

From VOA Learning English, this is As It Is.

Welcome to the show. I'm Caty Weaver. Today we tell about migrant children detained by Indonesia. We also report on a global fatherhood campaign. But first we look at an international report about so-called "designer drugs."

Designer Drugs

Large groups of new drugs are hitting the international market. Psychoactive substances, made in laboratories, are sold as "legal highs" and "designer drugs." The United Nations 2013 World Drug Report says such drugs are increasing so quickly that regulators cannot control them.

Thomas Pietschmann is a co-author of the report. He says a major effort is needed to prevent the manufacture, trafficking and use of these drugs. But he says controlling the spread is difficult because the new drugs change so quickly.

"Substance emerge on the market only for a short period of time, emerge, disappear and then another substance emerges, which creates the problem."

report says the number of new psychoactive substances reported by member states to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime rose 50 percent in three years.

However, there is also good news in the report.

The report says heroin use seems to be dropping in Europe while cocaine use is falling in the United States.

Indonesia's Child Detainees

The organization Human Rights Watch says hundreds of refugee children detained by Indonesia face violence and terrible living conditions. A report from the New York-based group says the children fled war, poverty and other dangers in their own countries. Now, it says some of the children are held by Indonesia for years. Katherine Cole has more.

The Human Rights Watch report says more than 1,000 children arrived in Indonesia last year. They came without adults. The report says the Indonesian government detained many and placed them in dirty and overcrowded detention centers.

Human Rights Watch researcher Andreas Harsono says the

children rarely see sunlight.

“Sometimes, once in a week or twice in a week, they were given the freedom to walk inside the compound of the migrant detention center where they can walk free, playing around, running, you know, being children.”

The report is based on discussions with more than 100 migrants. Almost half were children when they entered Indonesia.

It says the migrants described guards beating them. In one case, parents said immigration guards forced their children to watch guards beat other migrants.

Andreas Harsono says the number of migrants entering Indonesia is on the rise. He says many of the migrants have been oppressed in nearby countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma and Iran.

“The Indonesian government should open their eyes that increasingly over the last three - five years, because of conflict in the Middle East, in South Asia, because of the persecution against minorities there, religious minorities mostly, these people are running away.”

Indonesia has not signed the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention. The UN refugee agency is responsible for processing asylum claims. But Human Rights Watch says Indonesia often refuses to release detainees even when the UN has recognized them as refugees.

Human Rights Watch researcher Andreas Harsono says the refugees in Indonesia are trying to get to Australia. But, he says, even if they avoid detention they have a dangerous trip ahead.

“If they are lucky, in this case, they are not arrested. It takes them another year or a year-and-a-half to get them to another smuggler who specializes in using boats to cross the Indian Ocean into Australia.”

Human Rights Watch says hundreds are thought to die on these crossings each year.

Global Fatherhood Campaign

In many societies around the world fathers are thought as the financial providers and the parent that gives out punishments. There is a general understanding that a child goes to the father for money and the mother for love.

But a

new worldwide campaign is trying to change this view. Organizers of the Men Care Campaign say it improves the lives of men and their children and it helps reduce violence against women. Jim Tedder reports.

South Africa is one of 17 countries where the Men Care campaign is taking place. It was launched in 2011. Jean-Marie Mkurunziza's wife was pregnant at the time.

"We normally meet once a week."

Mr. Mkurunziza leads group meetings for Men Care.

"We go to the clinic and also in the community and inviting the expectant fathers to be part of this group and take responsibility in their family."

Part of that responsibility is helping their wives with tasks around the house.

"We give them homework, to go home and do something special, which they had never done before, cleaning the house, or cleaning the dishes. So, last week, one of my team members came with his wife, who is currently about to give birth. Then, the

was very happy.”

Vidar Vetterfalk is a Men Care Campaign organizer from Sweden.

“I attended a group while we were waiting for our first child.”

The Vetterfalks live in South Africa and have adopted two children there, a boy and girl. Mr. Vetterfalk says the Men Care group teaches men how to share the responsibility for child care.

“Me and my wife, we did that. Every second night we took care of the child. So at least one of us had slept in the morning.”

Promundo is an international group that helps support the campaign. Gary Barker is with Promundo’s Washington, DC, office. He says to get the best results a father should get involved during his partner’s pregnancy.

“We’re trying to get them inside the clinic, get the health workers to see men as allies in this process, because our research also shows if we engage men from that moment, they feel like, ‘wait, the world expects me to be involved in my child’s life for the long term even if they are not with the partner later on.”

Mr.

Barker says the father's group is just one part of the campaign. For greater outreach, local campaign partners take the message to the media through films, public service announcements and signs. They spread information about how and why fathers should get more involved in their children's lives.

"Men who report closer relationships with their children, who get involved in the daily care, report they they've got better mental health. They are less likely to be involved in delinquency or crime. They are less likely to abuse alcohol. We have data from Sweden that they actually live longer. Sons who see their fathers do this are more likely to grow up and, themselves, respect women's rights and believe in gender equality. And they're less likely to use violence against their partners."

The Men Care Campaign hopes this fatherhood movement will spread and improve families and societies around the world.

I'm Jim Tedder.

And that's As It Is for today. I'm Caty Weaver.

What do you want to hear about on As It Is? Go to our website at learningenglish.voanews.com and tell us what you think.



Thanks for joining us.