



MOVIMENTOS

DRUGS · YOUTH · FAVELA



WHY YOUNG PEOPLE FROM FAVELAS NEED TO TALK ABOUT DRUGS?

Drugs, youth and **favela**

THE **Movimentos: drugs, youth & favela** was born out of the need to be heard in the drug policy debate. In Brazil, the government's tool to deal with illicit drugs is war, where the favela takes center stage. That is why we, young people from various favelas and outskirts, have decided that **a new drug policy for our cities and for our country is urgent.**

The war on drugs directly affects our day-to-day lives. For us, it means closed schools, change in routine, fear of leaving home, extreme concern for our well-being and that of our families. In the name of this war, the state justifies a series of violations of rights against us, young people from the favelas and outskirts.

But this is not our war. It was not us who declared the war on drugs. We are not the ones who decided that some drugs would be considered legal and some illegal. But we are the ones who die as a result of it.

The failure of the war on drugs is already recognized by many politicians, by society, by academics and activists in Brazil and in the world. Drug consumption has not dropped, illegal trade has not ended. On the contrary, the war on drugs has brought more violence, corruption, and inequality than one could imagine. Because of it, we have lost the power of a young generation - mostly blacks – who are murdered or imprisoned, and eventually become statistics.

But in this debate, the voice of the favela is still excluded. They talk about us and in our name, but almost never they hear what we have to say.

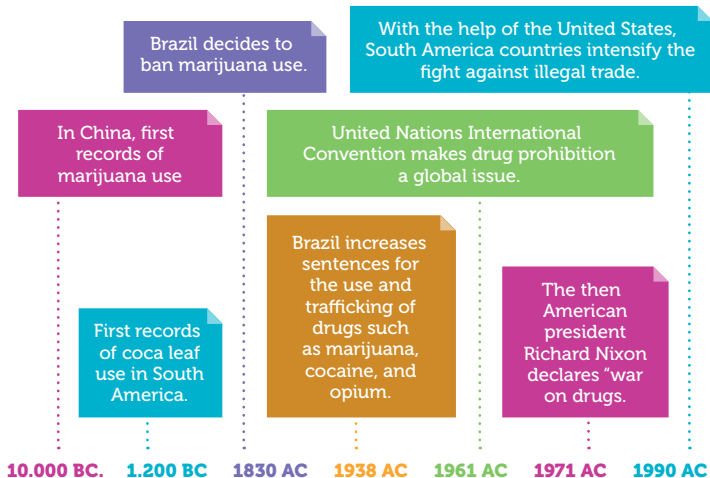
And we have a lot to say.

We believe that is not possible to construct alternatives without discussing the impact of the war on drugs in our lives, and without thinking about solutions that include us and give us opportunities to overcome decades of failed policies.

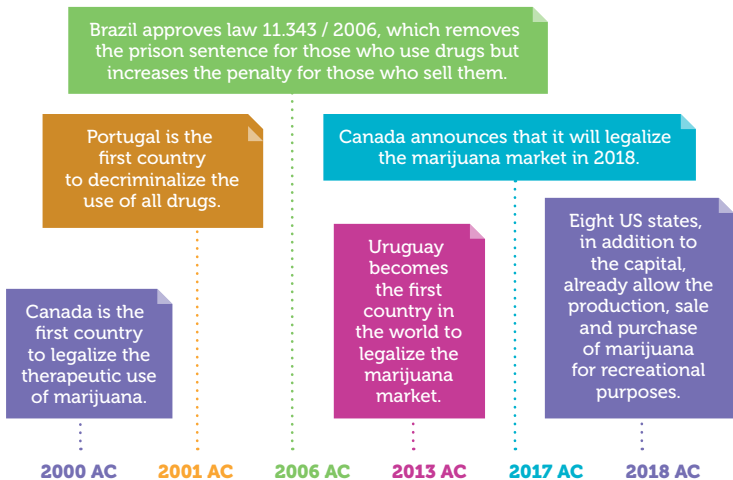
We are the Movimentos.

History of **drug** use

Did you know that humanity has always used drugs? Throughout history, substances available in nature have been used in the form of teas, extracts, and cigarettes, as medicines and stimulants for the body and the soul.



It was only in the 19th century (1801-1900) that people started talking about drug-related problems. It was when some plants and substances were **prohibited** by governments, and its users were treated as **criminals**.



The types of **use**

RECREATIONAL USE

It happens in moments of leisure and fun. It's the beer you drink at the barbeque or with friends at a bar.

THERAPEUTIC OR MEDICINAL USE

It is when you use a drug to relieve some pain or discomfort. It can be prescribed by a doctor or be self-medicated, such as when someone smokes a marijuana cigarette to relieve chronic pain.

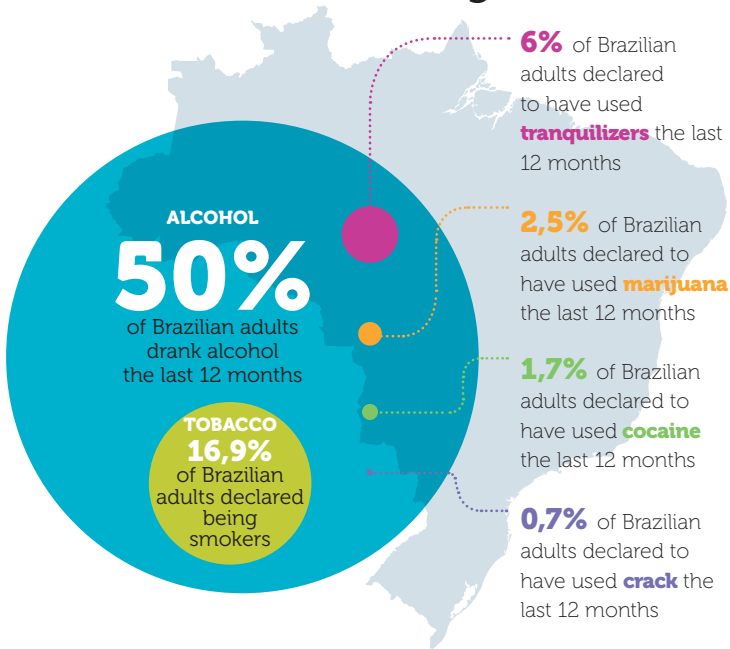
PROBLEMATIC USE

People who, for different reasons, put their health and other people's health at risk. For example, if you become aggressive when you drink or have risky conduct, such as drunk driving.

There are at least **250 million drug users in the world**.

However, **only 11%** of them develop **problematic use** of these substances. Or, every **10 people** who use drugs, **only 1** uses problematically¹.

Do you know what are the **most consumed** drugs in Brazil²?



When the use of drugs becomes a **problem**

Many people believe that addiction is only caused by reactions of the body to the substance used. People think it works like this: if you use a drug daily, when you try to stop using, your body will ask for more. Nowadays, there are more and more studies that point out that this is a limited vision: the personal characteristics and the social context in which the use occurs are also important points to explain why some people develop dependency and others do not.

Being in a vulnerable situation and exposed to violence are factors that contribute to problematic use. **In unsafe and unprotected places, where health and care services do not arrive, drug use tends to be more problematic³.**

In Brazil, between 2006 and 2008, 8,000 people died each year from drug use. But 96% of these deaths were caused by legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco ⁴.

Causes of death due to drug use



The prohibition helps make drug using more unsafe because it criminalizes and makes users afraid to seek help by having access to harm reduction programs and health services.

HOW THE PROHIBITION WORSENS THE SITUATION OF THE CRACK USER?

- It makes the access to clean material for use more difficult, favoring the sharing of utensils, such as pipes;
- It causes users to consume the drug in precarious and unsafe spaces, as they risk being arrested or assaulted;
- It disrupts access to health services.

What are the most **dangerous** drugs mais?

Dangerous drugs are those that put us at risk. In this sense, all drugs may or may not be dangerous, depending on the relationship that we establish with them.

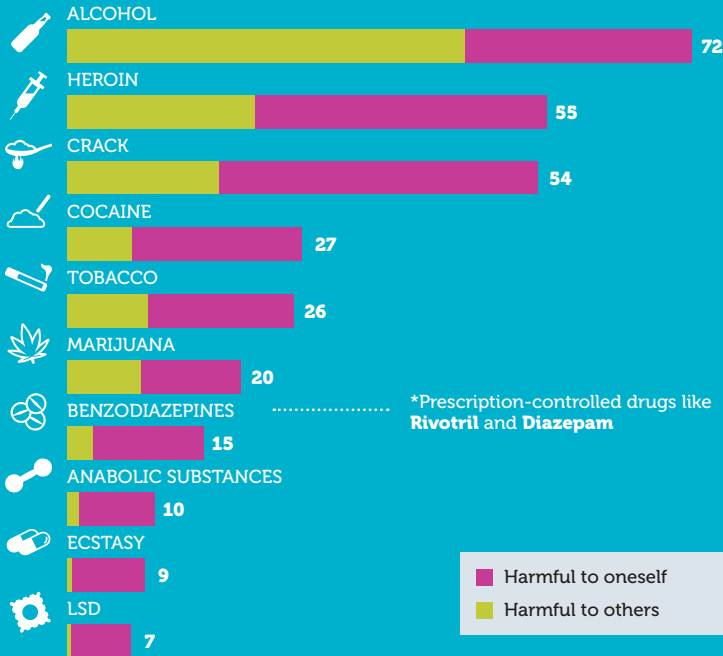
The data show that the drugs that cause more health problems are legalized. Meanwhile, illegal drugs are used as an excuse for police activity in the slums, killing more than the use of drugs itself.

Harm reduction works by making the use of drugs less harmful to the user, even if he or she does not want to, or cannot stop using it.

Examples: distribution of clean and disposable material for use of drugs (syringes, pipes, etc.); guidance on less harmful forms of use; social assistance for housing and health issues.

The most harmful drugs to individuals and society⁵

On a 0 to 100 scale of damage designed by the researchers

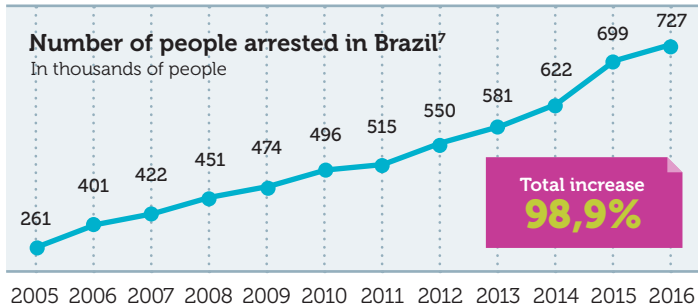


How does **Brazil** handle the drug problem?

Between 2005 and 2016, there was an almost **100%** increase in the number of people arrested in Brazil. To a large extent, this has to do with the **Drug Law 11,343**, of 2006, which ended the prison sentence for possession of drugs for personal consumption but increased the minimum sentence for drug trafficking to 5 years.

WE ARE ARRESTING THE SMALL FISHES

Most people arrested for drug trafficking in Brazil had no criminal records, no weapons, and was arrested on a small amount of drugs⁶.



WHO IS PUNISHED AND WHO IS NOT?

There is drug use in all social classes.

Studies show that young people from class A are the major drug users in Brazil⁸. But, even when consuming less, the poorest people are the main target of drug control policies.

The majority of those arrested and killed in the war on drugs are young, black, and living in slums and the outskirts, which shows how this policy is selective.

VIOLENCE-RELATED DEATH

Arresting more people did not help reduce street violence. Brazil has recorded more than **61,000** violent deaths by 2016⁹. These numbers place Brazil among the countries with the highest murder rates - **more than those who suffer from wars and other armed conflicts, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan.**

To discuss drug policy in Brazil we need to talk about racism.

What does that mean? That the government spends a lot of money on this war that results in a high number of deaths – and that it does not reduce drug use.



Crack is Cocaine

Cocaine and crack are variations of the same substance, extracted from the coca leaf. Although they may have different profiles, their users seek **the same type of effect**. Whether in the form of rock or powder, the difference is in the quality of the drug and the social environment in which the substance is used.



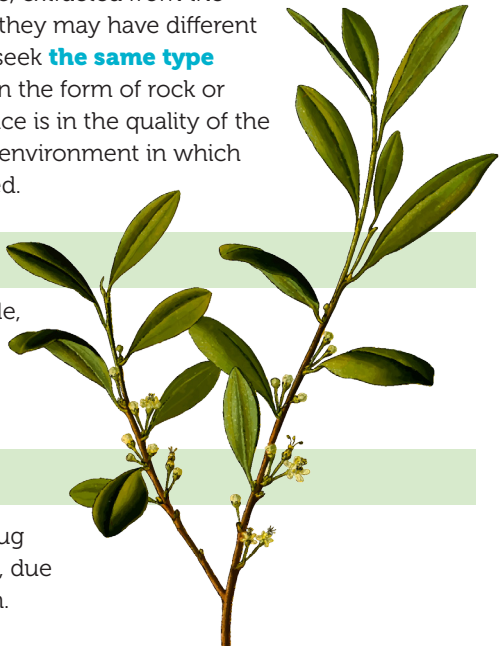
Crack

Cheap and affordable, it is more common in the poor sections of the population.



Cocaína

It is considered a drug of the upper classes, due to the cost per gram.



IS THERE A “CRACK EPIDEMIC”?

Crack has been dealt with a lot of misinformation and fear, which hinders the access to health services and limits the performance of harm reduction programs. The so-called “crack lands” allowed for the creation of the myth that there is an “epidemic” of crack users. But this is not so. Surveys show that less than 1% of the Brazilian population is a crack user¹⁰.

IS THERE A “CRACK EPIDEMIC”? THE RESEARCH ALSO SHOW THAT...

- 78% % of crack users want to receive some form of treatment.
- In most cases, violence and poverty was already present in people’s lives before using crack.

Why do we discuss so much compulsory hospitalization?

Why not invest in guaranteeing social rights, instead of betting on criminalization?

The data show that the use of cocaine is more frequent and moves more money than the use of crack in Brazil.

Why, then, does the public debate on drugs focus more on the use of crack than cocaine?

How to **change** this situation?

Some countries and places have already abandoned the logic of war and are testing other policies

DECriminalIZATION OF DRUG USE

When the consumption is no longer a crime, but the production and sale of drugs continue to be illegal.

Portugal decriminalized the use and possession of drugs for personal use in 2001. Contrary to popular opinion, **the decriminalization did not increase the consumption of drugs** and even facilitated users' access to treatment.

Over 20 countries have already decriminalized drug use in law or practice.

LEGALIZATION WITH REGULATION

It is when the government creates rules to control the production, sale, and consumption of a substance, removing these activities from illegality.

In 2013, **Uruguay** became the first country in the world to legalize the market of marijuana..

A year later, it was the state of Colorado's turn, in the **United States**, when they legalized and regulated the entire marijuana market. In addition to reducing violent crime and drug-related problems, tax money from legal marijuana sales was reverted to **health and education programs** on drug use.

Uruguay, Canada and 11 US states have already approved the legalization and total regulation of the marijuana market.

NEITHER HERE, NOR THER

When there are no laws to regulate the drug market, but in practice, governments formulate alternatives to the prohibition.

In some countries, such as **Spain**, it is possible to be part of a cannabis club, which are non-profit associations that grow **marijuana for the exclusive use of their members**, an alternative for those who do not want to use the illegal market to buy the substance.

In **Holland**, contrary to what everyone thinks, the marijuana market is not legalized. In practice, sales and consumption are tolerated in so-called **coffee shops**, but production and supply to stores are still illegal. Even so, the money from the sale of marijuana to the consumer is also **reverted to taxes**.

At least, 20 countries around the world regulate the use of marijuana for medical purposes.

Questions

WHY THE PEOPLE FROM THE FAVELA HAVE TO TALK ABOUT DRUGS?

We are the people most affected by the drug war. Because of it, we suffer daily violence, have restricted rights, and lose opportunities. It is time for us to be included in the drug policy debate in order to assert our perspective on this issue.

IS DRUG CONSUMPTION GOING TO INCREASE BY ENDING PROHIBITION?

A survey conducted in 21 countries, where drug use has been already decriminalized, shows that this is not the case. People do not stop using drugs because it is forbidden. Even with more than 100 years of prohibition, drug use throughout the world continues to grow.

IS IT GOING TO OVERBURDEN THE HEALTH SYSTEM BY ALLOWING THE USE OF DRUGS?

With or without prohibition, drug use, whether legal or illegal, is already a public health problem. What we need to do is to invest public money where it will really be useful. For example, the money that is spent on the imprisonment of people involved in the illicit drug market could be used to improve care for drug users in health services.

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SOURCES

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DRUGS, YOUTH & FAVELA

We are a group of young people from various favelas and outskirts in Brazil who believe that a new drug policy is urgent. Want to know more about our actions? Access the site: movimentos.org.br

EXECUTION:



SUPPORT:



PARTNERS:

