

Alcohol The International Dilemma

The unwarranted consumption of alcohol is becoming a dilemma on an international scale, resulting in numerous social problems upsetting all walks of life. In Northern Ireland the Chief Medical Officer – Dr Michael McBride has identified the widespread use of alcohol among the younger generation. In Northern Ireland children as young as 11 are consuming alcohol and by the age of 16 it is thought four out of five teenagers will have had an alcoholic drink in some form or other. Dr McBride hints that the motive behind so many young people are turning to drink in Northern Ireland is to improve their social and sexual confidence and requests better awareness of the damage that alcohol can do.

Unfortunately extreme consumption of alcohol amid teenagers is having a negative impact on communities across Northern Ireland largely in urban areas. In 2 years child crime has risen by around 20% mainly fueled by alcoholic consumption amid children as young as seven. In comparison, burglary, vehicle crime and criminal damage have seen little or no rise whereas alcohol-related offences have shot up by as much as a third.

In Northern Ireland The Garda youth diversion programme has been put in place to lower this anti social behavior with some positive results. Children suspected of crimes under this system are given the option to redeem themselves by compensating or apologizing to victims. Around 60-70% of the children have not re-offended within the first year after being submitted into this scheme.

Obviously these problems are not constrained to Northern Ireland and around the world countries are taking their own steps to combat the social effects of alcohol-related incidents.

In recent years millions have been invested on an yearly basis by drink manufacturers in Kenya on measures to reduce alcohol abuse, underage drinking and drink driving. Sales in of alcoholic beverages have rocketed and these companies have invested a great deal of time in projects to try and reduce the sometimes negative effect. Advertising, warnings on bottle labels and bartender training are just some of the ideas that have been put into action.

The National Alcohol Beverages Association of Kenya (Nabak) working beside The Pubs Entertainment Restaurants Association of Kenya (Perak) have been directing the drinking habits of Kenyans by encouraging alcohol selling outlets to endorse sensible drinking. The outcome has been very positive seeing in a sizeable downward trend in underage drinking following recent campaigns.

Other countries are using other methods in their battle to control alcohol abuse. Australia has brought in restrictions in its Northern Territory, and in some towns photo identification must be produced when purchasing alcoholic drinks. These new procedures have not gone down well with everyone and some publicans have been subject to insults, but generally the belief among retailers is that this is a decisive step in the right direction in the fight against the rising social problems connected with alcohol.

About the Author

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