



Republic of Mauritius



Rodrigues Regional Assembly

# Drug Use Survey in the Island of Rodrigues

A Rapid Assessment Study



Prime Minister's Office  
National Drug Secretariat  
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## The 2022 Drug Use Survey initiative in Rodrigues

The Drug Use Survey carried out in September-October 2022, in the Island of Rodrigues, was a joint effort of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA). The survey was implemented by the National Drug Secretariat of the Rodrigues, Outer Islands & Territorial Integrity (ROITI) Division, PMO, with the participation of staff from different Commissions falling under the administration of the RRA. Elaborated details regarding rationality and methodological aspects of the study are provided under appropriate chapters in this report.

The study applied a Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP) in view of obtaining a prompt island-wise snapshot of the drug use situation in Rodrigues. Rigorous statistical research techniques and methods were maintained throughout the whole investigation, from the survey design, throughout the field operations and finally at the data analysis stage. It is wise mentioning, right at the outset, that the study targeted the adult resident population aged 15-64 years.

People who use illicit drugs or misuse prescription drugs, are commonly considered as "hidden" or "hard-to-reach" populations in the research jargon. These individuals are often subject to stigmas by the family, relatives, institutions and the community, while at the same time they constantly carry the fear of being tracked down at any time for their illegal behaviors by law enforcement agents. Thus, drug users are obsessively preoccupied about the confidentiality of their drug habits and most of the time they operate drug use practices inconspicuously. As a result, rigorous training sessions were provided to the survey data collection team, both at the supervisory level and at the field data collection level, to minimize nonresponse rate on sensitive questions.

All things considered, collecting data on unlawful activities remains a challenging and a difficult exercise. This is why, given the sensitive nature of a topic like illicit drugs, interpretation of answers obtained from respondents must consider the likelihood of "prestige bias". Prestige bias is a phenomenon that occurs when survey respondents have the tendency to answer in a certain way to conform to social norms particularly in the case of illegal drug consumption, whereby some respondents might be unwilling to reveal their drug use behaviors.

It is hoped that the data and information generated by this study will help policy decision makers, programme managers and all other stakeholders engaged in the fight against the spread of illegal drugs, as well as, those working relentlessly towards the reduction of drug use harmful effects on individuals or groups.

It is to be noted that prior to the finalization of this report, consultations on the findings of the survey have been conducted with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through working sessions with the Deputy Chief Commissioner, The Commissioner of Health & Others, The Commissioner of Youth & Others together with their Head of Departments, including the Police Force and the Island Chief Executive.

## Acronyms

<b>C. I.</b>	Confidence Interval
<b>CMPHS</b>	Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey
<b>CRAC</b>	Centre d'Accueil et Réhabilitation (Rodrigues)
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>ICD</b>	International Classification of Diseases
<b>NDO</b>	National Drug Observatory
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NPS</b>	New Psychoactive Substances (Synthetic drug)
<b>PMO</b>	Prime Minister's Office
<b>PWID</b>	People Who Inject Drugs
<b>RAP</b>	Rapid Assessment Protocol
<b>RDS</b>	Respondent Driven Survey
<b>RRA</b>	Rodrigues Regional Assembly
<b>ROITI</b>	Rodrigues, Outer Islands & Territorial Integrity (Division)
<b>UNODC</b>	Joint United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## Technical note

In this report, a **current user** is defined as a respondent who had used drugs in the last 6 months prior to the survey date. A **Confidence Interval** (C.I) is a statistical device to indicate how far the sample was precise on specific estimates. The larger the C.I the more we should be careful about the estimate.

## Acknowledgements

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We greatly appreciate the hospitality and administrative support provided by the Chief Commissioner's Office of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, in welcoming the survey organizing team, while facilitating administrative procedures, necessary logistics and the services of qualified public resource persons for the field survey operations.

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The survey team is indebted to the people of Rodrigues for their invaluable contribution to the survey, especially the survey participants who trusted the survey organizers and responded generously, even, in the disclosure of personal aspects of their drug user status during field operations.

We wish finally to thank all those who have contributed to the project, whether individually or through any organization.

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## Drug Use Survey 2022 in Rodrigues

### Main Highlights

- **12.4%** (95% C.I, 11.0% – 13.8%) of people aged 15-64 years, residing in Rodrigues, had ever used drugs (19.9% among males, against 3.8% among females).
- It was estimated that, roughly **3,600** residents of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, had ever consumed drugs. This estimate statistically ranged, at 95% confidence interval, between 3,200 and 4,000 adult drug ever-users.
- **2.3%** (95% C.I, 1.8% – 3.0%) of residents of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, were currently using drugs (3.9% among males, against 0.6% among females).
- Just about **700** estimated residents of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, were currently consuming drugs (mostly cannabis herbs). This estimate statistically ranged, at 95% confidence interval, between 500 and 900 current adult drug users.
- Among residents of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, who had ever used drugs, males constituted **85.9%**, against **14.1%** females. Among current drug users, males stood at **88.5%**, against **11.5%** females.
- **19.0%** of young people of Rodrigues aged 20-24 years had ever used drugs, against **2.7%** who were currently consuming drugs.
- **6.6%** of students 15-24 years had ever used drugs, while **1.3%** of them were currently consuming drugs.
- Among all young people aged 15-19 years in the Island of Rodrigues, **4.6%** had ever used drugs and **2.2%** were currently on drugs. (According to the survey sample, 79% of adolescents aged 15-19 years were at schools).
- It is estimated that, roughly 3,000 – 4,000 residents of Rodrigues aged 15-64 years had ever consumed **cannabis**. Approximately 100 - 300 adults had ever used **heroin**, just around 50 -150 had ever used **cough syrup**, about one hundred had ever used **multiple drugs**, comprising combinations of two or more drugs such as cough syrup, cannabis, heroin, psychotropic tablets and new psychoactive substance (synthetic drugs).
- Injecting drug use stood roughly around at **0.3%** (C.I, 0.1 – 0.7) among **male** adults, giving an estimated number of up to 100 male adults residing in Rodrigues who had likely ever injected drugs.

- Among current users of drugs, 30.8% admitted it was easy or very easy to get access to drugs for consumption purpose, against 46.1% who found it difficult and 23.1% very difficult.
- Out of the 26.9% who knew personally people using drugs in Rodrigues, 59.9% acknowledged they personally knew residents of Rodrigues who were currently using drugs in their community, while only 18.6% correspondingly knew relatives who were engaged in such illegal practices.
- Almost all residents in Rodrigues, 97.9%, reported cannabis herb was available in Rodrigues, while 26.5% believed heroin was also available and 28.8% that new psychoactive substances were also a trendy drug in Rodrigues.
- One third of residents of Rodrigues aged 15 -64 years was of opinion that new psychoactive substances were not a problem in Rodrigues. The same rate was observed for heroin, while only 10.8% believed cannabis was not a problem.
- There were perceptions among respondents that the following drugs were present in Rodrigues, namely, cannabis herbs, heroin, new psychoactive substances (synthetic drugs) and to a much lesser extent, buprenorphine (*Subutex®*), cocaine, cough syrup, psychotropic tablets, mushroom and amphetamine. The use of glue was also mentioned.
- One third of residents of Rodrigues aged 15- 64 years had ever participated in drug prevention activities.
- Nearly half of the young population 15-19 years of Rodrigues had ever participated in some forms of drug prevention activities, while roughly two-third of students aged 15-24 years had ever been reached by drug prevention activities.
- Among residents of Rodrigues aged 15 -64 years who had ever used drugs, 6.5% had started using drugs when they were aged less than 15 years old, 79.7% had started using drugs in the age band 15-24 years and 13.8% at 25 years or above. In short, 86.2% of drug users had started using drugs before the age of 25 years.
- Among residents of Rodrigues who had ever used drugs, 34.1% had consumed their first drugs in the main Island of Mauritius, while 62.7% had the first drug experience in Rodrigues itself and 3.2% in other countries. It is to be noted that only 14.4% of adults residing in Rodrigues had never left their homeland to travel to other countries including the main Island of Mauritius. Nearly half of those who had never left Rodrigues were aged 15-24 years.

## Drug Use Survey 2022 in Rodrigues

### Executive Summary

A Drug Use Survey was carried out in the Island of Rodrigues in September-October 2022 among residents aged 15-64 years. This project was a joint collaboration between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Prime Minister's Office. The survey was implemented by the National Drug Secretariat, of the Rodrigues, Outer Islands & Territorial Division, Prime Minister's Office. The field data collection was ensured by staff of the different Commissions of Rodrigues, under the lead of the Statistics Unit of the Chief Commissioner's Office.

The survey made use of a stratified two-stage cluster sampling involving representative selections of the six official main regions of Rodrigues, the localities and households. The final workable sample size was 633 respondents, which represented a 96% response rate with respect to the initially decided sample size. The respondents' participation was proportionate to the sizes of the respective populations of the regions of the Island of Rodrigues. Representativeness was also considered for other factors such as sex, age, education level, socio-economic activity, civil status and income group. In nearly two-third of households surveyed there were 3-5 residents aged 15-64 years per household (with or without children <15 years or elderly persons >64 years). Latest available population data indicated that, as at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, the population of the Island of Rodrigues was estimated at 44,220 inhabitants and residents aged 15-64 years accounted for 65% of the population.

According to the 2022 Drug Use Survey, roughly one-quarter of residents of Rodrigues personally knew people who were using drugs in their Island. The rate of personal knowledge of drug users was lower among female adults, 17%, as compared to nearly one-third among male adults. On the other hand, among the one-quarter of adults who knew personally drug users, the highest rate of drug-use awareness was among those who confessed they knew personally drug users in the community, 60%, against the lowest awareness rate among those who knew personally drug users as colleagues, 14%. Still, among those who personally knew drug users, knowledge of relatives using drugs, stood at 19%.

Almost all residents of Rodrigues were in opinion that cannabis was present in Rodrigues. Nearly one third had the perception that heroin was present in Rodrigues, while 29% were convinced of circulating new psychoactive substances in the Island. It was also believed that some other drugs were used in relatively small proportion, namely, buprenorphine (Subutex®), hashish, cocaine, cough syrup, paracetamol syrup, psychotropic tablets, mushroom and amphetamine. The use of glue as a drug was also among the list of cited substances.

The adult population of Rodrigues considered cannabis as a concern for the Island. In fact, 71% of adult residents of the Island, reported cannabis was indeed a serious problem for the Island, of whom, nearly half found it even very serious. Opinions on the problematic of heroin were equally divided among the survey respondents. Roughly, half of Rodriguan adults found

heroin a problem in the Island, against another half who believed it was not so. In fact, among those who estimated that heroin was a problem, 61% emphasized that they found it indeed a very serious issue. A similar pattern of perception like the one observed for heroin was noticed for new psychoactive substances.

Most adults of Rodrigues shared the opinion that all age groups were somehow affected by drug use in Rodrigues, even if some degrees of variations were noticed among the different reported age groups.

However, the age group 20-29 years was the most popularly reported drug-use most-affected segment of the population, that is, by 79% of respondents in the study. Only 3% of respondents actually believed that the younger population group aged 15-19 years was a drug-use most-affected group.

Rodrigues has quite a good framework for delivery of prevention activities. The Drug Use Survey showed that drug-use prevention interventions were dispensed through a diversity of stakeholders, comprising governmental institutions, private health organizations, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, school authorities and religious groups. These stakeholders respectively operated individually, as well as, through collaborative actions, creating dynamic interactions among all the actors of drug prevention.

A well-balanced coverage of prevention interventions was observed for the different age groups of the Island population, as well as, for the different socio-economic activity groups of the Island. Relatively higher coverage of drug-use prevention was observed respectively among government employees and among students. Overall, among all adults, one third had ever been touched by these drug-use prevention activities. Coverage of drug-use prevention activities was almost 64% among students aged 15-24 years.

The results of the 2022 Drug Use survey revealed that 20% of the male adult population and 4% of the female adult population had ever used drugs, which is equivalent to an overall Island prevalence of 12% of adults who had ever used drugs in Rodrigues. Men constituted 86% of those who had ever used drugs, against 14% women.

Currently 2% of adults were using drugs, 4% among men and 0,6% among women. Men represented 89% of current users, against 11% women. Around half of current users had been using drugs for a period of 10 years or more. Only 8% of current users had been on drugs in less than one year.

The survey estimated that roughly 3,600 adult residents of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, had ever used drugs, out of a population of 29,000 residents aged 15-64 years. People who were currently using drugs, was estimated at roughly 700 residents 15-64 years. A higher prevalence of current users was observed among casual workers, 9.1%, as compared to low prevalence of current users among self-employed workers, 0.6% among employees of the

public sector current use of drugs stood at 5.0%, while it was 3.9% among private employees and finally, 1.3% among students aged 15-24 years.

It was estimated that roughly, 3,000 - 4,000 residents aged 15-64 years residing Rodrigues had ever consumed **cannabis**. Approximately 100 - 300 had ever used **heroin**, just around 50 - 150 had used **cough syrup** and finally, about one hundred had ever been involved in **multiple drug use**, comprising combinations of two or more drugs such as cough syrup, cannabis, heroin, psychotropic tablets and new psychoactive substance (synthetic drugs).

Among respondents who had ever used drugs, almost all (98%) admitted that their most recent drug consumed was cannabis, 1.4% stated heroin and 0.4% mentioned cough syrup. No respondents had mentioned new psychoactive substances as the most recently consumed drug. It is to be noted that, among those who had ever used drugs, 13.4% reported they had consumed the most recent drug one month ago. 18.8% reported they had done so in less than six months ago.

Relatively few adult residents of Rodrigues had never travelled outside Rodrigues, 14%. Travelling outside Rodrigues, especially to the main Island of Mauritius did not show any higher risk for starting a drug-use experience. Rodrigues remained the primary place for initiation to drugs for a significant number of Rodriguan adults. In fact, nearly two-third, 63% of drug ever-users of Rodrigues had consumed their first drug in Rodrigues. Even among Rodriguan drug ever-users, who had ever visited only the main Island of Mauritius, 61% have had their first drug in Rodrigues itself. This can be partly explained by the fact that, firstly, 80% of adults in Rodrigues have had their first drug experience when they were still young, that is, in the age group 15-24 years, and secondly, 96% of them started with cannabis, a drug which is adequately available in Rodrigues, as reported in the survey.

Among adult residents of Rodrigues who had ever left the Island of Rodrigues for any other places, current use of drugs stood at **2.5%** (95% C.I, 1.8 – 3.2), against **1.3%** (95% C.I, 0.3 – 2.6) current drug users among residents who had never left the Island. There was no statistical difference between the two prevalence.

Prevalence of current drug use was almost around two percent within each age group, with a slightly higher prevalence for the 20-24 years, 3%. Within the age group 20-24 years, a substantial gap was observed between the prevalence of drug-ever users, 19%, as compared to only 3% current users, indicating possible underreporting of current use of drugs among this group of respondents. It is to be noted that the survey revealed that the median age for starting drug use was 19 years.

Regarding civil status, never-married singles constituted the biggest component among current users, 37%, but the prevalence of current users among this group was 2%, while 13% of them had ever used drugs. Prevalence of drug ever-use oscillated between 11% and 16% for the different civil status groups. Regarding current drug use, there was an apparent indication that current use of drugs was more prevalent among divorced/separated adults,

5%, as compared to current use of only 2% among those “in a union”. The prevalence of drug ever-use of 16% observed for those “in a union” against 2% current users, was indication of significant underreporting of current drug use among this group.

The 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues showed that 80% of Rodriguans aged 15-64 years, who ever used drugs had their first drug (essentially cannabis) when they were in the age group 15-24 years. 7% started under 15 years. In addition, the survey data revealed that Rodriguans started drug use mainly, either to have a personal experience or by peer pressure.

The 2022 Drug Use survey sample which represented only 2% of the population of Rodrigues aged 15-64 years, was able to identify injecting drug use practices among the respondents. Thus, residents of Rodrigues who had ever injected drugs was estimated at around 1% of drug ever-users in Rodrigues. This estimate could be equivalent to around less than 100 residents of Rodrigues ages 15-64 years, who had ever injected drugs. Data also indicated that those who had ever injected drugs, had in fact ever travelled to the main Island of Mauritius where they had their first drug experience. The sampling methodology applied for this present survey, that is, classical random sampling, has limited statistical properties to survey among hidden networks such as people who inject drugs. It is now widely recognized that techniques such as chain referral sampling methods, for example, Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS), give better research outcomes in the area of hard-to-reach drug-user population.

## Brief profile of Rodrigues Island

Covering a land area of 108 square km and a population density of 404 inhabitants per square km, the Island of Rodrigues is administratively an autonomous outer Island of the Republic of Mauritius, about 560 km east of the main Island of Mauritius. Rodrigues is no longer considered as the tenth district of Mauritius since it acquired autonomous status, in 2002. The Island is administrated by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA), which is empowered to make Regulations for matters falling within its purview. Legislations initiated by the RRA become law for Rodrigues only after ratification by the National Assembly of the Republic of Mauritius.

As at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, the estimated population size of Rodrigues was 44, 220 inhabitants (Population & Vital Statistics, Statistics Mauritius). In 2021, the adult population aged 15-64 years accounted for 65% of the Island population. The net reproduction rate was 1.4 and the population grew by 0.9% over the previous year (Population & Vital Statistics 2021, Statistics Mauritius).

The economy of Rodrigues is based mainly on fishing, farming, handicraft and a developing tourism sector. Agriculture and fishing are the sectors absorbing the highest number of workers. Most of the commodities exported by Rodrigues to the main Island of Mauritius are from agriculture. This island is one of the top quality honey producing countries and has ever been awarded in international level honey competition. Thus, agriculture is the backbone of the Rodriguan economy. However, prolonged period of abnormal low rainfall often lead to shortage of water and subsequently impact on both the residential and commercial activities of the Island. Handicraft is also a source of income to numerous households. Local materials are used to produce handicrafts such as fancy jewels, bags, hats etc.

Based on latest available National Census data, literacy rate in Rodrigues moved from 69% in 2000 to 79% in 2011, while secondary school enrolment moved from 48% to 74% for the same decennial period. Furthermore, Census 2011 indicated that 94% of households were owners of their occupied housing units, 96% had electricity, 95% had piped potable water, while 75% were living in concrete wall dwellings. In 2020, life expectancy was estimated at 75 years for men and 79 years for women (Health Statistics Report, 2021).

Environmentally, Rodrigues is considered a delightful remote little holiday island being stunningly beautiful with scenic landscapes. The island is hilly with an assortment of flora. It has natural preserved forests.

Socially, most people live a lesser unhurried pace trend of life compare to Mauritius. Most residents of the surrounding islands come to Rodrigues to enjoy the island's tranquility and natural beauty. Crime rate is low, for instance, in 2021 there were 191 reported crime offences, which gave a crime offence rate of 4.3 per 1,000 inhabitants. On the other hand, there is a dynamic travel traffic with the main Island of Mauritius, with, for example 100, 496

arrivals and 100, 624 departures registered in 2021 (Digest of Rodrigues, 2021, Statistics Mauritius).

Rodrigues is endowed with a good communication network. There is a main harbor and the only airport manages arrivals and departures on a daily basis. Internet is available all over the Island. The road infrastructure is well developed and numerous households possess their own private vehicles, like pickups, cars and motorcycles, while public buses cover all parts of the Island.

Regarding health, in 2021 the health personnel ratio indicated that there was one doctor for every 1,587 inhabitants and one nurse for every 190 inhabitants. Infant mortality rate was 16.0 per 1,000 live births. The leading causes of deaths on the Island were attributed to the heart & other circulatory system diseases, 37.7%, followed by neoplasms (cancer & tumours), 16.5%, diabetes mellitus and endocrine disorders, 12.7%, diseases of the respiratory system, 8.1%. Deaths due to infectious diseases accounted for 4.9% (ICD 10 classification). Immunization coverage of vaccine-preventable-disease (VPD) was 85%. Major notifiable communicable infections, including indigenous malaria, are either eliminated or very rare. In 2021, the national incidence of Tuberculosis was 0.2 per 10,000 population, while HIV cases reported stood at 3.6 per 10,000 population.



## Chapter 1

### Overview of drug situation in Rodrigues

#### 1.1 Overview of drug use in Rodrigues

Past official routine and adhoc evidence-based information formally suggests that drug has been present in Rodrigues for quite a number of years. The last known formal Island-wise research project carried out in the area of drug use, dates back to December 2006. In fact, in 2006, the Centre for Applied Social Research, under the aegis of the Mauritius Research Council, carried out a drug survey among private households. In the study, titled “**Substance Abuse in Rodrigues 2006**”, out of a total of 400 respondents, 47% of respondents did not have any opinion about drugs in Rodrigues, while 33% were confident that the Island was free from drugs and finally 19% thought that their area was not drug free. Only 3% admitted they had ever used drugs. 37% agreed that the drug problem was under control. The study also confirmed the significant presence of cannabis and very rare use of heroin on the Island.

On the other hand, based on more recent routine service statistics, namely the 2021 Digest of Rodrigues of Statistics Mauritius, drug indicators are pointing out that drug offences are on the increase in Rodrigues. Thus, drug offence rate has moved from a figure of 1.9 drug offences per 1,000 population in 2016 to 7.2 drug offences/1,000 in 2021 (**See Table 1**). In fact, drug offence has constantly increased from 79 cases in 2016 to 320 cases in 2021, that is, an increase of +305%. It is to be noted that in general, increase in reported drug offences can partly be linked to improvement of drug control services.

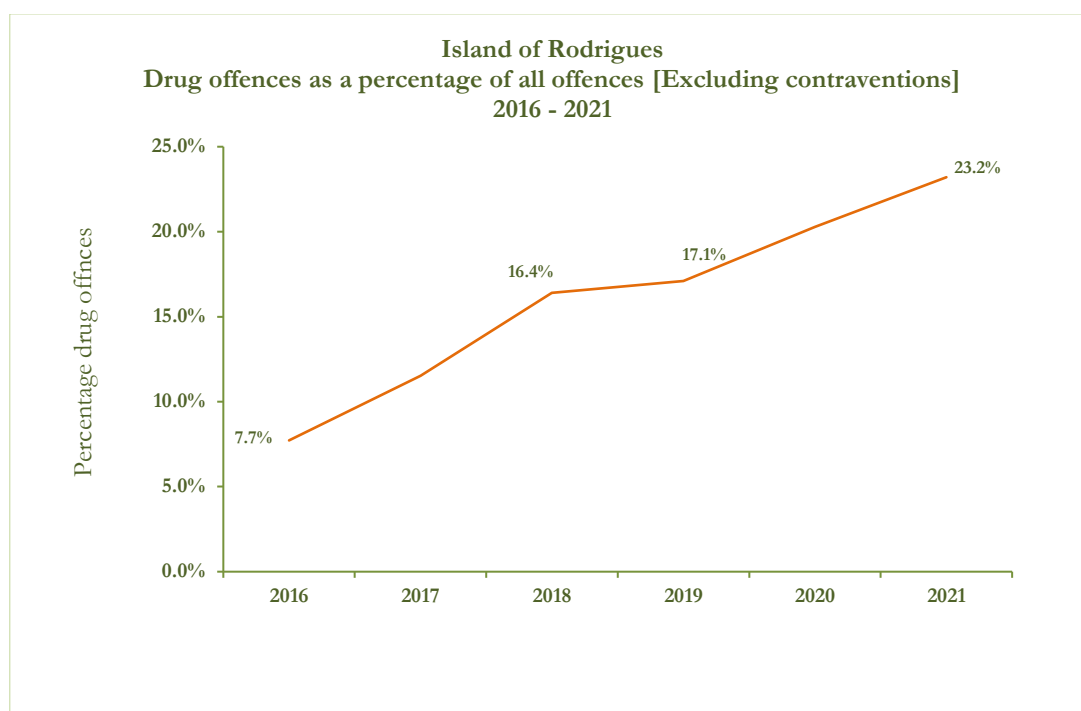
In addition, drug offences as a percentage of all offences (excluding road traffic contraventions) was 7.7% for the year 2016 and has since then increased steadily annually to reach a figure of 23.2% for the year 2021 (**See Figure 1**).

Furthermore, according to National Drug Observatory (NDO) Reports, cultivation of cannabis constitutes one of the major drug offences in Rodrigues, namely, 69% in 2017 and 75% in 2018, thus making Rodrigues, as in many other parts of the world, a place where cannabis remains the most popularly used or trafficked drug.

Table 1  
**Drug offence and drug offence rate in Rodrigues (2016 -2021)**

YEAR	Mid year population of Rodrigues	Number of drug offence cases			All offences (Excluding contraventions)	Drug offences as a percentage of all offences	Drug offence <u>rate</u> per 1,000 population		
		Drug-related <u>misdemeanour</u> offences	Drug-related <u>crime</u> offences	All drug offences			Drug-related <u>misdemeanour</u> offence	Drug-related <u>crime</u> offence	All drug offences
2016	42,260	25	54	79	1,023	7.7%	0.6	1.3	1.9
2017	42,638	91	24	115	998	11.5%	2.1	0.6	2.7
2018	43,035	42	129	171	1,042	16.4%	1.0	3.0	4.0
2019	43,371	35	154	189	1,105	17.1%	0.8	3.6	4.4
2020	43,819	50	195	245	1,208	20.3%	1.1	4.5	5.6
2021	44,220	1	319	320	1,379	23.2%	0.0	7.2	7.2

**Figure 1**



## Chapter 2

### Rationale and objectives of the 2022 Drug Use Survey

#### 2.1 Rationale for the 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues

- The Government of the Republic of Mauritius has expressed its firm commitment to address drug trafficking and provide effective prevention to the population and treatment to people who use drugs.
- The drug situation in Rodrigues, as described in the previous chapter, calls for vigilance. It is judicious to align constantly both the Island of Rodrigues and the main Island of Mauritius on the same level of standards regarding drug programmes given the dynamic socio-economic exchange, the intensive migration mobility and both the rapid transport and media communications between the two populations. For instance, the highest annual passenger traffic ever recorded during the past decade, was 100,496 persons for arrivals in Rodrigues and 100,624 for departures from Rodrigues respectively, in 2019. (Digests of Rodrigues, Statistics Mauritius)
- Thus, apart from its cannabis herbs self-supply market, Rodrigues is vulnerable against transnational organized maritime crime including drug trafficking, given it is an isolated Island, some 560 km far from the main Island of Mauritius. In August 2022, a 10-day extensive training on Port Security was conducted in Rodrigues in collaboration with officials from the Mauritius Port Security. This project was in line with the UNODC Strategic Vision for Africa 2030, under investment area 3 “Protecting Africa’s Resources and Livelihoods”. The training had equipped Rodriguan participants with relevant skills and modern techniques to combat maritime crimes and enhanced port security. The training was part of the EU Funded Programme on Port Security and Safety of navigation, a programme under the Indian Ocean Commission jointly implemented by International Maritime Organization, Interpol and UNODC.
- Finally, considering all the implications related to drugs, island-wise representative real time data and information have become crucial to complement the available routine service drug-related statistics, as well as, to help enlightening perceptions and hypotheses on the current drug situation in Rodrigues. Strategies and programme orientations can only be built up on robust data and information.

#### 2.2 Objectives of the 2022 Drug Use Survey in the Island of Rodrigues

##### 2.2.1 Main objective

The main objective of the 2022 Drug use Survey in Rodrigues was to assess the drug situation in the Island of Rodrigues. The main task was to generate updated evidenced-based primary data that would, firstly, constitute baselines to understand the drug problem and, secondly, to be used in future formulation of effective strategies towards drug demand, drug supply and harm reduction.

### 2.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine the prevalence of current and past drug consumption among adult residents of Rodrigues.
- To estimate the number of adults residing in Rodrigues who have ever used drugs and the number of those who are currently consuming drugs.
- To determine the types of drugs used among adults in Rodrigues, their magnitude.
- To determine the drug consumption pattern and related behaviors among adults.
- To measure the knowledge and perceptions among adults residing in Rodrigues on drug use.
- To obtain specific perceptions on the level of severity of heroin, cannabis and new psychoactive substances in Rodrigues.
- To obtain information on the prevalence of coverage of drug prevention intervention in Rodrigues.
- To gather information on the opinions and suggestions on current drug situation in Rodrigues.
- To formulate recommendations.

## Chapter 3

### Survey methodology

#### 3.1 Target population

The 2022 Drug Use Survey targeted residents of the Island of Rodrigues, aged 15-64 years, that is, roughly 29,000 adults. At the time of the survey design, the latest available official data by age group for Rodrigues, was for the year 2021. According to the Population and Vital Statistics Report 2021 of Statistics Mauritius, the total midyear population of Rodrigues in July 2021 was estimated at 44, 220. Those aged under 15 years represented 25.5 % of the total population. The adult population 15-64 years stood at 65.4% of the total population, while those aged 65 years and above constituted 9.1% of the total population (**See Table 2**).

Table 2  
**Island of Rodrigues - 2021**  
**Population size**  
(By age band)

Age band	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Percent	Sex ratio (Male/Female)
Under 15 years	5,666	5,612	11,278	25.5%	1.0
15-64 years	14,160	14,772	28,932	65.4%	1.0
65 years and over	1,809	2,201	4,010	9.1%	0.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,635</b>	<b>22,585</b>	<b>44,220</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>

#### 3.2 Prior information on drug offence in the Island of Rodrigues

In searching for recent prior information for the survey prevalence of drug use, it was found more appropriate to consider the proportion of drug offences on all offences. The proportion of drug offences on all offences was used as a proxy indicator to reflect the drug offence prevalence. For the three-year period 2019-2021 the average annual percentage of drug offence on all offences was 20.4% (**See Table 3**). Taking into account that roughly 50% -75% of drug offences are linked to cultivation of cannabis, the hypothesis for the prevalence of people who have ever used drugs was arbitrarily taken as 10%. This estimate was used in the sample size calculation (**See next Section 3.3**)

Table 3  
**Annual number of drug offences on all offences in Rodrigues**  
(2019-2021)

Cases	2019	2020	2021	Average annual cases 2019-2021	
				Number	Percent
<b>Drug offences</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
Total offences (excluding contraventions)	1,105	1,208	1,379	1,231	100.0%

### 3.3 Sample size calculation

The calculated sample size for the survey was 551. It considered the following parameters;

- the prior prevalence information on drug ever-use,  $P = 10\%$
- the resident adult population age 15-64 years,  $N = 29,000$
- the precision error,  $e = 5\%$ ;
- the Z score at 95% C.I,  $Z = 1.96$
- and finally the design effect,  $K = 4$

A final sample size of 600 sampling units was considered convenient for the survey.

Table 4  
Sample size calculation

N=Population 15- 64 years	= 29,000	K= (Design effect)	= 4
Z SCORE	=1.96	N=Population 15- 64 years	= 29,000
Hypothesis – Prevalence P(%)	= 10	N-1	= 28,999
Q=100% - P%	= 90	Z <sup>2</sup>	= 3.8416
Error (%)	= 5	PQ	= 900
		e <sup>2</sup>	= 25
		A = ( Z <sup>2</sup> PQ )/e <sup>2</sup>	= 138.2976
		B = (N-1) +A	= 29137.2976
		C = A / B	= 0.004746411
SAMPLE SIZE		K * N * [ C ]	= 551

### 3.4 Survey personnel and selection of survey participants

#### 3.4.1 Geographical division of the Island of Rodrigues

Based on Statistics Mauritius, there are two main administrative divisions in Island of Rodrigues. The first division is a stratification into 14 Census Zones and the second division is the stratification by the Census 2011 six Regions, namely Port Mathurin, 19% of the total population, followed by Saint Gabriel, 19%, La Ferme, 17%, Grande Montagne, 16%, Baie Aux Huîtres, 15%, and finally Maréchal, 14%. For the Drug Use Survey 2022 the six Census 2011 Regions were used as the first stratification factor to construct the sample. Clusters (Enumeration Areas, EAs) were randomly selected within these six regions as explained in section.

#### 3.4.2 Random selection of clusters and the sampling frame listing

For the 2022 drug survey, a total of 1,200 households was listed to form the sampling frames within each of the respective randomly selected Enumeration Areas. The randomly selected 1,200 households listed thus represented roughly 1,200/11,000 households, that is 11% of all households in Rodrigues. In all the steps of random selections, proportionality was considered for the size of each the population in the different geographical areas or regions. In each household only persons aged 15 – 64 years were listed, that is, the survey target population.

### **3.4.3 Selection of the sample survey participants**

Out of the constructed sampling frame of 1,200 households, a sample of 600 participants **(See sample calculation in section 3.3)** was randomly selected using probability proportional to size of Enumeration Areas (EAs). Only one participant per household was selected and in cases where there were more than one resident aged 15-64 years in the same household, appropriate statistics techniques were applied to select randomly only one among them.

### **3.5 Data collection tool**

Data was collected in the selected households by trained interviewers using face-to-face questionnaire interviews. Questions were set in English language with translations in the local language versions.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and privacy of participants and survey site officers were trained accordingly. The completed survey questionnaire did not include names of respondents but a unique identification number was developed for database management and analysis.

### **3.7 Constraints**

Feedbacks from the field team indicated that respondents were generous in answering and participating in the survey despite the fact that when it came to personal behaviors on use of drugs some respondents unsurprisingly were hesitant and reluctant to engage themselves in drug-related conversations. Furthermore, limited cross-tabulation analyses were performed where small number of data was available.

## Chapter 4

### Survey results

This section presents the findings of the 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues, in the following order:

- Survey response rate and socio-demographic profile of the sample survey respondents
- Knowledge and perception on drug use in Rodrigues
- Drug use prevention activities in Rodrigues
- Prevalence of drug consumption and drug-use-related behaviors in Rodrigues
- Types of drugs consumed and drug use practices

#### 4.1 Socio-demographic profile of the sample survey respondents

##### 4.1.1 Survey response rate

The pre-survey sample size consisted of 657 randomly selected participants, while the workable final sample size, after field data collection and data cleaning, was 633. Thus, a high response rate of 96.3% was realised for the study.

##### 4.1.2 Age-sex distribution of respondents

53.9% of respondents were males against 46.1% females. The age distribution obtained from the sample was almost identical to the age distribution of the population of Rodrigues. In the sample of respondents, 16.7% were in the age group 15-19 years, 23.2% in the age group 20-29 years, 19.6% in the age group 30-39 years, 20.7% in the age group 40-49 years and finally 19.7% were in the age group 50-64 years. Similar age distributions were also respectively observed among male and among female respondents (**See Table 5**).

##### 4.1.3 Region of residence of respondents

Self-reporting of residence by respondents showed that the sample gave appropriate geographical representation with respect to the population of Rodrigues, but La Ferme region was slightly oversampled while two regions, namely Maréchal and Baie Aux Huîtres were respectively slightly undersampled. As a result, most of the survey results have been weighted (adjusted) using the actual region distribution of the Island of Rodrigues. Table 6 gives figures for both the pre-survey and post survey distributions of regions (**See Table 6**).

##### 4.1.4 Civil status of respondents

**35.9%** of respondents were never-married singles (29.4% among males, 41.5% among females), **30.5%** were married (32.5% among males, 28.1% among females), **13.1%** were divorced/separated (6.9% among males, 20.4% among females), **2.4%** were widow/er (0.3%



among males, 4.8% among females) and finally, **18.1%** were in a union (18.7% among males, 17.3% among females) **(See Table 7)**.

#### **4.1.5 Educational level of respondents**

Weighted proportions showed that 13.8% of respondents had incomplete primary or no formal education, while 18.7% had achieved a completed primary level of education with no further higher level. 32.5% had reached secondary level but had stayed below the level of “Form 5”. 27.9% had reached the School Certificate and/or Higher School Certificate, with no further tertiary education. Finally, 7.0% had tertiary education level **(See Table 8)**.

#### **4.1.6 Socio-economic activity of respondents**

Out of the 633 respondents of the survey sample, 23.2% reported that they were employed by the private sector, followed by 22.2% who were self-employed. 17.2% were employed by the public service, 14.4% were students, 13.1% were homemakers (exclusively women), 3.9% were pensioners, 3.0% were casual workers, while 3.1% were unemployed. The distribution of socio-economic activity by gender showed that, among female respondents, 22.2% were employed by the private sector against 24.1% among their corresponding male counterparts. 15.2% among females were self-employed against 28.3% among males. Employment in the public service stood at 11.2% among females, while it was 22.4% among males.

Furthermore, there were 15.9% students among females, against 13.1% among males. Homemakers constituted 28.3% among females, while no homemaker was reported among males. There were equally 3.9% of pensioners respectively among each sex group. One percent of casual workers was observed among female respondents, against 4.7% among males. 2.5% of female respondents reported that they were unemployed against 3.5% among males.

Among the 3.1% respondents, almost three quarter (73.5%) were aged less than 30 years, while, the majority of them was financially supported by parents **(See Table 9)**.

#### **4.1.7 Monthly household revenue**

Out of the 633 survey respondents, 23.7% had a monthly household revenue of less than 10,000 rupees, 33.1% had 10,000-19,999 rupees, 16.9% had 20,000-29,999 rupees, 15.6% had 30,000-39,999 and 26.2% had 30,000 rupees or more.

#### **4.1.8 Household size**

The 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues covered 633 households, which was roughly 6% of the total households in Rodrigues. In the survey, the mean number of residents aged 15-64 years was estimated at 3.8 residents (15-64 years) per household (with or without children under 15 years or elderly above 64 years). Furthermore, 6.3% of households surveyed had one person aged 15-64 years (with or without children under 15 years or elderly above 64

years). Similarly, 14.2% had 2 residents, 65.1% had 3-5 persons aged 15-64, and 14.4% had 6 or more persons aged 15-64 in the household. The median indicated that 50% of households had each four or less residents aged 15-64 years, while the other 50% had four or more persons aged 15-64 years.

#### 4.1.9 External migration of residents of Rodrigues aged 15-64 years

The 2022 Drug Use Survey revealed that 14.4% of residents of Rodrigues had never left the Island to travel to other countries. 70.6% had ever visited the main Island of Mauritius only, while another 15.0% had visited both the main Island of Mauritius and other parts of the globe. This information was collected in view of enlightening any potential risk of external migration on local drug use. **(See section 4.4.3 for further analyses).**

Table 5  
**Age-sex distribution of respondents**

Age group (Years)	Sex of respondent									Population of Rodrigues Island 2021	
	Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted	Total	Sample	Weighted	Number	%
15-19	54	15.8%	15.7%	51	17.5%	17.9%	105	16.6%	16.7%	4,194	14.5%
20-29	77	22.6%	23.2%	70	24.0%	23.1%	147	23.2%	23.2%	6,734	23.3%
30-39	68	19.9%	19.7%	57	19.5%	19.5%	125	19.7%	19.6%	5,391	18.6%
40-49	71	20.8%	20.8%	60	20.5%	20.7%	131	20.7%	20.7%	5,992	20.7%
50-64	71	20.8%	20.6%	54	18.5%	18.8%	125	19.7%	19.7%	6,621	22.9%
Total (15-64 years)	341	100.0 %	100.0 %	292	100.0 %	100.0 %	633	100.0 %	100.0 %	28,932	100.0 %
	(53.9%)			(46.1%)			100.0%				

Table 6  
**Region of residence**  
 (By sex)

Region of residence	Sex of respondent									Population of Rodrigues Island (CMPHS 2019) All ages	
	Male	Post-survey Sample	**Pre-survey sample	Female	Post-survey Sample	**Pre-survey sample	Total	Post-survey Sample	**Pre-survey sample		
La Ferme	76	22.3%	17.6%	61	20.9%	16.1%	137	21.6%	16.9%	6,901	17.1%
Maréchal	33	9.7%	14.7%	27	9.2%	14.0%	60	9.5%	14.4%	5,690	14.1%
Saint Gabriel	61	17.9%	17.9%	56	19.2%	19.2%	117	18.5%	18.5%	7,494	18.5%
Baie Aux Huîtres	27	7.9%	14.7%	31	10.6%	17.1%	58	9.2%	15.8%	6,077	15.0%
Port Mathurin	92	27.0%	21.4%	74	25.3%	19.2%	166	26.2%	20.4%	7,705	19.1%
Grande Montagne	52	15.2%	13.8%	43	14.7%	14.4%	95	15.0%	14.1%	6,567	16.2%
Total	341	100.0%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%	40,434	100.0%

\*\*NOTE: Pre-survey region distribution has been used as weights

Table 7  
**Civil status distribution of respondents**  
 (By sex)

		Sex of respondent						Total	Sample	Weighted
		Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted			
Civil status	Single, never married	143	41.9%	41.5%	91	31.2%	29.4%	234	37.0%	35.9%
	Married	116	34.0%	32.5%	81	27.7%	28.1%	197	31.1%	30.5%
	Separated	12	3.5%	3.8%	32	11.0%	14.0%	44	7.0%	8.5%
	Divorced	8	2.3%	3.1%	19	6.5%	6.4%	27	4.3%	4.6%
	Widow/er	1	0.3%	0.3%	15	5.1%	4.8%	16	2.5%	2.4%
	In a union	61	17.9%	18.7%	54	18.5%	17.3%	115	18.2%	18.1%
Total		341	100.0%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8  
**Educational level of respondents**  
(By sex)

Education level of respondent	Sex of respondent						Total	Sample	Weighted
	Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted			
No formal education	6	1.8%	1.8%	5	1.7%	1.5%	11	1.7%	1.7%
Incomplete primary	49	14.4%	12.6%	34	11.6%	11.6%	83	13.1%	12.1%
Complete primary	66	19.4%	19.2%	52	17.8%	18.2%	118	18.6%	18.7%
Secondary (Below Form 5)	65	19.1%	19.7%	63	21.6%	22.6%	128	20.2%	21.0%
Secondary (Below Form 5), with vocational training	49	14.4%	15.1%	19	6.5%	7.4%	68	10.7%	11.5%
Secondary- Form 5 and above (SC & HSC)	85	24.9%	25.8%	93	31.8%	30.2%	178	28.1%	27.9%
Tertiary	21	6.2%	5.7%	26	8.9%	8.6%	47	7.4%	7.0%
Total	341	100.0%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9  
**Respondents' socio-economic activity**  
(By sex)

Socio-economic activity	Sex of respondent						Total	Sample	Weighted
	Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted			
Employed by private sector	79	23.2%	24.1%	57	19.5%	22.2%	136	21.5%	23.2%
Self-employed	106	31.1%	28.3%	46	15.8%	15.2%	152	24.0%	22.2%
Employed by public sector	72	21.1%	22.4%	37	12.7%	11.2%	109	17.2%	17.2%
Student	45	13.2%	13.1%	44	15.1%	15.9%	89	14.1%	14.4%
Homemaker	0	0.0%	0.0%	84	28.8%	28.3%	84	13.3%	13.1%
Pensioner	12	3.5%	3.9%	12	4.1%	3.9%	24	3.8%	3.9%
Casual worker	14	4.1%	4.7%	2	0.7%	1.0%	16	2.5%	3.0%
Unemployed	13	3.8%	3.5%	10	3.4%	2.5%	23	3.6%	3.1%
Total	341	100.00%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10  
**Respondents' monthly household revenue**  
(By sex)

		Sex of respondent						Total	Sample	Weighted
		Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted			
Monthly household income (Rupees)	Less than 10,000	77	22.6%	21.3%	76	26.0%	26.6%	153	24.2%	23.7%
	10,000-19,999	110	32.3%	33.8%	96	32.9%	32.4%	206	32.5%	33.1%
	20,000-29,999	63	18.5%	18.4%	48	16.4%	15.1%	111	17.5%	16.9%
	30,000-39,999	49	14.4%	15.0%	44	15.1%	16.4%	93	14.7%	15.6%
	40,000 and over	42	12.3%	11.6%	28	9.6%	9.5%	70	11.1%	10.6%
Total		341	100.0%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11  
Drug Use Survey 2021  
**Household size (Residents aged 15-64 years)**

Household size (No. of persons aged 15-64 years)	Frequency	Percent
One	40	6.3%
2	90	14.2%
3 - 5	412	65.1%
6 or more	91	14.4%
Total sample	633	100.0%

Mean household size =3.8 persons, Median=4, Mode=4

Table 12  
**External migration of respondents**  
(By sex)

		Sex of respondent						Total		
		Male	Sample	Weighted	Female	Sample	Weighted			
Countries ever visited by respondent	Mauritius only	236	69.2%	71.3%	203	69.5%	69.9%	439	69.4%	70.6%
	Mauritius and other countries	51	15.0%	14.3%	47	16.1%	15.8%	98	15.5%	15.0%
	Never travelled	54	15.8%	14.5%	42	14.4%	14.3%	96	15.2%	14.4%
Total		341	100.0%	100.0%	292	100.0%	100.0%	633	100.0%	100.0%

## 4.2 Knowledge and perception on drug use in Rodrigues

### 4.2.1 Knowledge on the magnitude of drug use in the Island of Rodrigues

Just about one quarter of respondents, **26.9%** (95% C.I, 25.0 – 28.7) reported they personally knew Rodriguan residents who were consuming illicit drugs in Rodrigues (35.1% among male respondents, against 17.3% among female respondents). Clearly, male respondents perceivably showed twice more awareness than females, regarding drug circulation among drug users on the island (**See Table 13**).

Overall, among respondents who personally knew resident drug users of Rodrigues, each respondent in fact personally knew on average 11 resident drug users. The median number of Rodriguans known as drug users by respondents, stood at 6 drug users, indicating that, in fact 50% of respondents knew six or less drug users, while another 50% knew six or more drug users (**See Table 14**).

Among government employees, **43.6%** (95% C.I, 38.6-48.3) personally knew Rodriguan residents who were consuming drugs. Correspondingly such knowledge was 30.2% among private workers, 28.3% among self-employed, 24.2% among casual workers, 22.8% of among students and finally only 8.9% of homemakers admitted they personally knew drug users in the island (**See Table 15**).

Among respondents who personally knew drug users in Rodrigues, 59.9% personally knew drug users in the community, 54.0% personally knew friends who were using drugs, 18.6% personally knew relatives who were using drugs and 13.9% personally knew colleagues who were consuming drugs (**See Tables 16 - 19**).

Additional data exploratory analysis showed that, among the 22.8% of students who knew personally Rodriguan drug users, 65.8% would personally know them as friends.

Table 13  
**Rodriguans who personally knew drug users in Rodrigues**  
(By sex of respondents)

Both sexes		Frequency	Sample	Weighted Percent	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
	know	172	27.2%	<u>26.9%</u>	(25.0	28.7)
	Don't know	461	72.8%	73.1%		
	Total	633	100.0%	100.0%		
Male		Frequency	Sample	Weighted Percent	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
	know	119	34.9%	<u>35.1%</u>	(32.4	38.0)
	Don't know	222	65.1%	64.9%		
	Total	341	100.0%	100.0%		
Female		Frequency	Sample	Weighted Percent	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
	know	53	18.2%	<u>17.3%</u>	(15.0	19.4)
	Don't know	239	81.8%	82.7%		
	Total	292	100.0%	100.0%		

Table 14  
**Respondents' estimates of Rodriguan drug users they personally knew**  
 (Among 172 respondents, 26.9%)

	Statistic	Bootstrap**			
		Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Mean per respondent	11	-0.07	1.65	8.36	14.66
Median	6	0.01	1.00	5.00	10.00
Mode	10				

\*\* . Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Table 15  
**% residents who personally knew drug users in Rodrigues**  
 (By selected socio-economic activity of respondent)

		Knowledge percent (Prevalence)	95% Confidence Interval
Socio-economic activity of respondent	Public Officers	43.6%	(38.6 – 48.3)
	Private workers	30.2%	(26.3 – 34.1)
	Self-employed	28.3%	(24.3 – 32.4)
	Casual worker	24.2%	(14.6 – 36.7)
	Student	22.8%	(18.5 – 27.8)
	Homemaker	8.9%	(5.7 – 12.5)
Overall		26.9%	(25.0 – 28.7)

Table 16  
**Distribution of respondents who personally knew colleagues using drugs**  
 (Among those who know drug users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
Not aware	153	89.0%	86.1%	0.0	1.4	83.4	88.8
Aware	19	11.0%	<u>13.9%</u>	0.0	1.4	11.2	16.6
Total	172	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 17

**Distribution of respondents who personally knew drug users in the community**  
(Among those who know drug users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Not aware	62	36.0%	40.1%	-0.1	2.0	36.2	44.0
<b>Aware</b>	<b>110</b>	64.0%	<b>59.9%</b>	0.1	2.0	56.0	63.8
Total	172	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 18

**Distribution of respondents who personally knew friends using drugs**  
(Among those who knew drug users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Did not know	81	47.1%	46.0%	0.0	2.1	41.6	50.2
<b>Knew friends</b>	<b>91</b>	52.9%	<b>54.0%</b>	0.0	2.1	49.8	58.4
Total	172	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 19

**Distribution of respondents who personally knew relatives using drugs**  
(Among those who know drug users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Did not know	144	83.7%	81.4%	0.0	1.6	78.2	84.4
<b>Knew relatives</b>	<b>28</b>	16.3%	<b>18.6%</b>	0.0	1.6	15.6	21.8
Total	172	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

#### 4.2.2 Opinion on the availability of types of drugs and their impact in the community

##### 4.2.2 (a) Types of drugs available in Rodrigues

Almost all (97.9%) of the 633 respondents questioned, asserted that cannabis was available in the Island of Rodrigues, while, 26.5% were in opinion that heroin was available and 28.8% believed new psychoactive substances were available. Other illegal drugs or prescription drugs that were spelled out, stood at less than 5% of respondents, namely, buprenorphine (Subutex®), hashish, cocaine, cough syrup, paracetamol syrup, psychotropic tablets, mushroom and amphetamine. Finally, glue was also mentioned as an abused substance. It is to be noted that the pattern of types of drugs available in Rodrigues, based on opinions of respondents, did not differ between male and female respondents.



Table 20

**Respondents' opinion on availability of type of illicit substances in Rodrigues - (By sex)**

	Opinion	Percentage respondents					
		Cannabis	Heroin	New psychoactive substances	Buprenorphine	Cocaine	Other***
Among males ( n=341)	Available	97.9%	30.8%	28.7%	3.5%	3.2%	4.7%
	Not mentioned	2.1%	69.2%	71.3%	96.5%	96.8%	95.3%
Among females ( n=292)	Available	97.9%	21.6%	28.8%	1.2%	3.1%	3.1%
	Not mentioned	2.1%	78.4%	71.2%	98.8%	96.9%	96.9%
All Respondents ( n=633)	Available	97.9%	26.5%	28.8%	4.7%	3.2%	3.5%
	Not mentioned	2.1%	73.5%	71.2%	95.3%	96.8%	96.5%

\*\*\*Cough syrup, paracetamol syrup, tablets, mushroom, psychotropic, amphetamine and glue

**4.2.2 (b) Drug Use most affected age group**

When respondents were asked about the drug-use most-affected age group of the Rodriguan population, the age group 20-29 years was mentioned by 78.9% of respondents, followed by the teenage group 15-19 years, by 61.5% of respondents. Adults aged 30-39 years were cited as a most-affected group by 40.7% of respondents. Adults aged 40-64 years old were believed to be a drug-use most-affected segment, according to 20.2% of respondents. Rodriguan children aged less than 15 years were considered among drug-use most-affected people by only 2.5% of the respondents (**See Table 21**).

**4.2.2 (c) Perception on situation with regard to specific illicit substances in Rodrigues**

As regards general opinion on specific illicit substances in Rodrigues, 10.8% of respondents considered cannabis was not at all a problem and 18.5% that it was a simple problem, against 30.2% who said it was a serious problem and 40.5% who found it a very serious problem (**See Table 22**).

Similarly, answering a general question on heroin in Rodrigues, just around one third of respondents, 36.3% were in opinion that it was not a problem, 10.8% thought it was a simple problem, while 20.8% admitted it was a serious problem and 32.1% it was a very serious problem (**See Table 23**).

One third of respondents (33.8%) thought that new psychoactive substances (NPS) in Rodrigues was not at all a problem and 11.6% thought that it was a simple problem, as opposed to 23.9% of respondents who believed NPS was a serious problem and 30.7% that it was a very serious problem (**See Table 24**).

Table 21  
**Respondents' opinion on drug-use most affected age group**

Drug most affected age group in the Island of Rodrigues	(Opinion prevalence)	
Under 15 years	2.5%	n=633
15-19 years	61.5%	n=633
20-29 years	78.9%	n=633
30-39 years	40.7%	n=633
40-64 years	20.2%	n=633

Table 22  
**Perception on cannabis in Rodrigues**

Perception	Frequency	Sample	Weighted	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
A very serious problem	255	40.7%	40.5%	0.0	1.0	38.5	42.5
A serious problem	181	28.9%	30.2%	0.0	1.0	28.3	32.0
A simple problem	120	19.2%	18.5%	0.0	0.8	17.0	20.2
Not a problem	70	11.2%	10.8%	0.0	0.7	9.4	12.1
Total	626	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 23  
**Perception on heroin in Rodrigues**

Perception	Frequency	Sample	Weighted	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
A very serious problem	194	31.0%	32.1%	0.0	1.0	30.2	34.0
A serious problem	129	20.6%	20.8%	0.1	0.9	19.1	22.7
A simple problem	62	9.9%	10.8%	0.0	0.7	9.5	12.1
Not a problem	241	38.5%	36.3%	0.0	1.0	34.3	38.3
Total	626	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

**Table 24**  
**Perception on new psychoactive substances in Rodrigues**

Perception	Frequency	Sample	Weighted	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
A very serious problem	189	30.2%	30.7%	0.0	1.0	28.7	32.8
A serious problem	157	25.1%	23.9%	0.0	0.9	22.1	25.7
A simple problem	63	10.1%	11.6%	0.0	0.7	10.3	13.0
Not a problem	217	34.7%	33.8%	0.0	1.0	31.9	35.9
Total	626	100%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

#### 4.2.2 (d) Respondents' general opinion on drug in Rodrigues

Opinions about the drug situation in Rodrigues were divided between those who believed it was not actually alarming, against those who thought that it had already become a very serious matter for their homeland. It is to be noted that, some even admitted that they did not have any clue about the exact drug situation of Rodrigues. Some survey respondents stated that an Island like Rodrigues did not deserve any drug-related problems. There were statements like "Bizin pena la drogue dans Rodrigues", expressing the feeling that drugs ought to be quasi inexistent in Rodrigues.

##### (i) Opinions of those who found drug situation alarming in Rodrigues

For those who found the drug issue alarming for Rodrigues, the essentials were summarised by the fact that, firstly, if the drug problem was not dealt with promptly, it would deteriorate considerably. They pointed out that the consequences would lay its grips especially on the young Rodriguans and the students. In addition, it would probably impact on the lives of families and the Rodriguan community as a whole. It would create financial problems for some households. It was felt that there were more arrests for drugs given that people were increasingly engaged in cannabis cultivations.

Secondly, people believed that there was a general increase in cannabis use and trafficking. Some adults stated that their opinion about cannabis being widely available in Rodrigues, was mainly due to what they heard from the media. There was a feeling that more Rodriguan people would fall in the drug-use trap just because of the main reason that drugs were increasingly available, especially cannabis. Furthermore, some believed that new psychoactive substances (synthetic drugs) and heroin were well and truly present and alarming in the Rodriguan society. Perceptions also included the fact that there was an increase in crimes. Many believed drug use was associated with offences such as larceny and crime.

Thirdly, there was a lot of apprehensions about the drug implications and its repercussions on the young generation of Rodrigues. The survey respondents saw a paradox in the sense that young Rodriguans were actually equipped adequately with the necessary information about the harmful effects of drugs but were behaving unresponsively. Given the existing

alcohol problem in the Island, drug use was considered as a threat to the youth. On the other hand, respondents argued that lack of leisure activities and work for the youth might also be a factor. There were also perceptions that the lack of work often forced some young people of Rodrigues to go to the main Island of Mauritius with the risk of getting exposed and involved in drugs.

Finally, there were also perceptions that drugs enter Rodrigues essentially through foreigners. The survey revealed that many Rodriguan adults were apprehensive with regards to potential emergence of dangerous drugs (heroin or new psychoactive substances) to such a scale that would be unmanageable and which would be disastrous for the Island.

(ii) Opinions of those who saw drug as a moderate or insignificant problem in Rodrigues

Some Rodriguan adults were in opinion that the drug situation in Rodrigues, as compared to the main Island of Mauritius, was not alarming and that Rodrigues was actually rather still safe. Regarding the fight against drug, they believed that the drug control authorities were performing well and that it was the responsibility of the inhabitants to collaborate and participate. Many stated that, even if Rodrigues was safer, there was still need to be vigilant and to maintain control of borders and points of entries of drugs. It was also pointed out that drug would not be a serious problem as long as parents were vigilant with their children. Finally, there was a perception that the number of drug-related arrests had decreased in Rodrigues.

**4.2.2 (e) Respondents suggestions to deal with the drug situation in Rodrigues**

The points put forward by the survey respondents in response to the drug situation were as follows:

- It is important to prevent heroin from entering the country
- The laws and its enforcement must be more severe
- Better control of borders, port and airport
- More organisations to guide the youth
- More leisure activities and work for the youth
- Increase prevention at schools, villages and in the community at large
- Conduct analysis on the means by which drugs enter Rodrigues
- More sensitisation campaign through the media
- No bail should be given
- Conduct studies on drug in general
- Cannabis should be legalised, but not dangerous drugs.
- Increase surveillance in forests to detect cannabis plants
- Improve the capacities of the drug control agencies
- There is need for collective efforts and participation of all the inhabitants of Island of Rodrigues as a whole.

### 4.3 Drug prevention activities in Rodrigues

#### 4.3.1 Delivery of drug prevention programmes and activities

Based on the survey respondents' answers, overall there was an indication that in Rodrigues, the drug prevention intervention programmes as a whole, was ensured by a diversity of stakeholders, namely, the autonomous government of Rodrigues, NGOs, private health organisations, religious entities, public socio-economic empowerment organisation, social councils, amongst others. In fact, the bulk of drug prevention activities were reported to have been delivered mainly by five stakeholders, namely: the well-known NGO CRAC; the Mauritius Police Force; the Commission for Youth; the Commission for Health; and schools' authorities. Other private organisations and NGOs were also engaged in the prevention activities of the Island. For instance, respondents have mentioned two well-known private reproductive health organisations, namely Action Familiale and the Mauritius Family Planning Welfare Association (MFPWA). Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC) which is a Catholic Church movement, was also mentioned among drug prevention stakeholders.

One interesting feature of the Rodrigues drug prevention programme, as reported by respondents, is that many prevention programmes or activities were delivered through joint collaborations, often involving two or more organisations. The collaboration showed also that prevention activities took place through interactions between public and private organisations. The survey further showed that drug prevention activities were mainly conducted at youth centres, schools, village councils, community centres, local sport events and at the premises of drug-prevention-related NGOs and religious bodies, amongst others.

#### 4.3.2 Segments of populations covered by drug prevention programmes and activities.

The Drug Use Survey 2022 revealed that nearly one third (**34.1%**, 95% C.I 32.2 – 36.1) of adult residents of Rodrigues had ever been reached by some forms of drug prevention activities. Among male respondents it was found that 37.6% had ever been touched by drug prevention activities, against 30.0% correspondingly among their female counterparts.

Analysis of the pattern of drug prevention activities delivered to different segments of the population showed that, 64.1% of students had ever been touched by drug prevention activities, 46.7% of public officers, 31.9% of employees in the private sector, 22.7% of homemakers (exclusively women) and 21.5% of self-employed workers. The sample size for casual workers was small, with only 16 respondents and among them 53.4% reported they had ever been reached by drug prevention activities (**See Table 25**).

Further analysis by age showed that, among the younger age group of 15-19 years, 55.3% had ever been reached by drug prevention activities. This can be explained by the high rate of drug prevention intervention observed among the student population, as just shown in the

previous paragraph, that is, 64.1% of students (It is to be reminded that 79% of children aged 15-19 years were at schools).

Among the age group 20-29 years, 39.9% had ever been reached by drug prevention activities. Correspondingly, for the age group 30-39 years it was 25.2%, for the age group 40-49 years, 34.3% and finally for the age group 50-64 years, 18.0% **(See Table 26)**.

Table 25  
**Prevalence of adult residents of Rodrigues reached out by drug prevention activities**  
(By socio-economic activity of respondent)

Touched by prevention activities	Socio-economic activity								OVERALL
	Self-employed	Employed by public sector	Employed by private sector	Casual worker	Unemployed	Pensioner	Homemaker	Student	
<i>Sample (n)</i>	152	109	136	16	23	24	84	89	633
Sample Prevalence	17.8%	42.2%	30.1%	50.0%	8.7%	0.0%	21.4%	58.4%	30.6%
<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>64.1%</b>	<b>34.1%</b> (C.I, 32.2 – 36.1)

Table 26  
**Respondent's participation to drug prevention programme**  
(By age of respondent)

		Respondent's participation to drug prevention programme		Total
		Ever	Never	
Age group of respondents	15-19 years	54	51	105
	<i>Sample</i>	51.4%	48.6%	100.0%
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>55.3%</b>		
	20-29 years	54	93	147
	<i>Sample</i>	36.7%	63.3%	100.0%
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>39.9%</b>		
	30-39 years	33	92	125
	<i>Sample</i>	26.4%	73.6%	100.0%
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>25.2%</b>		
	40-49 years	33	98	131
	<i>Sample</i>	25.2%	74.8%	100.0%
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>34.3%</b>		
	50-64 years	20	105	125
	<i>Sample</i>	16.0%	84.0%	100.0%
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>18.0%</b>		
<b>Overall</b>	<i>Sample</i>	194	439	633
	<b>Weighted prevalence</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 4.4 Drug consumption prevalence in Rodrigues

### 4.4.1 Prevalence of drug use and population estimates of drug users

#### 4.4.1 (a) Ever-users of drugs

The 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues has estimated that, **12.4%** (95% C.I, 11.0 – 13.8) of adult aged 15-64 years residing in Rodrigues had ever used drugs (19.9% among men (95% C.I, 17.7 – 22.5) and 3.8% among women (95% C.I, 2.7 – 5.0)). Out of the estimated total resident adults of Rodrigues aged 15-64 years who had ever used drugs, males constituted 85.9%, against 14.1% females.

Based on the latest available population data, namely the “Population & Vital Statistics 2021” from Statistics Mauritius, the population of adult aged 15-64 years of Rodrigues was 28,932, with 14,160 males and 14,772 females (**See population details in Table 2 shown earlier in this Report**).

Thus, based on the 2022 Drug Use Survey statistical confidence intervals, the population size of resident adults aged 15-64 years of Rodrigues who had ever consumed drugs, was estimated at 3,600 adults in the range 3,200 – 4,000. At this stage, it is worth reminding that the majority (96.4%) of all ever-users of drugs were essentially cannabis users as compared to other substances (**See Table 43 in Section 5.1**).

In addition, it was nearly ten years ago since half of the drug ever-users had their first drug experience (**See Table 39**), while it was only less than one year ago since 3.3% had the first drug consumption. It is understood that many had stopped drugs after the first drug and this is examined in further sections dealing with current use of drugs.

Male adult residents of Rodrigues aged 15-64 years who had ever used drugs, was estimated at 2,800 males in the range 2,500 – 3,200 and correspondingly females who had ever used drugs ranged roughly between 400 – 700 adults.

Table 27  
Prevalence of drug ever-users  
(By sex)

EVER USED DRUGS	Sex of respondent								TOTAL	sample	Weighted	95% Confidence Interval
	M A L E	sample	Weighted	95% Confidence Interval	F E M A L E	sample	Weighted	95% Confidence Interval				
Yes	59	17.3%	19.9%	(17.7% - 22.5%)	12	4.1%	3.8%	(2.7% - 5.0%)	71	11.2%	12.4%	(11.0% -13.8%)
No	282	82.7%	80.1%		280	95.9%	96.2%		562	88.8%	87.6%	
	341	100.0%	100.0%		292	100.0%	100.0%		633	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 28  
Distribution of respondents who had ever used drugs  
(By sex)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Male	59	83.1%	85.9%	0.0	2.1	81.6	89.8
Female	12	16.9%	14.1%	0.0	2.1	10.2	18.4
Total	71	100.0	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

#### 4.4.1(b) Current users of drugs

- NOTE: 1. DATA AVAILABLE TO EXAMINE CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT USERS WERE VERY LIMITED. THUS, DISTRIBUTIONS OF CURRENT USERS ARE QUALITATIVELY DESCRIPTIVE RATHER THAN QUANTITATIVELY.
2. HOWEVER, PREVALENCE ARE BASED ON LARGE SAMPLES AND ARE QUANTITATIVELY ADEQUATE.

##### (i) Distribution of selected characteristics of current users

Male current users of drugs constituted 88.5% of all current drug users, against 11.5% females.

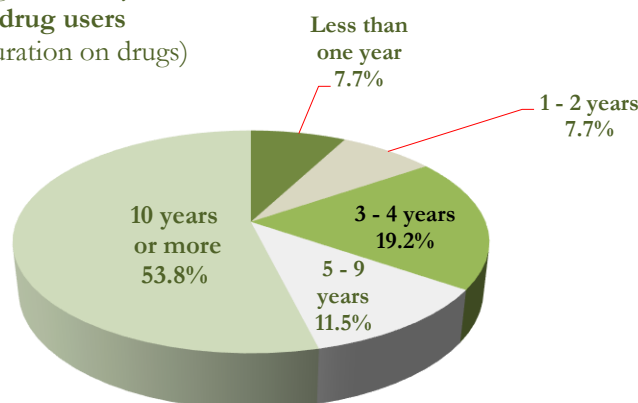
53.8% of current drug users had been using drugs for 10 years or more, 11.5% had been using for 5-9 years, 19.2% had been using for 3-4 years, 7.7% had been using for 1-2 years and finally, 7.7% had been on drugs for less than one year (**Figure 2**).

Nearly half of current drug users had attained higher secondary level of education with no tertiary level, roughly one quarter had stopped at the lower secondary level, 13.5% had stayed at the primary level and finally, 11.5% had tertiary level of education (**Figure 3**).



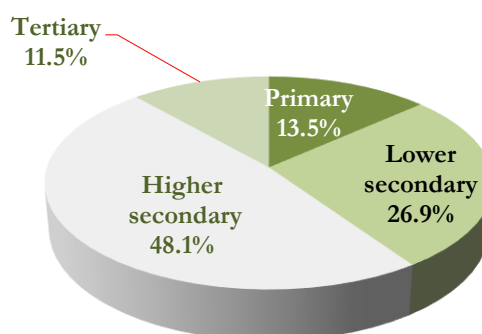
**Figure 2**

Rodrigues Drug use Survey 2022  
**Current drug users**  
(By years of duration on drugs)



**Figure 3**

Rodrigues Drug Use Survey 2022  
**Current drug users**  
(By level of education)



**(ii) Prevalence and population size estimates of current users**

The 2022 Drug Use Survey in Rodrigues has estimated that, **2.3%** (95% C.I, 1.8 – 3.0) of adults residing in Rodrigues were currently using drugs (**3.9%** among males (95% C.I, 2.8 – 5.1) and **0.6%** among females (95% C.I, 0.2 – 1.1)).

Thus, based on the 2022 Drug Use Survey statistical confidence intervals, the population size of resident adults aged 15-64 years of Rodrigues who were currently consuming drugs, was estimated at 700 adults in the range 500 - 900. Further analysis on the pattern and characteristics of current users are presented in the next sections.

Male residents in Rodrigues aged 15-64 years who were currently using drugs, was estimated to range between 400 – 700 and correspondingly females who were currently using drugs was estimated not to exceed 100.

Table 29  
**Prevalence of current users**  
(By sex)

CURRENT USERS	Sex of respondent											
	M A L E	sample	Weighted %	Confidence Interval -95%	F E M A L E	sample	Weighted %	Confidence Interval -95%	TOTAL	sample	Weighted %	Confidence Interval -95%
Yes	11	3.2%	<b>3.9%</b>	(2.8 – 5.1)	1	0.3	<b>0.6%</b>	(0.2 – 1.1)	12	1.9%	<b>2.3%</b>	(1.8 - 3.0)
No	330	96.8	96.1%		291	99.7	99.4%		621	98.1	97.7%	
	<b>341</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	100.0%		<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	100.0%		<b>633</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	100.0%	

#### 4.4.2 Further descriptive analyses on pattern of drug use

##### 4.4.2 (a) Distribution and prevalence of drug use by external migration

###### (i) Ever-users by external migration

**80.4%** (95% C.I, 75.7 – 85.1) of drug ever-users of the Island of Rodrigues had ever travelled to the main Island of Mauritius only, **10.5%** (95% C.I, 7.2 – 14.1) had travelled to Mauritius and other countries and **9.1%** (95% C.I, 5.8 – 12.7) had never travelled outside the Island of Rodrigues. It is to be noted that almost the same migration distribution existed for the whole adult population of Rodrigues (**See Table 12 in Section 1**).

The prevalence of drug ever-users was **14.2%** (95% C.I, 12.5 – 15.9) among Rodriguan adults who had ever travelled only to the main Island of Mauritius, while it was **8.7%** (95% C. I, 5.6 – 12.0) among those having travelled both to the main Island of Mauritius and to other parts of the globe. Finally, drug ever-users prevalence was **7.8%** among Rodriguan adults who had never left the Island of Rodrigues (**See Table 30**).

Table 30  
**Prevalence of drug ever-users**  
 (By respondent's' travel history)

		EVER USED DRUGS		Total
		Yes	No	
TRAVEL STATUS	<b>To Mauritius only</b>	54	385	<b>439</b>
		Sample percent 12.3%	87.7%	100.0%
		<b>Weighted percent 14.2%</b>		
		Confidence Interval 95% (12.5 - 15.9)		
	<b>Mauritius and other countries</b>	11	87	<b>98</b>
		Sample percent 11.2%	88.8%	100.0%
		<b>Weighted percent 8.7%</b>		
		Confidence Interval 95% (5.6 - 12.0)		
	<b>Never travelled</b>	6	90	<b>96</b>
		Sample percent 6.3%	93.8%	100.0%
		<b>Weighted percent 7.8%</b>		
		Confidence Interval 95% (4.9 - 10.9)		

Further comparative analyses were carried out between two groups of respondents, namely, those who had ever left Rodrigues versus those who had never left. Hence, the drug ever-users prevalence was **13.2%** (C.I, 11.8 – 14.7) for those who had ever left the Island, against **7.8%** (C.I, 4.9 – 10.9) for those who had never left. Since the two confidence intervals do not overlap it means the difference is statistically significant.

The above analyses did not necessarily imply that there was a higher risk for those who had travelled to the main Island of Mauritius. Section 4.4.3 shows further risk investigation comparing first drug experience in the Island Rodrigues and in other places outside Rodrigues.

(ii) Current users by external migration

**92.3%** (C.I, 84.1 – 98.1) of current users of drugs of the Island of Rodrigues had ever travelled only to the main Island of Mauritius, against **7.7%** (C.I, 1.6 – 15.9) of current users who had never travelled outside the Island of Rodrigues.

Current-users prevalence was **2.5%** (C.I, 1.8 – 3.2) for those who had ever left the Island, against **1.3%** (C.I, 0.3 – 2.6) for those who had never done so (**See Figure 4**). The two confidence intervals overlap, which means that there is no statistical evidence to say there was a difference between current drug use prevalence of those who had ever left Rodrigues and prevalence of those who had never.

#### 4.4.2 (b) Prevalence of drug use, by socio-economic activity of respondents

##### (i) Ever-users of drugs by socio-economic activity

###### Distribution

32.2% of drug ever-users were government employees, 27.2% were self-employed workers, 21.4% were private sector employees, 7.6% were students. 5.8% were casual workers, 4.7% were homemakers, and 1.1% were pensioners.

###### Prevalence

On the other hand, the prevalence of drug ever-users was 23.2% among adults employed by the public sector, followed by a corresponding prevalence of 15.2% among self-employed adults, 11.5% among private sector employees, 6.6% among students, 4.5% among homemakers (exclusively women), 3.5% among pensioners. The sample size for casual worker was small ( $n=16$ ) and among this group drug ever-users prevalence was 24.1%. **(It is to be noted that the actual socio-economic activities might have been different at the time some drug users were using drugs in the past)**

##### (ii) Current users of drugs by socio-economic activity

38.5% of current users were employees of the private sector. 36.5% were government employees, 11.5% were casual workers, 7.7% were students and 5.8% were self-employed workers. It is to be noted that overall in the survey sample, unemployed respondents stood at only 3.5%, while pensioners represented 3.9% and homemakers (exclusively women) 13.1%.

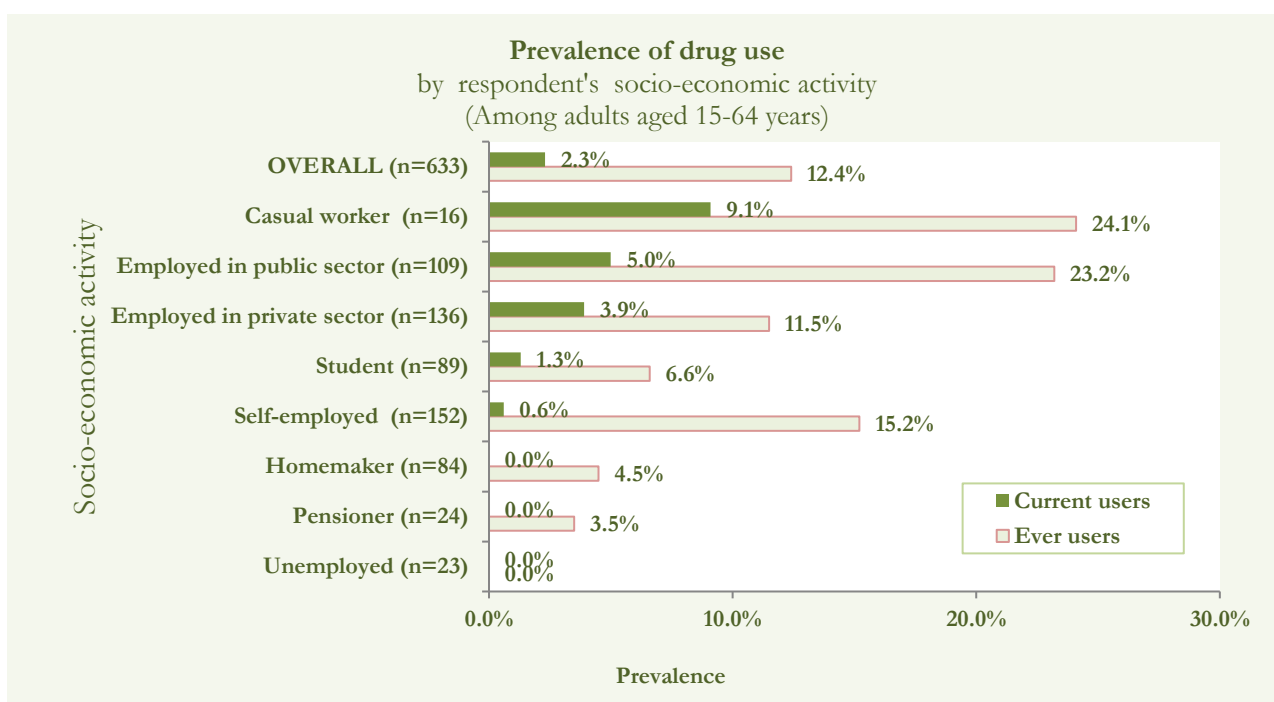
A relatively higher prevalence of current users was observed among casual workers, 9.1%, against the low prevalence of current users observed among self-employed workers, 0.6%. Among employees of the public sector, current use of drugs stood at 5.0%, while it was 3.9% among private employees and finally, 1.3% among students **(See Table 31)**.

Table 31  
**Prevalence of drug users**  
 (By respondent's socio-economic activity)

	Socio-economic activity								
	Casual worker	Employed in public sector	Employed in private sector	Students 15-24 years	Self-employed	Unemployed	Pensioner	Homemaker	OVERALL
Sample size	n=16	n=109	n=136	n=89	n=152	n=23	n=24	n=84	n=633
<b>Prevalence of ever users</b> 95% C.I**	24.1% (14.3 - 34.4)	23.2% (19.2 - 27.2)	11.5% (8.9 - 14.3)	6.6% (3.7 - 9.5)	15.2% (12.0 - 18.7)	0.0%	3.5% (0.0 - 8.2)	4.5% (2.3 - 6.9)	12.4% (11.1 - 13.8)
<b>Prevalence of current users</b> 95% C.I**	9.1% (3.0 - 16.7)	5.0% (2.9 - 7.2)	3.9% (2.2 - 5.7)	1.3% (0.3 - 2.7)	0.6% (0.0 - 1.3)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3% (1.7 - 3.0)

\*\* C.I : Bootstrap re-sampling Confidence Interval, with 1,000 samples

Figure 4



#### 4.4.2 (c) Distribution and prevalence of drug use, by age of respondents

##### (i) Ever-users of drugs by age

##### Distribution

6.2% of those who had ever used drugs were in the age group 15-19 years, 30.1% were aged 20-29 years, 36.2% were in the age group 30-39 years, 21.4% were in the age group 40-49 years and 6.2 % aged 50-64 years. Furthermore, 21.5% of drug ever-users were less than 25 years old, against 78.2% aged 25-64 years (**See Figure 5**).

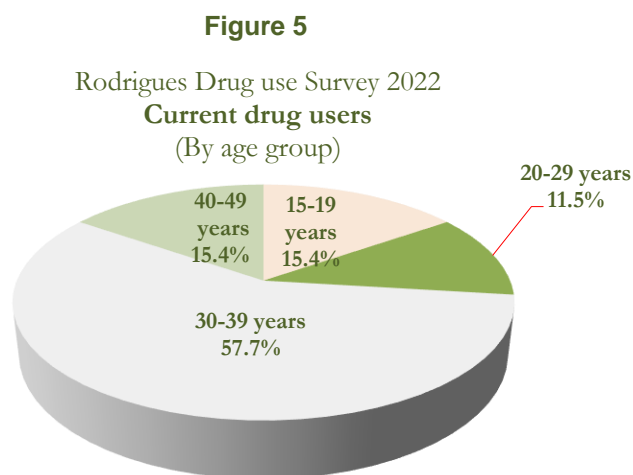
### Prevalence

The prevalence of drug ever-users was 10.1% among adults less than 25 years old, as compared to 13.3% among those aged 25-64 years. In fact, among the younger age group of 15-19 years, prevalence of drug ever-users stood at only 4.6%, but it showed rapid high prevalence when moved to the immediate age group of 20-24 years, that is, 19.0% (**See figure 6**).

#### (ii) Current users by age

### Distribution

15.4% of current users of drugs were in the age group 15-19 years, 11.5% were aged 20-29 years, 57.7% were in the age group 30-39 years and 15.4% were aged 40-64 years.



### Prevalence

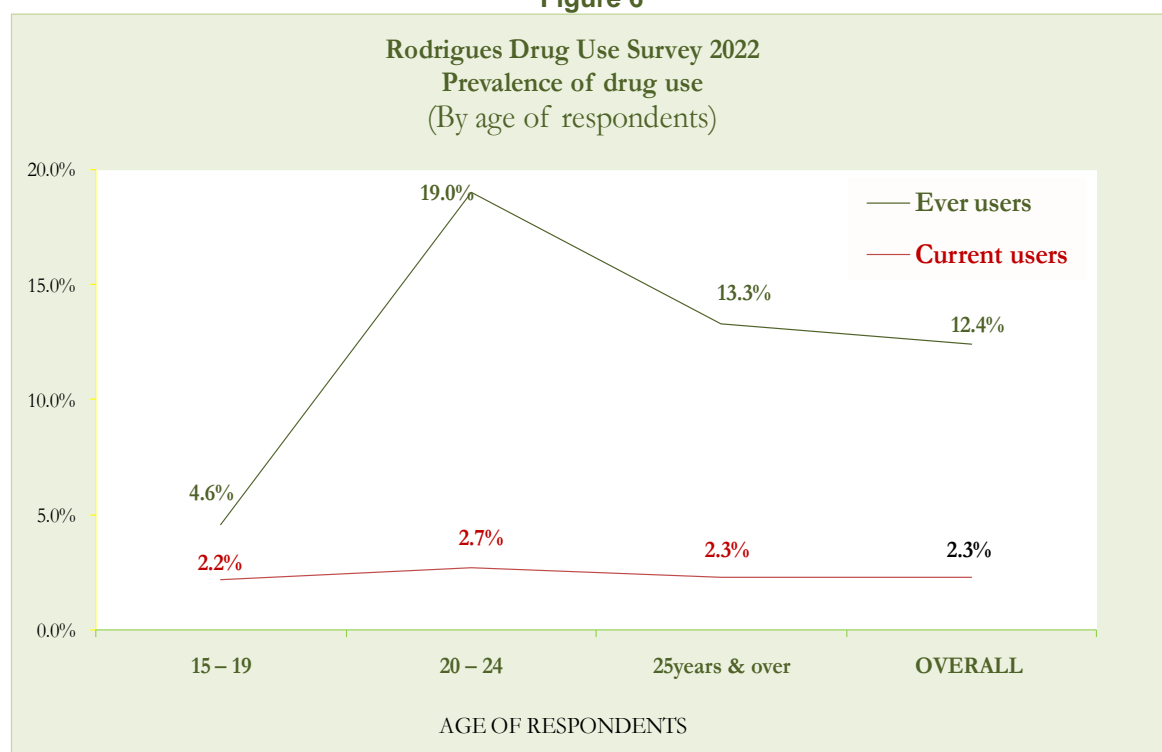
Prevalence of current users by age was 2.2% among the 15-19 years age group, 2.7% among those aged 20-24 years. It was 2.3% for those aged less than 25 years against 2.3% those aged 25 years and over.

Table 32  
**Prevalence of drug use**  
 (By age of respondent)

	Age of respondent				
	15 – 19 years	20 – 24 years	Less than 25 years	25 years and above	OVERALL
Sample size	n=105	n=69	n=174	n=459	n=633
<b>Prevalence of ever users</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>12.4</b>
95% C.I**	(2.6 – 6.8)	(14.3 – 24.8)	(7.5 – 12.5)	(11.7 – 14.9)	
<b>Prevalence of current users</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>
95% C.I**	(0.8 – 3.7)	(0.9 – 4.9)	(1.2 – 3.7)	(1.5 – 3.1)	

\*\* C.I: Bootstrap re-sampling Confidence Interval, with 1,000 samples

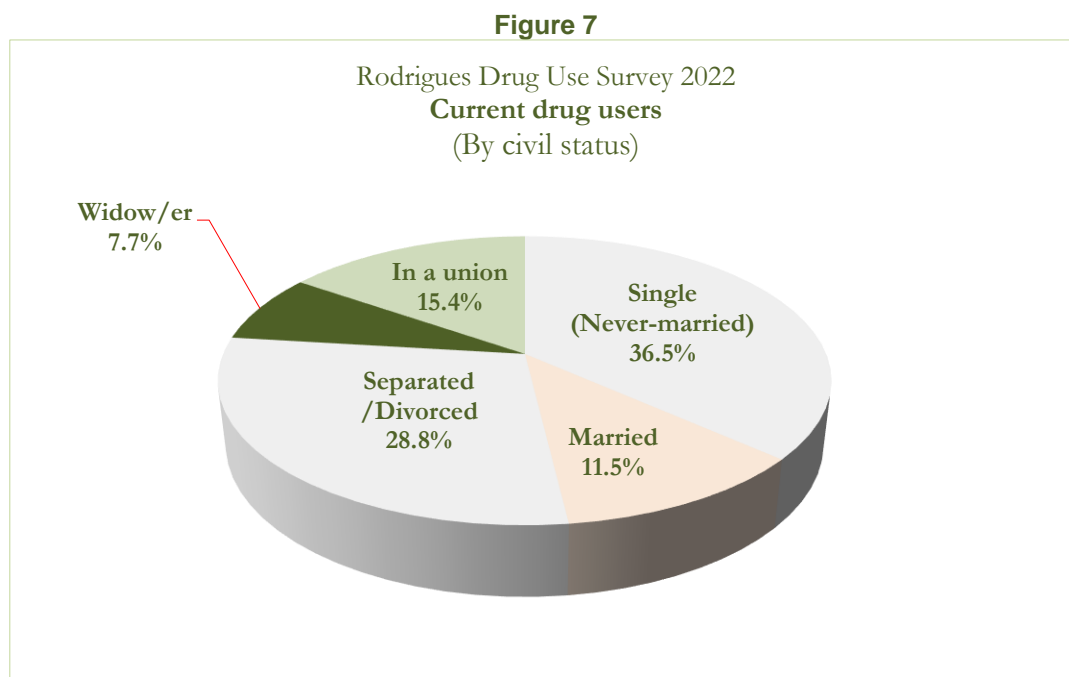
Figure 6



#### 4.4.2 (d) Distribution and prevalence of drug use, by civil status of respondents

##### (i) Distribution of civil status of respondents among current users

36.5% of current users were never-married singles, 28.8% were divorced/separated, 15.4% in a union, 11.5% were married, and 7.7% widowers.



##### (ii) Prevalence of drug use, by civil status of respondents

Among never-married singles, 13.0% had ever used drugs against 5.1% who were currently consuming drugs.

Drug ever-users stood at **10.9%** (C.I, 8.7 – 13.4) among married respondents, while only **0.9%** (C.I, 0.2 – 1.7) of them were currently using drugs.

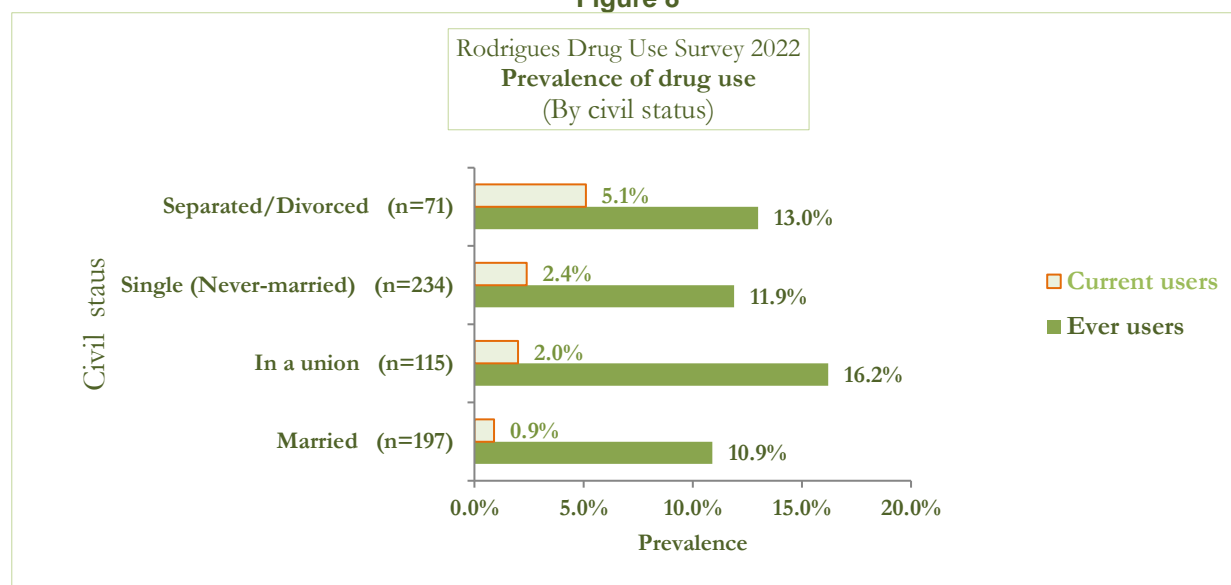
Among divorced/separated respondents' drug ever-users prevalence was **13.0%** (C.I, 9.3 – 17.0) against **5.1%** (C.I, 2.8 – 7.5) current users.

For those in a union, a relatively high prevalence of drug ever-users was observed, **16.2%** (C.I, 12.9 – 20.0) compared to 2.0% current users.

Thus, a relatively low rate of current users was observed among married respondents, **0.9%** (C.I, 0.2 – 1.7) as compared to the higher rate of current users among the divorced/separated group, **5.1%** (C.I, 2.8 – 7.5). Confidence intervals confirm the statistical evidence of difference between the current use among married respondents against current use among divorced/separated respondents.



**Figure 8**



(iii) Further analysis of drug use among the younger age group (15-19 years)

According to the 2022 Drug Use Survey sample, **79.0%** (95% C.I, 74.7 – 83.0) of those aged 15-19 years reported they were students, 16.4% were mainly self-employed or private sector employees and also very few government employees or casual workers. 3.0% of the 15-19 years age group were homemakers (exclusively female) and finally, 1.6% of the 15-19 years old reported they were unemployed.

Among those aged 15-19 years, prevalence of drug ever-users was **4.6%** (95% C.I, 2.6 – 6.8) and **2.2%** (95% C.I, 0.8 – 3.7) for current users. It is to be noted that the young population aged 15-19 years of Rodrigues was 4,194 (Digest of Rodrigues, 2021). Thus, the number of young people aged 15-19 years who had ever used drugs, was estimated at approximately **200** teenagers (100 – 300) with nearly half of them still currently using drugs, essentially cannabis.

Among students aged 15-19 years, the prevalence of drug ever-users was **3.1%** (95% C.I, 1.3 – 5.1) and it was **1.4%** (95% C.I, 0.3 – 2.8) for current drug users.

Similar analysis showed that an estimated **700** (500 – 900) young adults aged 20-24 years had ever used drugs, based on a prevalence of **19.0** (95%, C.I, 14.3 – 24.8) and a population of 3,667 adult aged 20-24 years. (Digest of Rodrigues, 2021).

#### 4.4.3 Initiation to drug use

##### (i) External migration and first experience with drugs

Among those who had ever used drugs, nearly two-third, **62.7%** (95% C.I, 56.9 – 68.1), had consumed the first drug in Rodrigues, against one third, 34.1% who reported they had drugs for the first time in the main Island of Mauritius, while only 3.3% of drug ever-users admitted they had the first drug experience in other countries than Mauritius.

Overall **62.7%** (95% C.I, 56.9 – 68.1) of drug ever-users had consumed drugs for the first time in Rodrigues, while among those who had ever travelled only to the main Island of Mauritius, similarly **60.8%** (95% C.I, 54.9 – 67.4) had consumed the first drug in Rodrigues. This indicated the fact that Rodrigues had been the very place for initiation to drugs for nearly two-third of adult residents of Rodrigues, irrespective of their external migration history.

Table 33  
**Place where respondents had consumed drugs for the first time**  
(Among drug ever-users)

Place of first drug use	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Percent	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
<b>In Rodrigues</b>	44	62.0%	<b>62.7%</b>	-0.1	3.0	56.5	68.1
<b>In Mauritius</b>	23	32.4%	<b>34.1%</b>	0.2	2.9	28.6	40.2
<b>Other countries</b>	4	5.6%	<b>3.3%</b>	-0.1	1.1	1.4	5.4
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 34  
**Place where respondents had consumed drugs for the first time**  
(Among drug ever-users who have visited only Mauritius)

Place of first drug use	Frequency	Sample	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
<b>In Rodrigues</b>	35	64.8%	<b>60.8%</b>	.2	3.4	54.3	68.0
<b>In Mauritius</b>	19	35.2%	<b>39.2%</b>	-.2	3.4	32.0	45.7
Total	54	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

##### (ii) Underlying reasons for starting with drug use

The 2022 Drug Use Survey demonstrated that, among drug ever-users, most respondents, **59.4%** (95% C.I, 53.6 – 65.2) started to use drugs while they were looking for personal experience with drug. 34.8% admitted having been initiated to drugs by friends. 0.7% answered they had used drugs to cope with psychological problems. 5.1% stated other main reasons for having started drugs, including medicinal purposes. 96.4% of drug ever-users respondents had started drug use with cannabis.

Table 35  
**Main reason that brought respondent to drugs**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

Main reason	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Percent	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Looking for personal experience	43	60.6%	59.4%	-0.1	3.0	53.6	65.2
Initiated by friends	22	31.0%	34.8%	0.1	2.9	29.0	40.2
Mental/psychological problems	2	2.8%	0.7%	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.8
Socio-economic problems	0	0.0%	0.0%				
Other main reasons	4	5.6%	5.1%	0.0	1.3	2.9	7.6
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

(iii) Age at first drug use and duration on drugs

Among respondents who had ever used drugs, 6.5% reported that they had their first non-injecting drugs when they were aged less than 15 years, 46.4% when they were in the age group 15-19 years, 33.3% in the age group 20-24 years and finally, 13.8% had started drug use when they were aged 25 years or more. In short, nearly 80.0% had started with drugs in the young age band 15-24 years.

The youngest age stated in the survey regarding initiation to drugs was 13 years old, while the maximum age at first drug was reported to be 39 years. The median age of initiation to drugs indicated that 50% had started at 19 years old or before, while another 50 % had started 19 years or after. Overall, on average the starting age was 20 years.

Table 36  
**Respondents' age at first non-injecting drugs**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

Age group	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Cumulative Percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
					Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Under 15 years	4	5.6%	6.5%	5.6	-0.1	1.2	4.3	8.7
15-19 years	34	47.9%	46.4%	53.5	0.0	2.4	41.7	51.1
20-24 years	23	32.4%	33.3%	85.9	0.0	2.5	28.6	38.0
25 years & above	10	14.1%	13.8%	100.0	0.0	1.8	10.5	17.7
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%		0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 37  
**Respondents' age at first non-injecting drugs**  
 (Among ever-users of drugs)

	Age Statistics	Bootstrap		
		Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval
Mean	20	0.0	0.3	19.7 20.8
Median	19	0.2	0.4	19.0 20.0
Mode	20			
Minimum	13			
Maximum	39			

Table 38  
**Respondents' first non-injecting drugs**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

First non-injecting drug	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Cannabis	68	95.8%	96.4%	0.0	1.1	94.0	98.5
Cough syrup	2	2.8%	1.8%	0.0	0.8	0.4	3.6
Heroin	1	1.4%	1.8%	0.0	0.8	0.4	3.4
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

For 3.3% of those who had ever used drugs, it was less than one year since they had the first drug experience. One or two years had elapsed since the first drug consumption for 7.6% of drug ever-users. It was three or four years back for 11.2% of drug ever-users, 5 to 9 years for 23.6%, and finally, it was ten years or more back since 54.3% of drug ever-users had their first drug consumption (**See Table 39**). NOTE: This analysis was an attempt to explore how far back drugs had been present in the community among the actual population, while it is understood that this is not the length of stay on drugs but an interval of time since first experience, as most ever-users were no longer currently on drugs.

Table 39  
**Interval of years since respondent's first drug consumption**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

		Frequency	Sample	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
					Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Interval of years since first drug consumption	Less than one year	2	2.8%	3.3%	0.04	1.1	1.4	5.4
	1 - 2 years	5	7.0%	7.6%	-0.04	1.6	4.7	10.5
	3 - 4 years	6	8.5%	11.2%	-0.01	1.9	7.6	15.2
	5 - 9 years	16	22.5%	23.6%	0.05	2.5	18.8	28.6
	10 years or more	42	59.2%	54.3%	-0.05	3.0	48.6	60.1
	Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	0.00	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 40  
**Interval of years since first drug consumption**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

	(Interval) Number of years	Bootstrap**			
		Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Mean	13	-.01	.62	11.9	14.3
Median	11	-.24	1.1	9.0	13.0
Mode	15				
Minimum	0				
Maximum	44				

\*\* Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

#### 4.4.4 Miscellaneous drug use behaviors among drug users in Rodrigues

##### (i) Medical and legal issues due to drug use

Among those who had ever used drugs, **10.1%** (95% C.I, 6.5 – 14.1) reported they had ever been arrested by Police. In fact, **11.8%** (95% C.I, 7.9 - 16.2) of male drug ever-users reported they had ever been arrested. No arrests were reported among females.

On the other hand, only 3.3% among those who had ever used drugs (both sexes) stated they had ever sought help to quit drug dependence. This is equivalent to roughly an estimated 120 adults in the population of Rodrigues. Furthermore, 98.1% of the drug ever-users did not think they were addicted. The very few who had sought help reported they had done so through the family and friends.

Table 41  
**Respondent has ever been arrested by Police**  
(Among drug ever-users)

Arrested by Police	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Percent	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Yes	8	11.3%	10.1%	0.0	1.9	6.5	14.1
No	63	88.7%	89.9%	0.0	1.9	85.9	93.5
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 42  
**Respondents who have ever sought help to quit drugs**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Percent	Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Yes	2	2.8%	3.3%	.0	2.0	0.0	7.0
No	69	97.2%	96.7%	.0	2.0	93.0	100.0
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	-13.9	34.6	0.0	100.0

## 4.5 Types of drugs consumed and drug use practices

### 4.5.1 Type of drugs ever used

According to the 2022 Drug Use Survey, **87.6%** (95% C.I, 86.3 – 89.0) of adults aged 15-64 years had never consumed any drug. **12.0%** (95% C.I, 10.6 – 13.7) reported they had ever used **cannabis** [Considering multiple drug use also].

**0.4%** (C.I, 0.0 – 0.9) of respondents admitted ever used **heroin** [Taking into account multiple drug use also].

**0.2%** (C.I, 0.0 – 0.5) had used **cough syrup** and **0.2%** (C.I, 0.0 – 0.4) reported **multiple drugs** comprising combinations of two or more drugs such as cannabis, heroin, psychotropic tablets and new psychoactive substance (synthetic drugs).

Considering statistical confidence intervals and based on a total Island midyear population of 28,932 adults, aged 15-64 years (Population & Vital Statistics Report 2021), it is estimated that roughly, 3,000 - 4,000 adults aged 15-64 years, residing Rodrigues, had ever consumed **cannabis**. Approximately 100 - 300 had ever used **heroin**, just around 50 - 150 had used **cough syrup** and finally, about one hundred had ever used **multiple drugs**, comprising combinations of two or more drugs such as cough syrup, cannabis, heroin, psychotropic tablets and new psychoactive substances (synthetic drugs).

Table 43  
Type of drugs ever used among all adults aged 15-64 years in Rodrigues

Drug ever used	Frequency	Sample	Weighted Percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Cannabis	68	10.7%	12.0%	0.0	0.7	10.6	13.3
Heroin	1	0.2%	0.2%	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.5
Cough syrup	1	0.2%	0.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Multiple (Cannabis/ heroin/ NPS/ cough syrup/ psychotropic tablet)	1	0.2%	0.2%	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.4
Drug-free respondents	562	88.8%	87.6%	0.0	0.7	86.3	89.0
Total	633	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

#### 4.5.2 Selected drug consumption practices among ever-users and current users of drugs

##### (i) Most recent drugs consumed

Among respondents who had ever used drugs, when they were asked about the most recent drug they had consumed, 97.8% answered cannabis, 1.4% heroin and 0.4% cough syrup. No respondents had mentioned new psychoactive substances as the most recently consumed drug. It is to be noted that, among those who had ever used drugs, 13.4% had consumed the most recent drug one month ago. 18.8% had done so in less than six months ago.

##### (ii) Frequency of drug use

Furthermore, data regarding those who had consumed drugs in less than six month ago (current users) was very limited, nevertheless there was an indication that nearly 80% of current users were consuming drugs at a rate of one-day consumption per 2-5 weeks.

##### (iii) Access to drugs

Among current users of drugs, only 9.6% admitted it was very easy to get access to drugs, 21.2% admitted it was just easy, while 46.2% found access to drugs was difficult and finally, 23.1% found access to drugs very difficult in Rodrigues.

Table 44  
**Non-injecting drugs used at most recent time consumption**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

Drug	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Cannabis	69	97.2%	97.8%	0.0	0.9	96.0	99.3
Heroin	1	1.4%	1.8%	0.0	0.8	0.4	3.5
Cough syrup	1	1.4%	0.4%	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.2
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%	-0.1	3.2	100.0	100.0

Table 45  
**Most recent time respondent had consumed non-injecting drugs**  
 (Among drug ever-users)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Percent	Cumulative Percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
					Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
One week ago	1	1.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.8
2-3 weeks ago	2	2.8%	2.9%	3.6%	0.0	1.1	1.1	5.1
One month ago	5	7.0%	9.8%	13.4%	0.1	1.7	6.5	13.4
2-5 months ago	4	5.6%	5.4%	18.8%	0.0	1.3	2.9	8.0
6 months or more ago	59	83.1%	81.2%	100.0%	0.0	2.4	76.4	85.9
Total	71	100.0%	100.0%		0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

Table 46  
**Frequency of non-injecting drug use**  
 (Among **current** users of drugs)

Drug consumption interval	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
2-7 days weekly	2	16.7%	15.4%	0.1	4.5	7.4	24.5
One day weekly	1	8.3%	3.8%	-0.1	2.6	0.0	9.8
One day in a period of 2-4 weeks	4	33.3%	42.3%	-0.2	6.4	29.4	55.1
One day in a period of 5 weeks or more	5	41.7%	38.5%	0.3	6.0	26.9	50.0
Total current users	12	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0



Table 47  
**Respondent's degree of physical access to drugs**  
 (Among **current** users of drugs)

	Frequency	Percent	Weighted percent	Bootstrap for Percent			
				Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Very easy	1	8.3%	9.6%	0.1	4.0	2.1	17.9
Easy	3	25.0%	21.2%	-0.2	5.1	11.4	31.3
Difficult	5	41.7%	46.2%	0.0	6.0	34.8	58.2
Very difficult	3	25.0%	23.1%	0.1	5.3	12.7	33.3
Total	12	100.0%	100.0%	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0

### 4.5.3 Injecting drug use

According to the 2022 Drug Use Survey sample data, there was an indication that the prevalence of people who had ever injected drugs, among adults aged 15-64 years, was **0.2%** (95% C.I, 0.0 – 0.4). It stood at **0.3%** (95% C.I, 0.1 – 0.7) among **male** adults, giving an estimated number of roughly up to 100 male adults residing in Rodrigues who have likely ever injected drugs, out of the population of 14,160 adult males (Population & Vital Statistics 2021). The 2022 Drug Use Survey did not identify any adult female respondent who had ever injected drugs.

## Chapter 5

### Recommendations

- ❖ Considering the fact that drug use starts at quite an early age, it is recommended that drug prevention programme be further strengthened particularly targeting the younger age group.
- ❖ Even if a large proportion of Rodrigues students have been reached with drug prevention programmes, some do still indulge in drug use, it is recommended that an evaluation of the prevention programme be conducted and prevention strategies and activities be reviewed.
- ❖ Increase and ongoing media campaign to sensitise the population at large as suggested by respondents.
- ❖ The 2022 Survey on Drug Use in Rodrigues has revealed that a significant proportion of Rodriguans believe that drugs are introduced in Rodrigues mainly through foreigners, in this respect much vigilance and strict control should be maintained at the points of entry of the Island.
- ❖ The 2022 Survey on Drug Use in Rodrigues has limited statistical properties to survey among hidden population networks, in this case, the current drug users, it is therefore recommended that a chain referral sampling methodology that is Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) survey be conducted among drug users in Rodrigues to better understand the practices and behaviours of drug user populations.
- ❖ Locally grown cannabis seems to be the main drug of use and remains a concern. Law Enforcement Agencies should be empowered with resources and logistics to improve surveillance in the forest areas where cannabis is grown.
- ❖ The response to the drug scourge is multi sectoral and concerns different institutions and organisations which usually work in silos. In this regard in order to ensure a well-coordinated and comprehensive approach to the drug problem it is utmost important that a body be set up to ensure the overall coordination and implementation of interventions including demand and supply reduction programmes.
- ❖ Rodrigues to develop its action plan against drug trafficking and drug abuse in view to ensure a well structured response.