

CULTIVATING ECOSYSTEMS OF CHANGE FOR LASTING IMPACT



SUPPORT. DON'T PUNISH
GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION 2024
SUMMARY REPORT



Cultivating ecosystems of change for lasting impact


Support. Don't Punish Global Day of Action 2024

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Support. Don't Punish is a global, decentralised and grassroots-centred campaign that resources communities targeted by and resisting repressive drug policies, and their allies, to promote **harm reduction and drug policies that prioritise health, human rights and well-being**.

The campaign seeks to raise the profile of harm reduction and sustainable responses to drugs by strengthening communities' mobilisation capacity, opening dialogue with policy-makers, and raising awareness among the media and the public.

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Photo: ACRDR

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KEY MESSAGES

The drug control system is harmful and needs to change.

People who use drugs should no longer be criminalised.

People involved in the drug trade should not face harsh or disproportionate punishments, where retained.

The death penalty should never be imposed for drug offences.

Drug policy should focus on health, well-being and harm reduction.

Drug policy budgets need rebalancing to ensure health and harm reduction-based responses are well financed.

KEY NUMBERS

295

cities

85

countries

>95%

of campaigners felt more confident in mobilising and considered they had elicited change in their target

>82

high-reach personalities engaged

INTRODUCTION



Photo: Winnie Byanyima, UNAIDS Executive Director

The global political climate presents a turbulent reality for communities affected by the so-called “war on drugs” across the world. As this year’s Global Day of Action shows, we have redoubled our efforts to uphold the rights of all people impacted by punitive drug policies. Together, fighting the harms caused by punitive drug policies, incarceration and the militarisation of drug control – all features of the “war on drugs”.

We have seen shifts in attitudes from international institutions and decision-makers previously silent about, or even opposing, the human-rights based drug policies they now embrace. United Nations bodies, including the [Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights](#), have denounced the ‘drug war’, calling for a shift towards health and harm reduction, away from punitive drug control. These changes come on the back of decades

of work from activists highlighting the damage caused by the “war on drugs”.

This slowly shifting reality has, however, been countered by a rise in far-right political movements. Positive moves at the national and supranational levels have failed to actualise or remain worryingly fragile for the majority of our communities around the world.

This reality, along with the ever present impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen us seek strength in our communities more than ever before – as we began to notice in [“Growing people power”, our most recent Global Day of Action report](#).

This growth and strengthening of our communities have enabled us to expand our ecosystems of change – from the streets of Abuja, Buenos Aires and Cebu, to the corridors of the UN, and even into the breakout rooms of online workshops.



Photo: Senator Risa Hontiveros - By Catherine Alvarez

The Support. Don't Punish campaign this year saw a focus on bringing people together - whether that be existing groups combating and countering the harms caused by the “war on drugs”, or broadening our connections with sister movements based on intersecting and shared experiences.



Photo: Scottish Drugs Forum

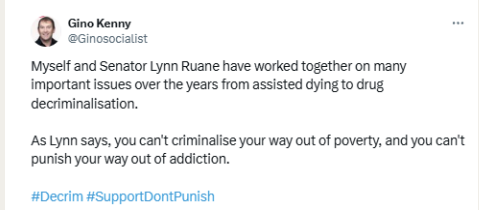


Photo: Screenshot from Gino Kenny's Twitter account

The campaign itself also received gestures of solidarity and support from friends in all corners of the world, including civil society and community groups, like the **Scottish Drugs Forum**, the **US National Harm Reduction Coalition** and Francophone Africa's foremost **community-led media**, **l'Arbre à Palabres**, produced by **PASEN**.

Decision-makers at all levels also shared our urgency in calling for reform, including **UNAIDS** Executive Director, **Winnie Byanyima** — the first person in her position to **endorse the campaign**, and parliamentarians like Gino Kenny (Ireland), Risa Hontiveros (Philippines) and Txema Guijarro (Spain).

INTERLINKING DRUG POLICIES ACROSS COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS

Increasingly, campaigners adopt the lens of intersectionality to approach harm reduction, drug policy, and campaign activities. Much of this stems from the connections built over generations between people impacted by the “war on drugs” and convergent groups. Whether through shared resistance against criminalisation, the still-unfolding trauma of the HIV epidemic, or the simple fact that people from all walks of life use drugs, the liberation of people who use drugs is intertwined with everyone else’s.

Strengthening connections along intersecting issues enriches and grows our networks, helping us develop more sustainable, prosperous, and effective ecosystems of change.

The harms of criminalisation and punitive drug policies are felt throughout the world. Their burden falls disproportionately on the shoulders of people experiencing multiple and compounding oppressions, manifesting in state-sanctioned violence and systemic neglect. This year we have continued to see the longstanding tradition of solidarity in resistance, and activities proving that we are stronger together.

Guided by these shared principles, in Kisumu City, the Western Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (WEKESWA) organised collaboratively this 26th of June, convening a productive exchange of medical, academic and community experts. Participants pointed at gaps in services and research, leading to an agreement from the Research Director of a local hospital to conduct research on the community’s specific needs. Well-funded participatory research methods, co-led with peers, can be transformative!



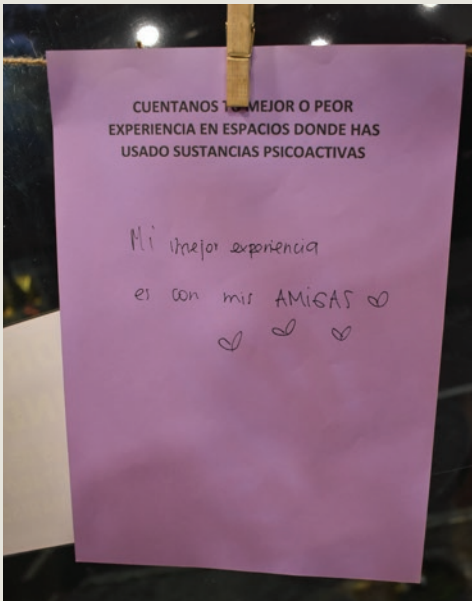
Photo: SSDP Kenya

In Nairobi, **SSDP Kenya** held an interactive discussion with students highlighting the power of the collective. Students engaged in role playing exercises and activities, as well as discussing collective ways to support themselves and each other when experiencing mental health difficulties. Peer to peer support played a key role for the participants and they engaged in further discussions about HIV prevention and reproductive health more broadly.

In Myanmar, the **Drug Policy Advocacy Group** brought together experts in harm reduction and drug policy advocacy, as well as representatives from affected communities for a panel discussion. Additionally, DPAG leveraged their position as a central hub in the country, bringing together allied groups to increase the day’s impact and reach the LGBTQ+ community, sex workers, and all people impacted by the “war on drugs”. Community groups were supported by DPAG to

coordinate their own local activities, expanding possibilities for change as well as bringing an intersectional approach to the panel discussion. The discussion ended by highlighting the need for gender-sensitive harm reduction approaches and targeted chemsex interventions.

Similar events were held in Ecuador by **Acción Antiprohibicionista Ecuador**, who hosted a safe meeting space for women and gender diverse people who use drugs. The collective built on their work in previous campaigns with their meeting space *Alafia* or 'good encounter'. The space has continued to foster connections between and within communities reinforce their work against the 'drug war'.



"My best experience is with my girl friends."
Photo: Acción Antiprohibicionista Ecuador

In Indonesia, **GAMMA** held a public discussion on the topic of young and LGBTQ+ people who use drugs in Bogor City, aimed specifically at students and academics from local universities. Young people remain disproportionately targeted by punitive drug policies while their voices are suppressed by a narrative focus on their need to be protected. Returning autonomy to young people is vital to tackling the harm caused by prohibition.

People pushed to the margins often find themselves at the sharp end of punitive responses to drugs. In Namibia, **Y-Fem Namibia Trust** promoted constructive responses instead, while fostering community care through an anti-colonial lens. Meetings were held in native languages, Oshiwambo and Khoekhoegowab, Afrikaans and more - towards decolonising drug policy.

Some of these activities were supported by our sister hub at the **Women and Harm Reduction International Network**. Each year WHRIN supports organisations from Namibia to Nepal to host activities around the Global Day of Action focused on the impact on women and gender diverse people, tackling the disproportionate incarceration and economic precarity being faced as a result of the "war on drugs".

In Colombia, **Elementa DDHH** and **Dejusticia**, held a public meeting with **Mujeres Libres**, a group led by formerly incarcerated women. **The majority of women imprisoned in Colombia are deprived of their liberty for drug-related offences.** Primarily heads of household, sole care-givers and from economically dispossessed communities, their minor involvement in the trade of substances in criminalised markets can be a survival

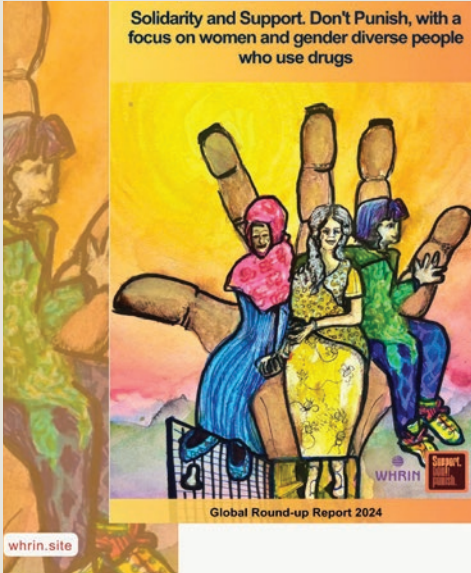


Photo: WHRIN

strategy. Between 1991 and 2018, the incarceration of women in Colombia increased by an astonishing 429%, primarily due to the “war on drugs”.

This year, a number of groups also worked on different forms of outreach campaigns focusing on intersectionality. Through underscoring the wide-reaching impacts of the “war on drugs” we can change the hearts and minds of an expanding audience.

In Lusaka, **Harm Reduction Zambia** organised an interview on local radio to present the case for harm reduction and the legal regulation of cannabis cultivation by small scale farmers. In 2017, the government established a licensed system of cultivation for medical purposes, with potential to support impoverished communities tackle economic

precarity and vulnerability. Yet no such licences have been awarded yet. As HRZ explain, opening new avenues for the cultivation of crops previously deemed illegal can have transformative effects on rural communities, many of whom are struggling from reduced harvests as a result of climate change.

Thinking about the harms caused by punitive drug policies and the current control regime, the focus is often, rightly, on the significant issues of criminalisation and the violence the community faces. However, the criminalisation of those involved in the production, cultivation, and supply of substances deemed to be illicit has driven the increase in the numbers of people imprisoned on drug related offences, and notably the increased number of executions on drug related offences.

There is no end to the “war on drugs” without recognising its harms on economically vulnerable communities across the world. From Indigenous people’s use of the coca plant, to farmers, to people who inject drugs, the “war on drugs” has wide-reaching ramifications that harm us all.



Photo: Metzineres

Elsewhere, in Catalonia and Indonesia respectively, public radio and talk shows by **Metzineres** and **SPINN** were held on issues facing women and gender diverse people who use drugs. Metzineres also organised a documentary screening highlighting resistance to prohibition in urban contexts as well documenting the history of the Raval neighbourhood in which they are located.

In Mexico, the 7th annual **Festival Apoye. No Castigue** was held to mark the campaign

day. The event brings together broader community groups to link sport, the environment, art and human rights as integral components of full spectrum risk and harm reduction. This full spectrum approach works to encompass all of the ways in which people use drugs, without detaching this drug use from the context in which they find themselves. To this end, peer education workshops were organised, as well as the distribution of a variety of safer use materials.



*Cultural activities and distribution of safer use kits with support from the Mayor's Office.
Photo: 7th Festival Apoye. No Castigue, Mexico.*



Photo: Teens Link

Other projects this year included **Odyssey'** (Slovakia) series of resources in the lead up to June 26th addressing the specific harms experienced by trans people and women who use drugs.

In Wakiso, Uganda harm reduction campaigning has taken on layers of urgency, with the passing of two laws last year targeting key populations in the country. **Teens Link** utilised the campaign day this year to organise an informal stakeholders meeting, convening religious leaders, government officials, partner organisations, and community together to highlight the issues brought about by the Anti-Homosexuality Act, and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control)

Act. The stakeholder meeting focused on ways to improve the legal situation for key population groups in the immediate, including focusing on improving access to vital healthcare services which have been restricted due to the increased criminalisation. While the context in Uganda remains horrifying due to the risk of life imprisonment and even the death penalty, Teens Link noted that "as civil society, we are more united than ever" in their efforts to repeal these laws.

This spirit of togetherness, whether through civil society networks, community groups, and interpersonally, powers the campaign and is key to our reach and strength.



Harm reduction workshop in Maleku territory. Photo: ACEID

RETHINKING DRUG USE AND HARM REDUCTION IN THE MALEKU INDIGENOUS TERRITORY

2024 Global Day of Action in Costa Rica
Small & Initiatives grants programme highlight: ACEID

The campaign has a long history in Costa Rica and this year it marked a milestone with our global day in the Maleku Indigenous Territory, north of the country. The Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas (ACEID), partnered with Asociación de Mujeres Uniendo Comunidades para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos (a local women's community group) to translate harm reduction ideas and practices with the community.

ACEID were invited to pioneer the first project working with people who use drugs in Indigenous communities of Costa Rica. Partnering with **Ditsö**, ACEID and local groups worked on a plan to research and discuss drug use with

in the Maleku community, through a harm reduction approach, to improve welfare.

Relying on the active participation of the Maleku community, the project was able to address stigma and demonstrate the immense potential of grassroots initiatives to bring about meaningful change.

A workshop was held through a participatory approach to identify existing experience and knowledge in the community, building solid shared foundations.

The intra-community and inter-generational nature of the workshop proved a success, providing a platform for community leaders to hear about the needs of people who use

drugs within the community, in a supportive and nonjudgemental environment.

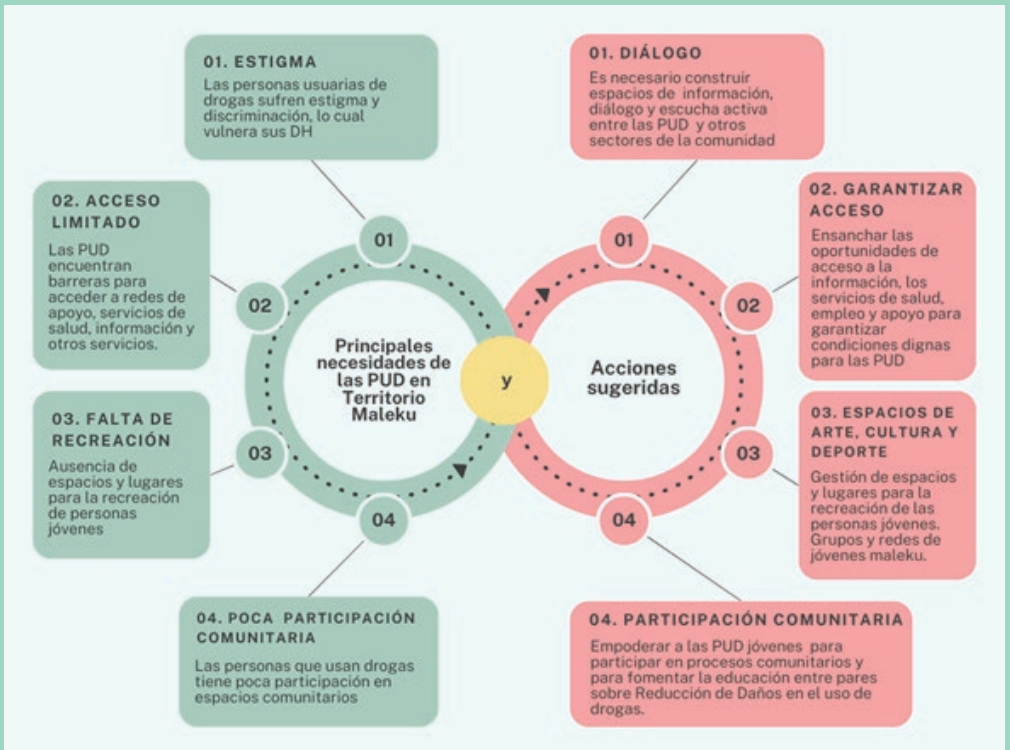
Given the recent and historic experiences of the Maleku community facing colonisation, deforestation, and the community being reduced to just 650 survivors. They experience stigma and discrimination as an indigenous minority group. As a result, their engagement with mainstream services remains extremely limited, if such services are available at all.

By resourcing communities with culturally-relevant tools to promote health and autonomy, the project contributed to undermine the legacy of colonial exploitation and economic marginalisation experienced by the Maleku people – moving a step forward toward breaking cycles of harm and punishment contributed to by the “war on drugs.”

“

Community-based inter-generational dialogues enabled a supportive and nonjudgemental environment to discuss harm reduction needs.

”



Needs assessment and suggested actions concerning harm reduction among the Maleku people. Photo: ACEID

PLANNING AND ACTING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

Strategically-timed actions can have significant impact and greatly strengthen our advocacy positions. In many ways, this is the very essence of the campaign's Global Day of Action – tactically leveraging *the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking* to highlight that a world beyond the “war on drugs” is possible and desirable for everyone’s health and wellbeing.

Whether mobilising around the 26th of June, strategically utilising election cycles, or coming together to lay out a path forwards, the campaign has fostered tactical thinking towards achieving common goals. Many activities this year capitalised on planning and timing.

In Nigeria, the **Drug Harm Reduction Advocacy Network** sought to get ahead of the curve and combat a proposed new measure from the Nigerian government to authorise the death penalty as a maximum sentence for drug trafficking, holding a meeting with community members and other relevant stakeholders.

With over 200 attendees both in person and online, the event brought together speakers and attendees from human rights groups, community networks, and donors. Speakers emphasised the importance of protecting human rights and pointed to the complete lack of evidence of the death penalty as a deterrent measure.

The work being done in Nigeria to combat the implementation of the death penalty is far from over – with efforts continuing to ensure

no ground is ceded in the fight against the death penalty.

Meanwhile, across the African continent in Mozambique, **Rede de Ajuda aos Usuários de Droga** (REAJUD) met with government officials to discuss updates on an ongoing review of the national drug law, focusing on pushing for amendments within the law to ensure provision of harm reduction services.



Photo: cool_ridge600, for AIVL

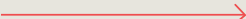
Continues on page 17 



Photo: CUT

LEVERAGING ELECTIONS TO ADVANCE HARM REDUCTION & DECRIMINALISATION

2024 Global Day of Action in Mauritius

Small grants programme highlight: CUT – Collectif Urgence Toxida

While elections can bring with them fear and uncertainty, they can also present opportunities for change and can open new avenues for our advocacy. As candidates hit the campaign trail, politicians can become more approachable.

With elections on the horizon at the end of 2024 in Mauritius, **Collectif Urgence Toxida (CUT)** seized the initiative in an election year and held a Conference on Harm Reduction and Decriminalisation, addressing government officials, parliamentarians, and media representatives among other key stakeholders.

Against the backdrop of a worrying uptick in violence against community members, the conference sparked political urgency in favour of the rights and health of people who use drugs. With 6,000 people actively engaging with CUT's harm reduction programmes, and a history of mobilising with the community, the organisation is well-placed to promote effective solutions.

Mauritius has made great progress in matters of **drug policy and harm reduction**, including thanks to CUT's pioneering work. While not linear, as demonstrated by the closure (and later re-introduction) of OAT services in the

last decade, progress is evident and further policy changes remain on the table.

During the conference, colleagues from CUT presented the results of a recently conducted survey, showing the majority of Mauritians to be in favour of decriminalisation of personal possession for all illicit substances, as well as a legal market for the sale of cannabis. This is in stark contrast to the view generally held by politicians that Mauritius is not ready for such changes.

CUT also received assurances from opposition MPs present that they stand in favour of decriminalisation and will work towards achieving such changes.

The conference had strong community-led components, with sessions spearheaded by peers and video interventions aimed at sharing experiences in the first person. One such vid-

eo was created to outline the situation faced by women who use drugs in Mauritius. Many attendees expressed at the conference the impact that this video had in providing a fresh perspective on the experiences of women who use drugs in Mauritius – giving a voice to an otherwise silenced group.

CUT's campaigning and advocacy work has been fruitful and expectations run high, as political parties court the younger generations, who place greater emphasis on an end to the "war on drugs". Continuing to break barriers and put the needs of people who use drugs at the centre of the political discussion on the island, CUT's Conference on Harm Reduction and Decriminalisation has multiplied the chances that the upcoming election brings positive change.



Photo: CUT

PLANNING AND ACTING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE (CONTINUED)

In Ukraine, the **Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs** and **Second Life** addressed an open letter to the Ukrainian government highlighting the need to ensure access to OAT. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine access to OAT has been a challenge, particularly near the frontline. Evacuees have become internally displaced refugees struggling to maintain access to medicine and unable to leave the country due to conscription laws. **Your Home** organised complimentary actions, with a televised programme on the needs of internally displaced people who use drugs and related advocacy meetings with government officials.

On top of impressive advocacy efforts, many activities sought to directly improve access to harm reduction and related services, including **Verter** in Mexico who produced a toolkit aiming to address harms caused by increasing use of fentanyl – particularly in the country's capital and north western states. They combined these efforts with advocacy work

and a video campaign to end criminalisation of people who use drugs.

In Albania, **Aksion Plus** organised a series of events to raise awareness of the available harm reduction and sexual and reproductive health services, meetings with stakeholders to ensure the sustained provision of such services, and the direct distribution of HIV prevention materials.

In Sierra Leone, a similar distribution of HIV prevention materials took place with **SSDP Sierra Leone**, who also organised a TV show highlighting the need for access to harm reduction. Meanwhile, their parent organisation **SSDP International** conducted a survey of students in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa to better understand drug education needs.

These activities, reaching out to people where they are at, seeking to build connections, were central to this year's actions.

Continues on page 20 →



Photo: Aksion Plus



Photo: LBHM Case

OPEN SPACE FOR DRUG TALKS

2024 Global Day of Action in Indonesia
Small grants programme highlight: LBH Masyarakat

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Masyarakat (LBHM), or the Community Legal Aid Institute are champions of reform in Indonesia. The organisation believes that everyone can actively participate in legal defence and assistance, uphold justice and contribute to the protection of human rights.

The Institute defends the rights of deprived human being regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, race, social status, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, mental health, or any other status. Providing legal aid to discriminated against communities,

organising training, engaging in advocacy efforts, and organising campaigns that raise awareness about human rights.

LBHM remain horrified by the punitive nature of drug control in Indonesia. This motivation led them to take to the streets to engage in open and frank discussions about drug use and prohibition in Jakarta.

Bringing together people who use drugs to ensure the needs of the community remained front and centre of the discussions. LBHM participants strategically located

themselves at key points throughout the city to garner further support.

By winning hearts and minds, they know they can further their advocacy work and build widespread support for change.

While engaging in conversations, they also gathered signatures for a petition to call for changes to the punitive drug control regime in the country, as well as focusing their efforts on **social media to build broader support**.

Media engagement in the campaign gave further platforms to people who use drugs to present their arguments to pave the way forward for an end to the “war on drugs”.

Shaped by the engagement of community members, the conversations touched on topics of relevance in Indonesia. Unfair trials for people who use drugs tied naturally in with the work of the Institute, while the use of taxpayer money to fund these punitive measures resonated with the people of Jakarta.

Further needs for access to available services was highlighted as a key issue and the campaign was underpinned by expressing a need to end the criminalisation of people who use drugs.



Photo: LBHM

PLANNING AND ACTING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE *(CONTINUED)*

Similarly to the efforts highlighted above, **Skoun** in Lebanon held street interventions with members of the public to discuss attitudes to drug use, as well as creating a policy brief highlighting the failures of drug policy in Lebanon. This brief was further expanded into three videos highlighting the three key demands of the brief - giving further diversity to the advocacy efforts and creating easily digestible resources.

In Montevideo, Uruguay, **Imaginario 9** focused on an online campaign to dispel myths

about drug use, as well as publishing an analysis of all political parties' proposed drug policies. They also included a debate on these policies from community members and the National Drugs Observatory weighing up the pros and cons.

Finally in Cameroon, **Association Camerounaise pour la Réduction Des Risques** (ACRDR) hosted a series of workshops for a diverse range of people, from people imprisoned in Bafia to the city's Mayor - truly expanding the reach of harm reduction.



Photo: Imaginario 9



Photo: Emily J Ebdon for AIVL

ART, ADVOCACY, ACTION! REIMAGINING 'SUPPORT' FOR PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

2024 Global Day of Action in Australia

Small grants programme highlight: Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)

Throughout early 2024, the [Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug User League \(AIVL\)](#), and their National Communications Group, had been planning for the Support. Don't Punish campaign in June. The organisation is the umbrella national network of 9 peer-based harm reduction and Drug User Organisations within the country, representing the 4 million people who use drugs illicitly in Australia.

With this in mind, AIVL prompted audiences with: "What does support look like for you?". [The almost 50 responses were turned into illustrations](#) which have been distributed

widely across the country. This artistic endeavour brings a splash of tattoo art-inspired colour to NSPs, drop-in centres, and even the hallways of government departments with the goal of spreading messages of love and support for people who use drugs.

AIVL also organised a webinar held on June 26th to discuss the campaign as well as platforming local and regional issues of relevance. The session began with Leah McLeod, of both AIVL and the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) framing the harms caused by stigma, discrimination,

and over criminalisation of people who use drugs. In particular she pointed to the shocking fact that **drug related offences represented 42% of registered executions carried out in 2023.**

The incarceration of people who use drugs around the world is extremely racialised and upholds colonialism by targeting indigenous peoples. In Australia this is particularly stark, with **1 in 3 people in Australian prisons being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island** people.

Dr. Kate Seear also presented the unseen ways punitive responses to drug use can impact people who use drugs. Referencing the removal of people from social housing if they are found to be using drugs, and people who use drugs being excluded from receiving State compensation if they are the victim of a crime due to “character references”. The ways we punish people who use drugs are far reaching and sustain systems of oppression.

Further speakers included Paul Dessaur of Peer Based Harm Reduction Western Australia presenting the evidence of the benefits from a pilot project of police officers carrying

“
**We’ve been the boogie-monster for so long. (...)
We’re pushed into this idea of something that we are just not!**
”

naloxone while on duty. While Lachlan Akers spoke about the new National Harm Reduction Coalition Aotearoa and Juan Fernandez Ochoa gave some further background on the Support. Don’t Punish campaign itself, bringing a regional and international touch to the presentations.

On Indigenous land, the “war on drugs” is weaponised to justify violence and imprisonment, perpetuating colonial control. From this land and all around the world, the message for change is clear.



Photo: AIVL webinar promo, with art by Emily J Ebdon

UNITING COMMUNITY TO STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER

Regardless of circumstance, communities impacted by the “war on drugs” can continue to find strength through the unity and support of one another. Sharing joy, solidarity and a sense of togetherness are at the core of our actions in the community. The power of this connection is clear to those who have experienced it —together, we solidify our resolve.

A key component of bringing communities together revolves around shared experiences of joy - something which can unite us and give strength through difficult times. A number of projects this year centred around fostering joy within the community, and particularly focused on removing the clinical nature that can often stifle harm reduction work, and pathologise drug using communities.

In Mexico and Canada events were held utilising the campaign to bring people together and distribute harm reduction resources while celebrating community. **PrevenCasa** in Mexico organised an event centred around



Photo: *PrevenCasa*

street art to celebrate local talent and work to distribute information about synthetic opioids along with naloxone for community members.

AAWEAR in Canada similarly organised an event centred around music with the distribution of HIV testing and prevention materials to attendees. Offering vital services does not have to feel clinical — laughter and fun are proverbially therapeutic.

In other places, community events were paired with robust discussions and educational events. In France, **CAARUD** Rimbaud and **Collectif FMR** put together a public concert which utilised the opportunity to hold a panel discussion about drug use, their work, and a Q&A with attendees. During the event testimonies from community members were shared with the aim of reducing the impact of stigma faced by people who use drugs in Saint-Etienne.

In Lithuania **RIGRA** combined their panel discussion combating stigma with a games day for the local community aimed at broadening their reach and connections within the ecosystem they inhabit. In Colombia **Cultura Civica Cannabica** invited local DJs and arranged a street art workshop to facilitate further advocacy to promote decriminalisation and in Serbia **ReGeneration** held a pub quiz to discuss cannabis policy in Serbia.

Insaf Murni Association of Malaysia (IMAM) chose a slightly different tact - turning their advocacy efforts into art to facilitate communication. People who use drugs were invited to submit art in the form of poetry, paintings, and everything in between, to express their experiences as they navigate punitive drug policies in this world. This artwork was then



Photo: RIGRA

presented at a community event beginning with a poetry drama designed specifically for the day, open mic sessions, and finally a live art creation. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Health as well as **The Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (CERiA)**, and the University Malaya presenting their app – LeGap - designed to connect people who use drugs embroiled in legal cases with free legal assistance.

Corporación Didactica also brought further interactivity to their events in Colombia as they worked with a local street art festival to offer their drug checking services to attendees. For those who wanted to use the service it was readily available, and for those who didn't it brought openness about the service directly to them to reduce the mysticism often associated with behind-closed-doors services for people who use drugs.

Some activities took their combination of joyful community engagement and tangible advocacy outreach efforts further by holding separate

events for different audiences. **Ishonch Va Hayot** held meetings with government officials in Uzbekistan to present their experiences opening a community centre, before later opening the doors of the centre to visitors and hosting yoga sessions for the public.

Other examples of activities bringing community together centred directly around highlighting specific campaign efforts, and branching out to expand our communities reach into new spaces.

LANPUD Mexico brought communities together and produced a campaign to combat stigma and misinformation on substance use, and responding to regional governments' approach to drug use.

In Pakistan, the **Gender and Child Protection Centre** created a video campaign and sought to expand their community further through outreach and distributing information in relevant health centres. In Algeria, **Youth RISE** organised an overdose prevention workshop



Photo: Corporación Didactica



Photo: Intercambios

aimed both at community and medical professionals.

Each year we see campaigns of all shapes and sizes taking place, bringing people together all around the world under a common banner. Few activities have the same reach as those in Argentina, organised by **Intercambios**, the **Asociación de Reducción de Daños de Argentina (ARDA)** and many more – bringing people together in an ever growing list of cities, towns, and villages around the country extending to 20 of the 24 provinces.

Community groups, together with workers from universities, hospitals, and civil society, united under a common banner to denounce an increase in state-sanctioned violence against people profiled to be involved in illegal drug markets following the election of a far-right government. This repression has included **raids on soup kitchens** and **blocking aid for rough sleepers**, pushing people further into misery and hardship.

The Support. Don't Punish Global Day of Action has always contained a dimension of protest - against the normalisation of our people being treated as disposable. Across the



Photo: SSDP Cavite

world this year people took to the streets in demonstrations calling for an end to the “war on drugs”.

To this end, activities were organised by Tanzania’s **Tandika Youth Rehabilitation and Handcraft Group (TAYOHAG)**, the French **ASUD Mars Say Yeh**, Belgian **Modus Vivendi asbl**, Estonia’s **Lunest, Recovering Nepal**, and **SSDP Cavite** from the Philippines with people taking to the streets calling for an end to the prohibition and the harms it has caused.

Finally, we have also seen that bringing communities together is vital too in online spaces - many in our communities experience isolation and seek community online. Projects from Brazil and the **Escola Livre de Redução de Danos**, sought to expand outreach online, as well as an in-person element, targeting younger people with the help of influencers to spread the message of the campaign.

Meanwhile, **Legalize Belarus** created an online trip-sitter platform with the hope of linking people across borders to provide support when consuming drugs.



Photo: Corporacion Viviendo

CALI, COLOMBIA - IN DIALOGUE FOR THE PROMOTION OF HARM REDUCTION

2024 Global Day of Action in Colombia
Small grants programme highlight: Corporación Viviendo

Drug policy reform in Colombia has taken several positive steps in recent years, with President Gustavo Petro **promising radical change and pioneering harm reduction at a regional and international level.**

However, on a local level this reform-driven and person-centred outlook prioritising support over punishment has not fully materialised. With 2024 local and regional elections seeing increased support for right-wing political parties, a coalition of organisations and community groups in Cali decided to bridge the gap between presidential rhetoric and community experiences in the city.

The project, led by **Corporación Viviendo**, along with **Corporación Sapiencia**, **Asociación Cultural Café Arboleda**, and **Red de Salud Ladera**, sought to platform the voices of communities. **Corporacion Viviendo finds its base in the Cali neighbourhood of Sucre**, providing holistic community-based services based on the principles of harm reduction. All organisations collaborating on the project represent distinct, but overlapping communities impacted in various ways by the “war on drugs.”

The conference brought together community members from all organisations, as well

as numerous local policy makers, giving the people most impacted by punitive drug policies an opportunity to engage in direct advocacy with their newly elected local government officials.

The timing of the conference itself proved very strategic, with the distribution of funding by the new local government not yet finalised, and the strong **attendance from those capable of implementing policy change** ensured the success of the event.

Significant progress was made with community members presenting the work of their organisations, and proposing an expanded, holistic, harm reduction approach in Cali.

The department of local government working on issues related to gender equality has agreed to initiate work with Corporación Viviendo and Corporación Sapiencia to improve support from local governments for women experiencing homelessness in the city, while Corporación Viviendo have been invited to contribute to the interdepartmental sessions addressing drug use in the city.

Aside from this broadened platform for change afforded to the organisers, a huge success from the activities can be seen through the strengthening of connections between them. The event increased appetite to further strengthen the community-led change they have fostered through collaboration.



Cali dialoga: un encuentro por la reducción de daños Apoye, no castigue

Photo: Corporacion Viviendo

PHOTO PROJECT



Photos : Multiple sources shared with the Photo Project

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

Whether championed and co-developed by the Maleku indigenous community in Costa Rica, farmers in Zambia, sex workers in Kenya, or opioid agonist therapy clients in Ukraine, this year's efforts took Support. Don't Punish's reach beyond our usual stomping grounds and brought diverse communities closer together. Activities around the world reinvigorated and underpinned our collective work to end the "war on drugs" and implement changes centred around the protection of human rights and dignity

Combining advocacy efforts with policymakers, harm reduction programming, outreach

initiatives, community engagement, and unifying actions, the campaign continued to bring people together for our collective wellbeing and a brighter future.

These efforts incorporated issues and groups targeted by intersecting forms of violence and neglect, creating space to acknowledge our differences whilst recognising our similarities, and building on this diversity to ensure nobody is left behind.

Through expanding our ecosystems of change we move us closer to a fairer world where can all fit and thrive.



Photo: Corporacion Viviendo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A DECENTRALISED EFFORT

The campaign's modus operandi

The Support. Don't Punish is an international decentralised networked effort, contributed to by thousands of campaigners and hundreds of **local partner organisations world-wide**.

The **International Drug Policy Consortium** hosts the Support. Don't Punish campaign and acts as its main hub. As such, IDPC leads on global fundraising, capacity development and communication efforts, and provides material and in-kind support to campaigners across the globe.

SISTER HUBS & LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Steering our common cause worldwide

IDPC is in regular dialogue with organisations that actively promote the campaign and contribute to the mobilisation of grassroots groups, including through their own fundraising efforts.

These **sister hubs** often have a regional or thematic focus. Their commitment has been crucial for the campaign's growth and many of the activities that have been mentioned above owe themselves to their unwavering dedication.

For this reason, an account of the 2024 Support. Don't Punish Global Day of Action would not be complete without acknowledging the fantastic work of sister hubs such as: the **Drug Policy Network South East Europe (DPNSEE)**, the **Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)**, the **Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD)**, the **Eu-**

ropean Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD), the **Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENA-HRA)**, the **Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN)** and **YouthRISE**.

This year for the first time, sister hubs and other campaign champions were invited to join a **Leadership Network**, which totals 24 members and enhances the Support. Don't Punish campaign by offering strategic guidance, amplifying successes, and troubleshooting. The Network fosters collaboration among seasoned campaigners, to shape the campaign's direction and energise harm reduction and drug policy reform globally.

CAMPAIGN DONORS

Resourcing people power for harm reduction

Last, but by no means least, IDPC is incredibly grateful to the campaign's donors, who provide absolutely essential means for campaigners to challenge criminalisation and promote harm reduction.

IDPC has received dedicated campaign funds from the **Elton John AIDS Foundation**; the **Robert Carr Fund**. Important core support has also been received from the **Open Society Foundations**.



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