July recorded a total of forty five (45) rounds of ammunition seized with drugs, both months accounting for 49% of the total number of ammunition seized for 2023. 25

ANALYSIS

Increased marijuana and cocaine seizures in 2023 reflected a return to amounts typically seized by Law Enforcement (LE) within the past five (5) years, as Drug Trafficking Networks (DTNs) remain resolute in their efforts to transship these and other narcotics through Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, this is indicative of DTNs continued employment of traditional trafficking methods, as well as the probable exploitation of trafficking techniques adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The possible growing local demand for/use of unregulated cannabis-infused products in particular, can increase the negative impacts including heightened health risks, increased criminal activity and greater societal normalization of narcotic use/abuse. Notwithstanding 2023's increase in local eradication exercises and destroyed fields, compared to 2022, as local demand grows traffickers are likely to explore and capitalize on opportunities to bulk supply – thereby increasing illicit financial gains. Consequently, this is anticipated to lead to further increases in illegal cultivation, especially indoor cultivation, which would likely reduce the probability of Law Enforcement (LE) detection. As such, this may result in increased production, distribution and sale of various derivative products, for example, edibles.

Further, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) seized locally represent another potentially lucrative narcotics venture for criminals; incentivizing some to innovate by exploiting the lack of regulation and oversight to illicitly produce and distribute pills. Such exploits may include pills that are misleadingly marketed, for example, counterfeits, poorly produced/adulterated, which present safety/health risks to consumers, including those seeking novel experiences. Noteworthy, social media and online/virtual marketplaces further facilitate the spread and accessibility of these and other substances.

While the rate of firearms seized from 2019-2021 remained consistent, there was a 57% decrease in the number of firearms seized with drugs when compared to 2022-2023. This reduction may be related to the diversification of local drug consumption as well as the commercialization of narcotics retail amongst non-violent offenders that has emerged.

Poly-drug use and the growing prevalence of NPS, inclusive of synthetics (ketamine, synthetic cathinone, methamphetamine and MDMA) has created new avenues for profit and a wider consumer base for traffickers. Trafficking networks may also benefit from the engagement of non-threatening salespersons, for example, school-aged youth and non-gang aligned, economically marginalized individuals, who are less likely to possess firearms or ammunition during transactions. This is particularly useful for accessing closed communities including the LGBTQ and/or affluent/business communities. Conversely, the trend of a reduced number of firearms seized with drugs can be attributed to ongoing anti-crime eradication operations led by the TTPS. In addition, both the overall decrease in 2023 in firearm related crimes and the low detection rate for serious crime, 13% could also account for the lower number of firearms seized with drugs.

Notably, the firearm trafficking is economically supported by the profits generated by the illicit drug trade. As such, similar to 2022, the low detection of firearms and ammunition with narcotics may not reflect the current criminal landscape given the uptick in drug-related murders via the use of illegal firearms and ammunition. Criminals found in possession of illegal firearms and ammunition originate mainly within the gang-controlled communities of St. Joseph, Arima, Arouca, St. Augustine and Tunapuna. As such, this suggested that it is likely that linkages between seizures and drug related murders may exist within these communities.

AN OVERVIEW OF DRUG CRIMES

Both drug possession and drug trafficking charges begin with someone arrested for having drugs in their possession. However, the similarities end there. A drug possession charge means that illegal drugs were found on one's person, in his/her vehicle/property, or anywhere to which he/she had reasonable access. Being charged with drug possession could also mean that a person was caught using drugs during the time of his/her arrest. Drug trafficking however, means possession with intent to sell or distribute these illicit substances. It includes the manufacture, transport, sale or distribution of illegal substances, but it is also a crime defined by weight and measurement. This means that if a person is found to have drugs in their possession and the amount exceeds the legal limit, he/she can be found guilty of drug trafficking.

According to a 2014 United Nations Policy Brief, there are gender dimensions to the global drug problem, with males being the majority of those using and/or trafficking drugs. The prevalence of males in drugs and drug-related crime is reflected locally when one examines the trends in drug arrests as highlighted hereafter. A breakdown of drug arrests and convictions by gender is also provided to underscore the gendered reality.

It is noteworthy that there is no simple linear relationship between the data on arrests and convictions. This is because a criminal conviction is a judicial ruling that the accused has committed a crime. Judicial rulings may not necessarily occur in the same year in which the accused was arrested.

TRENDS IN DRUG ARRESTS

Between 2019 and 2023 a total of ten thousand and forty four (10,044) arrests were made for narcotic offences, most of whom committed crimes with respect to possession of cannabis. This was followed by arrests for the possession of cocaine, with less arrests being made with respect to trafficking of cannabis and lastly, trafficking of cocaine. One may deduce from the data that drug possession may be more prevalent than drug trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago.

For each offence, a higher number of males were arrested as compared to females. In addition, the most prevalent narcotic was cannabis as it relates to arrests amongst males and females for both possession and trafficking. Records show that the largest proportion of arrests for the five year period under review was for the possession of cannabis. Nonetheless, there was a significant decrease in the number of arrests for the possession of cannabis from 2019 to 2022. It is noteworthy that 2023, recorded an 18% increase in the number of persons arrested for the possession of cannabis. This could be due in part to the fact that in December 2019, the Government amended the Dangerous Drugs Act to decriminalize the cultivation and possession of small quantities of cannabis. The Bill was proclaimed as law on December 23, 2019.

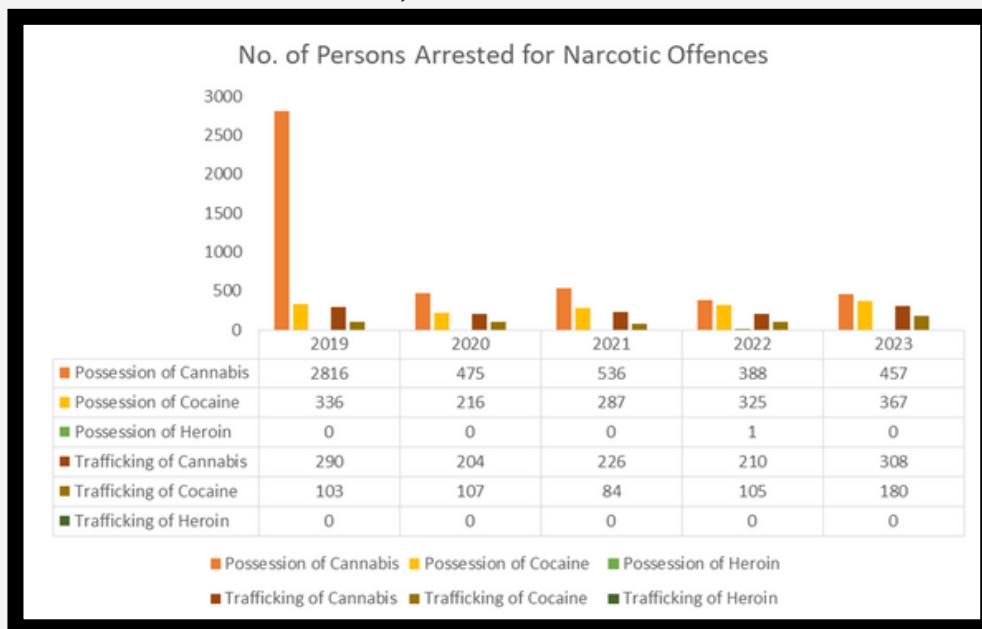


Figure 3: Number of Persons Arrested for Narcotic Offences

Source: CAPA

Notable Trends in Drug Arrests Observed Over the Period 2019 to 2023:

There was an 83% decrease in the number of persons arrested for the possession of Cannabis from 2019 to 2020, a 13% increase from 2020 to 2021 and a 28% decrease from 2021 to 2022. However, 2023 recorded an 18% increase in the number of persons arrested for the possession of cannabis.

TRENDS IN DRUG ARRESTS

There was a 30% decrease in the total number of arrests for the trafficking of cannabis from 2019 to 2020, an 11% increase from 2020 to 2021, a 7% decrease from 2021 to 2022 and a 32% increase from 2022 to 2023.

There was a 36% decrease in the total number of arrests for the possession of cocaine from 2019 to 2020, a 33% increase from 2020 to 2021, a 13% increase from 2021 to 2022 and 13% increase from 2022 to 2023.

There was a 4% increase in the total number of arrests for cocaine trafficking from 2019 to 2020, a 21% decrease from 2020 to 2021, a 25% increase from 2021 to 2022 and 42% increase from 2022 to 2023.

As it relates to Heroin, for the period 2019 to 2023, there were no recorded arrests for the possession and trafficking of Heroin. However, in 2022 one (1) arrest for the possession of Heroin.

TRENDS IN ARRESTS FOR DRUG POSSESSION

As regards possession, the highest number of males and females arrested for cannabis possession was recorded in 2019. In addition, 2019 recorded the highest number of males arrested for the possession of cocaine, while 2023 accounted for the largest number of arrests amongst females for the possession of cocaine. Over the five year period one (1) person, a female was arrested for the possession of Heroin, which was recorded in 2022.

The ratio of males to females arrested for the possession of cannabis was seventeen to one (17:1) in 2019, nine to one (9:1) in 2020, ten to one (10:1) in 2021, eight to 1 (8:1) in 2022 and twelve to one (12:1) in 2023.

The ratio of males to females arrested for the possession of cocaine in 2019 was twenty seven to one (27:1), in 2020 the ratio was thirty five to one (35:1), fifteen to one (15:1) in 2021, twenty six to one (26:1) in 2022 and eighteen to one (18:1) in 2023.

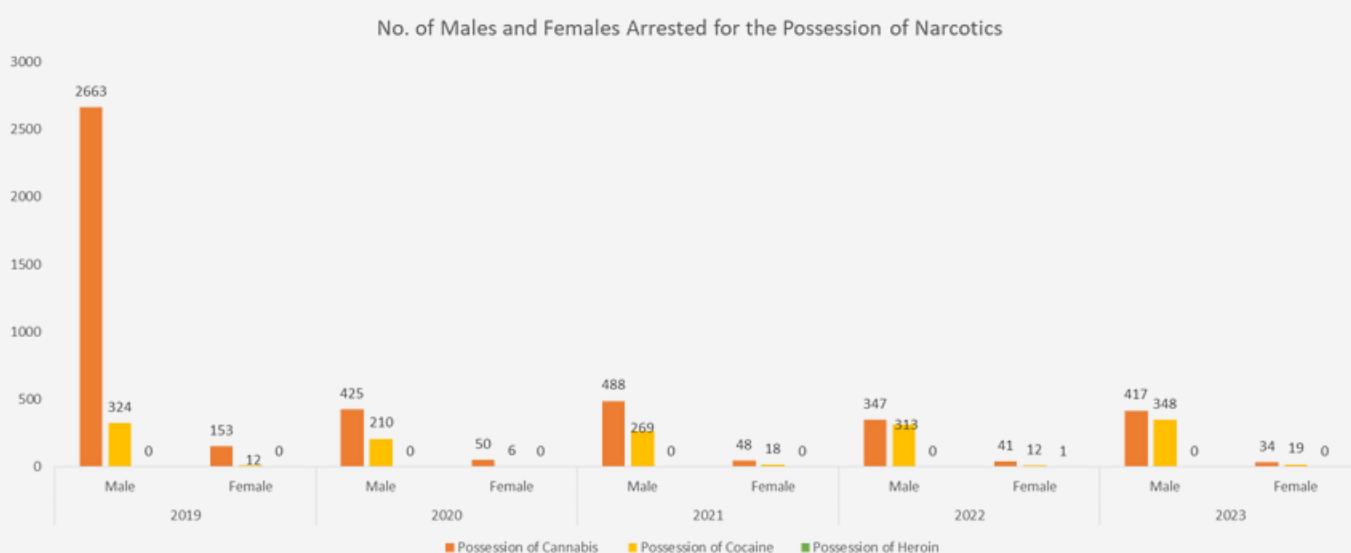


Figure 4: Number of Males and Females Arrested for the Possession of Narcotics

Source: CAPA

TRENDS IN ARRESTS FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING

As regards trafficking, the highest number of males arrested for cannabis and cocaine trafficking was recorded in 2023, while the largest number of females arrested for cannabis trafficking was recorded in 2021. 2022 both recorded the same number of females arrested for the trafficking of cocaine accounting for the highest number of females over the five year period.

The ratio of males to females arrested for the trafficking of cannabis was, twelve to one (12:1) in 2019, fifteen to one (15:1) in 2020, seven to one (7:1) in 2021, thirteen to one (13:1) in 2022 and twenty one to one (21:1) in 2023.

The ratio of males to females arrested for trafficking cocaine in 2019 six to one (6:1), in 2020 eight to one (8:1), in 2021 and 2022 was the ratio was five to one (5:1), , and in 2023 the ratio of males to females arrested for the trafficking of cocaine was nine to one (9:1).

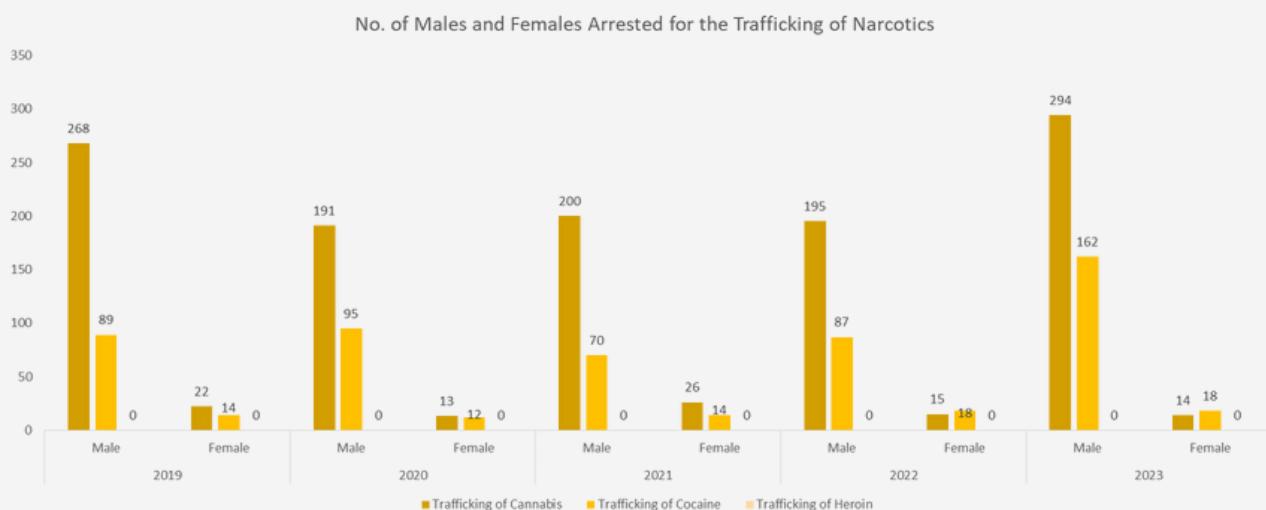
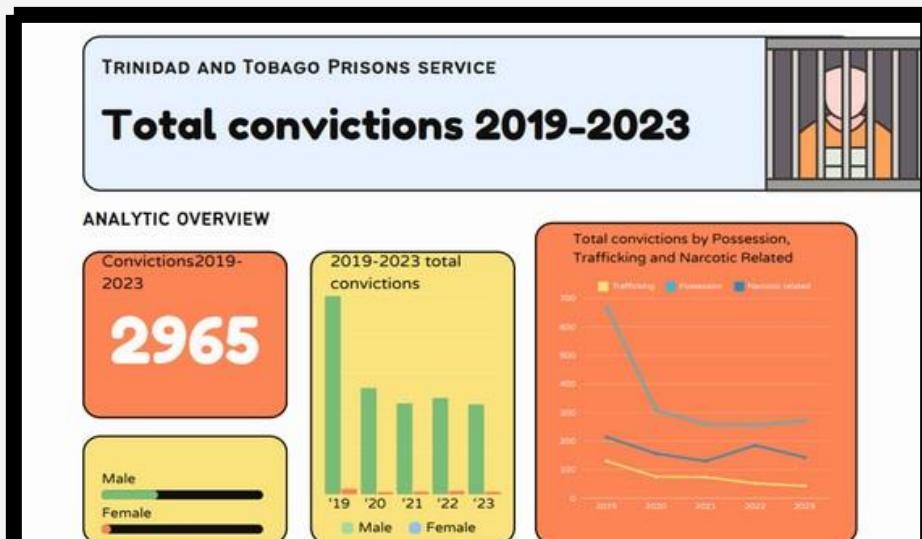


Figure 5: Number of Males and Females Arrested for the Trafficking of Narcotics

Source: CAPA

SNAPSHOT OF CONVICTIONS FOR NARCOTIC OFFENCES 2019-2023



The figures above shows a snapshot of the convictions for the period under review. Of the two thousand nine hundred and sixty five (2965) persons convicted during the period 98% were males and 2% were females. An overview of the data shows that 2019 recorded the highest number of convictions for males and females. Each year thereafter there was recorded steady decreases in convictions for narcotics and narcotic related incidents.



As it relates to female convictions for the period 2019-2023 the total number of females convicted amounted to sixty-nine (69) with 52.5% accounted for by convictions for possession, 33.3% for convictions relating to Trafficking, and 14.1% for convictions relating to Narcotic related offences.

CONVICTIONS BY GENDER 2023

For 2023 there has been a total of 447 males' convictions for narcotics and narcotic relates offences. 269 males or 60% of the convictions were for possession followed by 139 males or 31% for Narcotic related offences and 39 males or 9% of the convictions are accounted for by trafficking offences. There have been no recorded convictions for Heroin during the period under review



Figure 6: Number of Males Convicted for Narcotic Offences 2023
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

In 2023, two hundred and sixty-nine (269) men and two (2) women were convicted of drug possession. An overview of the data as it relates to the possession of narcotics shows that males possess a higher conviction rate than women. The data shows that for every one hundred and thirty-five (135) men convicted for the possession of narcotics one (1) female was convicted.

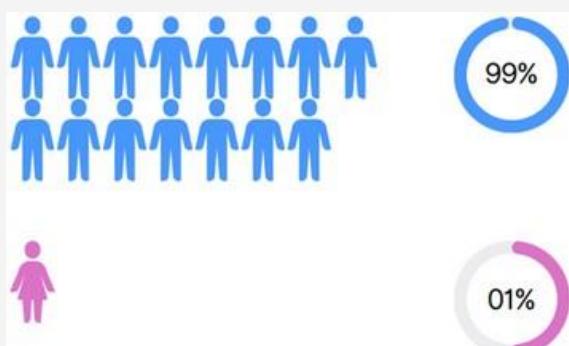


Figure 8: Percentage of Males and Females Convicted for the Possession of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

For 2023 there has been a total of 10 females' convictions for narcotics and narcotic relates offences. 2 females or 20% of the convictions were for possession followed by 4 females or 40% for Narcotic related offences and 4 females or 40% of the convictions are accounted for by trafficking offences. There have been no recorded convictions for Heroin during the period under review



Figure 7: Number of Females Convicted for Narcotic Offences 2023
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

In 2023, a total of forty-three (43) persons were convicted for the trafficking of narcotics. Of this total, thirty nine were males and four (4) were females. Therefore, for every ten (10) males convicted for trafficking offences one (1) female was convicted.

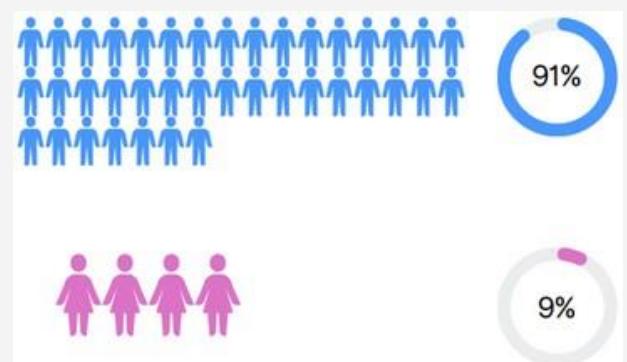


Figure 9: Percentage of Males and Females Convicted for the Trafficking of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

MALES CONVICTED FOR THE POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS 2019-2023

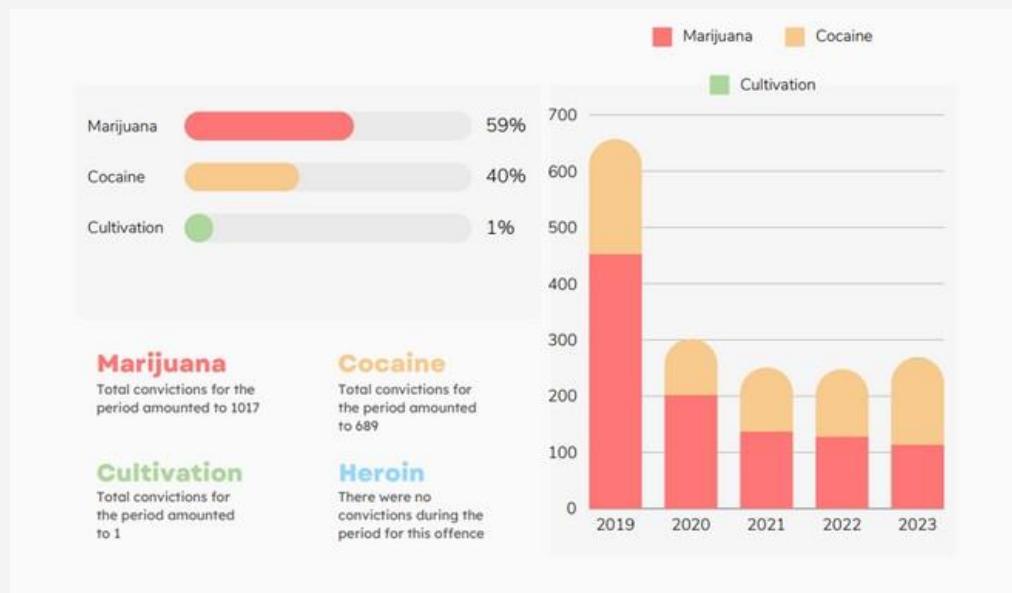


Figure 10: Males Convicted for the Possession of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

For the period under review (2019 to 2023) the total number of males convicted for the possession of narcotics was one thousand, seven hundred and twenty seven (1727). Of this, one thousand and seventeen (1017) or 59% were for convictions regarding the possession of marijuana. Six hundred and eighty nine (689) or 41% accounted for convictions as it relates to the possession of cocaine and there was one (1) conviction for cultivation.

From 2019 to 2020 there was a 55% decrease in conviction for possession of Marijuana the largest decline for the period. During the period 2020-2021, a 32% decrease in convictions was recorded. For the periods 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 a 7% and 11% decline in convictions was recorded respectively.

Whilst a constant decline in convictions for marijuana possession was noted the convictions for cocaine possession fluctuated. For the period 2019-2020 a decline of 51% in convictions the only period during which a decline in convictions was recorded. For the remaining periods under review 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 increases in convictions of 14%, 6% and 28% respectively were recorded.

It should be noted the there was no report of convictions for the possession of Heroin for the period under review.

MALES CONVICTED FOR THE TRAFFICKING OF NARCOTICS 2019-2023

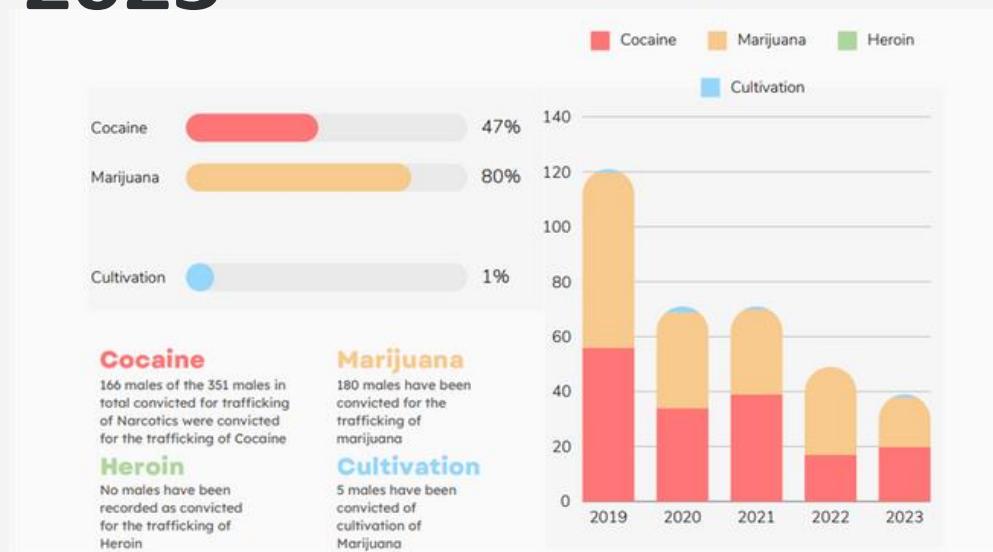


Figure 11: Males Convicted for the Trafficking of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

As it relates to the trafficking of marijuana a total of three hundred and fifty-one (351) males were convicted during the period under review (2019 to 2023). Convictions for the trafficking of marijuana continued to exceed that of convictions for the trafficking of cocaine. Marijuana convictions accounted for 80% of the convictions while cocaine trafficking accounted for 47% of the convictions.

The percentage change in convictions for trafficking of cocaine for the period 2019-2020 was a 39% decline, while 2020-2021 recorded a 15% increase in convictions. However, during the period 2021 to 2022, a 56% decrease was recorded, accounting for the largest decline for the period under review. Despite this decline, 2023 recorded an 18% increase in convictions from 2022.

Regarding the trafficking of marijuana, the period 2021-2022 was the only period to record a decline which was a 3% decline. For the periods 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 recorded increases in convictions of 45%, 11% and 44% respectively.

It is noteworthy however that convictions for the cultivation of marijuana continue to fluctuate over the period 2019-2023. For the periods 2019-2020 and 2022-2023 there was recorded a 100% increase in convictions for cultivation. However, for the periods 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 there was a 50% and 100% decrease in convictions respectively.

No conviction for trafficking of Heroin by males was recorded for the period under review.

MALES CONVICTED FOR NARCOTIC RELATED OFFENCES 2019-2023

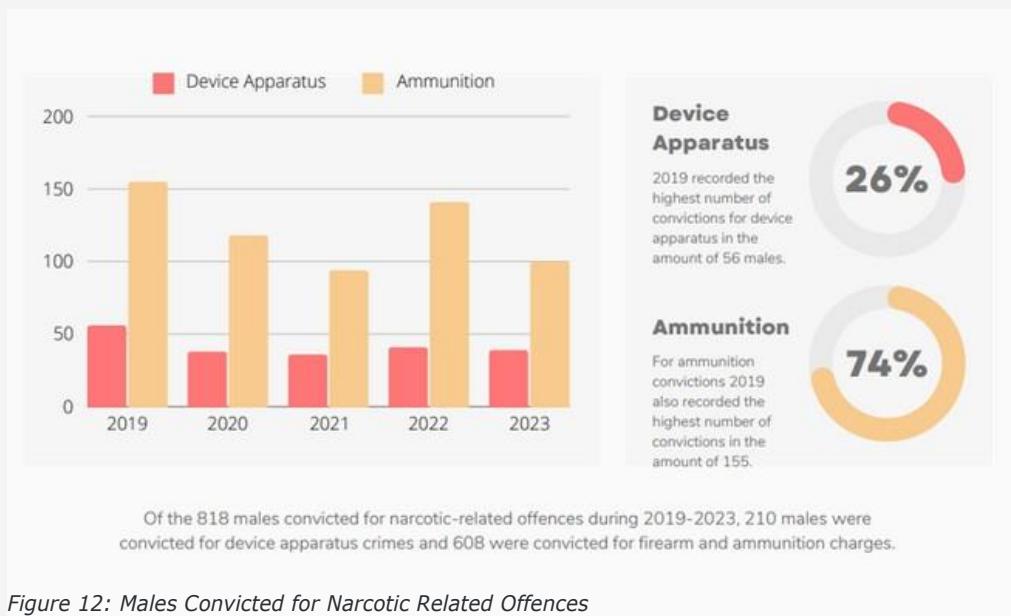


Figure 12: Males Convicted for Narcotic Related Offences
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

In relation to convictions for firearms and ammunition for the periods 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 the data recorded showed a 24%, 20% and 29% decrease in convictions of males for these offences. Further, for the period 2021-2022 there was a recorded increase in convictions of 50% for these offences.

Regarding convictions of males for device apparatus, the data showed an increase in convictions for the periods 2021-2022 of 14%. Additionally, decreases in convictions have been recorded for the periods 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023.

FEMALES CONVICTED FOR THE TRAFFICKING OF NARCOTICS 2019-2023

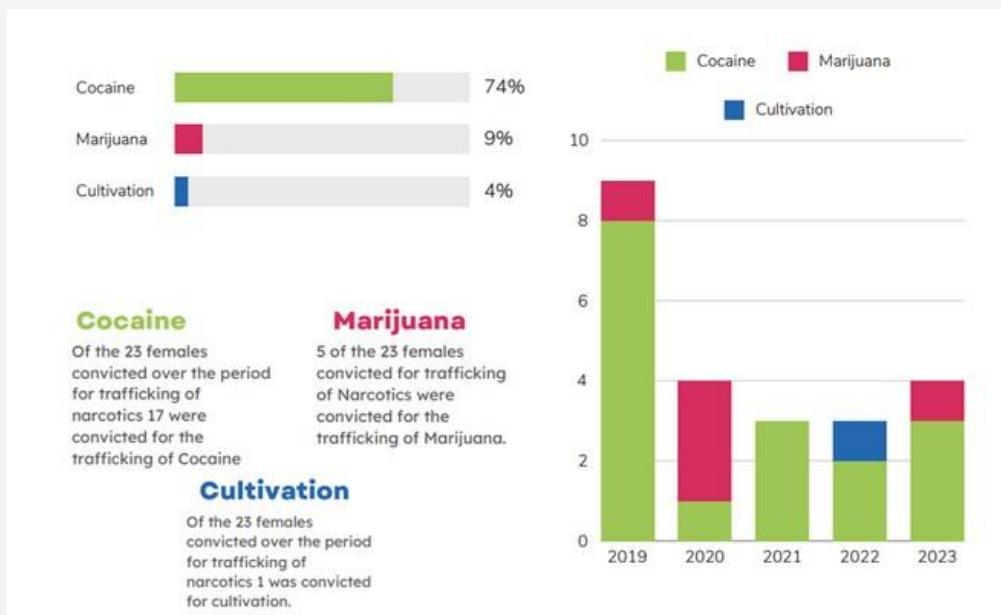


Figure 13: Females Convicted for the Trafficking of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

Of the twenty-three (23) females convicted for trafficking of narcotics, 74% accounted for convictions for the trafficking of cocaine, 9% for convictions for the trafficking of marijuana and 4% for cultivation.

As it relates to convictions for cocaine trafficking, the periods 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 recorded decreases by 87% and 53% respectively. The periods 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 recorded increases in convictions by 200% and 50% respectively.

Trafficking of marijuana convictions for the period under review showed a 200% increase in convictions over the period 2019-2020. 2020-2021 recorded a decline of 100% in convictions while 2021-2022 recorded no convictions. The final period under review 2022-2023 recorded a 100% increase in convictions.

No conviction for trafficking of heroin by females was recorded for the period under review.

FEMALES CONVICTED FOR THE POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS 2019-2023

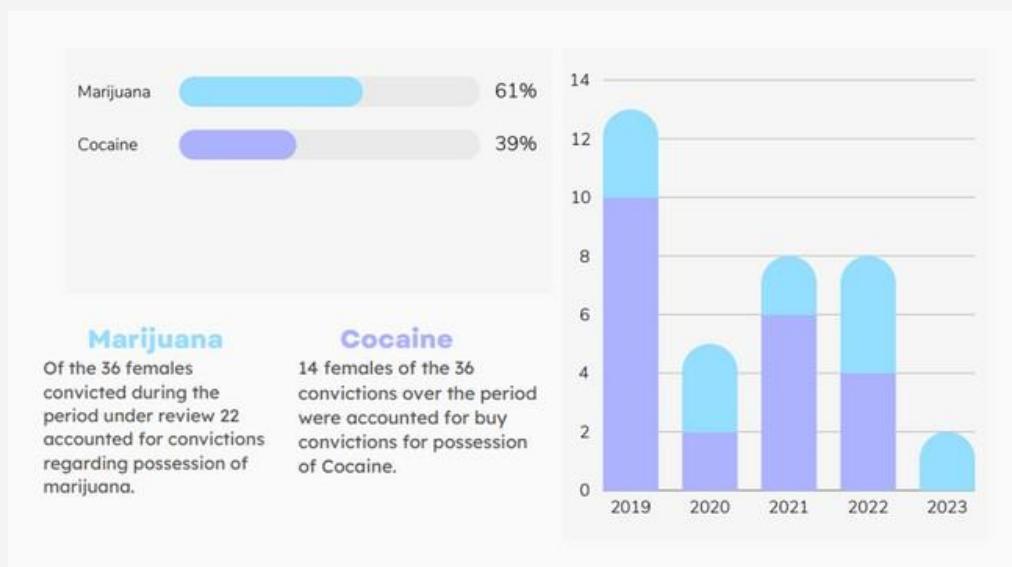


Figure 14: Females Convicted for the Possession of Narcotics
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

Of the thirty-six females (36) convicted for possession, 39% were for the possession of cocaine and 61% for the possession of marijuana. For the period under review, there were no female convictions recorded for the possession of heroin.

The number of convictions recorded for the possession of cocaine remained consistent for the years 2019 and 2020. However, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 recorded decreases of 33% and 50% respectively. For 2021-2022 a 100% increase in convictions was recorded.

As it pertains to convictions for the possession of marijuana, twenty-two (22) females were convicted during the period under review.

2020-2021 and 2022-2023 recorded decreases of 33% and 50% respectively. 2021-2022 recorded a 100% increase while the number of recorded convictions in 2019 and 2020 remained consistent.

FEMALES CONVICTED FOR NARCOTIC RELATED OFFENCES 2019-2023

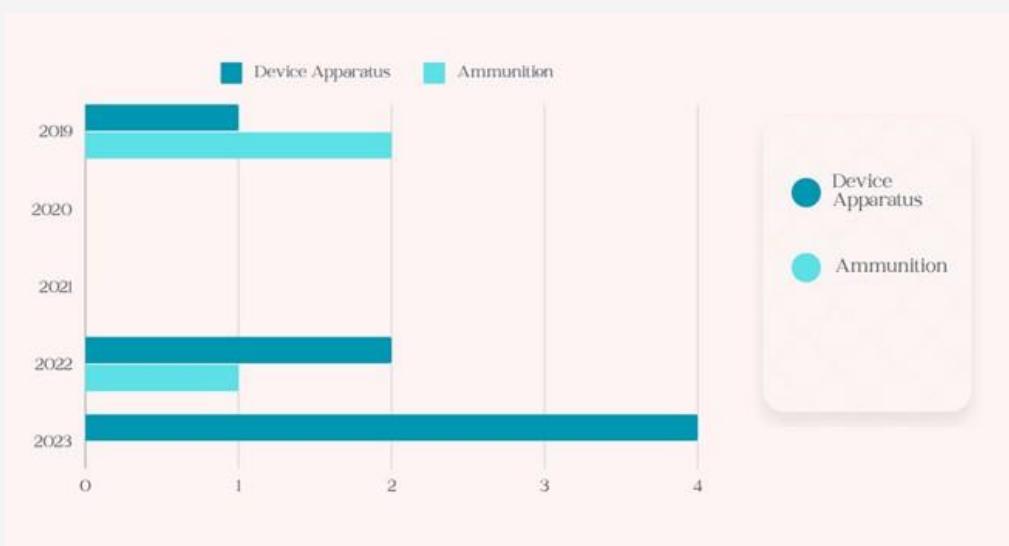


Figure 15: Females Convicted for Narcotic Related Offences

Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

A total of ten (10) females were convicted for narcotic related offences for the period 2019 to 2023. 2022 recorded the highest number of females convicted for possession of device apparatus while for firearms and ammunitions 2019 recorded the highest number of convictions. It should be noted that for 2020 and 2021 there were no recorded convictions.

CONVICTIONS BY AGE GROUP

The most prevalent age groups by year as reflected in the figures below for the period 2019 to 2023 were as follows:

- 2019, the age group 25-29;
- 2020, the age group, 25-29;
- 2021, the age group 25-29;
- 2022, the age group 35-39; and in
- 2023, the age group 30-34

2019

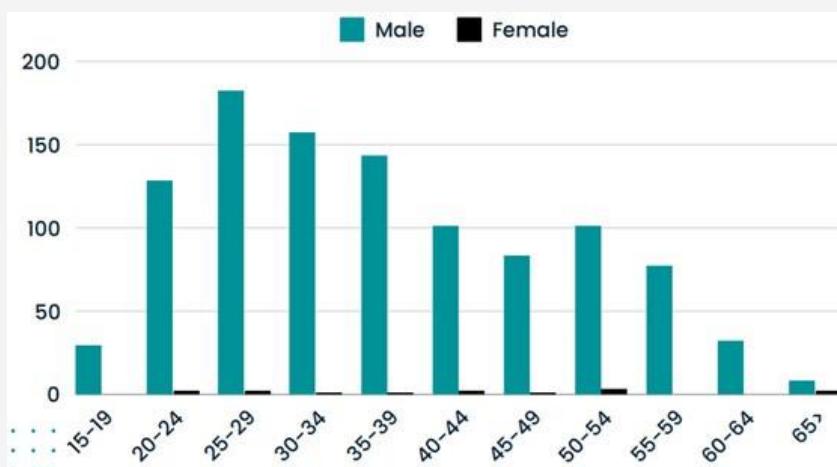


Figure 16: Number of Males and Females Convicted by Age Group 2019
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

2020

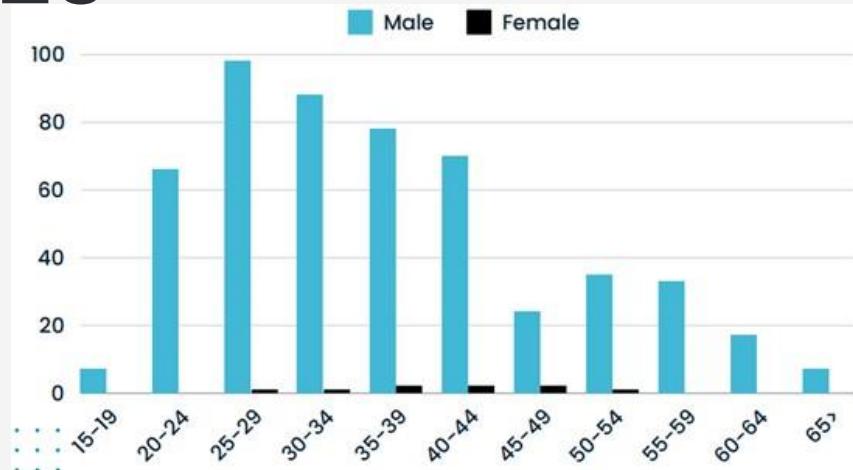


Figure 17: Number of Males and Females Convicted by Age Group 2020
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

CONVICTIONS BY AGE GROUP

2021

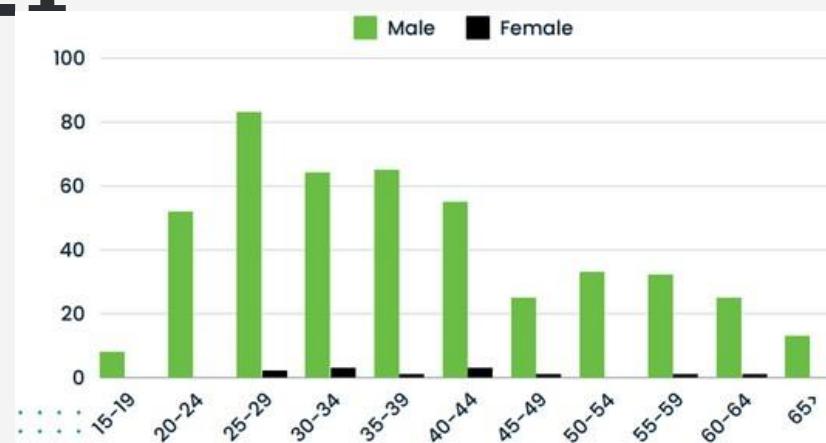


Figure 18: Number of Males and Females Convicted by Age Group 2021
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

2022

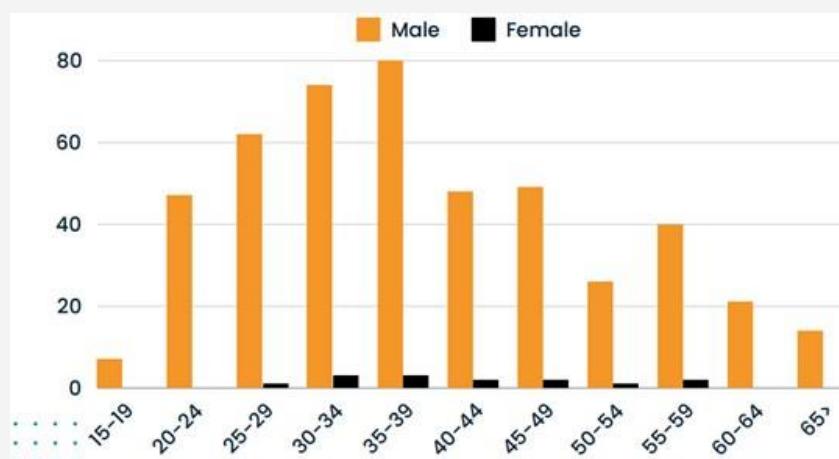


Figure 19: Number of Males and Females Convicted by Age Group 2022
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

2023

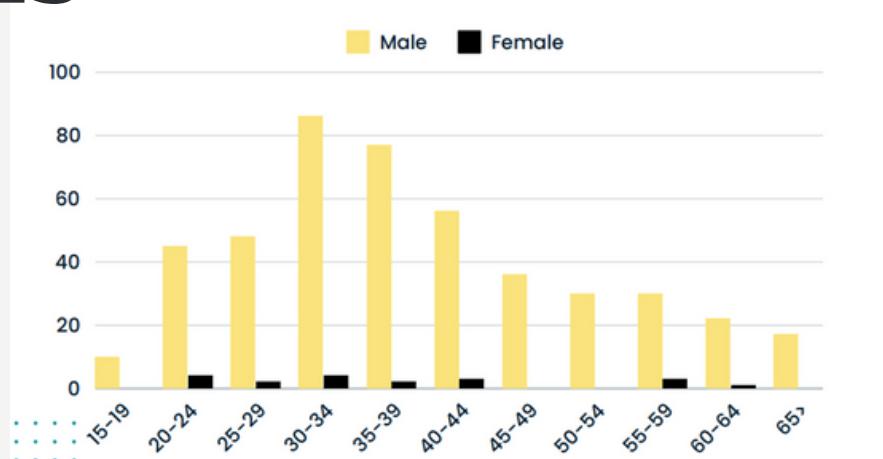


Figure 20: Number of Males and Females Convicted by Age Group 2023
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service

YOUNG OFFENDERS REMANDED

The primary source of data for this section was derived from the 2018 re-branded Youth Transformation and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC) (formerly the Youth Training Centre (YTC)). It is an institution under the ambit of the Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Service, and has as its philosophy “the process of reform and training which would enable those committed to its custody to return to, and function beneficially, in the society from which, by due process of law, they have been temporarily set apart.”

The total intake at YTRC for the period 2019 to 2022 for drug related offences, including both male and female was twenty five (25). It is noteworthy that no females were remanded in 2022 and 2023 for narcotic and narcotic related offences. For the five year period under review, 2019 recorded the highest number of residents remanded for narcotic and narcotic related offences. It accounted for 64% of the total number of residents remanded for narcotic offences over the five year period. There was a continuous reduction in the number of residents remanded for narcotic and narcotic related offences from 2020 to 2022. This may also, in some part, be due to the decriminalization of cannabis in 2019. But it may also be related to the pandemic or possible changes in the availability of drugs, or drug habits. However, 2023 saw an 80% increase in the number of residents remanded.

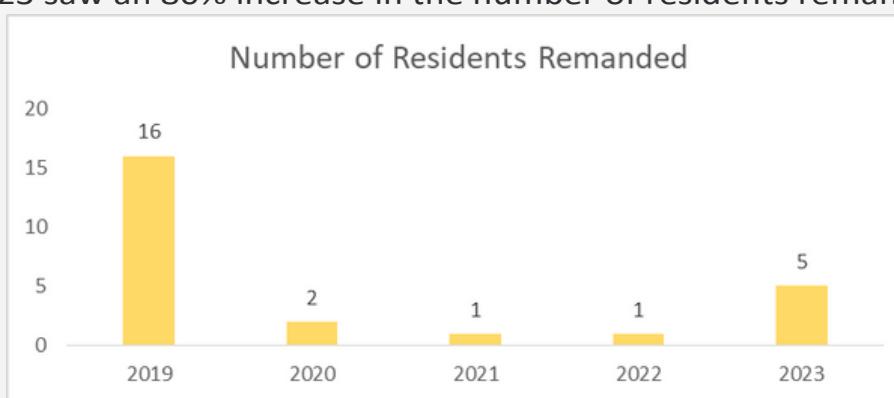


Figure 21: Total Number of Young Offenders Remanded for Drug Offences
Source: YTRC

As shown in the table below, the most prevalent offence recorded for the five year period was Possession of cannabis, followed by the possession of cannabis for the purpose of Trafficking.

| Year | Possession of Cannabis | Possession of Cocaine | Possession of Cannabis for the Purpose of Trafficking | Possession of Cocaine for the Purpose of Trafficking |
|------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 2019 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2020 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2021 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2022 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2023 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Table 11: Number of Young Offenders Remanded for Possession and Trafficking Offences
Source: YTRC

DEPORTEES FOR DRUG RELATED OFFENCES

The Immigration Division, Ministry of National Security, recorded a total of eighty two (82) persons deported to Trinidad and Tobago for drug related offences over the period 2019 to 2023. 2019 recorded the highest number of deportees on drug related offences, accounting for 39% of the total number of deportees for the five year period. The table below shows that there was a continuous reduction in the total number of deportees recorded from 2019 to 2023. An overview of the data provided by the Immigration Division, highlights that the majority of persons were deported for offences as it relates to the possession of narcotics.

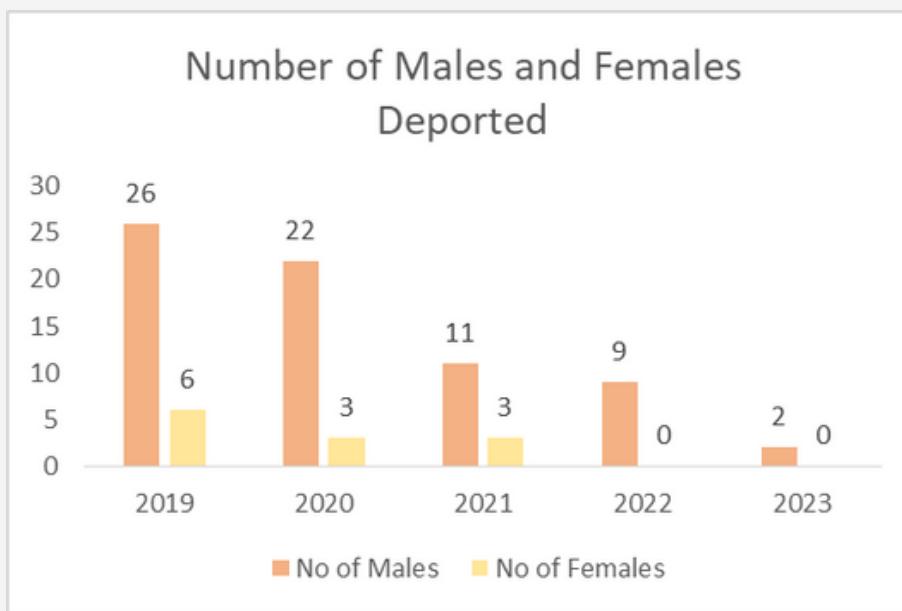


Figure 22: Total Number of Males and Females Deported 2019 to 2023
Source: Immigration Division

For the five year period under review, the number of females deported for drug related offences was minimal in comparison to that of their male counterparts, accounting for 85% of the total number of deportees.

| Deporting Country | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Barbados | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Canada | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| UK | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| USA | 26 | 20 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 62 |
| Venezuela | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 32 | 25 | 14 | 9 | 2 | 82 |

Table 12: List of Deporting Countries
Source: Immigration Division

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT) is the only organization legally mandated to receive information on suspicious transactions and suspicious activities from Reporting Entities required under the law to report these transactions and activities. The FIUTT contributes to Trinidad and Tobago's Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) efforts by providing useful intelligence and information to support the operations of local and foreign authorities in their investigation and prosecution of Money laundering, Financing of Terrorism and related criminal activity. To this end, the FIUTT requests and collates information, conducts analyses on same and disseminates the results to authorized local and foreign authorities. From the analyses conducted during the period under review, the FIUTT identified the following indicators, trends and patterns of drug trafficking:

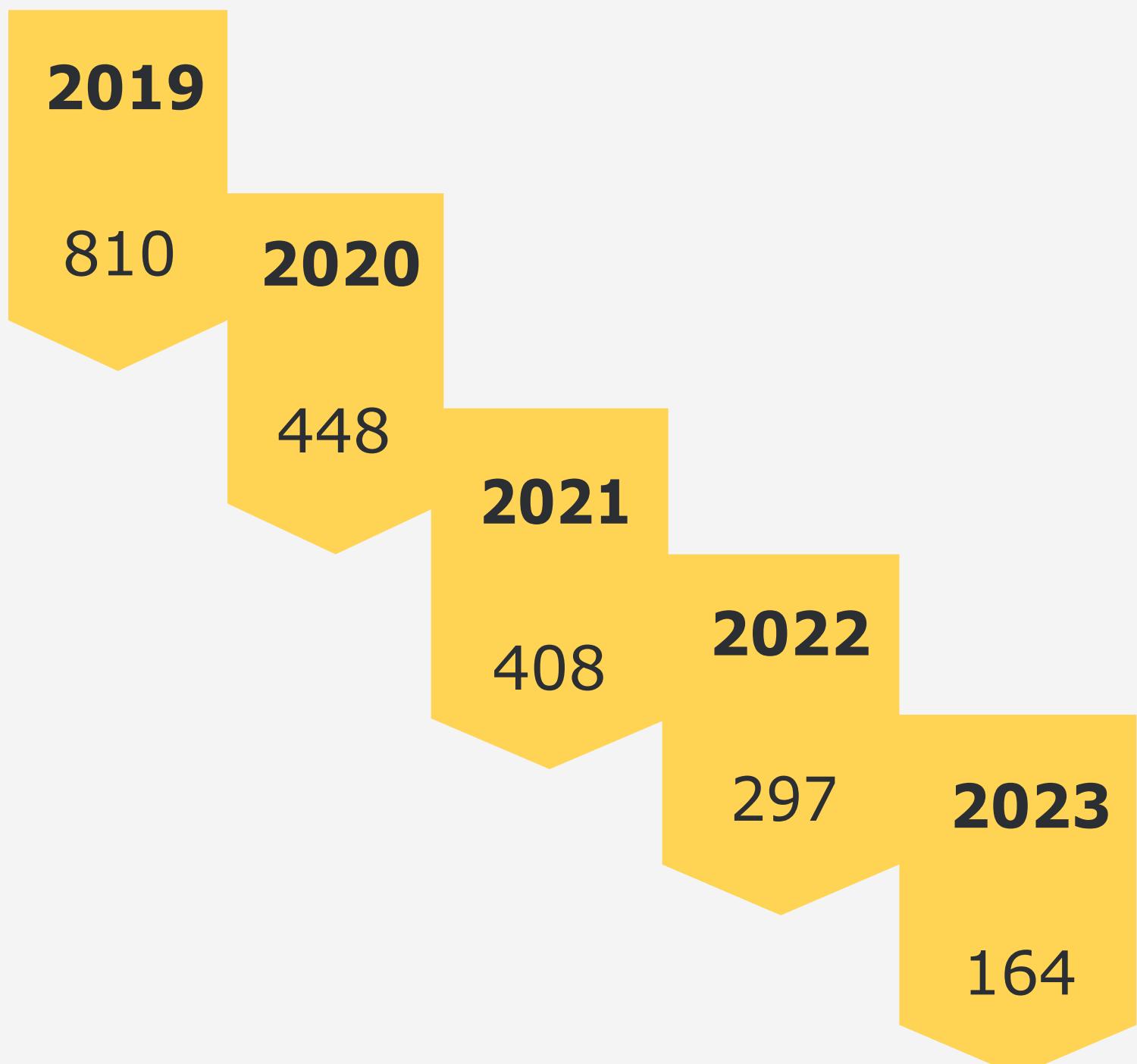
- Large cash transactions conducted over short periods of time;
- Multiple funds transfers involving a high risk drug countries;
- Multiple funds transfer to common beneficiaries and/or to persons located within the same geographical area;
- Individuals working together to break up one transaction into two or more transactions and
- Transactions accompanied by information which appear false or contradictory

For the reporting period October 2019 to September 2020, drug trafficking was suspected in 92 STRs/SARs, 5% of the total number of reports. For the reporting period October 2020 to September 2021, drug trafficking was suspected in 26 STRs/SARs, 1.6% of the total number of reports. For the period October 2021 to September 2022, drug trafficking was suspected in 35 STRs/SARs, 3.7 % of the total number of reports. For the period October 2022 to September 2023, drug trafficking was suspected in 8 STRs/SARs, 0.8% of the total number of reports.

The total dollar value of the STRs/SARs for drug trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago dollars for the reporting period October 2022 to September 2023 was one million, two hundred and thirty three thousand, eight hundred and eighty five (\$1,233,885). This reflects a 65% decrease in the dollar value from October 2021 to September 2022, which was a reported three million, five hundred and sixty two thousand, and fifty (\$3,562,050).

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

For the period 2019 to 2023, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service recorded an 89% decrease in the number of DUI offences recorded.





CHAPTER 2:

DEMAND REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Demand Reduction Sector has a dual responsibility to:

- Undertake drug prevention programmes and activities aimed at preventing susceptible members of the population from engaging in drug use, reduce their inclination to engage in such actions; and
- Treat and rehabilitate such drug dependent members of the population

The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (ADAPP) coordinate drug abuse prevention and demand reduction initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago respectively and supports the efforts of non-governmental and other organizations involved in substance use prevention.

DRUG PREVENTION

Effective prevention strategies can minimize the disease burden by delaying the start of use, reducing problematic use and reducing the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs. Drug prevention approaches are very varied, ranging from those that target society as a whole to interventions focusing on at-risk individuals.

In Trinidad and Tobago, most prevention strategies focus on substance use in general; while some also consider associated problems, such as violence, crime and sexual risk behaviour. One of the main challenges in drug use prevention is aligning different strategies that range from providing contextual and evidenced-based information to specific target groups, while also ensuring sufficient population coverage.

DRUG TREATMENT

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, the term “treatment” refers to “the process that begins when psychoactive substance abusers come into contact with a health provider or any other community service, and may continue through a succession of specific interventions until the highest attainable level of health and well-being is reached.” Therefore, treatment aims at reducing the dependence on psychoactive substances, as well as reducing the negative health and social consequences caused by, or associated with, the use of such substances.

In Trinidad and Tobago, treatment and rehabilitation is undertaken using both inpatient and outpatient services. They are offered by both Government and civil society organizations, which include those affiliated with religious organizations and other secular bodies.

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) coordinates drug abuse prevention and demand reduction initiatives in Trinidad.

NADAPP continued its strategic focus on capacity building in the drug demand reduction sector and focused on strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders through targeted training sessions. This approach allowed for greater impact over time and better leveraging of resources across the sector. Some of these initiatives conducted during the period included the following:

1. Train the Trainer/Capacity Building Initiatives
2. Substance Use Prevention Working Group
3. Employee Wellness Session
4. Outreach Activities
5. Be Trinity SMART Programme

Train the Trainer/Capacity Building Initiatives

1. School Health Safety and Security Officer Training:

The workshop series entitled “Towards a Drug-Free School Environment” Capacity Building Workshop for the Health Safety and Security Services Unit, Ministry of Education was conducted for school Health Safety and Security officers during August 2023 at the Five Rivers Secondary School and Guaico Secondary School.

This Capacity Building Workshop for the School Health Safety and Security Services Unit was designed to support the unit’s role in responding to drug related incidents amongst students. The workshop equipped professionals with current information, resources, laws, and policies regarding student drug use. Research has indicated that students are at risk for engaging in substance use and trafficking. As a result, it is crucial that the SHSSOs are prepared to implement the prevention methods and utilize the information gained in this workshop to ensure student health, safety, and security.

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) supported the implementation of this initiative by facilitating a presentation from a law enforcement perspective and an educational display of licit and illicit drugs and paraphernalia.

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Beneficiaries:

- Thirty-two (32) School Health Safety and Security Officers (SHSSO) from Northeastern and Southeastern Education Districts;
- Twenty two (22) Officers from the Port of Spain Education district;
- Three (3) principals from the Northeastern Education District (NEED);
- Two (2) School Health Safety and Security Unit District Coordinators; and
- A total of Fifty- four (54) School Health, Safety and Security Officers and three (3) Principals were trained in recognizing drug use and its effects. These participants represented three (3) Educational Districts of the Ministry of Education.



Workshop for Health Safety and Security Officers Held at Guiaco Secondary School

2. Police Officer Training for a Marijuana Eradication Task Force: NADAPP conducted a Training session for the course Cannabis Supply and Demand Management, which targeted twenty eight (28) police officers who are part of a Marijuana Eradication Task Force on September 18, 2023. The following areas were covered in this training further to consultation with the Advanced Programmes and Services Unit Faculty of Advanced Law Enforcement Education and Training of the Police Academy:

- Rationale for Marijuana Suppression:
- Identify the negative outcomes of marijuana use for individuals and society
- Interventions available and how they can impact demand reduction:

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Substance Use Prevention Working Group

This stakeholder group, led by NADAPP and supported by the NDC, continued to bring together key governmental and non-governmental organisations in the field of Drug Demand Reduction on a quarterly basis in order to share experiences, best practices and build capacity in the field. Capacity building sessions covered the following topics:

- Adult Drug Treatment Court Process
- Drug Information Network Annual Report 2022 Presentation
- Alternative Development Measures for Drug Demand Reduction

Employee Wellness Session

NADAPP conducted a presentation on the importance of Employee Wellness Policy and its alignment with the National Drug Policy and Operational Plan 2021-2025. This was delivered in a special meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and her team of technical officers. Areas addressed included an overview of NADAPP's role and mandate and opportunities for collaboration towards the development of a draft Employee Wellness Policy.

Outreach Activities

Drug education activities (interactive presentations and information dissemination booths) were conducted in schools, communities and workplaces in 2023, and addressed the following areas:

- Concepts of drug use, misuse, and abuse
- Physical and Psychological effects of licit and illicit substances
- Prevention Strategies/Coping Mechanisms
- Resources for Treatment and Rehabilitation



NADAPP staff engaged at school outreach activities



Members of the public interacting with NADAPP's educational materials

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

A total of eighty (80) outreach activities was conducted during 2023, which targeted a total of Eleven thousand, five hundred and fifty six (11,556) beneficiaries. Details of these drug education sessions are as follows:

| Initiative | Number of Outreach Activities | No. of Beneficiaries |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| School (Primary, Secondary, Tertiary) | 39 | 7834 |
| Preschools (Number of Students Receiving Trinity Smart Material) | | 850 |
| Workplace | 4 | 221 |
| Community (inclusive of vocational, police youth clubs and religious organizations) | 30 | 2437 |
| Special Projects/Initiatives eg School Safety Officers, police officers | 7 | 214 Webinar viewership increases during 2023 |

Table 13: Outreach Activities Conducted by NADAPP

Source: NADAPP



NADAPP Staff engaged in outreach activities

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Be Trinity SMART Programme

The Be Trinity SMART Programme is a drug prevention strategy developed and designed in Trinidad and Tobago to provide educators of young (early childhood) children with access to culturally relevant, age appropriate materials for the delivery of drug education. The programme, at every stage, from conceptualisation, content development, piloting, training, monitoring and evaluation, has been collaborative with the Ministry of Education.

Training of Early Childhood Care and Education administrators, teachers and primary school teachers was conducted virtually during 2020 and 2021. These stakeholders were trained in basic drug education and strategies for teaching lessons on the harmful effects of drug use for young children. Trinity smart content (videos) were also broadcasted via Trinidad and Tobago Television Limited. A major component of the Trinity SMART Programme includes education materials such as puppets, stuffed toys, puzzles and books to aid in the delivery of lessons.



Trinity SMART Material on Display at a NADAPP Outreach Booth

Programme Beneficiaries:

Trinity Smart Educational materials including books, puzzles, puppets and stuffed toys were delivered for use in Eight hundred and fifty (850) ECCE, Private and Servol preschools in Trinidad during the period August - September 2023. Arrangements are being made for delivery of Trinity Smart materials to preschools in Tobago.

In October 2023, educational materials were also distributed to the Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education for use at primary schools and to the National Library and Information Systems Authority (NALIS) for use at all public libraries.

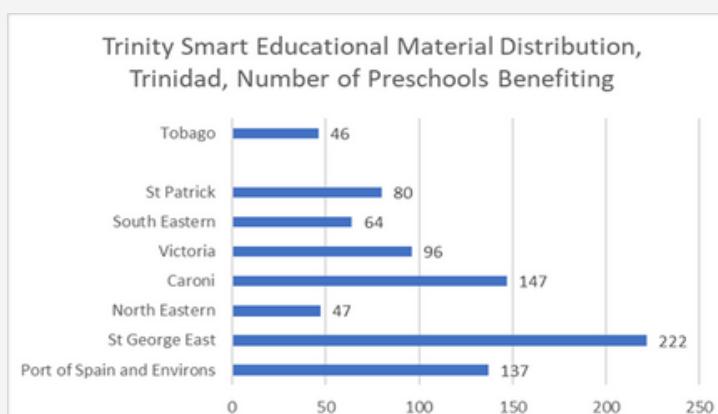


Figure 23: Trinity SMART Material Distribution
Source: NADAPP

DRUG PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

The Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programme (ADAPP) continues to provide support services for drug intervention and prevention, to promote the building of healthy homes, healthy communities and a healthier Tobago. It is therefore mandated to deliver substance abuse prevention awareness at schools and at the community level with a focus on education and training. The below table highlights the activities undertaken by ADAPP in 2023 as well as the number of persons that benefitted from these initiatives.

| ACTIVITY | DESCRIPTION | NUMBER OF SESSIONS/EVENTS | NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Health Centre Initiative | Disseminate information on substance use and misuse to persons accessing services at the Health Centres on the island. | 12 | 240 |
| Substance Misuse Symposium | Disseminate information to participants on marijuana and synthetic drug use. | 1 | 34 |
| ADAPP Life Skills Camp | Educate and equip campers with the necessary information and skills needed to resist substance use | 1 | 65 |
| Learning Enrichment Centre (LEC) | Disseminate information to students on substance use and misuse. | 26 | 280 |
| Clean Air Fair | Disseminate information to students on the effects of smoking. | 1 | 63 |
| Health Fairs / Camps | Disseminate information on issues surrounding substance use and misuse. | 4 | 277 |
| Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Sessions | Disseminate information to enrolled trainees in issues on surrounding substance misuse. | 2 | 25 |
| Media Appearances | Disseminate information on issues surrounding substance use and misuse. | 1 | NA |

Table 14: Outreach Activities Conducted by ADAPP
Source: ADAPP

DRUG TREATMENT

Coordination of Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Data

The NADAPP Secretariat is tasked by the Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) to be the repository for treatment centre intake data for the Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DINTT), which was launched in 2016. During fiscal 2023, efforts were made to improve the data collection process by implementing strategies to address gaps in the process.

One hundred and forty-seven (147) intake forms were collected for 2023 and following data verification was inputted into CICAD's database by NADAPP from the following centres during the period:

- ◆ Serenity Place Empowerment Centre Caura
- ◆ SAPTC
- ◆ Rebirth House Teen
- ◆ Challenge TT
- ◆ New Life Ministries Rehabilitation Centre - Mount St. Benedict New Life
- ◆ Ministries Rehabilitation Centre for Women- Palo Seco

Trends identified in the data:

There were one hundred and twenty-three (123) males and twenty-four (24) females receiving drug treatment reported by centres. The mean age of persons in treatment was forty (40) years old while the median was age thirty-nine (39) and the mode was age thirty-six (36).

40% of clients reported that they were either working or self-employed at the time of treatment, while 30% was unemployed.

One hundred and thirty-one (131) clients reported that their highest education levels achieved were as follows:

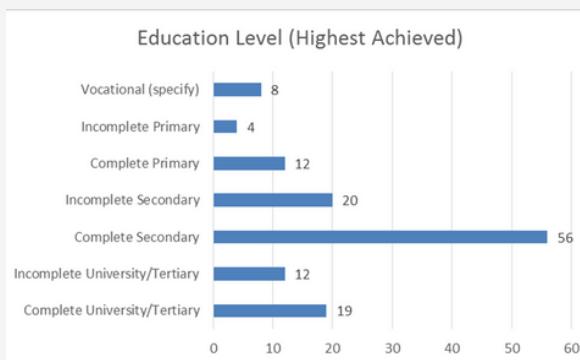


Figure 24: Educational Level of Persons in Treatment
Source: NADAPP

DRUG TREATMENT

The main substance for which clients were seeking treatment for was alcohol, followed by Cannabis:

| Main Substance for which treatment is sought: | Number of Clients |
|---|-------------------|
| Alcohol (rum, beer, wine, whisky, vodka, etc) | 58 |
| Cannabis/marijuana/ganja | 43 |
| Cocaine (powder) | 16 |
| Crack | 16 |
| Other | 6 |

Table 15: Main Substance Impacting

Treatment Source: NADAPP

Cough syrup, morphine, pethidine, hemp and Rivotril were also reported as the main substance for which some clients were seeking treatment as indicated in other above.

The table below shows a breakdown of secondary substances that clients sought treatment for.

| Secondary Substance seeking treatment for | Number of Clients |
|---|-------------------|
| Alcohol (rum, beer, wine, whisky, vodka, etc) | 19 |
| Cannabis/marijuana/ganja | 18 |
| Cocaine (powder) | 0 |
| Crack | 1 |
| Methamphetamines (MDMA) and other derivates | 1 |
| Tobacco | 31 |
| Other (please specify) | 3 |

Table 16: Secondary Substance Impacting

Treatment Source: NADAPP

When clients were asked about substances used without prescription in the last 30 days, in addition to alcohol, cannabis and crack, clients reported use of percocet (opioids), benzodiazepines, heroin, mushrooms, LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and cough syrup.

Clients were also asked whether they had been diagnosed with a psychiatric condition and one hundred and four (104) clients provided a response. Forty- one (41) of those clients responded positively. Clients reported being diagnosed with a range of psychiatric disorders including

- Depressive disorders,
- Schizophrenia Spectrum and other Psychotic Disorder, Anxiety Related
- Disorders,
- Bipolar and Related Disorders, Alcohol
- withdrawal Delirium,
- Alcohol Induced Psychotic Disorder and
- Cannabis Induced Psychotic Disorder.

CONCLUSION

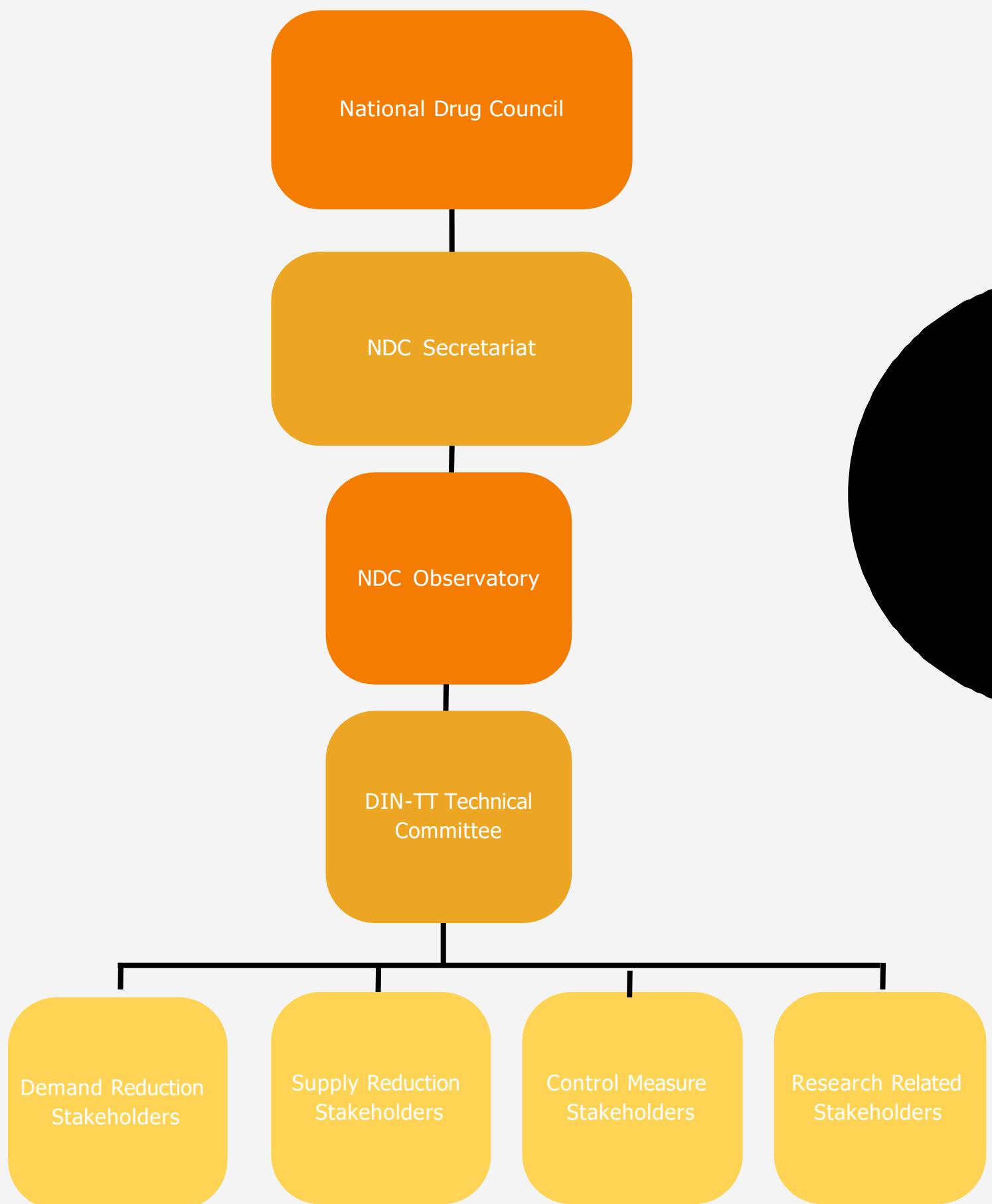
The Drug Information Network plays an important role in shaping effective policies in the drug control and drug demand reduction sector. By facilitating collaboration among Government agencies, and Non-Governmental organizations, the DIN-TT enables stakeholders to stay informed, share best practices and responses to evolving drug related challenges. Therefore, the DIN-TT continues to provide a conduit for the exchange of timely, accurate, and comprehensive information on emerging trends.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to utilize a combination of law enforcement measures, prevention initiatives and international cooperation in an attempt to reduce the prevalence and impact of drug trafficking and abuse.

To ensure a multi-disciplinary platform for the sharing of drug supply and drug control data, the National Drug Observatory in 2024 through the Drug Information Network will continue to develop drug-related information and statistics on the Trinidad and Tobago drug situation. It is also important for the Observatory to fill the research gaps that exist in the country to provide a deeper understanding of the new emerging trends that exist in the data for a deeper understanding of Trinidad and Tobago's drug situation.

APPENDIX I

DINTT Organisational Structure



APPENDIX II

Membership of the DIN-TT Technical Committee

Ministry of National Security:

- Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Unit
- National Drug Council (NDC) Secretariat
- Research Unit

Ministry of Health:

- National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP)

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services:

- Inter-Ministerial Research Council (IMRC)

Trinidad and Tobago Police Service:

- Crime and Problem Analysis Branch (CAPA)

APPENDIX III

Stakeholders of the DIN-TT

Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs:

- ◆ Central Authority
- ◆ Anti-Money Laundering/ Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Compliance Unit

Ministry of Health:

- ◆ Health, Policy, Research and Planning Unit
- ◆ National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP)

Ministry of Finance:

- ◆ Financial Intelligence Unit
- ◆ Customs and Excise Division

Ministry of National Security:

- ◆ Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Unit
- ◆ Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre
- ◆ Research Unit
- ◆ Immigration Division
- ◆ Trans National Organised Crime Unit (TOCU)

Treatment Centres:

- ◆ Helping Every Addict Live (H.E.A.L.)
- ◆ New Life Ministries Rehabilitation Centre
- ◆ Rebirth House
- ◆ Serenity Place
- ◆ Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Centre, Caura

Tobago House of Assembly:

- ◆ Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (ADAPP)

Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force:

- ◆ Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard
- ◆ Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard
- ◆ Trinidad and Tobago Regiment