

# **Report for Lifetime Evaluation of the Support. Don't Punish Campaign (2013 – 2024)**

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April 2024

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the survey of local partners – the evaluation would be much poorer without your inspirational stories and valuable insights – and to all those who agreed to spare some of their time to talk to me: Thomas Bridgen, Wilson Box, Vanessa Morris, Julián Quintero, Michelle Wazan, Ruth Birgin, Igor Gordon, Joana Canêdo, Zaved Mahmood, Johann Nadela, Pablo Cymerman and Nahuel Messina.

My thanks also go to the team at IDPC: Jamie Bridge and Ann Fordham, for your time and support; Adrià Cots Fernández and Marie Nougier, for your help with the survey.

But particular and heartfelt thanks go to Juan Fernandez Ochoa for being a constant source of information, help and boundless optimism. I can see why the campaign values you so highly.

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
CAHR	Community Action on Harm Reduction
EHRA	Eurasian Harm Reduction Association
EJAF	Elton John AIDS Foundation
EuroNPUD	European Network of People who Use Drugs
GDA	Global Day of Action
IDPC	International Drug Policy Consortium
IP	Initiatives Programme
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSF	Open Society Foundations
RCF	Robert Carr Fund
SDP	Support. Don't Punish
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHRIN	Women and Harm Reduction International Network

# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Methods

Support. Don't Punish (SDP) is a global, grassroots-centred campaign which promotes 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 resourcing and strengthening communities' organising capacity, opening dialogue with policymakers, and raising awareness among the media and the public.

Campaign activities include organising the Global Day of Action (GDA) on 26th June each year, including the provision of resources and small grants to grassroots organisations and allies (known as 'local partners'), a live photo petition (the 'Photo Project'), attendance and organisation of networking events and workshops, and the Initiatives Programme (IP), which provides grants to a small number of organisations each year.

The campaign is overseen by the IDPC secretariat, with support from a network of other organisations taking leadership roles known as 'sister hubs', and has been active for 11 years (2013-2024).

This evaluation employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating Contribution Analysis to determine the campaign's contribution to changes to national drug laws, improved support and funding for harm reduction, and reductions in police violence and repressive responses toward affected communities — in particular, people who use drugs.

Methods included a full evidence review, network mapping, analysis of campaign data, interviews with IDPC staff, 3 sister hubs, 5 local partners and 1 decision maker, and a survey of local partners which had a response from 197 organisations. Case studies were developed from the interviews with local partners to provide a more in-depth analysis of the impact of the campaign.

The main evaluation question was – **how does the SDP campaign influence the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practices that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities?**

## Growth and Resources

In the first year of the GDA in 2013, there were over 48 events organised by 29 local partners in 21 countries. By 2018 there were two hundred local partners in 98 countries holding GDA events. Despite being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, by 2023 there were at least 178 local partners holding events in 84 countries. Asia and Europe both had strong growth in the 2013-2019 period, with weaker growth in 2020-2023, while Africa and Latin America both had strong growth in both periods.

**Of the 195 countries in the world, there has been a GDA event held in at least one year in 126 (65%) countries. Over half of the countries in the world (51%) have had a GDA event in 4 or more years over the lifetime of SDP, while nearly a third (31%) have had a GDA event in 8 or more years.**

The campaign has grown from providing just 17 small grants in 2013 to 120 in 2023, alongside the introduction of IP grants covering more extensive work plans. This has meant that the average size of the small grant has had to reduce, with 2023 the lowest amount in five years. Other organisations, known as

sister hubs, also provide grants to small local partners. There were six sister hubs active in 2023 (DPNSEE, EHRA, MENAHRA/MENANPUD, YouthRISE, WHRIN and EuroNPUD) who supported a total of 45 local partners with GDA events through local grant funding.

In 2023 there were over 30,000 unique pageviews on the SDP website (home of the majority of resources) and 78% of survey respondents agreed that the support and resources provided by the campaign widened the reach of their work. The most frequently used resources were SDP logos, Banners, Flyers/Factsheets, T-Shirts/Clothing and GDA Summary Reports. Alongside the information and support provided online, IDPC also attends and organises events under the banner of SDP, with at least three conference events organised in 2023.

The Photo Project showed strong initial growth (over 9,000 submissions in four years) but since 2018 it has increased by an average of around 300 photos per year.

### **Influencing drug policy/practice**

**73% of survey respondents stated that their involvement in the SDP campaign influenced changes in drug policy/practices in their area, with rates higher in Africa (89%) and Asia (85%).**

The campaign's impact on increasing the visibility of people who use drugs' needs, changing policymakers' perceptions, and providing educational resources were highlighted as examples of how the campaign had helped influence drug policy/practice.

Some respondents identified actual policy/practice changes, with respondents identifying either law changes or draft laws which incorporate harm reduction being implemented in Colombia, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Ukraine. Survey respondents were cautious in directly linking SDP activities to policy or practice change, but the overriding impression was that each activity undertaken, or ally gained was a small step in the right direction.

### **Reducing stigmatisation**

**76% of survey respondents felt that their involvement in the SDP campaign had reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities in their area.**

The most common way in which SDP had helped to reduce stigmatisation was to enable people, especially the general public, to see people who use drugs as people and enable them to tell their story. Other examples included the creation of safe spaces, humanising people who use drugs to the police, working with young people and their families, and reaching out to affected communities themselves.

### **Improving media coverage/public opinion**

**69% of survey respondents believed their involvement in the SDP campaign resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion in their area, with rates higher in Africa (82%) and Asia (76%).**

Many respondents identified improvements in the media coverage, both in terms of coverage of GDA events but also more generally in the narratives used to discuss drug policy. GDA was seen as a good opportunity to

increase awareness amongst the general public, but there was some scepticism about the wider impact that this made on public opinion given the scale of activities.

**Almost all (97%) survey respondents agreed that the aims of the campaign are clear and easily understood. When asked to describe the aim of the campaign, the responses of the majority of respondents aligned closely with the views of the IDPC secretariat.**

Challenges noted in the Photo Project and social media strategy suggest areas for improvement in communication and media outreach.

### **Direct communication with officials**

**72% of survey respondents reported they had, or maintained, direct communication with officials, police or politicians in their area as a result of their involvement in the SDP campaign, with rates higher in Africa (92%) and Asia (82%).**

Examples of this in action included increased communication with government departments/officials and politicians, working with local health authorities and hospital administrators to improve service access for people who use drugs, and being invited to join working groups to help advise on policy development or present at official meetings.

Organisations in Nigeria, Liberia, Moldova, India, Lebanon and Uganda all undertook direct advocacy and educational activities with politicians, officials from government departments and other civil society organisations, while in Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, India, Mozambique and Benin there were GDA activities focused on direct communication between peers and law enforcement agencies and officers.

The position of local partners as accepted authorities is also strengthened by the campaign's educational support with the majority (84%) of survey respondents agreeing that the campaign had improved their knowledge of harm reduction and decriminalisation.

### **Community mobilisation**

**76% of survey respondents reported that their involvement in the SDP campaign had helped their community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively, with higher rates in Africa (87%), Asia (79%) and Latin America (79%).**

Almost all (97%) survey respondents agreed that the campaign makes them feel part of a community working towards shared goals, with a smaller majority agreeing that the campaign had made them more confident in making positive change for their community (82%) and that their local network had grown due to their involvement in the campaign (76%).

Local partners felt the campaign was helpful in getting more affected communities involved in events which, in turn, increases their involvement in activism and widens the spheres of their influence. This was seen as a unique and critical benefit by a Human Rights and Drug Policy Advisor at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The campaign was also seen to help grow membership and facilitate networking. The inclusive nature of SDP makes it welcoming to groups from other marginalised communities.

The importance of SDP as a global initiative that welcomed small groups, in particular those led by people who use drugs and other affected communities, which provided them with legitimacy and visibility, was a recurring theme in all the discussions with local partners.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

The SDP campaign has a clear message, shows continued growth, has unquestionably increased the involvement of grassroots groups, challenges structural barriers and has a defensible and rational logic.

Requests for larger small grant amounts were common among local partners, reflecting a need for increased resources. Other suggestions for improvement included strategic planning for key messages, better access to merchandise, enhanced media planning, and increased training and information dissemination.

The campaign has limited resources, however, and the IDPC secretariat spend the majority of their time managing the small grants, assessing and managing the IP grants, and supporting local partners on the GDA itself. This does not leave much, if any, time for strategic development of the campaign nor communications or social media strategy.

There is plenty of potential leadership within the existing SDP umbrella, and the IDPC need to utilise the existing leadership structures within SDP.

Challenges to SDP in the near future will be to ensure sustainable funding to maintain (and hopefully grow) the small grant system, to develop clearer internal structures, improve reporting mechanisms, develop communications and social media strategies, and find innovative ways to expand and strengthen the umbrella.

Recommendations include securing sustainable funding, enhancing internal structures and leadership, agreeing a renewed Theory of Change, improving reporting mechanisms and access to resources, developing communication and social media strategies, and expanding the campaign's reach.

**In conclusion, this evaluation has shown the SDP campaign to be a powerful force in mobilising communities, reducing stigma, engaging with policymakers, and influencing drug policies globally. Despite its successes, addressing existing challenges through the recommendations made here will be crucial for sustaining and enhancing the campaign's impact in the future.**



# Introduction and Methodology

## Background

Support. Don't Punish (SDP) is a global, grassroots-centred campaign which promotes 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 resourcing and strengthening communities' organising capacity, opening dialogue with policymakers, and raising awareness among the media and the public.

The campaign's main focus is the Global Day of Action (GDA), which takes place on, or around, 26<sup>th</sup> June (the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking) each year. The aim of the GDA is to reclaim and shift that day's narrative towards messages of drug reform and harm reduction. Each year grassroots organisations and allies (known as local partners by IDPC) are supported by both IDPC and a network of other organisations (known as sister hubs) in organising activities.

Alongside the GDA, the campaign runs the Photo Project, which is an open, live photo petition that documents advocates, people who use drugs, government and United Nations officials, celebrities united under the SDP banner. IDPC also attends and organises events under the banner of SDP, with branded booths and workshops that provide learning and networking opportunities. In recent years, the campaign has also seen the introduction of the Initiatives Programme, which provides larger grants to a small number of organisations each year to undertake a more extensive work plan.

The campaign is overseen by the IDPC secretariat, and has been active for 11 years (2013-2024), in which time the campaign has grown, developing a global network of hundreds of organisations. The campaign has received financial support from philanthropic donors including the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), the Robert Carr Fund (RCF) and the Open Society Foundations (OSF).

To better understand and document the campaign, consider avenues for further expansion, and strengthen learning tools, IDPC has commissioned an EJAF-funded, independent evaluation of the campaign's lifetime thus far. Myriad Research Ltd. were commissioned to undertake the evaluation which ran from October 2023 to March 2024.

## Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation are provided in Annex D. The scope of the evaluation will encompass the lifetime of the SDP campaign, from its inception in 2013 to the present day, and include activities and support provided by IDPC to all organisations involved in the SDP campaign.

In line with the ToR, the purpose of the evaluation is to:

1. Identify and document key lifetime outcomes and impacts of the campaign core activities as well as the campaign's communications and capacity-development work.
2. Recommend strategies to increase engagement and impact; as well as to strengthen coordination and support tasks by the IDPC Secretariat, which serves as the campaign's central hub.

3. Gather feedback, and assess consistency, on perceptions of the campaign's key aims, activities, approach, and communications.

## Evaluation Questions

The following questions were developed early in the evaluation and will be the focus of the remainder of the evaluation:

1. How does the Support. Don't Punish campaign **influence the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practices** that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities?
2. What **resources and support** has the Support. Don't Punish campaign provided to grassroots organisations and communities engaged in harm reduction efforts, including sister hubs and local partners, and are they being efficiently allocated?
3. Does the campaign contribute to **reducing the stigmatisation, discrimination and dehumanisation** faced by people who use drugs and other affected communities?
4. In what ways has the SDP campaign **enhanced the mobilisation and organising capacity** of communities and grassroots initiatives focused on harm reduction and drug policy reform?
5. To what extent has the campaign **facilitated constructive dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, community representatives, and advocates** for harm reduction and drug policy reform?
6. How effective has the campaign been in using **media and communication channels to increase public awareness and support** for harm reduction and sustainable drug policies?

## Evaluation Method

The evaluation will employ a mixed-method approach, incorporating Contribution Analysis (Mayne, 2001) to determine the campaign's contribution to harm reduction and drug policy reform. This is a structured approach designed to arrive at conclusions about the contribution a program has made (or is currently making) to particular outcomes.

Contribution Analysis typically follows a number of steps:

1. Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
2. Develop a theory of change
3. Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change
4. Assemble and assess the contribution story
5. Seek out additional evidence and revise/strengthen the contribution story

## Data Collection

The evaluation began with a comprehensive literature and policy review including all available campaign documentation. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 3 members of IDPC staff:

- Juan Fernández Ochoa, IDPC Campaigns & Communications Officer
- Jamie Bridge, IDPC Chief Operating Officer

- Ann Fordham, IDPC Executive Director

A follow up interview was undertaken with Juan Fernández Ochoa to gain additional information about sister hubs and the Initiatives Programme, along with regular update meetings to discuss data and all aspects of the campaign. We also interviewed one of the main funders of the campaign from EJAF.

The evaluation examined website visitor data and all available social media data, although due to changes in the availability of both Meta and X (Twitter) tracking statistics, the social media data was incomplete. This also included the available data on the Photo Project.

Data is collected by IDPC each year on the number of organisations that have notified them they are participating in the GDA. This data, along with information on small grants, was used to map participants in each year. Data relating to GDA participation in 2023 was also used to undertake a Social Network Analysis on the campaign network.

After each GDA the IDPC send out a feedback form to collect participants' views. The questions vary by year, but three consistent questions ask participants about impact, what could be improved and to summarise the GDA in three words. This data is available for each year from 2018 to 2023.

The above data collection and analysis will effectively act as steps 1-4 in the contribution analysis. The following data collections form elements of steps 5, with the aim of strengthening the contribution story:

- An online survey of local partners was sent out in November in English, Spanish and French. The aim was to gather local partners' perceptions on the campaign's key aims, activities, and impact. A draft of the survey in English is provided in Annex E.
- Interviews with 3 sister hubs, 5 local partners (from Argentina, Colombia, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Zimbabwe) and 1 policymaker were undertaken in January-March 2024. The interviews were more exploratory in nature than those with IDPC staff to collect a broader range of information and avoid biasing any individual stories. We developed personalised prompts for each interview, using the data they provided in the online survey and existing information regarding their participation in GDA and Initiatives Programme.

The survey data and interviews with local partners/sister hubs was used to develop four case studies documenting key lifetime outcomes and impacts of the campaign. These were selected both to provide a diverse range of political and cultural context, and also to demonstrate the range of achievements and activities undertaken by local partners.

A summary of the main data sources is provided in the table below:

**Table 1: Data collected in this evaluation**

<b>Data collection Type</b>	<b>Participants/Data</b>
Interviews with IDPC staff	4
Interviews with funders	1
Analysis of web data	11 years' data 2013-2023
Analysis of social media metrics	11 years' data 2013-2023
Analysis of Photo Project data	11 years' data 2013-2023
Analysis of GDA feedback forms	6 years' data 2018-2023
Network mapping of local partners from GDA tracking statistics	11 years' data 2013-2023
Survey of local partners	197
Interviews with sister hubs	3
Interviews with local partners	5
Interviews with decision-makers	1

## **Indicators**

The previous evaluation<sup>1</sup>, undertaken in 2014, suggested the following measurable indicators that could be used to assess impact:

- Estimated number of people participating in public events on the Day of Action at each location
- Number of online and print media reports of Day of Action events in each country and/or location
- Number of TV and radio interviews conducted, and/or broadcast, in relation to the Day of Action in each location
- Use of website trackers to count the number of unique visits to campaign-related website pages

Having assessed the available data it was not possible to provide exhaustive and comparable figures of the number of organisations that participated in GDA activities each year nor on media reports or broadcasts. There is some data available on media reports, but this data is not consistent over time, and should not be deemed exhaustive.

It was also found that the reporting of involvement in GDA is varied in both frequency and detail. While it is possible to accurately identify local partners who have received grant funding in any particular year, accurately tracking the size, scope and locations of each GDA event in any particular year is not possible. In recent years some partners have provided much more detailed information on the locations of GDA events (one partner in 2023 had 51 event locations listed, which mapped to 39 cities), which has impacted the comparability of data compared to previous years. To ensure the most accurate picture possible, we have focused on the count of unique local partners who were confirmed as holding an event in any particular country for each year. This will represent an undercount of the total involvement in GDA but allows the most accurate comparison of involvement over the last eleven years. A summary of specific indicators used for this evaluation is provided below:

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw (2015)

**Table 2: Indicators used in this evaluation**

Indicator	Source
Number of unique local partners and countries involved in GDA by year	GDA tracking statistics
Number of events provided grant funding for GDA by year	GDA tracking statistics
Number of pictures submitted to the picture project by year	Photo Project
Number of visits to SDP website by year	Web Statistics
Social media metrics by year	Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram
Number of media reports by year	GDA Feedback
Number and type of resources used by local partners	Evaluation Survey
Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has resulted in positive media coverage or positive change in public opinion	Evaluation Survey
Percentage of responding local partners who report SDP has resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion	Evaluation Survey
Percentage of responding local partners who report SDP influenced changes in policy/practices or reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation	Evaluation Survey
Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has resulted in direct communication with officials, police or politicians	Evaluation Survey
Percentage of responding local partners report SDP has helped their community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively	Evaluation Survey

An evaluation matrix, which maps the relevant evaluation data to the evaluation questions, is provided in Annex C.

## Data Analysis

The interview transcripts from IDPC staff, funders, local partners, sister hubs and policy-makers were all analysed by hand rather than by an analytical programme, using a reflexive thematic approach, which is particularly suited to exploring people's experiences, views and perceptions (see Braun and Clarke, 2006).

This allowed the identification of patterns through data familiarisation, data coding, theme development and revision. The first stage was for the evaluator to read and open code each transcript in line with the areas explored in the interview schedule and then to move on to identify further themes and categories that emerged from the data. This was an iterative process conducted to verify, confirm, expand upon and qualify these elements. This allowed the evaluator to gain a detailed understanding of different perspectives and experiences.

The data on GDA participation (held in Excel files known as city trackers) was cleaned and mapped to standardised city and country codes.<sup>2</sup> The data was cleaned to identify unique local partners in each country and year. Each geographic area was checked for correlations between the number of local partners and year to identify meaningful growth over time. This was split into periods representing pre and post declaration of

<sup>2</sup> <https://simplemaps.com/data/world-cities>

the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup> GDA event data was then analysed using Python, NetworkX and Basemap to provide geographic visualisations. The network mapping for 2023 was undertaken in Gephi.<sup>4</sup>

Data from the GDA feedback survey was combined, translated into English (where applicable) and cleaned, with qualitative data on impacts thematically coded. The feedback also asks respondents to provide 3 words that they would use to describe the Global Day of Action. This data was cleaned, coded and analysed for word frequency. Differences between responses on impacts between local partners in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America were tested for significant differences<sup>5</sup> using chi-square.

Descriptive data on impacts is provided from the online survey of local partners. Nonresponse to the questions on impact was recoded as don't know. Differences in response between regions and years of engagement was tested for significance using chi-square. Due to the small sample sizes in the regions, Oceania and North America were excluded from the significance testing. Qualitative responses were translated into English (where applicable) and then thematically analysed.

### **The Attribution Problem**

The main question this evaluation seeks to address is – how does the SDP campaign influence the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practice that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities? But what influence or impact is it reasonable to expect of a campaign of the size of SDP?

Attributing social or political change to any single campaign, however effective, is incredibly challenging given the vast range of factors which might influence both broader attitudinal change and political decisions. Factors which can influence the development of drug policy specifically include the shift towards more relativist, secular values, trends in substance use, illicit drug experience among the voting public, the globalisation of trade, associations with violent crime and the influence of interest groups (Caulkins et al, 2003).

In the case of SDP, we also have to contend with differences in each local partners' activities and political, economic, and cultural context. GDA events have been held in 126 countries over its lifetime, each with their own unique political and cultural circumstances.

Contribution Analysis provides a means to causally link measurable elements of the evaluation with the intended social impacts. Chapter 2 will examine the evolution of the SDP campaign, identify its specific activities and outcomes and set out the ways in which this should be reflected in the Theory of Change (ToC). Chapter 3 will gather existing evidence for the ToC and assess the existing contribution story of the SDP campaign. Chapter 4 will then provide the additional evidence collected during this evaluation to strengthen this contribution story. It will use local partners' voices to provide evidence and a line of reasoning from which stakeholders can draw a plausible conclusion as to whether the campaign does indeed have influence over the intended social impacts.

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<sup>3</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic is officially ongoing but is no longer a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). <https://www.who.int/europe/emergencies/situations/covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gephi.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Due to the small sample sizes in the regions, Oceania and North America were excluded from the significance testing.

# The Theory of Change

## Origins of the Campaign

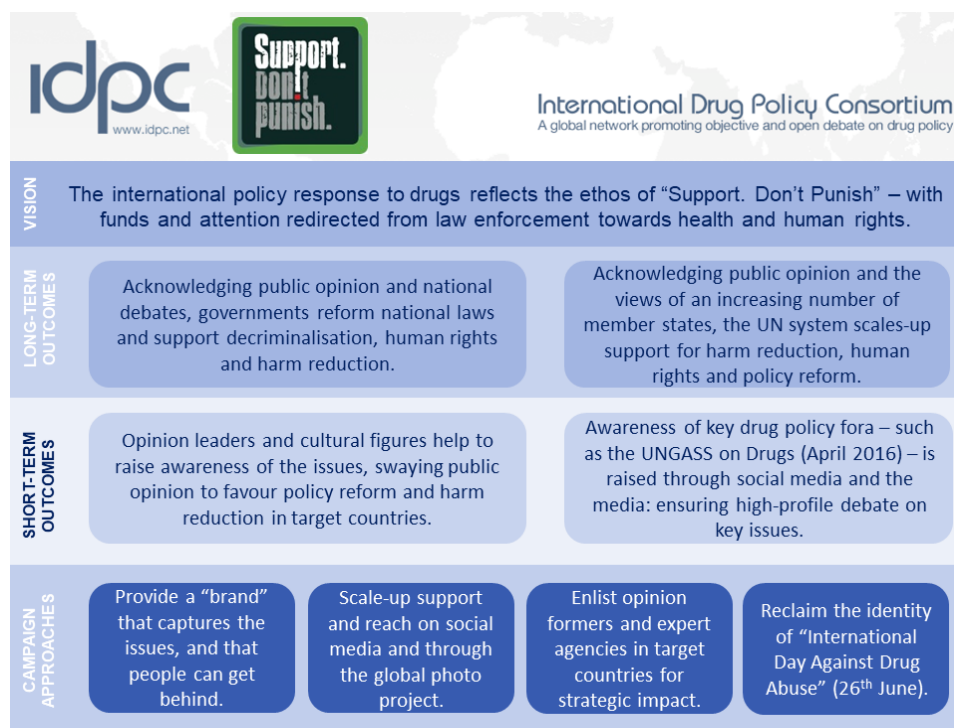
The campaign was originally conceived in 2012 as part of the Community Action on Harm Reduction (CAHR) project funded by the government of the Netherlands. It was developed by the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), Harm Reduction International (HRI), International HIV/AIDS Alliance, the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) and five CAHR country partners (Kenya, Indonesia, India, China and Malaysia).

The 'International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking', or 'World Drug Day', is marked annually on 26<sup>th</sup> June by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Official events on 26<sup>th</sup> June often advocate an abstinence-based approach to drug use and for the continued criminalisation and punishment of activities related to drugs and drug use — including possession for personal use. One of the campaign approaches identified in the original Theory of Change (Figure 1) was to reclaim the identity of the 26<sup>th</sup> June through what would become known as the Global Day of Action (GDA).

The original aims of the campaign were focused on awareness raising:

*I'd say at the start it was very muted in terms of expectations of impact. So really what we wanted at the start was the partners in those eight countries<sup>6</sup>, and only really those eight countries, that they would be able to do events that would raise awareness about the need to change drug policy in those countries. (JB, IDPC)*

Figure 1: Original SDP Theory of Change (2013)



<sup>6</sup> These included the CAHR project's target countries of China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Malaysia and countries where IDPC already had strong links: Ukraine, UK and Mauritius.

But in the first year of the Global Day of Action (GDA), events did not just happen in the countries directly working on the project:

*In the first year...we only expected these eight countries to take part. They all had resources to do it. So, you know, that's what we were expecting. And then all of a sudden, these photos started pouring in on the day of action...And there was this one group of women...who worked in a rehab in... South Asia...It was the workers and some of their patients and they didn't even have a printer ...they'd drawn the logo onto signs and taken photos...we couldn't believe it. .. we didn't give them money that time, but the next year we made sure we gave them a grant and kept working with them. That kind of organisation would never have got support otherwise. (JB, IDPC)*

The appetite for something like SDP was evident from that very first year:

*What we did not expect, and it's so incredible, is the massive mobilisation and engagement from all over the world that very first year on that first Global Day of Action. And then we knew then and there that this was going to be something bigger. (AF, IDPC)*

The campaign continued to grow (more detail on this is provided in section 3.1) and more grassroots groups became involved in the GDA each year. This was, at least in part, due to the deliberate decision to make participation as easy as possible:

*Because we'd always put the campaign out there as like low threshold...there was no copyright on the logo or anything like that. (AF, IDPC)*

From the first year, the campaign provided small grants to campaigners from across the globe, intentionally expanding the focus beyond the five priority countries of the CAHR project (China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Malaysia). But as the campaign grew, it also changed in its focus:

*I think we hoped in the beginning that it would be more public facing, but we didn't expect that it would become like a mass mobilisation for the movement...that so many people get behind and the campaign has definitely evolved...the trajectory of the campaign in the beginning, it was [focused on] the HIV response, it was about harm reduction (AF, IDPC)*

Not only had its function moved beyond awareness raising and more towards capacity building and mobilisation, but the types of groups that wanted to be involved was also becoming more diverse. Within a few years IDPC were being contacted not just by groups concerned with harm reduction in the context of the HIV response, but by anyone affected by the war on drugs from community groups of farmers who grow opium to mothers advocating for CBD oil for their children who had epilepsy.

*everybody from across the movement. And it's been really beautiful...it's grown now into like a drug policy reform message. (AF, IDPC)*

These changes have not been reflected in the Theory of Change which is no longer a point of reference for the campaign:

*We never had a 10-year road map, you know...we had a theory of change but even in our theory of change, we weren't thinking we'd still be doing this in 2023 (JB, IDPC)*



The campaign requires an updated Theory of Change to be developed against which it can then be evaluated. Before this is set out it would be helpful to address the two previous evaluations of the campaign and two key innovations: Sister Hubs and the Initiative Programme.

## **Previous evaluations**

There have been two evaluations of the SDP campaign, one in 2014 and the other in 2017. The evaluation in 2014<sup>7</sup> was positive about the campaign, highlighting that it had surpassed its initial goals and expanded its reach globally. There was some ongoing debate surrounded the wording of the campaign brand, but despite this it had actively engaged individuals who use drugs in various countries, leading to increased awareness of the harm caused by drug criminalisation.

The campaign had effectively served as an umbrella for various drug-related issues, including decriminalisation, alternatives to imprisonment, law enforcement approaches, rights protection, stigma reduction, and harm reduction services.

The GDA had empowered communities of people who use drugs to shift the focus towards harm reduction and human rights, away from enforced abstinence and criminalisation. The campaign logo and tools had proven cost-effective and adaptable, facilitating widespread use.

The recommendations from the 2014 evaluation can be summarized into three main areas:

- Data-Driven Planning: Encourage SDP campaign organizers to include data collection and feedback to IDPC. Advance planning is needed to maximize campaign reach and collaboration between organisations, particularly for regional linkages.
- Inclusivity and Capacity Building: Involve people who use drugs in all campaign stages and integrate the campaign into capacity-building programs. This includes leadership, data collection, and reporting.
- Media Engagement and Collaboration: Enhance media engagement through earlier planning, involvement of public figures, and strategic banner placements. Collaborate with mainstream development and human rights agencies for wider support.

In response to the recommendations the campaign introduced and refined feedback forms for each GDA, created a new Campaigns role in 2017, improved advanced planning with GDA calls issued earlier in the year, and used the 2015 GDA to promote advocacy around the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs 2016.

A subsequent campaign audit conducted by NetChange in 2017<sup>8</sup> was not a full outcome evaluation, and no written report was available. However, the slide deck highlighted that local partners appreciate the campaign framing and approach to the issue. The campaign's use of a 'distributed organising' approach was found to be smart and effective, and NetChange highlighted the open nature of the campaign, and the financial support offered to local partners alongside local autonomy as positives of the campaign. Recommendations for improving the campaign included:

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<sup>7</sup> Shaw (2015)

<sup>8</sup> NetChange (2017)

- More year-round activities and more regular check-ins
- Internal comms channels
- Central guidance on media and political influence and communications
- More focus on building mobilisation capacity for local partners
- Ask local leaders to do more and give them the tools to do more autonomously
- Explore sustainable funding models

Further changes to the campaign following this audit included the introduction of the "Initiative Programme" (see 2.4 below), development of an internal communications system using Slack<sup>9</sup>, more proactive coordination of country partners organising activities in the same place, strengthening the role of "sister hubs" (see 2.3 below) and organisation of over 10 capacity development workshops including regional ones funded by the Global Fund.

It is worth noting, in relation to the sustainable funding models, that until recently IDPC were based solely in the UK and due to their legal status, there were barriers to public fundraising. They have recently registered in the Netherlands so exploring crowd-funding opportunities as well as new funding sources is already something on the SDP agenda for 2024. IDPC has also encouraged local partners to include SDP in their own budgets:

*So, it's like if you want to engage in the campaign, please be aware that our resources are limited. We will give small grants, but it will also help us if you include campaign activities in your other grants with other funders. And so, for example, the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and malaria, a lot of country partners in the Global Fund grant did include a line for a budget line for SDP and that's what we've tried to encourage partners to do as well. (AF, IDPC)*

## Sister Hubs

In recognition of something that had been naturally developing since the early days of the campaign, but had also been one of the recommendations in the NetChange report<sup>10</sup>, "Sister Hubs" were first named in the feedback report for the GDA in 2020.

*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. (IDPC, 2020)*

While IDPC remains the main coordinating (and fund-raising) hub of the campaign, there are groups who have gone beyond simple GDA participation into positions of coordination and leadership, with many providing their own budget for small grants to local partners within their network (more on this in section 3.2).

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<sup>9</sup> Slack was created to communicate internally, and at one point had about 180 people involved. Slack has since become a paid service, so the campaign is considering how to migrate internal communications.

<sup>10</sup> The NetChange (2017) report included recommendations that local leaders or "high action takers" be encouraged to do more autonomously

*there were already some organisations that had taken up leadership responsibilities thematically or regionally. And the campaign has always been a decentralised initiative, so it only makes sense that you reward, acknowledge and rejoice in other organisations within this ecosystem taking coordination, fundraising and networking responsibilities, and that's where the 'sister hubs' came from. (JF, IDPC)*

The idea of sister hubs is a fluid concept, and organisations can act as a sister hub one year and not the next. This makes tracking who is a sister hub trickier than it might be. Organisations who are currently, or have previously been, sister hubs include:

- Drug Policy Network South East Europe (DPNSEE)
- Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)
- Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD)
- European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD)
- Frontline AIDS and the PITCH Programme
- India HIV/AIDS Alliance
- Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHR)
- Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN)
- YouthRISE.

## **Initiatives Programme**

The Initiatives Programme (IP) began in 2019 and came about through two converging interests. Since 2017 the IDPC had been collecting local partner feedback on the GDA (more on this in section 3.9) and had been receiving feedback saying that local partners wanted to mobilise beyond the 26<sup>th</sup> June, something that was already occurring in places. So, there was a desire amongst local partners to extend the campaign throughout the year, but this would require additional resources. At around the same time, EJAF approached IDPC about providing some grant funding to certain regions.

*It was a convergence of interest because on our side we wanted to make sure that we were able to provide that extra rung on the ladder of engagement and that we could support people beyond the 26th of June, and on their side they were interested in prioritising support for certain regions and countries and seeing what else in the campaign could achieve beyond the Global Day of Action. (JF, IDPC)*

The idea was that the IP would always link back to the GDA, with six-month work plans that either began or ended around the GDA.

*The Global Day of Action has always been either a point of departure to start building momentum or the culmination of momentum that you will have built through the initiatives. (JF, IDPC)*

So, in 2019 IDPC put out a call for applications to the IP and in the first year received 82 applications, with six IP projects chosen occurring in Argentina, Germany, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Africa and Ukraine — primarily led by affected communities.

The IP was paused in response to the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic to allow for reallocation of funds but received 84 applications in 2022 and 89 in 2023. Due to the larger grants available (up to \$5000), a more formal assessment process had to be developed by IDPC. This involves a committee of local partners

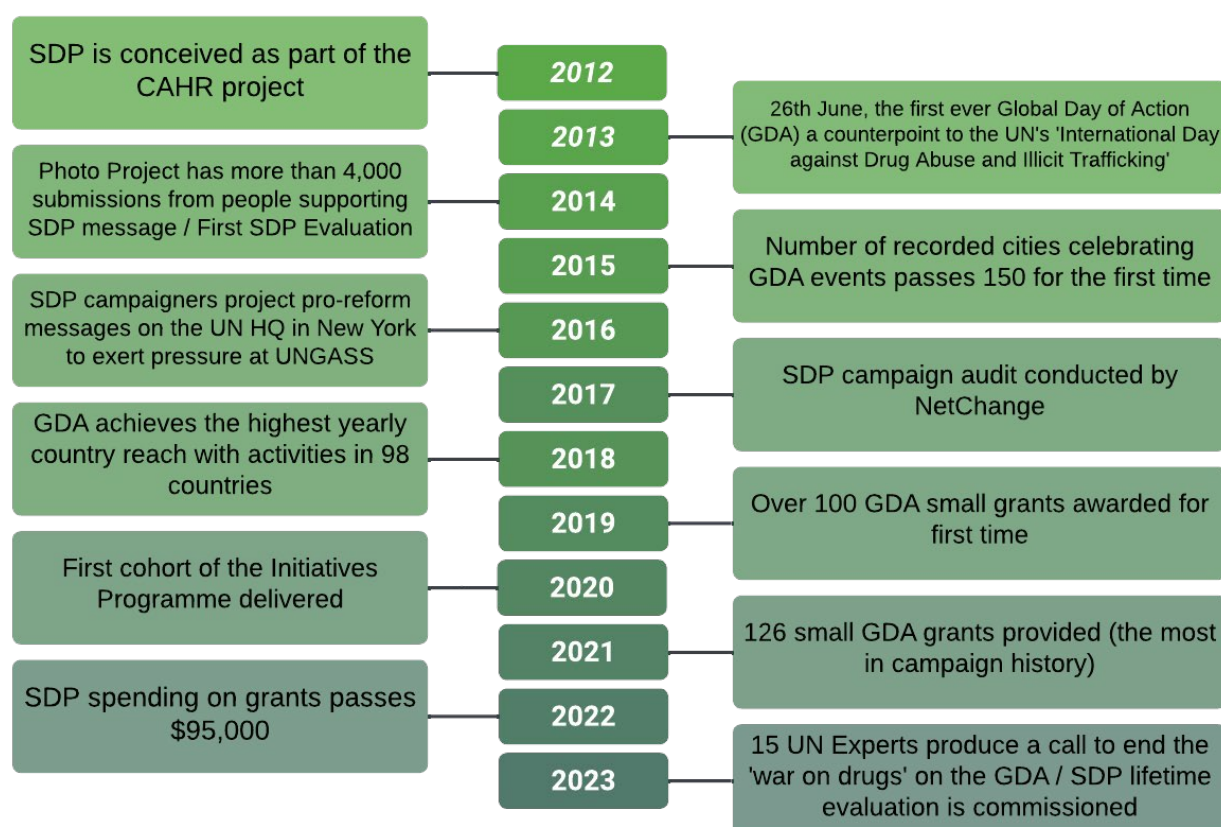
(chosen to ensure a geographical and community balance) using a standardised scoring template to assess applicants to ensure both transparency and local partner involvement in decision making.

Projects vary in scope and focus but examples of activities include social media campaigns, rallies, debates around film screenings, development of communications strategies and other project documentation, production of research reports, continued engagement of politicians, art exhibitions and formalisation of networks. A full list of all IP projects so far funded is provided in Annex A.

## Proposed Theory of Change

The original Theory of Change very much focuses on awareness raising as the central change mechanism of the campaign. In the period following on from the NetChange report, SDP has grown and expanded both its reach and its focus. More local partners are included in the GDA than ever before, and the campaign provides funding not just for events on the GDA itself but also to larger work plans that run for longer period of time, thus building local mobilisation capacity. A summary of the timeline of SDP is provided in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: SDP Timeline**



The interviews with IDPC staff and documentation review have identified four 'pathways' by which the campaign aims to have impact:

- Shared learning
- Awareness raising

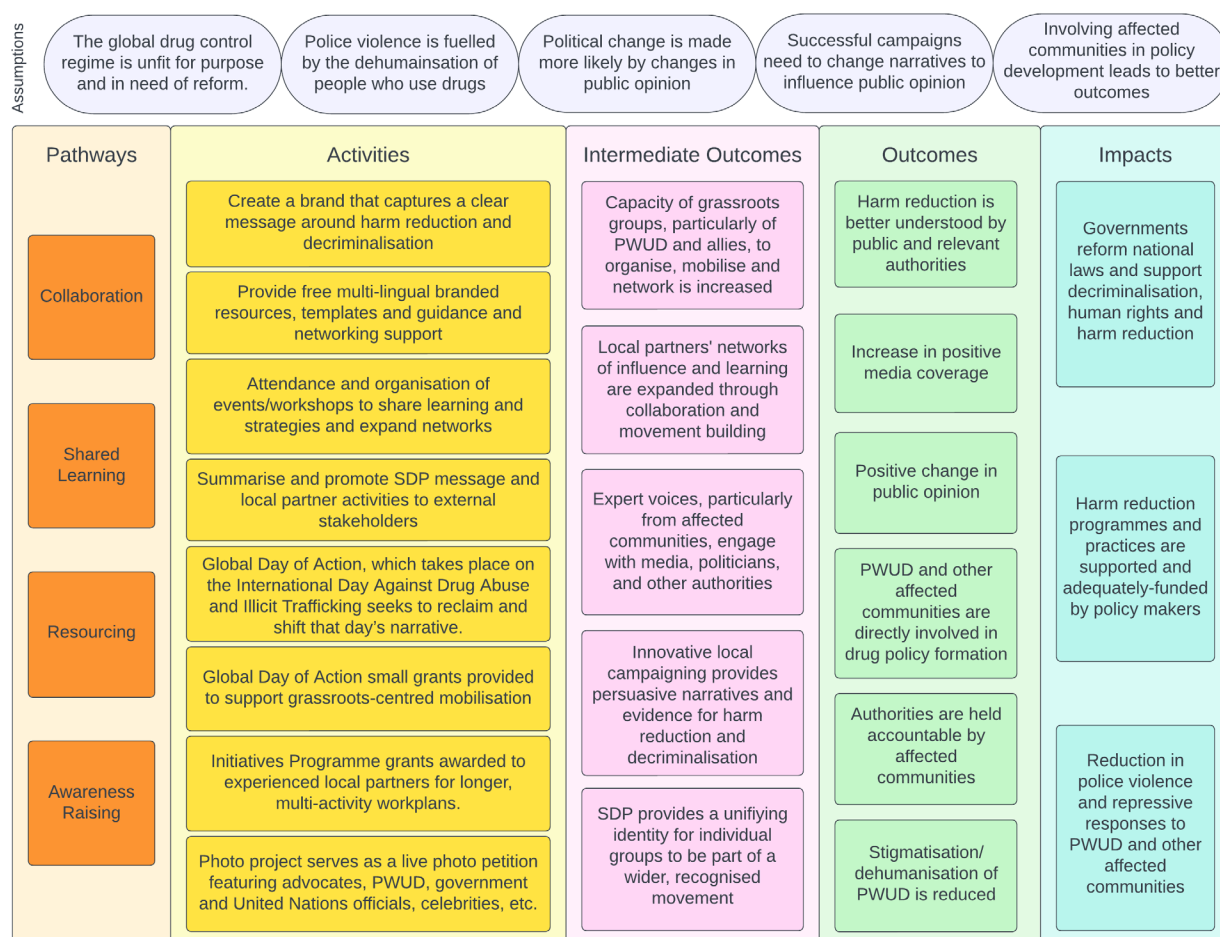
- Collaboration
- Resourcing

In terms of activities the campaign consists of branding, resources, GDA, Photo Project, small grants, Initiative Programme grants, and promotion of the GDA activities and SDP message.

Outcomes have widened from a focus on raising awareness, to also include capacity building and mobilisation, engagement of people who use drugs and other grassroots groups with officials and policy-makers, positive media coverage and changes in public opinion, reductions in stigmatisation/dehumanisation of people who use drugs, and the involvement of affected communities in policy development.

Impacts now focus on changes to national drug laws, improved support and funding for harm reduction, and a reduction of police violence and repressive responses against communities.

**Figure 3: Proposed SDP Theory of Change (2024)**



This is updated ToC will be used to evaluate SDP as it will more closely reflect the realities of the SDP campaign than the original ToC. But it is important to note that ToC should not be static and one of the recommendations from this evaluation will for those involved in the campaign to work together to agree the ToC going forward.

The following section will examine what evidence exists that SDP has undertaken the expected activities, and to what degree it could reasonably be concluded these have resulted in the expected outcomes and impacts.

## The Contribution Story

The contribution story of the SDP campaign needs to assess the extent to which there is evidence for the activities, outcomes and impacts contained in the ToC. This section summarises the existing evidence and assesses the contribution story.

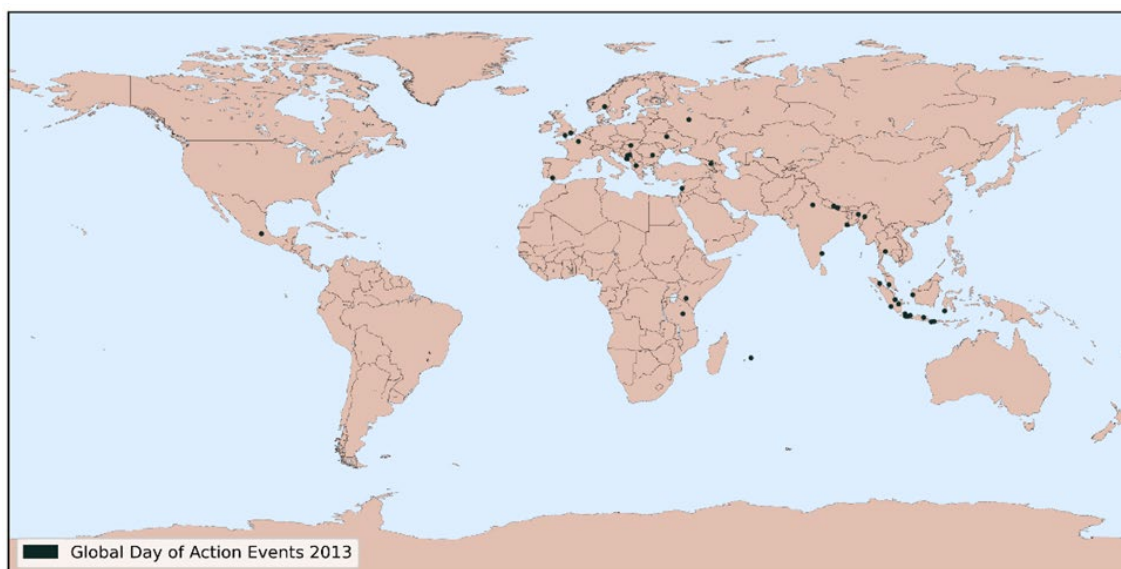
It will examine the growth of the GDA through data on local partners involvement in GDA, grants, network mapping of sister hubs, photo project submissions, use of website, and social media and media reports. It will also examine 7 years of GDA feedback data from local partners to assess what impact they report.

The section will conclude with an assessment of the extent to which the data provides evidence that the campaign has had the impacts expected by the ToC.

### The growth of the GDA

The reporting of involvement, or otherwise, by partners is varied in both frequency and detail. While it is possible to accurately identify local partners and activities that have received grant funding in any particular year, accurately tracking the size, scope and locations for each GDA event is not possible. Due to the low threshold for participation grassroots organisations can hold a SDP event without reporting details of it to the IDPC or any coordinating hub, which means those that do not get grant funding may not get recorded in the participation numbers. In recent years some partners have provided much more detailed information on the locations of GDA events, which also impacted the comparability of data compared to previous years. To ensure the most accurate picture possible, we have focused on the count of unique local partners who were confirmed as holding an event in any particular country for each year. It should also be noted that many local partners collaborate with other groups to hold events, but the record of the event may only have their name indicated as the arranging organisations. Thus, what follows will represent an undercount of the total involvement in GDA, but allows the most accurate comparison of involvement over the last eleven years.

**Figure 4: Map of GDA events in 2013**



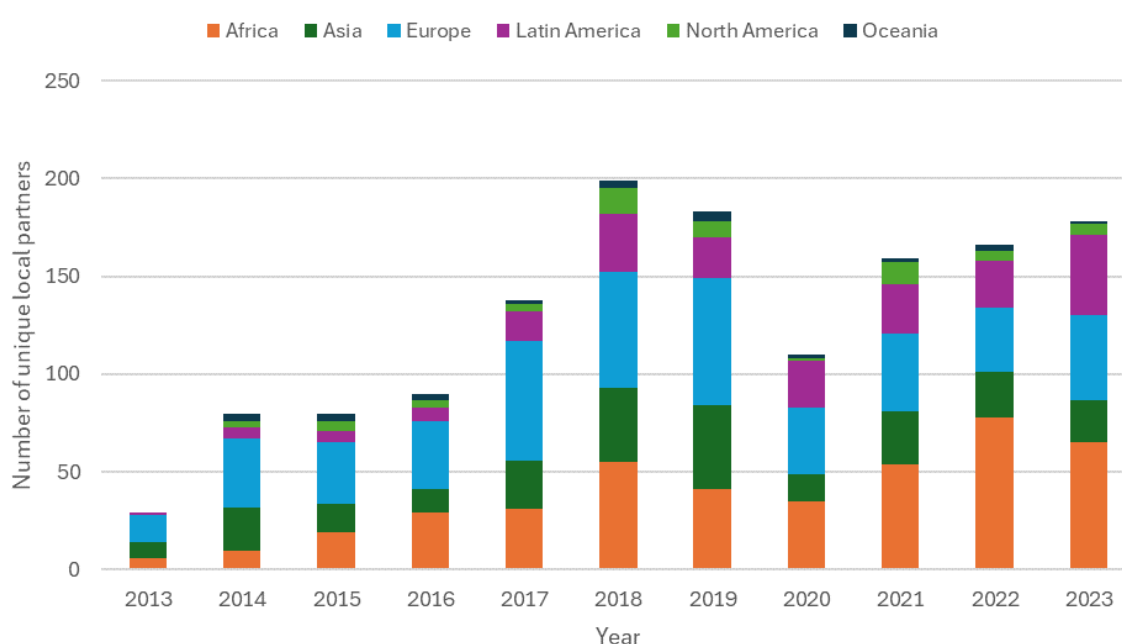


In the first year of the GDA in 2013, the expectation was that eight countries (all of whom were represented by partners involved in the development of SDP) would participate. Instead, there were over 48 events organised by 29 local partners in 21 countries (Figure 4).<sup>11</sup>

Participation in the GDA continued to grow steadily over the next few years, and by 2017 the number of local partners reporting an event had passed one hundred for the first time (Table 3). In 2018 there were nearly two hundred local partners in 98 countries holding GDA events.

The declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic, and associated government responses, had an understandable impact on participation, with the number of local partners holding events falling by 40% from the previous year, as is clearly illustrated in Figure 5. The largest decreases in participation in 2019 were in Europe (48% decrease in 2020 from previous year) and Asia (67% decrease).

**Figure 5: Number of local partners involved in GDA events by region 2013-2023**

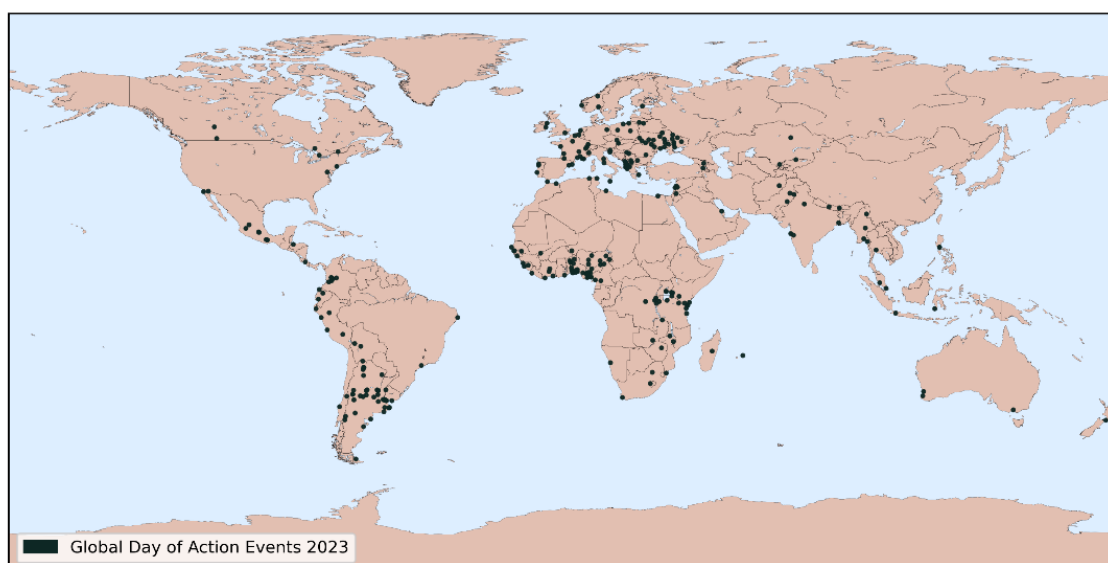


Since 2020 there has been a steady increase in participation, with 2023 figures nearly back to pre-2019 participation. In 2023 there were at least 178 local partners holding events in 84 countries (Figure 6).

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that in the previous evaluation (Shaw, 2016) and in IDPC interviews the reported figure was over 40 countries.



**Figure 6: Map of GDA events in 2023**



In the first GDA, European local partners made up nearly half of all participants (Table 3). That figure is now around a quarter, although this is indicative of increases in other regions rather than a decrease in Europe. Participation in Latin America was very low in the early years of SDP but has been steadily increasing in recent years. In 2013 there were 6 local partners in Africa, in 2023 there were 65, more than a tenfold increase.

**Table 3: Support. Don't Punish local partners' involvement in GDA by regional distribution (% of total local partners each year) 2013-2023**

Year	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	North America	Oceania	Total local partners
2013	21%	28%	48%	3%	0%	0%	29
2014	13%	28%	44%	8%	4%	5%	80
2015	24%	19%	39%	8%	6%	5%	80
2016	32%	13%	39%	8%	4%	3%	90
2017	22%	18%	44%	11%	3%	1%	138
2018	28%	19%	30%	15%	7%	2%	199
2019	22%	23%	36%	11%	4%	3%	183
2020	32%	13%	31%	22%	1%	2%	110
2021	34%	17%	25%	16%	7%	1%	159
2022	47%	14%	20%	14%	3%	2%	166
2023	37%	12%	24%	23%	3%	1%	178

To illustrate the strength (or otherwise) of the growth of local partner participation, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient<sup>12</sup> (r) for year and local partner numbers for 2013-2019 and 2020-2023, which roughly corresponds to periods representing pre and post declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 4).

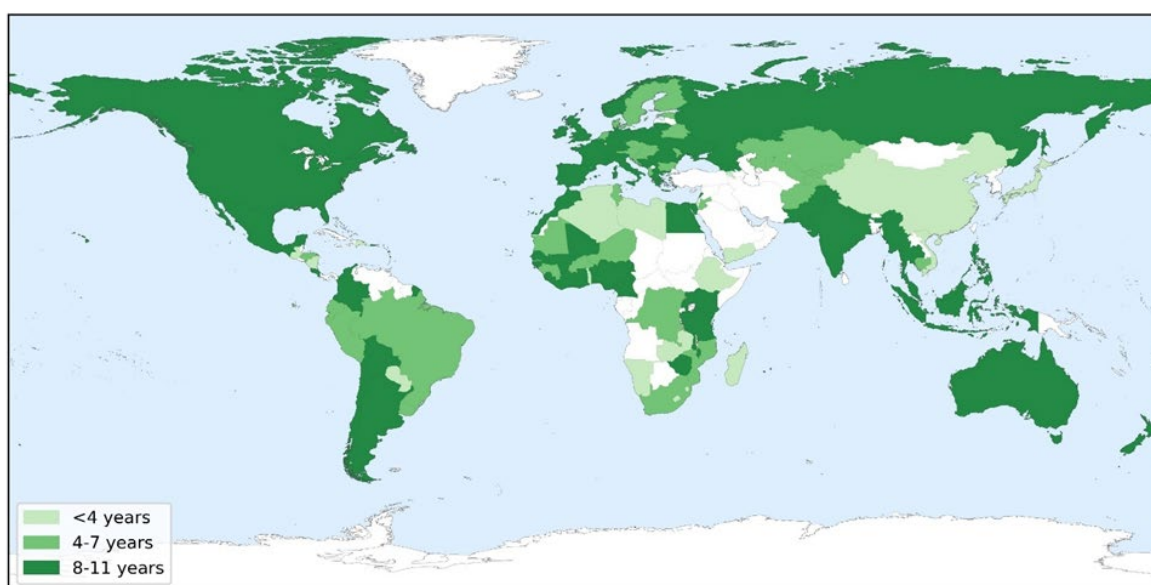
**Table 4: Correlation between years and local partners' involvement in GDA by region 2013-2019, 2020-2023**

Period	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	North America	Oceania
2013 – 2019	0.92	0.86	0.94	0.88	0.70	0.21
2020 - 2023	0.81	0.47	0.54	0.77	0.28	-0.32

This shows that Asia and Europe both had strong growth in the 2013-2019 period, with weaker growth in 2020-2023, while Africa and Latin America both had strong growth in both periods.

Participation in North America and Oceania is lower than other regions, but there has still been a small consistent presence in many countries within those regions. As Figure 7 shows, the GDA truly has become a global phenomenon. Of the 195 countries in the world, there has been a GDA event held in at least one year in 126 (65%) countries.

**Figure 7: Countries by the number of years a GDA event has been held in the lifetime of SDP**



Over half of the countries in the world (51%) have had a GDA event in 4 or more years over the lifetime of SDP, while nearly a third (31%) have had a GDA event in 8 or more years.

Comparing in region coverage is made difficult by the differing size of each region, and the fact that some regions having a large number of very small countries (e.g. Micronesian and Polynesian countries make up 8

<sup>12</sup> Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is the most common way of measuring a linear correlation. It is a number between -1 and 1 that measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, in this case the year and the local partners. Any number greater than 0.7 is a strong positive correlation (so partner numbers have significantly increased) while any number less than -0.7 is a strong negative correlation.

of the 14 countries in Oceania). That being said, Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of countries by their annual involvement in GDA and region (the same data the above map is based).

**Table 5: Regions by country's GDA annual involvement over lifetime of SDP (2013-2023)**

	<4 years	4-7 years	8+ years	Total GDA Countries	Total Countries
Africa	12	9	19	40 (74%)	54
Asia	8	8	10	26 (54%)	48
Europe	3	16	21	40 (91%)	44
Latin America	4	6	6	16 (48%)	33
North America	0	0	2	2 (100%)	2
Oceania	0	0	2	2 (14%)	14
Total	27	39	60	126 (65%)	195

The region with the highest number of countries who have had at least one GDA event is Europe (91%) followed by Africa (74%). Around half the countries in Asia (54%) and, following strong recent growth in involvement, Latin America (48%) have had at least one GDA event. Disparities in regional involvement may be partly driven by prioritisation of particular regions in grant funding decisions:

*We prioritise initiatives in the Global South and community-led initiatives, as well as target countries from our donors' priorities. Only about 3% of the small grants total go to groups that are not in this priority category. This is both a strategic (i.e. cost-benefit) and principled (i.e. decoloniality) position that we have assumed. (JF, IDPC)*

## Sister Hub Network

The city tracker data is not designed to accurately map each of the network connections within the GDA. As such, it was not possible to provide a network map over time. But by analysing just the latest year of data it is possible to visualise some of the complexity of the SDP ecosystem.

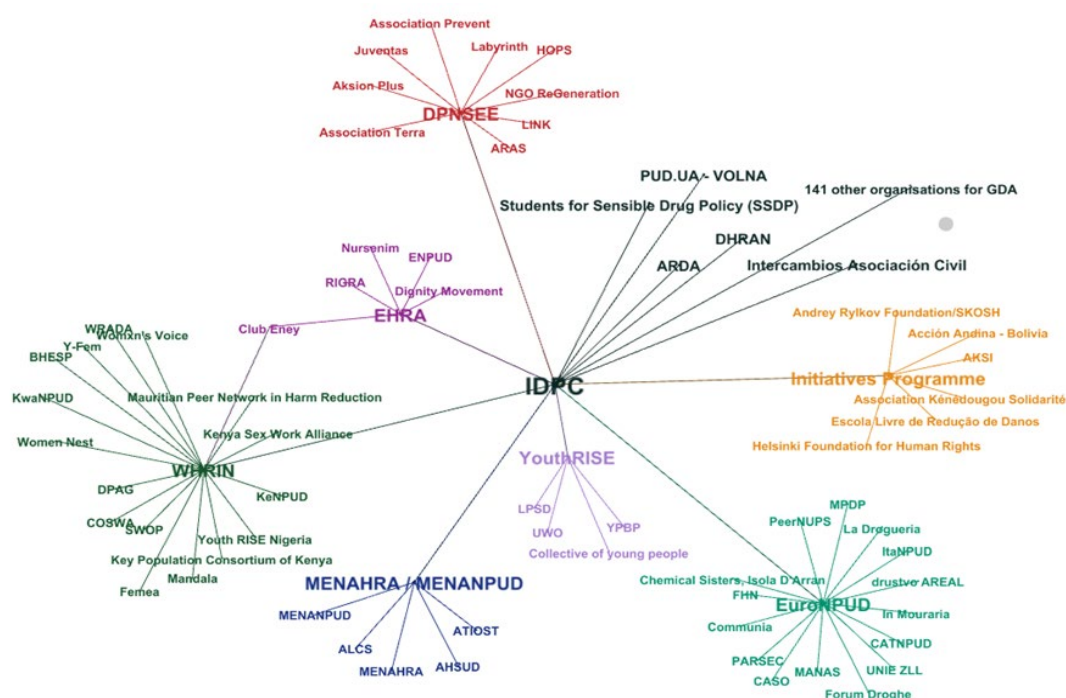
IDPC is still the central hub of the campaign and support small local partner's GDA activities (of which we counted at least 141 in 2023, some of whom will have activities in multiple cities but mostly located in one place), alongside some larger local partners with multiple activities in multiple cities (e.g. SSDP, DHRAN, ARDA, Intercambios Asociación Civil, All-Ukrainian union of people with drug addiction (PUD.UA) – VOLNA), the six IP projects, and six sister hubs.

The six sister hubs active in 2023 were DPNSEE (supported 15 events with 9 local partners), EHRA (5 events with 5 local partners), MENAHRA/MENANPUD (4 events with 7 local partners), YouthRISE (4 events with 4 local partners), WHRIN (10 events with 17 local partners) and EuroNPUD (11 events with 15 local partners). This means a total of 45 local partners<sup>13</sup> were supported through the sister hubs in GDA 2023 activities; but these were only those organisations of whom IDPC are aware. This will likely be an underestimation of the

<sup>13</sup> This is a minimum considering many activities will involve multiple groups and typically there is underreporting in the city tracker data.

true number of organisations supported through the sister hub network, much as the numbers for GDA as a whole are likely to be underreporting.

**Figure 8: Network map of 2023 GDA**



What this mapping does not illustrate is that many of the smaller local partners will themselves be supporting other groups. Some local partners used to be sister hubs but have had to step back from that additional responsibility due to a shortage of resources, while others may step up in the future and develop from informal arrangements to more structured networking relationships. There is no shortage of potential local leadership within the campaign.

## Grants

Spending on small grants rose steadily in the first seven years of SDP. In the first year there were a total of 17 small grants paid to local partners at an average of \$477 each (Table 6). By 2019 this had increased to 103 small grants at an average of \$608, alongside 6 Initiative Programme (IP) grants totalling \$20,750, bringing the total SDP grant spending to \$93,831.

The most recent years figures show the challenges that face SDP, the overall envelope has become smaller, with total spend on SDP grants \$82,400, at the same time as the IP spend has increased to \$30,000 and demand for small grants has increased. This has meant that the average grant amount has reduced to \$375. The proportion of total grant spent on IP grants has risen from 22% in the first year of the IP to 36% in 2023.

The two take aways from looking at the grant data are the clear demand there still is for the small GDA grants, and the challenge that SDP faces in continuing to undertake both small grants and IP grants within the existing funding envelope.

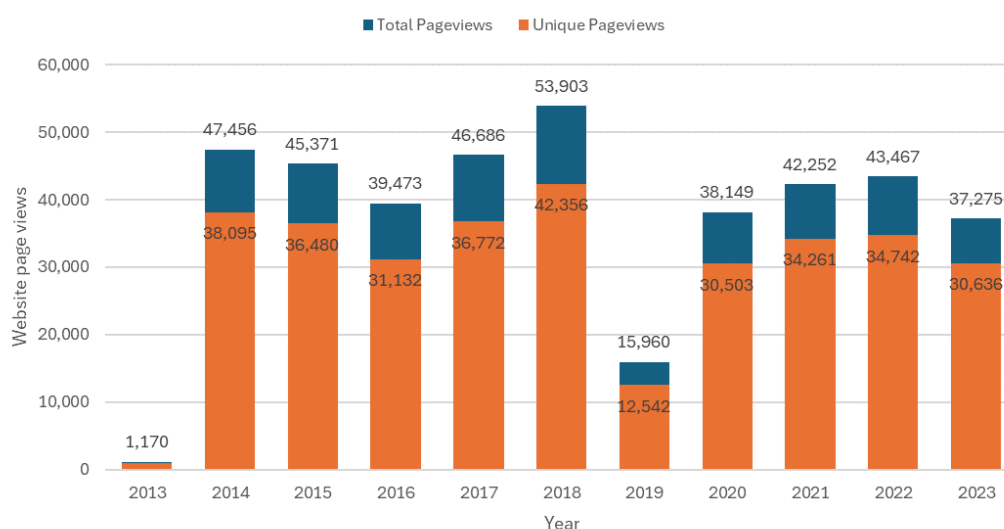
**Table 6: Support. Don't Punish campaign spending on grants (USD) 2013-2023<sup>14</sup>**

Year	Total GDA grant spending (\$)	Initiatives Programme grants (\$)	Total SDP spending (\$)	Total small grants direct to local partners	Average small grant amount (\$)
2013	\$8,105	\$0	\$8,105	17	\$477
2014	\$10,405	\$0	\$10,405	23	\$452
2015	\$25,639	\$0	\$25,639	44	\$583
2016	\$29,128	\$0	\$29,128	42	\$583
2017	\$41,771	\$0	\$41,771	45	\$576
2018	\$44,151	\$0	\$44,151	85	\$378
2019	\$73,081	\$20,750	\$93,831	103	\$608
2020	\$61,389	\$0	\$61,389	97	\$525
2021	\$72,915	\$0	\$72,915	126	\$515
2022	\$66,139	\$29,025	\$95,164	116	\$475
2023	\$52,400	\$30,000	\$82,400	120	\$375

## Website

The SDP website provides a huge number of resources, information and feedback on the campaign, with a particular focus (understandably) on the Global Day of Action. It is available in three languages: English, French and Spanish. Excluding the first year and 2019 (when activities were impacted by the pandemic) there have been over 30,000 unique hits in every year (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Page views for SDP website 2013-2023**



The website includes downloadable resources (banners, logos, flyers) and publications (bank of ideas, guides, reports). There is a wealth of information related to past events, but these are only accessible via the

<sup>14</sup> Figures from 2013-2018 were recorded in GBP and have been converted to USD using the exchange rate as at 1<sup>st</sup> January of the corresponding year. This data relates only to grants paid for GDA or Initiatives Programme.

past events map which can make it challenging to access. The SDP Summary reports are available in the blog section of the website, but these are presented alongside other reports and posts dating back to 2016 and it can be difficult to distinguish key information and reports. There were also places where the website felt slightly out-of-date (the 2023 GDA page still had a feedback survey link available in February 2024 despite asking for this to be completed by August 2023). IDPC were themselves critical of the website.

*I think it's a matter of capacity rather than anything else...it has become increasingly difficult to deal with the huge amount of information that is produced by campaigners...We haven't found a way to receive that information and present it back to campaigners in a way that is quick and feasible (JF, IDPC)*

The SDP website provides details of the main funding organisations (Elton John Aids Foundation, Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund and Open Society Foundations) and also 423 supporting organisations who have provided their logo to endorse the campaign.

There is also an SDP newsletter which is sent out in advance of the GDA and as needed depending on the key 'moments' of the campaign. This currently has 1,390 subscribers.

### **Networking events**

Alongside the information and support provided online, the IDPC also attends and organises events under the banner of SDP. Where IDPC is present at a conference, the SDP Photo Project booth is likely to be visible, along with workshops and networking events for local partners:

*We try to organise workshops and meetings in every conference we go to. These spaces serve to exchange experiences, share skills and discuss collective strategy. (JF, IDPC)*

IDPC are also often invited to talk to other advocates/students about the campaign. In 2023, SDP hosted three conference events, as detailed in Table 7.



**Table 7: SDP networking event 2023**

Title	Where?	When?	What?
Harm reduction on the road to liberation: Successes, limitations and contradictions	Social Justice Conference (Brighton, United Kingdom)	25-26 February 2023	The SDP campaign was present at the conference with its travelling Photo Project booth and co-hosted, together with colleagues from Release and Metziñeres, a pre-conference attended by some 30 harm reduction advocates and practitioners, which was an opportunity to create a safe space for an open and action-oriented exchange of ideas on the tensions between much-needed community-led harm reduction, state support, and the limitations of publicly funded yet often exclusionary systems of health and welfare.
'Support. Don't Punish' — A prison abolitionist call?	27th Harm Reduction International Conference (Melbourne, Australia)	16-19 April 2023	The SDP campaign was present at the gathering along with the Photo Project Booth, which we shared with our fantastic colleagues from Mainline and which was visited by over 100 people, providing an opportunity to connect with seasoned SDP local partners and also activists new to the campaign. The campaign held a very well-attended workshop based on the experiences of SDP campaigners worldwide. The workshop's 50 participants were introduced to prison abolition as a social movement, explored intersections with the harm reduction and drug policy reform movement, and discussed existing frictions and potential avenues to mitigate them in the service of building cross-movement and anti-carceral solidarity.
Building Safer Consumption Spaces with Abolitionist Principles, within Prohibition & State Surveillance	International Drug Policy Reform Conference (Phoenix, Arizona)	18-21 October 2023	Besides the Photo Project booth, the campaign co-organised a community session on safer consumption sites, state violence and prison abolition. The discussion was attended by about 40 colleagues and reflected the practices of surveillance and control experienced through most of these sites that echo a wider trend whereby governments utilise 'harm reduction' under the aegis of public health to perpetuate marginalisation. The group emphasised the importance of harm reduction's accent on intersectionality, empowerment, community leadership, and radical care as basis to mobilise in solidarity and resistance. The conversation then evolved into a discussion on practical strategies to navigate the tensions between community needs and external impositions, prompting useful exchanges of relevant experiences and lessons learnt, and explored movement-building and the limits of 'allyship' in harm reduction.

**Figure 10: Screenshot of Photo Project page (taken 14/02/2024)**

## Photo project

In the original Theory of Change, the Photo Project was one of the four main campaign approaches and still exists as a central element of the campaign, as demonstrated by its existence as a networking tool at the three conferences detailed in the previous section.

*The idea was that anyone can just take a photo with the campaign logo and then they are part of*

### Photo project

A key part of the Support. Don't Punish campaign, the Photo project is an open, live and ever-growing photo petition with more than 10,000 entries. Snaps feature advocates, people who use drugs, government and United Nations officials, celebrities and more, all united by the same message: Support. Don't Punish.

If you agree with us that we need health and human rights centred approaches to drug policy, join the club! Download the campaign [flag or logo](#), take a photo, and send it to [campaign@sdpcat.org](mailto:campaign@sdpcat.org). We will share the photos here and on [Facebook](#).

[SUBMIT A PHOTO](#)

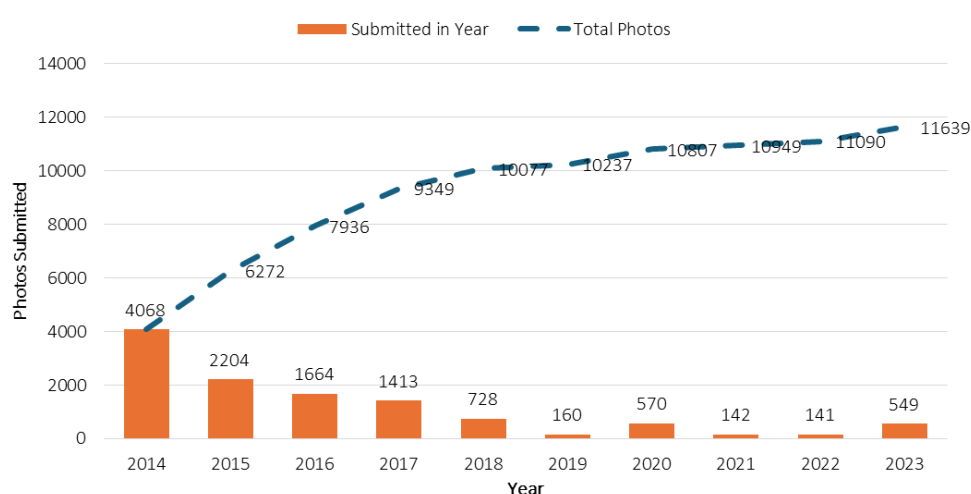


*the campaign... you're giving someone the lowest threshold [for involvement] that you possibly can, you know, all you're asking is for a photo. ...it literally could not be easier to be part of the campaign. (JB, IDPC)*

The numbers were impressive, with 11,639 photos submitted by 2023 (Figure 11). However, the initial growth and enthusiasm for the Photo Project (where it grew from nothing to over 9,000 submissions in four years) has not been maintained in recent years. Since 2018 the photo project has only increased by around 1,500 submissions, an increase of around 300 per year on average.

*The photo project...was one of the first mechanisms of mobilisation and support for the campaign from the very beginning...but I wonder to what extent it continues to be an effective advocacy and campaigning tool. (JF, IDPC)*

**Figure 11: Number of submissions to the Photo Project 2014-2023**



Considering the scale of the GDA (with hundreds of events per year) and the fact that most events would produce multiple photos, this would suggest that the Photo Project has fallen down the list of priorities. Doubts about the utility of the Photo Project were also expressed by each of the IDPC staff in their interviews:

*one of my biggest problems is nowhere on the website does it give you the sense of the scale and community of the photo project. (JB, IDPC)*

There is a feeling of unused potential to the Photo Project – a nice idea and a positive engagement tool that leads to a bit of a dead end.

*it's a beautiful part of the engagement strategy, but...people get their photo taken and then we put it on the website...Can we make more of that? (AF, IDPC)*

## Social media

The evaluation was unable to obtain detailed social media information, as much of the historic tracking data on major sites has now been monetised. This means things like hashtag reach are only available through paid (and expensive) marketing platforms. The data here is for annual subscribers to the major social media sites, and headline statistics for 2022 and 2023 from Facebook, X (Twitter) and Instagram.



**Table 8: Social Media Subscribers to SDP accounts on Facebook, X (Twitter) and Instagram 2013-2023**

Year	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Instagram
2013	1,727	*	*
2014	5,274	90	*
2015	19,574	*	*
2016	26,451	*	*
2017	27,434	3,416	*
2018	27,953	4,069	*
2019	28,472	4,648	1,752
2020	28,851	5,227	2,975
2021	29,018	5,905	4,428
2022	29,530	6,394	4,550
2023	29,794	6,970	6,653

The number of subscribers on all three major platforms has steadily increased over the lifetime of the campaign, with the latest figures showing 29,794 subscribers on Facebook, 6,790 on X (Twitter) and 6,653 on Instagram (Table 8). Subscribers to Facebook increased dramatically in the first few years but has slowed in recent years (although this is possibly reflective of wider usage trends of the platform than anything campaign specific). Both X and Instagram subscribers have increased in numbers in recent years.

**Table 9: Social Media Metrics for Facebook, X (Twitter) and Instagram 2022 and 2023<sup>15</sup>**

Platform	Metric	2022	2023
Facebook	Posts	39	55
	Post Reach	41,466	44,528
	Post Impressions	55,576	59,572
	Page & Post Engagements	3,472	5,196
	Engaged Users	2,817	3,639
Instagram	Posts	22	16
	Reach	16,571	24,428
	Impressions	45,923	69,896
	Likes	2,330	2,282
X (Twitter)	Tweets	87	58
	Impressions	54,594	103,773
	Engagements	1,703	2,904
	Likes	899	1,558

Total impressions in 2023 (which is the number of times people saw a post) were higher on each platform than in 2022 (Table 9). X impressions nearly doubled from the 2022 to 103,773 in 2023 despite fewer Tweets, Instagram had 69,896 impressions (up from 2022 despite fewer posts), and Facebook had 59,572 (up slightly from 2022).

The difficulty in accessing up-to-date Social Media metrics and the reduction in both Tweets and Instagram posts in 2023 is indicative of a wider issue, that the campaign resources around GDA are so focused on providing support to local partners that there is no space for a considered and targeted social media campaign, something IDPC are acutely aware of:

*Communications is a huge part [of our work]...ensuring that all that's happening around the world gets platformed in our social media and on our website is a hugely time consuming task and an important one because it gives visibility to the campaign and the collective...in those moments [around GDA] I realise acutely how limited our capacity is...and that manifests itself in so many ways, like our social media is not as active as I would like it to be (JF, IDPC)*

## Media Reports

As part of the feedback mechanism for the GDA, IDPC ask participants to provide links to media items or details of media engagements that occurred as part of their GDA events. This data is incomplete, required coding to types of media and still contains inconsistencies (for example there were only two social media links provided in 2023). In the past five years, the GDA has produced over 500 media items, with over half of

<sup>15</sup> Reach is the number of unique people who saw posts. Impressions is the number of times people saw posts. Engagements is the number of times users interacted with posts or pages.

these being articles (Table 10). Reporting requirements are minimal and so these figures are highly likely to be underestimates of the actual media engagement of the campaign.

**Table 10: Media items produced from GDA 2019-2023**

	Article	Radio	Social Media	Television	Video	Other	Total
2019	55	9	7	2	16	5	94
2020	64	4	3	3	12	3	89
2021	26	5	24	3	25	3	86
2022	37	6	37	2	31	16	129
2023	77	6	2	4	18	12	119
Total	259	30	73	14	102	39	517

It was not possible to check each of the media items, but the general impression when looking at the types of media outlet involved was that the majority of media items were not produced in mainstream publications. That in itself is not a negative thing, but it does suggest that more could be done with a defined media strategy. Improved media communications was also identified as a possible area of improvement in the GDA local partner feedback, as detailed in the following section.

### **GDA local partner feedback**

Recent feedback from local partners is overwhelmingly positive. It is worth noting that while the form is available for anyone to complete online, it is likely to be those partners who were actively engaged, receiving support and resources from the campaign, that are most likely to respond.<sup>16</sup>

That being said, of the 86 people who had responded to the latest (2023) feedback survey, 100% of them agreed that joining the Global Day of Action strengthened their confidence in making positive change for their community.

The word cloud below (Figure 12) is based on an analysis of the three word summaries that local partners are asked to provide in the feedback form (data from 2018-2023 with the phrase Support Don't Punish removed as this occurred frequently) and highlights how positively the Global Day of Action is viewed by local partners, with Support (32) and Community (31) the most frequently occurring words:

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<sup>16</sup> Regional response for 2023 was: Africa (31), Asia (9), Europe (18), Latin America (24), North America (2) and Oceania (1).

**Figure 12: Word cloud of local partners summary of what SDP means to them (2018-2023)**



## Impacts

The GDA feedback form asked participants What do you consider are the key impacts of your activities? 473 responses<sup>17</sup> covering six years of GDA (2018-2023) were thematically analysed and four main themes were identified:

- Reducing stigmatisation
- Increasing awareness
- Communication with officials
- Mobilisation

There were 124 respondents who mentioned elements of reducing stigmatisation or dehumanisation of people who use drugs, with higher rates amongst respondents from Africa (36%) and Asia (32%) than Latin America (17%). Many of these highlighted the importance of affected communities having a voice and that through direct dialogue the public, officials and police were reminded that the rights of people who use drugs matter. Many also spoke about recognition for other affected communities including the families of criminalised people who use drugs:

*the message of Support Don't Punish sensitises people on issues and concerns of people who use drugs and supports them to become productive members of our communities and go beyond the stigmatisation of drug users. (Sahara Center for Residential Care and Rehabilitation, 2021)*

Raising awareness, media coverage and affecting public opinion (which obviously overlaps strongly with reducing stigmatisation) was cited as an impact by 362 respondents (the most of any of the themes), with higher rates amongst respondents from Latin America (86%) and lower in Asia (65%). Many of the respondents highlighted that raising awareness occurred alongside other more targeted activities.

<sup>17</sup> Regional response from the combined feedback data was: Africa (129), Asia (60), Europe (136), Latin America (120), North America (18) and Oceania (10).

*The street advocacy, which was strategically organised, served as a constant reminder to interrogate the impact of current negative approaches, perception, and attitudes in addressing drug use in Nigeria. ...The radio interview established to a wider audience the importance of promoting evidence-based information on drugs to improve prevention and response programs. (Anonymous)*

Communication with officials, including politicians and police, was identified as an impact by 84 respondents, with rates higher amongst respondents from Africa (36%). Respondents often provided specific examples of direct dialogues between peers and policymakers:

*The campaign event served as a platform for reiterating the government's commitment to implementing people-centred, balanced, compassionate, and humane drug policies. Furthermore, the event strengthened relationships between people who use drugs, harm reduction advocates and legislators in order to expedite engagements to make amendments to the recently repealed Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act 2015 to remove punitive clauses before its reintroduction on the floor of parliament. Last but not least, the event's unified people who use drugs [to launch a] community call [which] triggered a parliamentary directive for the Parliamentary Committee on Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Bill to gather comprehensive and sufficient input from the affected community, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders in the development. (Teens Link Uganda, 2023)*

Mobilisation and collaboration were cited as an impact by 96 respondents, with examples of collaborations between different organisations, countries and regions, and the involvement of community and grassroots groups, with a particular focus on women, youth and people who use drugs.

*More than 30 organisations contributed to the campaign being present in more than 20 districts in 8 provinces and the City of Buenos Aires. In addition, numerous municipal care devices adhered and in the Province of Mendoza joined the Provincial Plan for Addictions and Mental Health Directorate, which took as its axis the work on the consumption of mothers and pregnant women. 11 articles were recorded in local media and several radio interviews. More than 200 interactive photos were taken. Year after year the campaign grows in participation and achievements. (Intercambios Asociación Civil, 2018)*

Lastly, a small number of respondents identified having had a direct influence over either drug policy development or practice (13). This included respondents in India who cited a change in the Drug law in their state, provision of drug checking service for people who use drugs in Portugal, establishment of the second methadone treatment centre in eastern Uganda, introduction of Harm Reduction Services in Tanzania, changing access to MRT drugs in pre-trial detention centres in Ukraine, Health authorities directly contributing to the opening of new methadone centres in Albania, parliamentarians reviewing drug laws in Nigeria, and improving access to health care for people who use drugs in Mexico. Further examples of policy or practice change will be explored in section 4.3 and in case studies of local partners including Case Study: Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network and Case Study: Acción Técnica Social

Other impacts identified included outreach elements including provision of PPE etc (44), and improved knowledge/training (47). Only 4 of the 474 respondents reported they made no impact.

## Possible improvements

The GDA feedback form also asked What do you think still needs work? with responses from 444 respondents over the period 2018-2023. It is worth noting that a number of local partners spoke about what needs work globally in the realm of harm reduction, not specifically with the GDA of the SDP campaign.

Several themes emerged from the analysis:

- Improved communications/dissemination
- Widening participation
- More involvement of officials
- Increased funding

The single biggest area of improvement identified by 118 respondents was around communication and dissemination. In particular, respondents identified more coordinated efforts for social media and greater involvement of the media. Many mentioned that this would need better strategy and more preparation in advance of GDA (which was a recurring theme elsewhere).

*After conducting an evaluation, Pamflet realised that the campaign [would] be more effective if we had sufficient preparation in mapping our target audience. By having comprehensive preparation in designing campaign, we could know better level of impact that very feasible to achieve, either level of awareness, attitude, or behaviour. In addition, we also wish to involve more organisation that focus on drugs or other organisation focus on democracy issue who are not familiar yet with drugs issue. We find the intersectionality is very important to amplify the humanist drugs policy and narrative.*  
(PAMFLET, 2021)

More effective engagement with officials and policymakers was mentioned by 96 respondents, although many of these strayed from better engagement into identifying a lack of action by policymakers as something that needed improving. There was frequent mention of improving dialogue and making clear and actionable requests.

*To make more concrete actions and requests to agents able to make change, governments at the municipal, provincial and federal level. (Anonymous)*

Increasing participation was mentioned by 86 respondents, with many focusing on the involvement of people who use drugs or other groups experiencing intersecting oppressions. Some also highlighted the importance of involving other groups early on in the process and not just on GDA:

*Local lesson: To collaborate more with other organisations beforehand and to distribute material and information about the event. (The Stockholm Drug Users Union)*

Increased funding, budget allocations and additional resources (particularly T-shirts) were identified by 54 respondents.

*The budget allocated to the activities remains insufficient given the scope of the campaign and the mobilisation around the activities initiated. (Anonymous)*

Other feedback included additional strategic support (16) (such as identifying annual themes and improving feedback), having greater preparation time for the GDA (32), running the campaign through the whole year (25) and focusing more on intersectionality (19).

## **GDA Summary Reports**

Since 2021 the IDPC secretariat has published summary reports on some of the activities carried out as part of the GDA.<sup>18</sup> These reports provide specific examples of some of the outcomes identified in the proposed ToC. This section provides a summary of some key examples from the last three years of summary reports under four main headings: engagement with policymakers and officials, engagement with media, addressing stigma against people who use drugs, and mobilisation. While there are some example of GDA events influencing drug policy/practice (see the next paragraph on VOLNA's advocacy), actual changes in drug policy/practice often occur over a much longer period of time and so are not captured in the annual GDA Summary Reports which tend to focus on that year's particular activities.

### **Engagement with policymakers and officials**

PUD.UA / VOLNA (Ukrainian network of people who use drugs and people living with addiction) were a recipient of an IP grant in 2020 for their project 'Ukrainian Drug Policy without Jokers.' This was a national campaign proving support to local groups with events in 25 regions and involving over 150 community representatives. VOLNA's advocacy work has made the network a recognised voice representing people who use drugs in Ukraine. The Supreme Council (the Ukrainian parliament) agreed to engage community representatives in reviewing the current national drugs strategy and drafting its replacement.

In Norway, the Association for Humane Drug Policy arranged a gathering outside parliament that including people who use drugs, parliamentarians, and a cabinet minister. Delhi Users' Network organised a webinar with academics, legal practitioners and government officials regarding people-centred drug policies. In Nigeria, YouthRISE Nigeria and the Bensther Development Foundation held a drug policy roundtable, aimed at highlighting harm reduction successes, with youth advocates, government and parliamentary stakeholders and civil society. In Ghana, West Africa Drug Policy Network (WAPDN) held a forum with a variety of stakeholders to counter misinformation and discuss the positive changes brought about by the country's new drug law adopted in 2020.

Georgian Network of People who Use Drugs (GeNPUD), New Vector, Imedi, Rubicon and Phoenix organised activities in Georgia, including a social media campaign, a petition to the Prime Minister concerning drug policy reform and meetings with parliamentarians.

Organisations in Nigeria, Liberia, Moldova, India, Lebanon and Uganda all undertook direct advocacy and educational activities with politicians, officials from government departments and other civil society organisations, while in Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, India, Mozambique and Benin there were GDA activities focused on direct communication between people who use drugs and law enforcement agencies and officers.

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<sup>18</sup> IDPC (2020), IDPC (2021) and IDPC (2022)

## Engagement with media

Association Camerounaise pour la Réduction Des Risques liés à la consommation des drogues auprès des jeunes (ACRDR) organised a public debate, co-led by people who use drugs, for the 2020 GDA. That year ACRDR promoted the SDP on two television channels and nine radio programmes. This was followed up the next year by a week of activities, including a media tour which resulted in 13 news items. In 2022, they organised a conference with government officials, faith leaders and law enforcement agencies.

In similar vein, advocates from S.H.E.L.T.E.R (Sustainable Health, Education, Livelihoods, Training, Equity & Rights) in Lesotho spoke at national radio stations about drug policy reform in the country, and organised discussions between government agencies and people who use drugs.

AfriLAW and WADPN-Nigeria arranged a drug policy conference with media agencies in Nigeria (including News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), National Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ), and SouthEast Media Executives Roundtable (SEMERT)). Journalists were involved in workshops on drug policy and expressed support for the need for drug policy reform and the need to train and sensitise more media colleagues. The success of this conference provided valuable lessons about how innovative approaches can be used to engagement with journalists on drug policy matters.

## Addressing stigma

Many groups took the tenth anniversary of GDA in 2022 as a moment to grieve for those they had lost, with commemorative activities in Kenya, the Philippines, Russia, Australia, and Canada. Other activities in 2022 focused on the gendered, racist, and classist dynamics of the ‘war on drugs’, with activists creating safe spaces that allowed marginalised communities to share experiences and build capacity to mobilise and advocate for themselves. Safe spaces were hosted in Pakistan, South Africa and Canada, with WHRIN supporting similar activities in Ukraine, Mexico, Burundi, India and Portugal.

Some activities focused on building local community ties. For example, Metzineres, a harm reduction programme exclusively for women and gender non-conforming people, created a short film documenting the experiences of people who use drugs and their engagement with the local community. This was then premiered with neighbours invited to join for a celebratory meal at the drop-in centre. These activities helped to challenge existing prejudices and build bridges and community links between people surviving multiple forms of violence — including related to repressive responses to drugs— and their neighbours.

The Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) is a long-standing, peer-based group. They organise a weekly radio show, News from the Drug War Front, with support from colleagues in the entertainment industry. For the 2020 GDA, the show gathered and shared women's experiences in relation to drug policies and services, and the war on women who use drugs.

Other activities aimed to challenge prejudices amongst the general public. In Moldova, PULS Comunitar organised a street action near the city hall, which attracted around 8.000 people, which raised the issue of stigma through a street art installation entitled ‘Would You Punish Them Too?’ which used portraits of well-known figures who used drugs.



## **Mobilisation and organising**

The GDA was often used as a springboard for more expansive projects, with numerous examples of organisations mobilising around GDA and then continuing to work together on other projects. The European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD) expanded their work as a campaigning hub in 2020, to provide support and small grants not only on GDA but also to deliver their campaign 'Time For A New Normal', which was cobranded with SDP, and focused on advocacy to promote peer-to-peer distribution of Naloxone on the International Overdose Awareness Day on 31 August.

Intercambios Asociación Civil delivered a social media campaign #EstarEnLaDistancia (Together whilst distant) which aimed to raise awareness of the challenges faced by people who use drugs during the pandemic, and to highlight gaps in provision to political and health authorities and the public. It was joined in the campaign by over 70 organisations, and a declaration was produced and endorsed by 133 organisations and individuals.

South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) was awarded an IP grant to deliver a project focused on harm reduction training and a PhotoVoice project. But when the pandemic hit, SANPUD adapted to prioritise the needs of vulnerable peers. Many of Cape Town's street-based population were forcibly relocated, with movement restrictions and no access to opioid agonist therapy (OAT). SANPUD reprogrammed some of the IP funds to enable them to secure OAT and naloxone from stakeholders and mobilise resources to ensure symptomatic medication to alleviate the suffering of opioid withdrawal. Despite these urgent needs, SANPUD managed to also provide a webinar on harm reduction provision, overdose prevention training sessions and the PhotoVoice project (using photography to tell peers' stories).

There were numerous examples of organisations using GDA to reach out to provide urgent food, sanitary equipment, support and information to vulnerable (often street-based) people who use drugs. These included Peer Based Harm Reduction WA in Australia, Acción Técnica Social in Colombia, Proyecto Epicuro - Fundación Ciencias para la Cannabis in Chile, Middle East & North African Network for People who Use Drugs (MENANPUD) in Egypt, Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs in Russia and Prevencasa A.C. in Mexico.

Indonesia Cannabis Feminist collaborated with ReSister Indonesia and Lingkar Ganja Nusantara Semarang, to form the 'Psychoactive Education Coalition', which ran a series of online workshops exploring how drug policy intersects with social, cultural and feminist issues. Other countries where organisations ran educational workshops in 2021 included Tanzania, Costa Rica, Poland, and Peru.

## **Initiative Programme Feedback**

There have been 18 Initiative Programme (IP) grants since its inception in 2019, and each grant covers a range of work, often taking place over 6 or more months. This section provides a summary of some of the key outcomes from IP projects arranged under four main headings: engagement with policymakers and officials, engagement with media, addressing stigma, and mobilisation, although many projects will contain elements of each of these areas. A full list of IP projects is provided in Annex A. It is also worth noting that three of the IP projects are examined in the case studies contained later in the report: Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre, Acción Técnica Social, and Intercambios Asociación Civil.

## **Reducing stigmatisation**

Free School of Harm Reduction (Brazil) organised a series of cultural interventions promoting harm reduction and making visible the diversity of cultural expressions by people who use drugs. Indonesia Act for Justice (Aksi Keadilan Indonesia) supported the 'Art Speaks Justice: Access to Justice for People who Use Drugs' campaign, which through the framework of art activism promotes the importance of access to justice for people who use drugs. SKOSH (International/Russia) organised solidarity and cultural events in the shape of photo exhibitions in Moscow (Russia), memorial events in Berlin (Germany) and Tbilisi (Georgia), and a film screening and forum in Paris (France) — all with a focus on cultural expressions by anti-prohibitionist activists and service clients in Russia. South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) provided Emergency Relief Support (including medication, PPE and sanitary products) for people who use drugs in Distress Under Current COVID-19 Restrictions, alongside webinars, training and a Photovoice project.

## **Increasing awareness**

BerLun (Germany) organised activities over the course of seven months under the banner: 'One Europe: Access to treatment for everyone!' including rallies, community work on HIV prevention, and street reporting of the experiences of people who use drugs. Drug Policy Advocacy Group (DPAG) (Myanmar) organised online events, distributed campaign materials in 7 different cities and had an online photo campaign. Intercambios A.C. (Argentina) promoted a shared campaign message in 21 cities in Argentina, alongside a social media campaign and a common declaration on drug policy reform supported by 133 organisations and people.

## **Communication with officials**

Acción Técnica Social (Colombia) promoted community, civil society and academic participation in policy debates with parliamentarians, developed a communications strategy and engaged in legislative debates. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland) held a series of informal, closed meetings between legal and law enforcement authorities, human rights lawyers, drug policy experts, and representatives from community-led networks to discuss the impacts of enforcing the criminalisation of drug possession. PUD.UA/VOLNA (Ukraine) engaged with policymakers, through health and police departments, in 25 regions of Ukraine. Skoun (Lebanon) arranged the institutional development of a formal Coalition, direct advocacy of parliamentarians, reviewed a draft law to amend the country's drug legislation, and developed an ongoing advocacy plan. SSDP International (Ghana-Nigeria-Liberia) used focus groups to produce a report to be presented to national youth advocates as an advocacy tool, and to policymakers to promote engagement and advocate for reform. YouthRISE Nigeria, DHRAN and AFRILAW (Nigeria) organised peer-attended discussion events to develop the capacity of public authorities to respond to the needs of people who use drugs, alongside a social media campaign.

## **Mobilisation**

Acción Andina (Bolivia) promoted social organisation and mobilisation, created platforms and mechanisms of expression for women who have been socially excluded and repeatedly imprisoned, developed manifesto and proposals for harm reduction responses with a gender perspective. Association KénéDougou Solidarité

(Mali) arranged information and awareness workshops and a know-your-rights outreach campaign for people who use drugs. ReSister Indonesia (Indonesia) arranged facilitated, confidential community dialogues to foster the exchange of experiences and strategies, which resulted in production of a list of policy recommendations leveraging ongoing legal reform processes. Teens Link Uganda (Uganda) equipped advocates with skills in digital photography and story-telling, and mobilised support for harm reduction and decriminalisation through direct engagement with media, policymakers and opinion-formers. Voices of Community Action & Leadership (VOCAL-Kenya) mobilised civil society and community members to oppose the law's harmful amendments before the High Court of Kenya, alongside a social media campaign.

### **Assessing the story so far**

This chapter has provided the existing evidence (data and feedback available from before this evaluation) to assess the extent to which it can support the contribution story of the ToC. This section will summarise what the existing data can tell us about the campaign, and identify areas where the evidence is weaker. The following chapter will then present new evidence collected as part of this evaluation to strengthen this story.

There is strong evidence of a growth in involvement in the GDA, through both grants and local partner numbers, with growth particularly strong in Africa and Latin America. The campaign has demonstrated global reach and has resulted in the creation of multiple informal networks which support the inclusion of grassroots groups. There is continued use of website, resources and social media subscribers have continually increased.

There is some suggestion in the social media statistics that recent communication efforts may have fallen from previous years. The same is true of the photo project which saw huge growth in the first few years but has been fairly static in recent years. Reporting on the involvement of SDP in media items is patchy but suggests multiple engagement efforts, albeit in typically less mainstream media.

Local partners feedback regarding SDP suggests it is viewed positively by those who participated in GDA. There are examples of SDP influencing reducing stigmatisation, increasing awareness of SDP themes, communication with officials, and mobilisation. Given that possible improvements to SDP included improved communication/dissemination, widening participation and more involvement of officials, there is still room for improvements to the campaign.

The GDA summary reports and IP feedback provide numerous examples of GDA and IP activities that have resulted in the intermediate outcomes identified in the ToC. There is strong evidence that the campaign provides support for grassroots mobilisation and network building. The campaign has created a space for genuine engagement with policymakers, police and media by people who use drugs and other affected communities. It has also encouraged campaigners to be innovative in their activities and has created a wealth of resources, although feedback mechanisms and learning opportunities could be streamlined/improved.

Where the evidence is weaker so far is around awareness raising, with data on social media and media engagement patchy at best. Challenging wider narratives around the 'war on drugs' would require more resources than is available to the SDP, but the campaign may be able to make communication more effective through early planning and more strategic oversight. Additional evidence on the extent to which the

campaign's purpose is clear to local partners would be helpful as there is a risk that the flexible and low threshold participation model could result in a lack of coherence in this regard.

There is also not much evidence about the usage of the resources provided to local partners, in part due to the lack of data on downloads from the SDP website. In terms of elements of the ToC that have weaker evidence, there is little/weak evidence relating to the actual Impacts of the ToC (changes to national drug laws, improved support and funding for harm reduction, and a reduction of police violence and repressive responses to people who use drugs). There is also little to suggest that the Photo Project has had much impact.

These weaknesses in the story will be examined in the next chapter through the use of data from a **survey of local partners, interviews with local partners and sister hubs, and the presentation of four case studies** (including three of IP projects) that demonstrate the extent to which it can be shown that SDP is resulting in the intended impacts.

## Strengthening the story

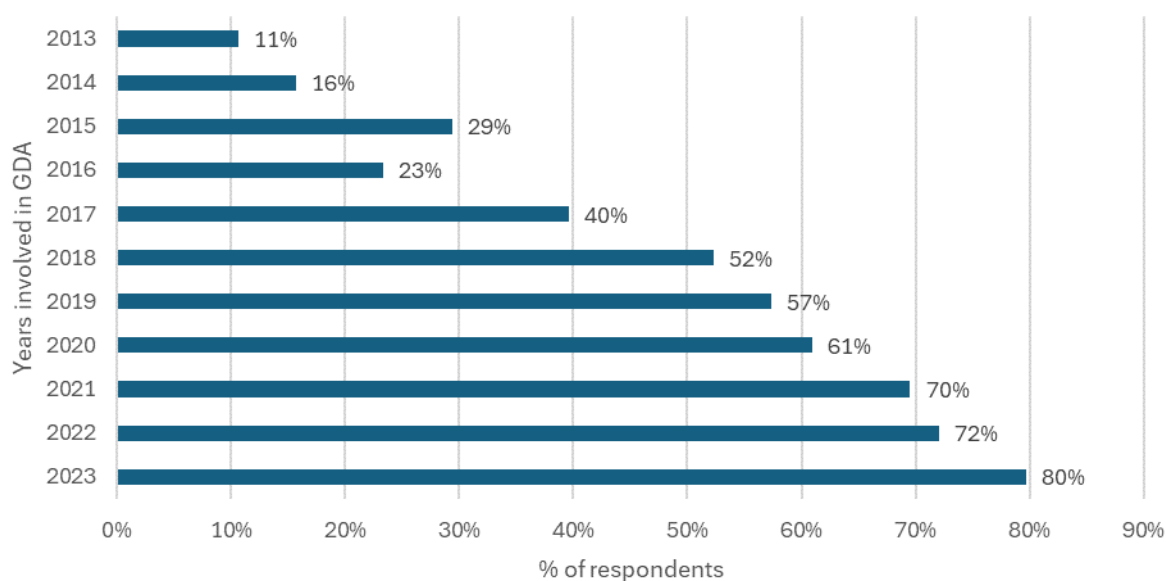
To help strengthen the contribution story, we sent out an online survey to all participants of the GDA, and other organisations on the SDP newsletter mailing list, in November 2023. The survey closed in January 2024, and 197 responses were received. When we compared participation in GDA by region with respondents by region (Table 11) we can see the survey is broadly representative, with Africa slightly over represented in the survey and Europe slightly under represented (although this may be a reflection of the changing participation rates as more recent participants are more likely to respond to the survey).

**Table 11: Response to evaluation survey by region**

	Respondents	% total response	% local partners involved in GDA
Africa	71	36%	30%
Asia	34	17%	18%
Europe	52	26%	32%
Latin America	29	15%	14%
North America	7	4%	4%
Oceania	4	2%	2%
Total	197		

When asked which years they had been involved in the SDP campaign, the majority of respondents (80%) had been involved in SDP in 2023 (Figure 13). Only one respondent stated they had not yet participated in the GDA.

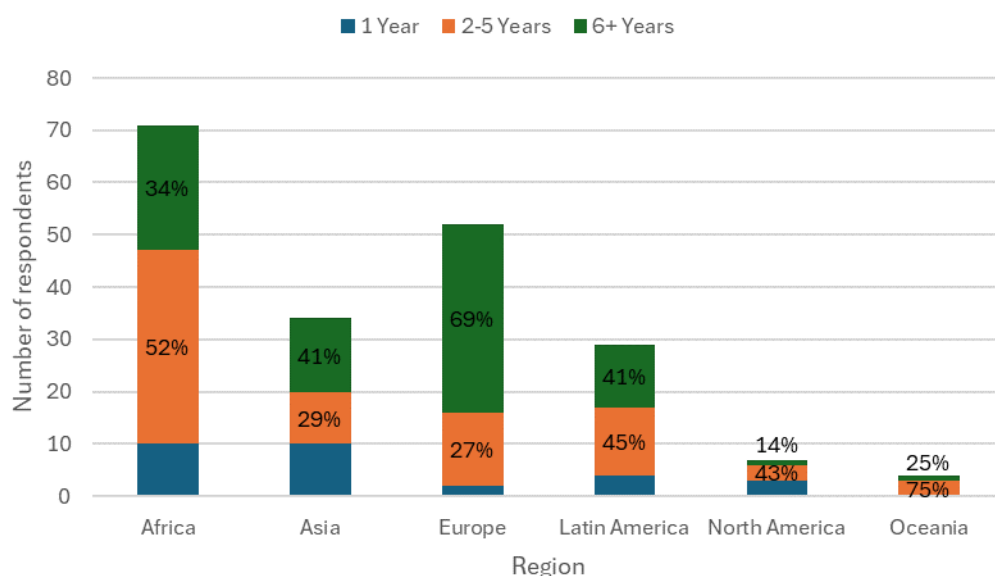
**Figure 13: Evaluation survey - Respondents involvement in GDA by year**



Almost half (45%) of respondents had been involved in the GDA for 6 or more years, with a further 41% between 2-5 years and 15% for one year only. Respondents from Europe were most likely to have been

involved in the GDA for 6 or more years (Figure 14). Africa and Asia had the highest proportion of respondents who had only been involved in one year of GDA, of which 55% were involved in 2023.

**Figure 14: Evaluation survey respondents by years of involvement in GDA and region**



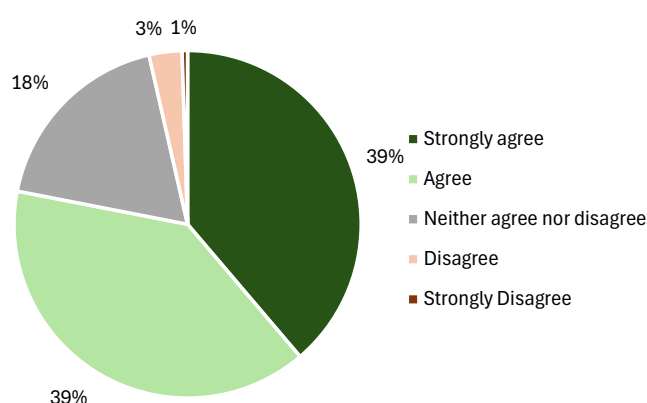
The response to the survey included a good mix across regions and years of participation, with no obvious response biases. When asked if they intended to be involved in the GDA in the future, 96% said yes, with the remaining saying they did not know.

## Resources

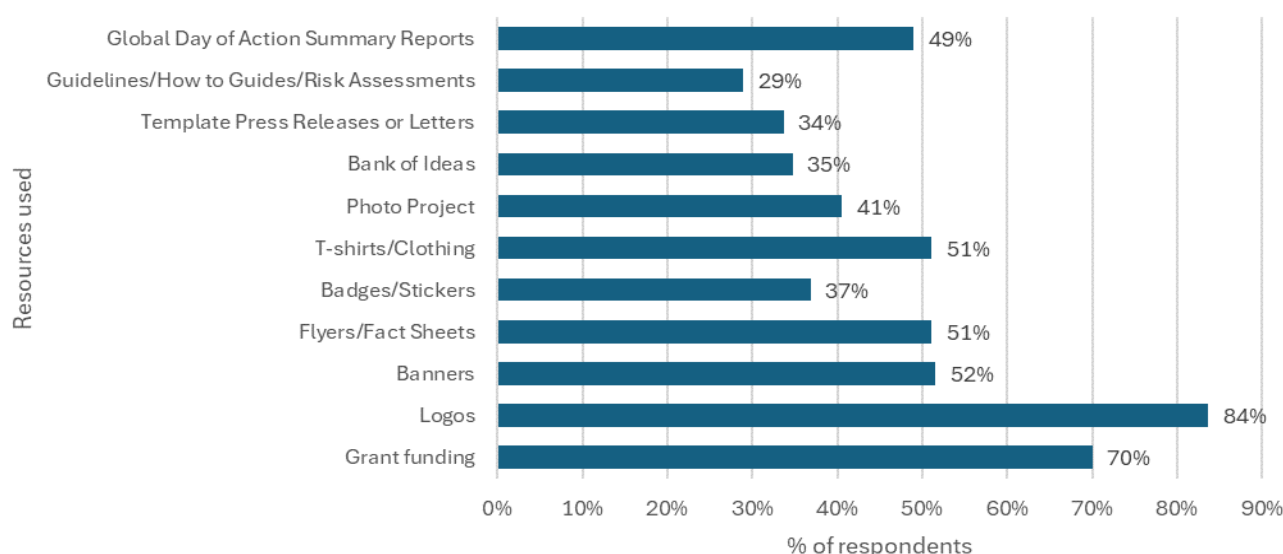
The majority (78%) of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: The support and resources provided by the campaign has widened the reach of our work (Figure 13). Respondents from Asia (85%) and Latin America (86%) were more likely to agree or strongly agree than those from Europe (77%) or Africa (71%).

Respondents were asked which SDP resources or materials they had used or customised. The majority had used logos (84%) and grant funding (70%) (Figure 16).

**Figure 15: The support and resources provided by the campaign has widened the reach of our work (base: 197)**



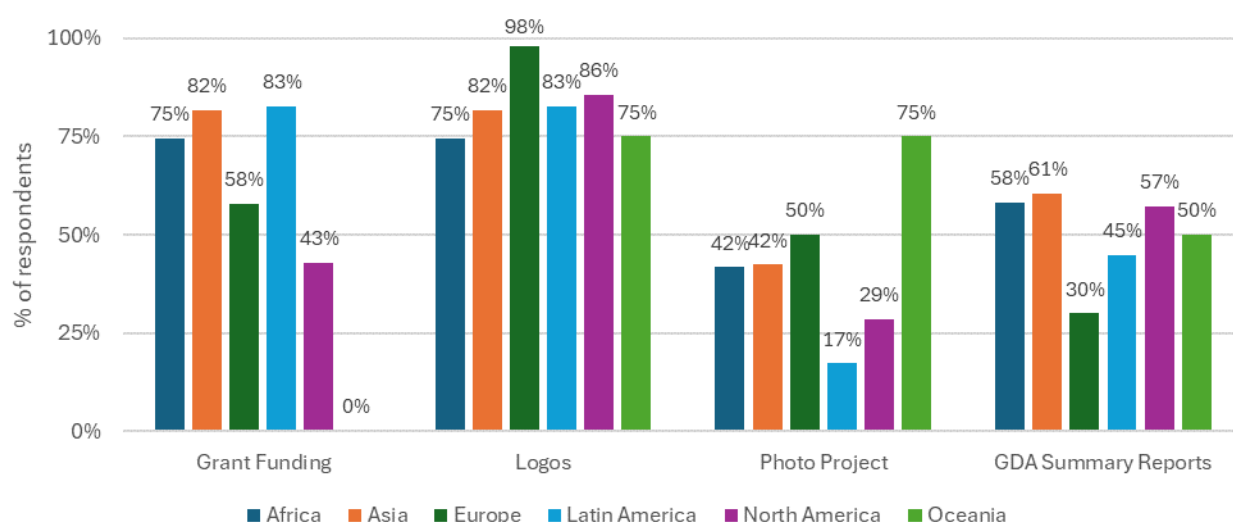
**Figure 16: SDP resources used by survey respondents**



Around half of respondents had used GDA summary reports, T-shirts/clothing, Flyers/fact sheets and banners. The least used resources (although still used by around a third of respondents) was Guides/Risk assessments (29%), Template Press Releases/Letters (34%) and Bank of Ideas (35%).

Whether respondents had used certain resources varied by region, with respondents in Asia (82%), Latin America (83%) and Africa (75%) more likely to have received grant funding than respondents in other regions. (Figure 17) Use of the logo was high in all regions but highest in Europe (98%), while respondents in Latin America were least likely to have used the Photo Project (17%). Respondents in Asia (61%), North America (57%) and Africa (58%) were more likely to use GDA Summary Reports than those in Europe (30%).

**Figure 17: Selected SDP resources used by survey respondents by region**



When asked about what support had been provided to them by IDPC, the majority of respondents identified some form of financial support (130), followed by materials/resources (59). Responses were overwhelmingly positive about IDPC, although some expressed concern over reduced grant amounts.

*In its initial stages, the IDPC provided both financial resources and materials for our efforts. However, in recent times, we have received only smaller grants. While these grants have allowed us to maintain a visible presence on the ground, it is evident that we require more substantial support to make a truly meaningful impact. (Drug Policy and Harm Reduction Platform – Malawi)*

*The IDPC has provided invaluable support to SSDP Gambia Chapter for the SDP campaign, including financial assistance, collaboration, and strategic guidance. This support has proven to be instrumental in successfully organising impactful events and initiatives, contributing significantly to the campaign's effectiveness. (SSDP Gambia Chapter)*

Several local partners (45) cited the technical support, information and guidance provided by IDPC:

*Information regarding statistics on policy developments and reducing the negative impact of narcotics in various countries so that we can reveal them in various discussion sessions (Hemp Makassar)*

*We received grant funding, also the technical assistance from IDPC help us to manage the event preparation. And IDPC can collate and share all the campaign stories with the wider networks. (Womxn's Voice)*

While others focused on the support in networking and collaboration (18):

*By putting great network of events and support together to provide a strong backbone with global reach (CAPUD)*

Respondents were asked whether there were any ways the SDP campaign could better support them, with responses thematically coded. The most frequent request, perhaps not surprisingly, was for additional funding/larger grants (61), although there was frequently a recognition that with finite funding raising the grant amounts would not be possible without impacting the number of groups supported.

Outside of this recurring issue, there were four main themes to the responses: more strategic planning on key messages for the GDA (30), better access to T-shirts/merchandise (24), greater media/promotion planning (including coordinated social media campaigns) (20) and more training/information dissemination (18).

*It would be interesting to provide recent data when the campaign takes place so that these could be added to communications strategies. In the same way, there is a possibility to coordinate actions and networks of a smaller scale between mobilising organisations to, for instance, produce collaborative content for social networks, which benefit the campaign globally, showing an even greater degree of togetherness. (RESET Política de Drogas y Derechos Humanos)*

*International coordination for a campaign strategy with a common target (e.g. EU with European elected officials, UN with the respective ministerial delegations to participating countries, etc.) Time for international exchange of practices: the tools developed, examples of strategies and actions that have resulted in victories, the difficulties and levers developed (AIDES - translated from French)).*

Some of the requests from respondents suggested they were not aware of some existing resources (with several requesting an annual summary report of campaign activities and initiatives) while others wanted



better organisation of existing resources. There were also a small number of requests for higher-spec graphics and additional languages.

## Messaging

Almost all (97%) of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: The aims of the campaign are clear and easily understood (Figure 14).

To check the degree of alignment between IDPC staff and local partners on the key message of SDP, they were both asked to provide a brief summary of the aim of the campaign in their own words. The summary IDPC staff agreed was: Support. Don't Punish is a global grassroots-centred initiative in support of harm reduction and drug policies that prioritise public health and human rights.

This was used to identify 8 key themes which were agreed with IDPC staff: Global; Grassroots/People who use drugs/mobilisation; Harm Reduction; Decriminalisation; Human Rights/Public Health; Better/Sustainable Drug Policy; Awareness/Visibility and Humanisation/Destigmatisation.

The responses from local partners were then analysed for whether they had explicitly mentioned any of those themes. Partners that did not mention any of the 8 themes were coded as not aligned.

Figure 18: The aims of the campaign are clear and easily understood (base: 197)

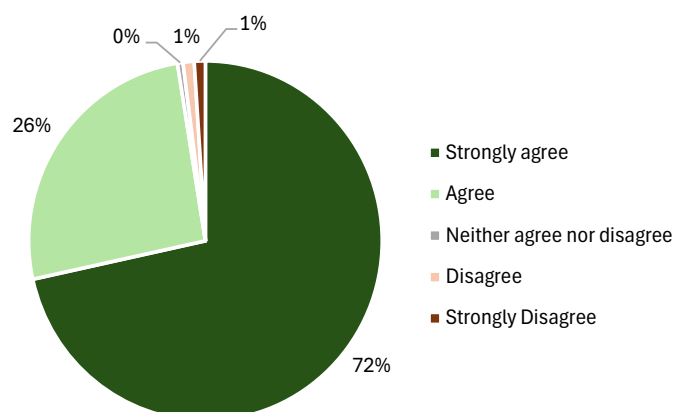
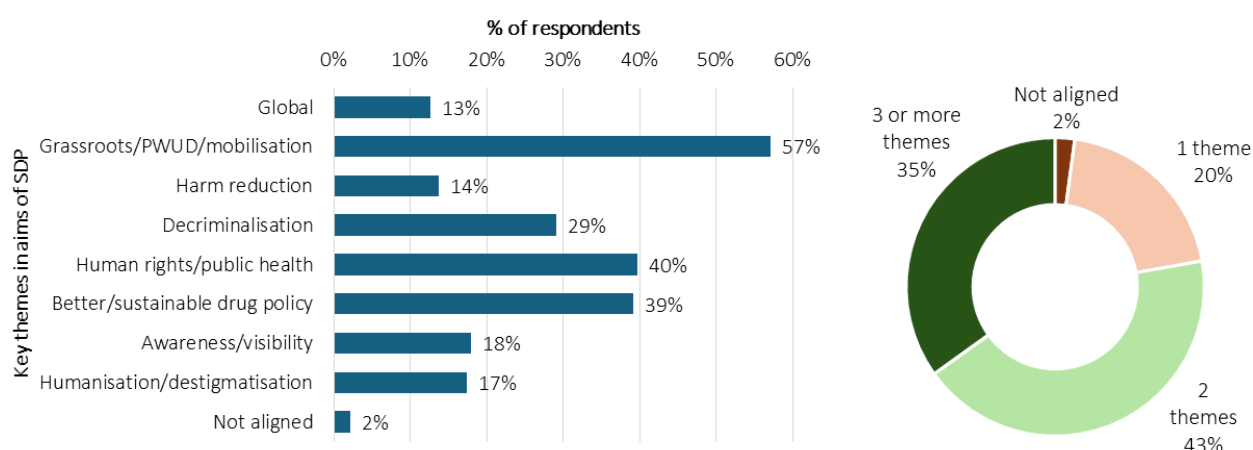


Figure 19: Key themes in local partners summary of SDP aims



Base: 189

The majority (78%) of responses identified at least two key themes, with only 2% providing a summary that was not aligned to any of the 8 themes (Figure 19). The most frequently occurring themes were Grassroots/people who use drugs/mobilisation (57%), Human rights/public health (40%) and

better/sustainable drug policy (39%) The themes mentioned by the fewest respondents were Global (13%) and Harm Reduction (14%) – although it should be noted that this was explicit mention of the phrase harm reduction and that the idea of harm reduction is also incorporated in human rights/public health and better/sustainable drug policy.

This would support the contention that the messaging and aim of the SDP campaign is clear and understood by the vast majority of local partners.

## Influencing drug policy/practice

Nearly three quarters (144, 73%) of survey respondents stated that in their opinion, their involvement in the SDP campaign had influenced changes in drug policy/practices in their area (Table 12).

**Table 12: Has your involvement in the SDP campaign influenced changes in drug policy/practices in your area?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	Base
Africa	89%	1%	10%	71
Asia	85%	3%	12%	34
Europe	58%	15%	27%	52
Latin America	59%	10%	31%	29
North America	43%	14%	43%	7
Oceania	50%	25%	25%	4
Total	73%	8%	19%	197

Respondents in Africa (89%) and Asia (85%) were more likely<sup>19</sup> to report that their involvement in SDP had influenced drug policy/practices than those in Europe (58%) and Latin America (59%).

Increasing the visibility of people who use drugs and changing perceptions of policymakers was the most frequently mentioned (73) way in which SDP had impacted drug policy:

*Involvement of decision-makers in our campaign has opened doors to dialogue on protection of human rights among people who use drugs, in 2023 campaign we were able to involve the judiciary arm of the government and we were given the opportunity to be members of the court user committee to advocate on the rights of people who use drugs and particular women who use drugs who are jailed for minor offences. (Women Nest Kenya)*

Other respondents identified the importance of being recognised as a valid participant in policy discussions/development (18):

*The fact that REAJUD is considered a valid actor for drug issues and a voice for people who use drugs in Mozambique is already very relevant, as it is currently part of the technical group that is working to review the drug policy and harm reduction. (REAJUD)*

<sup>19</sup> Chi squared test  $X^2(3, 186) = 21.36, p < .001$

Some respondents identified actual policy/practice changes (13), with respondents identifying either law changes or draft laws which incorporate harm reduction being implemented in Colombia, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Ukraine. Details of three of the respondents are provided in Case Study: Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network, Case Study: Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre and Case Study: Acción Técnica Social. The majority (9) of respondents reporting actual policy/practice changes had been involved in SDP for 6 or more years and all but one reporting they had at some point received a GDA small grant. Ten of the respondents who identified policy/practice change were from Africa.

*Changes in drug policy at the state level are one of the priorities of our activities. We are part of the commission, advising bodies that are directly related to the problem of loyal attitude to people who use drugs. We collect data, bring it to people's deputies. We conduct trainings for law enforcement agencies to change attitudes towards drug users. We present proposals to the heads of ministries. We cooperate with international organisations in order to adopt the best experience of progressive drug policy and implement it in Ukraine. (Western Ukrainian Resource Centre - Ukrainian Network of People Who Use Drugs - Your Home (translated from Ukrainian))*

Increasing people who use drugs' knowledge of their existing rights was another important element that respondents identified as having impacted drug practices (18).

Survey respondents were cautious in directly linking SDP activities to policy or practice change, but the overriding impression was that each activity undertaken, or ally gained was a small step in the right direction:

*Government understands the failure of the drug law and public health approach to address drug issues but due to their political gains they don't want to take the radical steps. Today police are more lenient than before. Journalists are more aware on posting people who are arrest for drug offences i.e. blurring the face, [avoiding] writing hateful messages etc, Government is willing to have a discourse with drug using community. (Sikkim Drug Users' Forum)*

## Case Study: Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network

Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (ZCLDN) is a peer-led organisation of people who use and inject drugs (PWUID) founded in 2011. It operates in eight provinces in Zimbabwe providing advocacy on harm reduction, drug policy reform and the prevention of HIV/AIDS amongst PWUID. ZCLDN has been involved in the SDP campaign since 2013.

As ZCLDN Director, Wilson Box, explains *“when we started operating as an organisation no one had actually ever discussed issues to do with drug use in Zimbabwe and also on the lives of people who use and inject drugs in Zimbabwe. When I first read about the SDP campaign I immediately fell in love with the idea of advocating for drug policy reform. The vision behind the campaign and its objectives actually motivated us to really participate in it.”*

Many of the early Global Day of Action (GDA) events were focused on awareness raising, public gatherings, with music and entertainment supplied by local artists, and invitations sent to prominent officials. In 2019 they hosted a soccer tournament for people who use and inject drugs, which provided a safe space for participants to express their concerns and included sexual health education sessions and condom distribution.

More recently, events have focused on directly engaging peers in policy development, to ensure that something tangible is developed from the GDA. For the 2023 GDA, ZCLDN conducted a consultative meeting with women who use and inject drugs to set out their key priorities and demands and to ensure that policymakers in Zimbabwe are aware of the challenges they face and have direct engagement with the PWUID community.

They also hosted a forum with Students for Sensible Drug Policies (SSDP) Zimbabwe and Accountability Lab Zimbabwe aimed at identifying the current challenges and gaps in implementing the National Drug Master Plan and providing policy recommendations. ZCLDN has recently sent a petition to the Parliament of Zimbabwe and are working with the Parliamentary Committee on Health and Childcare to help draft a motion for the Parliament of Zimbabwe on the need for drug policy reform.



ZCLDN Director, Wilson Box, speaks at the 2023 GDA forum

*“GDA has helped us to develop, especially our engagements at a higher level, in coming up with different partnerships to ensure that we have got a bigger voice and it has assisted our staff members to [develop] policy briefs...[SDP has made] us one of the go-to organisations when it comes to drug policy and harm reduction issues in Zimbabwe.”*

These activities have resulted in progress. The National AIDS Council in Zimbabwe have adopted the language of SDP, with a focus on the need to support PWUID rather than criminalize them, ZCLDN has helped to develop the Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan, the Treatment and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Substance and Alcohol Use, and has worked with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health, Dutch based Mainline and the National AIDS Council to produce a situational analysis on drug use in Zimbabwe. *“We have created champions within the Parliamentary Committee on Health and Childcare...who speak on the need for drug policy reform in Zimbabwe. We have networks within those spaces so that they could also assist us in advocating for policy change.”*

Wilson Box sees the development of the Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan as *“the brainchild”* of the SDP campaign, as it focuses both on decriminalisation and harm reduction as key pillars to help people who use drugs. *“What the SDP is advocating for is exactly what the Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan is also advocating for.”* The document is now the only recognised national framework to help with drug challenges in Zimbabwe.

In the national media, including radio stations and the public service station, they are now talking about the need for drug policy reform using language that does not discriminate or stigmatise people who use drugs. And the campaign helps encourage community involvement by creating a safe space for dialogue, *“is a town hall where everyone could actually express himself or herself, without any prejudice... [it is] breaking barriers...and we are seeing a lot of our people really feeling comfortable to participate in that because it's so simple...and the message is very clear”*



ZCLDN members at a 2023 GDA event

Through the SDP campaign, ZCLDN has been encouraged to reach out to other organisations, like the Students for Sensible Drug Policies (SSDP) Zimbabwe who ZCLDN have helped to train and assisted in organising events. ZCLDN see the involvement of these types of organisations as *“an indicator that the campaign is actually growing from strength to strength.”*

Challenges remain, both in terms of legislation, including the Dangerous Drugs Act and the Criminal Codification and Reform Act which are both prohibitionist and punitive, and in terms of practice with no publicly available harm reduction interventions in Zimbabwe<sup>20</sup> and PWUID still targeted by police for minor offences. But despite these continuing challenges there is *“now political will from politicians to participate and bring positive energy in helping people who use drugs”* including through an inter-ministerial committee on drug use. For the first time in Zimbabwe, PWUID are included as a key population group in a GC7 application to the Global Fund – *“who knows, we might actually be an SSR [sub-sub-recipient] for people who use and inject drugs from the Global Fund.”*

ZCLDN identified lack of adequate funding for SDP as the key weakness of the SDP campaign, with concerns over grant amounts and sustainability. This is particularly pressing as to cement the gains they have made ZCLDN would want to expand their campaign to the whole country. ZCLDN have explored the possibility domestic resource mobilisation, but this was not deemed to be feasible given the current economic situation in Zimbabwe.

In the next few years, ZCLDN would like to see an SDP African conference, where people working in the field and communities can come together, share learning, and engage with policymakers.

*All quotes attributed to Wilson Box, ZCLDN Director.*

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<sup>20</sup> Harm Reduction international (2022)

## Reducing stigmatisation

Over three quarters (149, 76%) of survey respondents stated that in their opinion, their involvement in the SDP campaign had reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities in their area (Table 13).

**Table 13: Has your involvement in the SDP campaign reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities in your area?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	Base
Africa	83%	6%	11%	71
Asia	79%	9%	12%	34
Europe	67%	12%	21%	52
Latin America	79%	7%	14%	29
North America	14%	0%	86%	7
Oceania	100%	0%	0%	4
Total	76%	8%	17%	197

There was no significant difference<sup>21</sup> between respondents in Africa (83%), Latin America (79%), Asia (79%) or Europe (67%) in whether involvement in SDP had reduced stigmatisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities.

The most common way in which SDP had helped to reduce stigmatisation was to enable people, especially the general public, to see people who use drugs as people and enable them to tell their story (72):

*in every campaign the participation and involvement of people who use drugs has changed the perception of the community engaged since they are able to share the lived experience through telling their stories. (Women Nest)*

*By giving a public face to the menace of drug addiction, showing the public that people who use drugs are not monsters or criminals, but a normal part of society. (LUNEST)*

*Especially in street-based harm reduction strategies, and peer-to-peer led spaces, the campaign has provided a common language to engage with issues around drug policy and autonomy, and to invite people to see the real persons behind the 'drug scares'. (Dejusticia)*

Some respondents identified the impact of humanising people who use drugs to the police (14):

*The police are seeing how to treat drug use not as a crime but a practice that requires support and all this is thanks to the SDP campaign (BAPUD (Translated from French))*

Others said SDP enabled them to work with youths and their families (8) to ensure better familial support structures:

<sup>21</sup> Chi squared test  $\chi^2(3, 186) = 4.488, p = .213$

*Currently we are witnessing most of family members are escorting their children to the established resource centre and work together to support their treatments and even during our outreaches most of community members we are reaching are asking to be capacitated on how they can best support their family members with drug problem which before they used to discriminate and stigmatize. (STEPS TANZANIA)*

*The event has helped to sensitize youth on substance use and also to be sensitive towards the issue. These youth will serve as a messenger to friends, family, and the community to reduce the negative perception towards people who use drugs and to create a supportive environment. (SPARSHA Nepal)*

Finally, some respondents said that SDP activities had helped them to reach out to people who use drugs in their communities and encourage them to access services (7):

*There's increase in number of women who use drugs accessing healthcare services at harm reduction facilities in Calabar more than once a week, and it was not so before the campaign. (Health Action Support Initiative (HASI))*



## Case Study: Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre

Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre was created in 2003 and is a harm reduction and outpatient treatment centre for substance use disorders in Lebanon. Although they had always been proponents of the rights of people who use drugs, Skoun's advocacy work began in earnest around 2008 with workshops and conferences arguing for the legalisation of Opiate Agonist Treatment (OAT) in Lebanon, which occurred in 2011.

In 2013 they were involved in the first ever SDP Global Day of Action (GDA), where activists and advocates from Skoun gathered at the Palace of Justice and distributed information about Lebanese drug policy and the importance of decriminalising people who use drugs to judges, lawyers and the public, and held a press conference alongside the Ministry of Justice to promote treatment as an alternative to incarceration. According to Michelle Wazan, Drug policy and advocacy department manager at Skoun, "I think in the early days the coordination with other NGOs was less systematic so we were doing our own kind of thing...which was ... working with communities, engaging people on SDP, doing outreach, social media, these sort of things."

The timing of the GDA, to coincide with the International Day against Drug Abuse, was seen to provide a springboard to better media engagement "because you already have the media's attention because they need something that is timely". Skoun have worked hard to build a media list and allies, and are constantly looking for innovative and creative ways to give a "human voice to people who have been wronged by the system and who have been very negatively impacted by repressive drug policies." In 2023 they ran a Social Media campaign using public figures to tell the stories of people who use drugs impacted by their arrest and prosecution. "SDP is a great opportunity to raise the public's awareness to the harms of repressive drug policies."

The regularity of the GDA enabled continuous learning, "doing it year after year, and having the support to do it year after year, also allows us to build on our own experience, learning from what we did last year, what works, what doesn't work, how can we make it better?"

Skoun found both the small grants, which help when the majority of your funding is project based and earmarked for specific purposes, and the shared resources (the logos, website and reports) and branding really helpful. "For harm reduction circles and people who use drugs, SDP is a landmark. Having this form of visibility, but also this brand, of everyone across the world calling for health oriented and human rights centred policies makes a huge difference."

Although the reports and annual reports were considered useful, there may be opportunities for more shared learning and community building after each GDA, possibly in the form of webinars: "I'd love to ... have discussions with different activists from different countries, to showcase what they've done and discuss the challenges they face in their contexts. Maybe after each year they just pick maybe like 5 countries where something impactful has happened or that has led to change, which they've done in their in their reports, but it would be nice to hear from the people behind that."

Alongside their more public facing approach to advocacy, Skoun work hard to engage decision-makers: "There's two aspects to our SDP work, one which is very community-based working with the public on the ground and also on social media, and...another which is focused on the decision makers and lawmakers and creating arguments that resonate with them."

In 2019 there had been progress in the fight to amend the Lebanese law on drugs and a subcommittee had been formed in Parliament to study the proposed bills. But then the [Lebanese liquidity crisis](#) caused



shortages in water, energy and basic healthcare and was quickly followed by the 17 October Protests<sup>22</sup>, the 2020 Beirut port explosion (which devastated large parts of the capital) and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022 once the immediate threat to life had reduced and people had adapted to the situation, Skoun felt the time was right to again push for reform to the laws on drugs and to fight for the rights of People who use drugs. But they didn't want to do this alone, "we wanted to do it in a concerted way with the group of like-minded organisations who were at the core of one of the law amendments that was put in front of Parliament. So, it was everybody's baby."

The Lebanese Coalition for the Reform of Drug Policies (LCRDP) was formed by Skoun, the Association Justice et Miséricorde (AJEM)<sup>23</sup>, SIDC<sup>24</sup>, Legal



## LEBANESE COALITION FOR THE REFORM OF DRUG POLICIES

Agenda<sup>25</sup>, and MENAHRA who are a network of harm reduction NGOs in Middle East and North Africa. Early in 2024, the LCRDP also voted to invite the Middle East and North Africa Network of People who Used Drugs (MENANPUD) to join the coalition.

Many of these organisations had been working together informally for some time. For example, the 2015 GDA saw Skoun and Legal Agenda host a panel discussion around the Lebanese national drug policy, and Skoun were already sub-grantees on some of MENAHRA's work. But the Initiatives Programme gave them the ability to institutionalise these relationships.

They used the Initiatives Programme grant to formalise the coalition, including funding a full day strategy meeting, logo design, and workshops to delineate the work they do and agree on decision making mechanisms where they can agree action plans and "work in a coordinated, strategic way." The coalition will be meeting in two weeks' time to agree an action plan for 2024.

One of the first actions of the coalition was to issue a joint statement addressed to the newly elected members of parliament asking them to prioritize drug policy reform as part of the solution to the compounded crises in Lebanon. Following that statement, the coalition was contacted by the Head of the Human Rights Parliamentary Committee who invited them to his office to discuss reforms to Lebanese drug laws, and subsequently Skoun was invited by the human rights parliamentary committee to a series of meetings aimed at relaunching the legislative review process to amend the Lebanese law on drugs. These advocacy efforts have led to the inclusion of decriminalisation in the recommendations of the National Mental Health Program to the Parliament,

Skoun's current advocacy efforts remain focused on drug law reform, alongside working for the inclusion of the rights of people who use drugs within humanitarian frameworks in terms of funding and programming, and emphasising the intersectionality of drug policy: "If you're a refugee, if you're a migrant, if you're queer, if you're a woman, all of it interplays, so we want partners, stakeholders, donors, funding agencies, donor countries understand that substance use response and advocacy for the rights of people who use drugs falls within this much bigger umbrella of rights." This focus on intersectional issues needs to be done through a strategic lens as the impact will "depend on the context, on the sensibilities of the country, the issues they are currently facing, who you're addressing."

Strengthening their message and being mindful of the audience is something Skoun has been refining for years through their GDA events, and they identified media training as something that may be beneficial to the SDP family as "not everybody is involved at the same level that works on the SDP campaign; some are

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/11/lebanon-protests-explained/>

<sup>23</sup> AJEM provide Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) in Lebanese prisons

<sup>24</sup> SIDC do both advocacy and run a harm reduction outpatient walk-in clinic

<sup>25</sup> Legal Agenda are a legal NGO who help draft the legal amendments.

students, some are grassroots activists, some are people who use drugs. So, I think having ... training on how to communicate with the media, how to write a press release, how to build a media list, how to keep a journalists engaged and what kind of content is going to attract mainstream media?"

Whatever improvements are needed, Michelle thinks the campaign is in good hands: "I think IDPC does a fantastic job, they're like this reference for everything that's going on and I don't even know how they do it, they're wonderful!"

*All quotes attributed to Michelle Wazan, Drug policy and advocacy department manager at Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre.*

## Improving media coverage/public opinion

Over two thirds (136, 69%) of survey respondents stated that in their opinion, their involvement in the SDP campaign had resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion in their area (Table 14).

**Table 14: Has your involvement in the SDP campaign resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion in your area?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	Base
Africa	82%	8%	10%	71
Asia	76%	12%	12%	34
Europe	54%	21%	25%	52
Latin America	59%	28%	14%	29
North America	43%	0%	57%	7
Oceania	100%	0%	0%	4
Total	69%	15%	16%	197

Respondents in Africa (82%) and Asia (76%) were more likely<sup>26</sup> to report that their involvement in SDP had resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion than those in Europe (54%) and Latin America (59%).

The large majority of respondents identified improvements in the media coverage (74), both in terms of coverage of GDA events but also more generally in the narratives used to discuss drug policy:

*A number of media outlets have covered our most recent campaign and have espoused people first language and started to cover the issues of drugs from different angles than the traditional ones, exploring the diverse impacts of repressive drug policies on prisons, access to healthcare etc... (Skoun, Lebanese Addictions Center)*

*The first campaign we had back in 2021 state-controlled media refused to cover our event, but we have we have been given coverage on state controlled Tv station. Public perception has changed in a positive way in that most people no longer see drug use as a criminal issue but a health issue. (Harm Reduction Zambia Network)*

Respondents (14) highlighted the important role that Social Media can play in enabling wider dissemination of the SDP message:

*The public participation walks, and the social media events have certainly assisted in spreading the messages amongst communities that otherwise may not know about the stigma and discrimination experienced by the community of people who use drugs. (TB HIV Care)*

While many respondents identified GDA as a good opportunity to increase awareness amongst the general public, there was some scepticism about the wider impact that this made on public opinion, particularly given the scale of activities (13):

<sup>26</sup> Chi squared test  $X^2(3, 186) = 13.35, p = .004$

*Yes among media personnel who attended the training and to a large extent the populace that listen to a radio program we ran but population wide public opinion is still negative indicating inadequate public engagement due to funding limitations and also media engagement needs to be more consistent (Bensther Development Foundation)*

*The campaign is part of a whole series of initiatives which have undeniably contributed to gaining recognition for Harm Reduction, especially in Brussels, but, at the level of public opinion, we are seeing a hardening rather than more tolerance, with local residents who do not hesitate to damage harm reduction systems or tarnish the image of sector associations. (Modus Vivendi asbl (translated from French))*

## Case Study: Acción Técnica Social

Acción Técnica Social (ATS) is a civil society organisation, founded in 2007, that works to reform drug policies from a perspective of harm reduction, human rights, the participation of people who use drugs and the regulation of currently illegal markets. Current projects include Échele Cabeza which provides young people with information on Psychoactive Substances (PAS) and drug checking services, CAMBIE - a drug consumption site for people who use drugs by injection, and Coca Regulated Peace Guaranteed which promotes the regulation of cocaine in order to achieve peace. They also organise the Psychoactive Shorts Festival, which is a film festival that seeks to change narratives about drugs through art and cinema.

Since 2014, ATS have been involved in the Support Don't Punish campaign, and have organised GDA activities every year, with the aim of promoting new narratives on the use of psychoactive substances: *"when we started, we started very strongly because at the time we had a very good relationship with the mayor of Bogota...Gustavo Petro [the current President of Colombia]"*. The first GDA event was a harm reduction conference inaugurated by the Mayor, and attended by government officials, NGOs and the general population. *"Initially, we tried to focus particularly on social mobilisation with people who use drugs, but also with public authorities, decision-makers."*

Since the pandemic ATS have shifted the focus of the GDA to be a moment of solidarity with the most vulnerable *people who use drugs, "to promote awareness among people who use drugs[of] the importance of reform, which would benefit other people who use drugs who are experiencing particularly intense economic, social, cultural precariousness... in particular people who are street based....solidarity... from privileged drug users to less privileged users."*

ATS have had some success in shifting the *"narrative around harm reduction at the political level, at the social level, at the technical level...traditional media talk about it."* ATS, and their landmark project Échele Cabeza, have become a reference for politicians and journalists: *"they come now to us ...in order to validate and find information on drug policy and drugs."* They currently provide technical support to different law projects and media organisations are using them as *"validators of information"* in relation to Fentanyl use in Colombia.

In 2022 ATS applied for an Initiative Programme grant for a project called "Harm reduction will be the law". The project aims to make harm reduction legislation, to make sure it's part of all festivals and all events, and to improve the conditions of festival and leisure spaces, with guaranteed provision of water, drug checking services, areas of rest and recovery, and to ensure all relevant information on harm reduction is available to the people. *"It's the appropriate time to jump from policies and projects to law, because the laws will compel future governments and also channel budget into harm reduction projects."*

They used the IP grant to develop a communications strategy, to pay for promotional video, digital promotion materials for a social media campaign and organised a working breakfast with other partners and stakeholders, *"So communication, social mobilisation, gatherings with decision-makers and stakeholders and human resources in order to administer all this."*

The communications strategy developed through the IP promoted the importance of a legal basis to guarantee access to harm reduction interventions: *"we reached out to media in order to position the narrative that we expected the media to share or promote. So, we went to mass media; we did a press release,...we did a project launch."* ATS encouraged community, civil society and academic participation in

policy debates with parliamentarians, published analysis and awareness pieces on high-reach media outlets and engaged in relevant hearings and legislative debates. *“we’re going to go into Congress to include the concept of harm reduction in every kind of law...in relation to drugs...currently, Colombia is debating the legal regulation of cannabis, as well as electronic devices for vaping, and [a law] specifically on harm reduction.”*

They also work and collaborate with a network of allies including a district-based cannabis collective, an association of people who vape, and human rights organisations like Elementa and Dejusticia, who *“act as replicators of the campaign.”* And their collaboration extends internationally: *“the idea of being part of this network connects us with other organisations, in particular, with countries where we have really good relationships like Mexico, Argentina, we’re always in dialogue with our partners in those countries.”*

ATS were one of the first Latin American organisations involved in SDP and in 2023 joined eight other organisations running GDA events in Colombia. SDP has helped *“other organisations to join this campaign, without necessarily being part of the IDPC network. More and more organisations are involved in drug policy or in harm reduction or against prohibition.”* Having the SDP brand helps create a unity of message: *“So on social media, on traditional media, people notice the logo, and they know that we are all talking the same language and that provides the idea that we’re a big network behind this effort.”*

The SDP brand also helps engagement with decision-makers: *“the day that we went to Congress in a debate on the production bill... many politicians of so many different political parties, use the logo, wore the t shirt, talked about the importance that this was...the first moment of a process that needed to be ongoing.”* While identifying funding is an ongoing challenge, the legitimacy that SDP provides can result in indirect resource provision: *“in Bogotá, for example, we persuaded the mayor for it to be Support, Don’t Punish day. And that meant that they offered us infrastructure.... they gave us an auditorium. They gave us food. They gave us media contacts. So that was important.”*

ATS identify the importance of finding *“allies among politicians and...among the media.”* Challenging the prevailing narrative requires not just allies but also taking advantage of opportunities: *“identify what subjects are already on the agenda that can be potentiated... So, we didn’t start it from scratch, we took advantage of a conversation that was already ongoing”.*

The SDP is *“a campaign that has grown so hugely, and has such a tiny budget, it has really exceeded the expectations that I could have about it. And that shows that the quality and strength of the organisations that are behind it, and also the facilitation that IDPC does.”* The campaign is an opportunity to share learning, to *“see what kinds of actions other countries are engaging with”* but also to take encouragement and motivation from the successes of other activists.

ATS identified securing bigger coverage, potentially around a global theme per year, as something that potentially the campaign could work to improve. They would be keen to find ways to *“strengthen the commonalities that we share”*, building on the campaign as *“a place for us to meet ourselves as activists between countries.”*

ATS have big plans for 2024, with a focus on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Psychoactive Shorts Festival and a focus on unity and celebrating their achievements in changing the narratives around drugs: *“Sometimes when we’re so immersed in the subjects, we don’t see the progress, it would seem that there’s no change. But when you look at the 10 years of experiences...and you listen to the kinds of messages and narratives, and you look at today, you notice that there has been progress.”*

*All quotes attributed to Vanessa Morris, Coordinator of the Échele Cabeza project and Julián Quintero, Director of Acción Técnica Social [translated from Spanish].*

## Direct communication with officials

Nearly three quarters (142, 72%) of survey respondents stated that they had, or maintained, direct communication with officials, police or politicians in their area as a result of their involvement in the SDP campaign (Table 15).

**Table 15: Have you had, or maintained, any direct communication with officials, police or politicians in your area as a result of your involvement in the SDP campaign?**

	Yes	No	Don't know	Base
Africa	92%	4%	4%	71
Asia	82%	15%	3%	34
Europe	60%	37%	4%	52
Latin America	55%	38%	7%	29
North America	14%	71%	14%	7
Oceania	25%	75%	0%	4
Total	72%	23%	5%	197

Respondents in Africa (92%) and Asia (82%) were more likely<sup>27</sup> to report they had direct communications with officials, police or politicians as a result of the SDP campaign than those in Europe (60%) and Latin America (55%).

The most frequent communication mentioned by local partners was with government departments/officials and politicians (64):

*Meeting with key stakeholders, including the Mayor of Banjul, senior police officers, members of the Ministry of Health, and senior officers, including the Public Relations Officer of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency in The Gambia, underscores the campaign's reach and impact. These direct engagements with influential figures in various sectors are crucial for building support and fostering understanding of the importance of sensible drug policies. (Students for Sensible Drug Policy- Gambia Chapter)*

*During the previous campaigns, our partners in different areas of Myanmar invited the local politicians, parliamentarians, community leaders and local authorities to participate in the campaign. They involved as speakers in the panel discussions and supported the progressive and new ideas on drug issues. They also engaged with local media on the global day of action and shared their perspectives. (DPAG)*

Some local partners had been invited to join working or technical groups to help advise on policy development or present at official meetings (17):

*For example, in 2021, we managed to have the Support. Don't Punish campaign recognised as being of public interest by the Legislature of the province of Santa Fe. Likewise, this year we have discussed the*

<sup>27</sup> Chi squared test  $X^2(3, 186) = 24.163$ ,  $p < .001$



*campaign in the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires, and we were invited to present the results of the campaign at the XVI Argentine Congress of Mental Health. (Intercambios Asociación Civil)*

*We are part of a technical group where the police are also part of that is working for reform of drug policy in Mozambique, as well as we also had a Community Dialogue Directed by the Police General Comandante on the 26th of June in the Mafalala neighborhood. (REAJUD)*

Local partner's position as an accepted authority is also strengthened by the campaign's educational support with the majority (84%) of the survey respondents having agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: The campaign has improved my knowledge of harm reduction and decriminalisation.

Some local partners said that contact with police had improved relations between the police and the community (48):

*We have had several cases where law enforcers have contacted us whenever there were arrests and ensured that drug users are released especially for petty offenses. (KINPUD)*

*Each year, we actively engage law enforcement authorities to sensitize and equip them with the most effective approaches to support individuals using drugs, prioritising assistance over criminalisation. Through these ongoing sensitisation sessions, we have successfully established and maintained direct communication channels with law enforcement, fostering a collaborative and understanding relationship. (STEPS Tanzania)*

A small number of local partners were not convinced that SDP had impacted these relations (6), although it is worth noting that for some this may not be an impact they are intending. Some groups undertake SDP activities which are predominantly community-facing and so do not expect the campaign to encourage dialogue with authorities:

*we are in contact with the police and politicians throughout the year, without SDP having a concrete effect with these professions. (Fondation ABS)*

Finally, local partners worked with local health authorities and hospital administrators to improve access, and remove barriers for people who use drugs, to services (15):

*The police at the areas where we operate, has developed better approaches to how they handle people who use drugs when they find them in possession of any or when they are found in hotspots. Likewise, through these campaigns, there's improved treatment of people who use drugs in hospitals in the areas where we operate. (UNIDOS)*

## Case Study: IDUCare

IDUCare is a community-led service delivery organisation founded in 2015 that runs a drop-in centre in Cebu City, Philippines. Their work includes provision of paralegal assistance, medical treatments and therapy, capacity building and training for peer outreach workers, peer education programs for people who use drugs, and drug policy advocacy.



IDUCare became involved in the SDP campaign through the founder's links to IDPC (having completed the IDPC Harm Reduction & Drug Policy Advocacy Fellowship Programme and joined a regional Support. Don't Punish campaign strategy development workshop).

The initial focus of IDUCare's GDA activities was around building an understanding of harm reduction amongst the community of people who use drugs to *"let them know really the essence of Support. Don't Punish advocacy before we talk to the other stakeholders."*

For the 2019 GDA, IDUCare partnered with StreetLawPH, an organisation of human rights lawyers who had identified a gap in access to legal assistance because of the refusal of some in the legal community to help people who use drugs. They organised a session of paralegal training for peers on access to justice and health services for people living with HIV deprived of liberty in Cebu City. This was the start of a partnership that continues to this day. *"It started there. Then we adapted because we think that the drop-in centre has to have a paralegal."*

Providing community-led outreach work meant that people in positions of vulnerability would often open up in ways they might not for other organisations: *"we do outreach, HIV, Hep C and...sometimes because there is trust already, being peer-to-peer, they also tell us about their [legal] problems."* So now StreetLawPH work with IDUCare to provide paralegal training to people who use drugs who then provide that service at the drop-in centre.

IDUCare are supporting people who use drugs *"to make sure that they will not be rearrested. If you want you can be in the drop-in centre, or community volunteering, or we can help them make a resume to help with jobs, or we give them a business shirt for an interview. We just make sure that when they come out, they have support"*

This peer-led training and support creates positive feedback loops *"we already have clients who [were released from] jail because of those services, and now they are volunteering as a paralegal or outreach work"*.

For the 2022 GDA, IDUCare and StreetLawPH gathered together two communities of women who use drugs from two cities - Cebu and Caloocan – for a hybrid online and face-to-face Kumustahan. *"Kumustahan" translates to the time or moment when people ask each other how they are doing. "It's a conversation in the community. It's how are you?"*



Group photo from the 'kumustahan' event.

Despite having different approaches (with the Cebu-based group more focussed on harm reduction approaches and the Caloocan-based group more towards abstinence-based approaches) the GDA provided a safe space to exchange stories and discuss ways in which

they can improve the lives of their respective communities. The Caloocan-based group is taking inspiration from their neighbours and exploring ways they might expand their networks and impact. IDUCare and StreetLawPH continue to work with them *“we try to have capacity building, organisation development...hopefully we will have a network of more voices.”*

These mobilisation efforts are strengthened by IDUCare demonstrating the benefits of peer-led organisations and thus reducing stigmatisation of people who use drugs: *“we’re an example that we’re productive in society, we’re helping the society. So, it makes for less stigma.”*

IDUCare is also challenging the continued stigma of people who use drugs through awareness raising and media work *“we try to not just decriminalise but also change the narrative”* They recognise the importance of media support in challenging the stigma of people who use drugs. *“The media role is very important, and we try to be part of [changing the narrative]...we correct somebody [for example] if they’re using ‘drug addict’, we explain why [their language should be] people centred.”*

SDP has helped IDUCare to develop their policy advocacy: *“bringing people into policy advocacy work, because IDUCare is more [focused] on outreach work, harm reduction and health. But it’s a parallel movement, health and drug policy has to be equally played.”*

IDUCare is now part of the technical working group for the United Nation Joint Programme on Human Rights based approach on drugs, a role made all the more important as they are one of the only representatives of the people who use drugs community: *“somebody from the community has to be part of the technical working group or else it will just have no impact.”*

There are elements of the technical working group still focused on abstinence-based approaches, and it’s important to have a *“vanguard talking about human rights, harm reduction...talking about decriminalisation.”* *“In a diplomatic way we correct them... they always see treatment as voluntary, but it’s not really voluntary [if] you’re forced to volunteer.”*

Having service delivery experience provides legitimacy to their advocacy *“IDUCare has already made some success stories. So that helps us.”* Being part of SDP also helps *“it’s very big, it’s phenomenal, it’s a movement and to be part of it gives us an edge in our advocacy.”*

The regularity of the GDA provides a degree of stability to IDUCare’s mobilisation and networking *“the yearly call is very important. It gives us momentum... it’s not just a one stop activity and then nothing after that...it’s a global movement that ... will not disappear.”*

They are grateful for the help that IDPC and the SDP campaign have provided, although they would ideally like larger grant amounts. *“IDPC is very helpful in IDUCare’s advocacy work...they’re so, so supportive and part of that is the Support. Don’t Punish movement.”*

As with much advocacy, IDUCare believe that the small changes they are manifesting will lead to more fundamental shifts in the war on drugs *“I’ll just start small, hopefully we can have harm reduction policy here but...our aim is really to decriminalise and to repeal the 9165 punitive drug laws”*

The work continues with a drug policy summit in June at which IDUCare hope to *“have a Support. Don’t Punish booth”* where they can *“give some support like giving IEC materials, [SDP] videos and T-shirts.”*

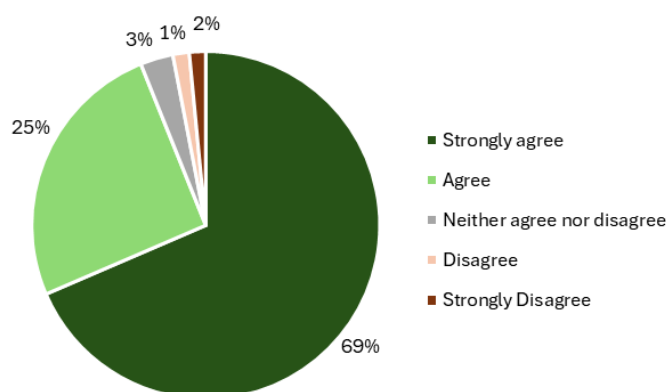
*All quotes attributed to Johann “Panki” Nadela, Founder and Executive Director of IDUCare.*

## Community mobilisation

Almost all (97%) of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: The campaign makes me feel part of a community working towards shared goals. (Figure 14).

A smaller majority of survey respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with the statements: The campaign has made me more confident in making positive change for my community (82%) and Our local network has grown due to our involvement in the campaign (76%).

Figure 20: The campaign makes me feel part of a community working towards shared goals (base: 197)



Over three quarters (149, 76%) of survey respondents stated that in their opinion, their involvement in the SDP campaign had helped their community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively (Table 16).

Table 16: Has your involvement in the SDP campaign helped your community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Base
Africa	87%	3%	10%	71
Asia	79%	9%	12%	34
Europe	56%	19%	25%	52
Latin America	79%	10%	10%	29
North America	71%	0%	29%	7
Oceania	75%	0%	25%	4
Total	76%	9%	15%	197

Respondents in Africa (87%), Asia (79%) and Latin America (79%) were more likely<sup>28</sup> to report that their involvement in SDP campaign had helped their community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively than those in Europe (56%).

Local partners (43) felt the campaign was helpful in getting more people who use drugs involved in events which, in turn, increases their involvement in activism and widens the spheres of their influence:

*Yes, SSDP Gambia Chapter's involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign has played a crucial role in helping the community grow, become more active, and mobilize more effectively. By fostering*

<sup>28</sup> Chi squared test  $X^2(3, 186) = 16.954$ ,  $p = .001$

*direct engagement, awareness campaigns, and community sensitisation initiatives, the campaign has empowered community members to actively participate in discussions about sensible drug policies. This increased involvement has created a more informed and mobilized community, contributing to a collective effort toward positive change in drug-related practices and policies. (Students for Sensible Drug Policy- Gambia Chapter)*

*Engaging in campaigns is a strategic move to strengthen and expand community influence. Effective campaigns increase member participation, raise awareness of community issues, and gain broad support from the community. Campaigns are not only a tool to garner support, but also a tool that strengthens the power of the community. With increased participation and awareness, communities can move more effectively, mobilize, and achieve common goals. (Yayasan Pesona Bumi Pasundan)*

*Community of PUD in India has embarked on the Global Day of Action to shift from participation to activism on health and human rights of self and communities within the countries of India and Nepal (NAPUD)*

The campaign was also seen as having helped to grow membership, with local partners (29) reporting more people becoming involved in GDA events:

*Our involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign has helped our community grow, be more active and mobilise more effectively, by providing that umbrella from the IDPC, our local drug user networks are able to feel the solidarity as opposed to being continuously othered and siloed. Which in turn has created more solidarity within our community, our people who use drugs networks now look forward to June 26<sup>th</sup> (CAPUD/AAWEAR/Boyle Street Community Services Society/Streetworks)*

Alongside the growth of members, many (27) reported a growth in the networking in which they were operating, citing the umbrella of SDP as a useful tool in identifying groups with common goals:

*Yes, the inter-associative dynamic that we have at the local level, with different volunteers and slightly different fields of intervention too, has made it possible to create links and move forward together, but all the associations are more or less from the community. (AIDES (Translated from French))*

*last year we have pulled together 18 different NGO's, before this, it were more separate islands. SDP is a common goal each organisation can stand for (Legalize!)*

Finally, some local partners (17) highlighted the importance of recognising issues of intersectionality, with the inclusive nature of SDP making it welcoming to groups from other marginalised communities:

*The Support. Don't Punish is an inclusive, non punitive campaign that has no bias towards any gender, race, sexual orientation or faith. This allows us to be active in various communities and to raise awareness without being defined by any one population / Group thinking. (TB HIV Care)*

*We have especially promoted respect for the rights of peasant, Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations who grow coca, poppy or marijuana. And at this point we have influenced -beyond the global day of action- ministries and entities responsible for drug policies (in their design and implementation) at the level of said populations. (Corporación Viso Mutop)*

## Case Study: Intercambios Asociación Civil

Intercambios Asociación Civil is a civil society organisation, founded in 1995, that aims to contribute, within the framework of human rights, to the development and application of knowledge in addressing drug-related problems. It is a founding member of the Latin American Harm Reduction Network (Red Latinoamericana de Reducción de Daños) and the Argentine Harm Reduction Network (Red Argentina de Reducción de Daños).

Intercambios were running advocacy campaigns before the SDP campaign even existed, with a 2012 campaign entitled “15 ideas for a new Drugs law” aimed at promoting debate on key issues in the reform of Narcotics Law 23,737. The second phase of the campaign incorporated the voices of teachers, religious leaders, celebrities, and members of civil society and had them explain why the drug law needed to change. “Of course we had a lot of networks already because it's the way we have to work, but really the Support. Don't Punish campaign gave us a framework to strengthen those networks.”



Intercambios have been involved in the SDP campaign since 2015, changing the translated name of the campaign in their first year to Acompañe No Castigue (as the direct translation Apoye is a slang term in Buenos Aires). Intercambios took a unique approach to the campaign, deciding very early on to act as a coordinating hub with the aim of trying to involve as many organisations from different fields (human rights, LGBT, drug policy, etc.) as possible and also organisations from different parts of the country.

After their second year of involvement they structured the GDA around “one issue that was especially important in our context” and to use the campaign as a way to focus on it. “One year we focused on drugs and the education system, another year it was the Feminist movement in our country.” In a year when national policy discussions were focused on mental health, the campaign focused on the importance of decriminalisation to the mental health of drug users. “With each campaign we try to challenge ourselves to spread the voice of the campaign, to reach more of the public.”

In 2019 Intercambios applied for a grant under the Initiatives Programme to support a social media campaign: #EstarEnLaDistancia (which roughly translates: Being together, whilst distanced) which ran in 2020. The idea behind this shared campaign message was to ensure that physical distancing measures would not negatively impact on the rights of people in situations of vulnerability: “Here the restrictions were very strict and lasted a long time, so we thought that it was very important to show that it's important to take care of yourself, to keep some distance, but it's not an excuse to not be present.”

Through the Initiatives Programme, Intercambios was joined by over 70 organisations in 21 cities in Argentina, with many creating videos to share their message. The additional funding allowed Intercambios to strengthen their networking (through online and in person meetings), to print materials and it “let us campaign earlier than normal, it let us prepare jointly with more organisations, to create new ideas about how to develop the campaign.” Social media cards were produced with key information on right-affirming responses to the pandemic situation, and a common declaration on drug policy reform, harm reduction and the COVID-19 crisis was shared and signed by 133 organisations and people. The social media campaign was successful: “in the world where we move: in the health world, in the drugs, in the academic world, it was a strong one.”



Whilst specialist media are often reliant on the information that Intercambios provides, more mainstream media coverage is dependent on local context, “if in the time the campaign is running, there is a big discussion about the drug law, maybe they cover it more.” Although they recognise it would be difficult, they believe the key to wider local coverage lies with larger media organisations (e.g. CNN or BBC): “if any international media could highlight the campaign, it would also then be reflected by local media.”

Involvement in the SDP campaign has “increased year by year and also for us its part of our challenge each year to try to get more organisations involved.” Due to the huge geographic and economic variation in Argentina, “for us it's also a challenge to try to get more places involved; to have more representation from different places in our country.” In 2023 Intercambios helped to organise GDA activities by 147 organisations in 69 cities and 17 provinces, making Argentina one of the most active countries on GDA.



Intercambios think the GDA grants are too small but are realistic about the challenges in providing them: “it's better than nothing and it helps us.” They also value the provision of customisable materials, although “it would be very useful to have more materials, especially in Spanish, to use them, or to change them.” Intercambios are proud to have helped mobilize other organisations around the campaign, and have followed the SDP model of providing materials for others to customise: “We produce materials, and design the aesthetic of the campaign and we provide it to the other organisations. They can use it in their context...as they want, but at least they have some materials to use.”

They work closely with IDPC, finding strength in the umbrella of SDP: “we work together with the IDPC, trying to link everything we are doing with their central campaign and that's very important. And of course, in that way they help us a lot and we help them a lot also. It's a very interesting association.”

The GDA is an opportunity to show both individual action and unity: “It's a lot of work to get some coherence to all the actions, because for us, the important thing is to not just show different actions, but especially to show it as a unique collective action.” The SDP campaign provides “a framework that lets us work together and it's already installed as a date that we know that we will want to do something.”

For its reclaiming of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, SDP has served as a “contra-campaign”, using “a day that was already used for [one purpose] to show other voices, and in the field of drugs, I think that was very useful.” “I think there's not another campaign that [focuses] on the human rights of the people who use drugs, and so I think that that's very important.”

Their hope for the future is continued growth, with wider governmental recognition of the campaign: “If some national governments could take the campaign as part of their drug strategy that could be very, very important, recognising that it's a civil society initiative.”

*All quotes attributed to Pablo Cymerman, Executive Director of Intercambios A.C. and Nahuel Messina, Coordinator of the Press and Communication Area.*





## A view from the U.N.

Zaved Mahmood is a Human Rights and Drug Policy Advisor at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). He has been aware of SDP since around 2017 and sees the SDP campaign as advocating similar positions to the OHCHR on the need for human rights-based approaches to drug policy and the decriminalisation of drugs for personal use. He thought the campaign had been very successful in the mobilisation of people who use drugs and other affected communities: *“In the whole drug policy and harm reduction area, this campaign is unique in that they manage to mobilize [and engage] grassroots people...it has a very strong community spirit. I think that is the unique thing.”*

The mobilisation and engagement of grassroots groups was key to the development of human rights-based drug policy: *“Without them: nothing. Without the participation of the community and civil society we will not achieve what we want to achieve: mainly protection and promotion of the rights of people who use drugs and human rights-based drug policy.”* This is not just a personal opinion, as the UN System Common Position on drug policy<sup>29</sup> recommends “the active involvement and participation of civil society and local communities, including people who use drugs, as well as women and young people” in the development and implementation of drug policy. *“I see this as one of the key objectives, making a bridge between community people and the policy people whether it is at regional level, national level, or international level.”*

The existence of the campaign’s branding also helps create a unified message: *“it helps in the sense that the community is coming with one voice. This is the important thing...They may have different ways of expressing this voice, but one voice is [saying] Support, Don't Punish...look at them with humanity, with dignity”*

Zaved thought the campaign could extend its focus more beyond the GDA and aim to mobilize the community around different events including the International Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup> December) and International Women’s Day (8<sup>th</sup> March). He also thought it important that the campaign made links with other campaigns and movements that addressed some of the intersectionalities of the impacts of the ‘War on Drugs’: *“from a human rights perspective, I think it would be good to connect with other campaigns or other actors who have a common interest, that could enrich this campaign.”*

The biggest challenge the campaign faced was one of sustainability and resource mobilisation: *“just one or two people organize this whole campaign. It's tremendous. It's tremendous work they're doing, but at some point, I think that they may need more support to sustain this campaign.”*

The risks of the campaign failing are that the trust and engagement the campaign has built within the grassroots communities would be lost: *“from my experience working in human rights [for] more than 30 years, I would say that it's really difficult to build this kind of campaign to mobilize [grassroots] and if it fails at some point... then the grassroots people who are involved in this will be demoralized.”*

Zaved was hopeful that others would recognise the effectiveness of the campaign, and the unique approach it takes to grassroots mobilisation, and continue to support it: *“The donor community and development*

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<sup>29</sup> <https://unsce.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/2018%20Nov%20-%20UN%20system%20common%20position%20on%20drug%20policy.pdf>

*partner community who are in support of the human rights based approach to drug policy need to support this campaign.”*

## **Sister Hubs**

To gain a better insight into the functioning of the sister hubs the following people were interviewed:

- Ruth Birgin (RB) of Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN)
- Igor Gordon (IG) of Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)
- Joana Canêdo (JC) of European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD)

WHRIN have been an active participant in SDP since they joined the Harm Reduction Consortium in 2019 while EHRA and EuroNPUD have been involved since 2017. All three organisations manage small grants for community and civil society organisations who want to be involved in the SDP campaign. WHRIN support activities that have a particular focus on women gender diverse people who use drugs while EuroNPUD focuses on drug user organisations.

The strong central message of SDP combined with flexibility and adaptability was appreciated:

*“just the concept of SDP was...set up by IDPC and they've been really generous in allowing this...particular focus on women and gender diverse people and to be part of the SDP umbrella. And I think the way that's happened is really great” (RB)*

*“So, there are the slogan of the campaign and messages of the campaign. But we are always putting some of our specific sub-regional topics and issues to this campaign” (IG)*

Each has an allocated budget and goes through an application process, similar to the one IDPC do (indeed each of the organisations said they worked closely with IDPC in the lead up to GDA to ensure duplication of funding is avoided). They support smaller the successful recipients of grants (and other organisations who want to participate without funding) on the day of GDA and then collate and report on activities, both to IDPC and on their own websites. Reporting mechanisms vary with WHRIN<sup>30</sup> and EHRA<sup>31</sup> each having dedicated pages reporting information they have collated on activities and outcomes linked to the SDP campaign, and EuroNPUD undertaking interviews with groups post-GDA and feeding back more internally.

Each of the interviewees expressed that one of the key strengths of the campaign was that it gave a global identity to what would otherwise be disconnected groups of campaigners.

*“certainly with us, we feel very much part of the campaign. “We interact a lot with [IDPC] during the buildup and during and afterwards as well. So, there's no disconnect. It feels like we're very much under the umbrella.” (RB)*

*“this is global initiative and for small ... local communities ... for them it's very important to be part of something big and under like one slogan with a joint visual identity.” (IG)*

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<sup>30</sup> <https://whrin.site/campaigns/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://harmreductioneurasia.org/advocacy/campaigns>

*“First of all, it's an international campaign. That gives opportunity for local grassroots engagement and regional grassroots engagement. So, this networking, you know from international to local organising I think is one of the [biggest] strengths of the campaign.” (JC)*

Another strength that was highlighted was the ability to be innovative, and the range of activities that were possible on GDA, with the website being a useful resource to support this:

*“actions are so varied...some are more strategic and connecting with government mechanisms and really in the faces of decision-makers and others are...inward looking and focused on community mobilisation and giving safe space or, you know, chill out options for people for that day. And everything in between.” (RB)*

*“[the SDP website] is a useful resource especially in terms of the different examples of actions and activities....[we] disseminate information to potential grantees just to show what they can do, what kinds of activities like this diversity of activities.” (IG)*

JC highlighted that many drug users' groups have difficulty accessing funding, so the SDP campaign provides unique opportunities: *“the small grants programme allow not only the [GDA] organising, but some organisations are set up during these moments.” (JC)*

The fact that the campaign created links between people who use drugs (and other affected communities) and policymakers was seen as vital to its possible impact:

*“[GDA] are special occasions to make us visible in the civil society organisations, in the municipal agendas, in the national politics. And also, always with this connection with the international and regional level as well....it's an opportunity to engage from political people to the neighbours” (JC)*

*“a workshop [with community engagement] to create a statement that is then presented to parliamentarians: that sort of output seems to be the sort that can change things.” (RB)*

But there were opportunities for SDP to improve the way that it supports grassroots groups in making these links. Identifying possible windows of opportunity, targeting things like recognition on the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) for the Global Fund and strengthening the research/activism/feedback mechanisms were aspects that were highlighted.

*“Building proper connective tissue between opportunities which are just left at global level that should be being snatched and run with through campaigns like SDP.” (RB)*

*“the campaigns are also a way to communicate some data, to advocate...And this activism can and should inform also the research....I imagine this communication between research, activism and then the feedback loop in between to be more concrete in the future.” (JC)*

When asked whether the campaign had made measurable impacts each of the interviewees expressed a degree of caution in attributing direct change, but were positive about the campaign:

*“[The work of] partners in Ukraine, for example, has produced results despite the invasion...it's hard with all advocacy to say ‘this caused that’. But I think there's been this war of attrition where finally the government are doing things like requiring domestic violence shelters to include women who use drugs. That's happened over the last three or four years in tandem with SDP activity...” (RB)*

*"It's always very difficult to give specific examples of impact of one day in the year and with this kind of campaign because it's really [a] small scale initiative. But I think yes...for instance in 2018, [Kazakhstan]...wanted to close methadone OST program. [we protested outside the Kazakhstan embassy] and also we called for our partners in other countries also to make the same action...I don't know if this helped or not, but just a couple days after that they stopped the campaign to close." (IG)*

When asked about any problems or weaknesses of the campaign, RB raised the issue of the word "Support", in the sense that many people who use drugs do not feel they need support, but she said they had experimented with using "solidarity" or other "S" words and that the issue was "containable".

JC suggested that having a specific focus for the GDA, with a specific goal fed by the research, could help strengthen dialogue between policy officers, community members and politicians: *"sometimes having a big message that is fed by the research, it's important for being taken seriously" (JC)*

RB thought a centralized record of local partners, with details about past activities, which could be referred to by IDPC and supporting hubs when administering GDA grants would be useful. There was also a suggestion of developing a SDP mentoring system, where one of the newer local groups gets twinned with a more experienced strategic one. But this would require proper planning and reporting structures, which in themselves would require additional resources up-front to develop. *"twinning sounds fantastic ...but...it rarely gets off the ground unless it's really structured." (RB)*

When asked if they would be willing to participate in additional strategy planning around the wider campaign, all of the interviewees were keen to be involved: *"It's always very interesting to be involved in the development of these kind of things to develop messages and strategic thinking." (IG)* JC thought such a team could look to develop resources around how to move from public-facing engagement with peers to engaging with media and policymakers.

None of the three interviewees were aware of the term "sister hub", and there was some confusion around the term given the existence of EuroNPUD's SisterWUD<sup>32</sup>. But despite this, each were enthusiastic about the continued relevance and potential of SDP campaign:

*"So, there are problems with shrinking space for civil society in many countries...making more strict rules for NGOs...a lot of these things are happening, and I think the campaign objectives are still relevant for the region, human rights and drug policy." (IG)*

*"I'm happy that WHRIN is already a sister hub. I love that." (RB)*

*"I'd congratulate the work of the team because they give a lot to [the campaign] to make sure that everyone is engaged. Of course we work through focal points, [but] people keep on doing everything they can to develop and deliver this campaign" (JC)*

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.euronpud.net/women>

## Conclusions

### Findings

**What resources and support has the Support. Don't Punish campaign provided to grassroots organisations and communities engaged in harm reduction efforts, including sister hubs and local partners, and are they being efficiently allocated?**

Half of survey respondents had used SDP logos, Banners, Flyers/Fact-Sheets, T-Shirts/Clothing and GDA Summary Reports. Local partners were overwhelmingly positive about the help provided by IDPC with many also mentioning having also received technical or organisational guidance, specific information or assistance in networking. There continues to be consistent traffic to the SDP website, with over 30,000 unique pageviews in 2023. 78% of survey respondents agreed that the support and resources provided by the campaign had widened the reach of their work.

The campaign has managed to combine expansion of the type of grant, in the form of IP grants, and also continued to support large number of small grants (with 2023 being the second highest number of small grants paid to local partners). This has meant that the average size of the small grant has had to reduce, with 2023 the lowest amount in five years. There was evidence to suggest that the impact of the campaign was greater in Africa and Asia (see following sections), and as such this may need to be a consideration in the efficient allocation of small grants in the future, but this must be balanced by the importance of the campaign remaining a truly global initiative.

The introduction of IP grants has made administration of the SDP more complex, but has enabled local partners to push for greater impacts, with the case studies relating to Acción Técnica Social (section 4.8) and Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre (section 4.12) demonstrating measurable impact in media engagement, dialogue with policy-makers and mobilisation.

The three "sister hubs" interviewed for the evaluation were very positive about the SDP campaign with key strengths identified as giving a global identity to what would otherwise be disconnected groups of campaigners, combined with flexibility and innovation, and the links the campaign created between people who use drugs (and other affected communities) and policy-makers. All three were positive about the support provided by IDPC, enthusiastic about the continued relevance and potential of SDP campaign, and keen to be further involved in additional strategy planning around the wider campaign, despite some confusion around the term "sister hub".

In terms of how the campaign could allocate resources better, the most frequent request was for larger small grant amounts, although there was also recognition that this was beyond the control of the campaign. Other areas of possible improvement included more strategic planning on key messages for the GDA, better access to T-shirts/merchandise, greater media/promotion planning (including coordinated social media campaigns) and more training/information dissemination. There were also a small number of local partners who were either not aware of the scope of available resources (particularly the GDA summary report) or thought existing resources could be better organised.

## **In what ways has the SDP campaign enhanced the mobilisation and organising capacity of communities and grassroots initiatives focused on harm reduction and drug policy reform?**

76% of survey respondents thought their involvement in the SDP campaign had helped their community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively, with higher rates amongst respondents in Africa (87%), Asia (79%) and Latin America (79%) than Europe (56%).

Measuring the exact number of local partners or cities involved in GDA is not possible as, by its very nature, SDP does not have strict reporting requirements and so will always undercount involvement. That said, there is strong evidence of sustained growth in participant numbers, which have recovered well from the impact of the pandemic. SDP coverage is truly global, with over half of all countries having had at least one GDA event in four or more years over the lifetime of the campaign. However, participation is weakest in North America and Oceania, with recent growth in local partner numbers mainly focused on Africa and Latin America.

There is a strong network of support within SDP, with organisations frequently supporting others either through their own system of grant allocation (known as sister hubs by IDPC) or through combining GDA activities. The six “sister hubs” active in GDA 2023 supported at least 45 local partners and many have their own reporting and feedback mechanisms.

There were numerous examples of collaborations between organisations, countries and regions, and the involvement of community and grassroots groups, with a particular focus on women, youth and people who use drugs. The campaign was effective in getting more people who use drugs involved in GDA activities which, in turn, was seen to increase their involvement in wider activism.

The campaign has helped not only to increase membership in some groups, but also widen support networks. In some cases, collaboration at GDA events has led to formal partnerships or coalitions. The IP grant to Skoun Lebanese Addiction Centre (section 4.12) resulted in the formation of the Lebanese Coalition for the Reform of Drug Policies (LCRDP). SDP is viewed as a broad and inclusive “umbrella” that welcomes local partners that share its core as well as convergent objectives and recognises the impact of intersectionality on people who use drugs.

97% of survey respondents agreed that the campaign makes them feel part of a community working towards shared goals. A smaller majority also agreed the campaign had made them more confident in making positive change for their community (82%) and that their local network had grown due to their involvement in the campaign (76%). The importance of SDP as a global initiative that welcomed small groups, in particular those led by people who use drugs and other affected communities, which provided them with legitimacy and visibility, was a recurring theme in all the discussions with local partners.

## **Does the campaign contribute to reducing the stigmatisation, discrimination and dehumanisation faced by people who use drugs and other affected communities?**

76% of survey respondents thought their involvement in the SDP campaign had reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities in their area, with no significant differences in rate between regions.

Enabling people, in particular the general public, to see people who use drugs as people and enable them to tell their story was the most common way in which SDP had helped reduce stigmatisation. There were also examples of groups helping youths and their families to overcome issues and vulnerable people who use drugs who had been encouraged to access services.

Humanising people who use drugs to the police also had an impact with specific examples in Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, India, Benin and Mozambique of SDP supporting direct communication between people who use drugs and law enforcement agencies and officers.

Some local partners used GDA as an inward-looking opportunity for reflection and healing with examples of safe spaces were created in Pakistan, South Africa and Canada, with WHRIN supporting similar activities in Ukraine, Mexico, Burundi, India and Portugal.

### **To what extent has the campaign facilitated constructive dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, community representatives, and advocates for harm reduction and drug policy reform?**

72% of survey respondents stated that they had, or maintained, direct communication with officials, police or politicians in their area as a result of their involvement in the SDP campaign, with higher rates amongst respondents in Africa (92%) and Asia (82%) than Latin America (55%) and Europe (60%).

The campaign helped local partners, in people who use drugs, to engage in direct dialogue with policymakers and government officials. Some had been invited to join working or technical groups, while others had become a recognised authority. This was also helped by the campaign's educational support with 84% of survey respondents agreeing the campaign had improved their knowledge of harm reduction and decriminalisation.

There are numerous examples of local partners undertaking direct advocacy and educational activities with politicians or government officials including in Ukraine, Norway, Georgia, Nigeria, Liberia, Moldova, India, Lebanon and Uganda. The case study of Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (section 4.4) demonstrates how local partners can grow from small awareness-raising GDA activities, to more strategic policy focused ones.

The interview with the Human Rights and Drug Policy Advisor at OHCHR made clear that the development of human rights based drug policies required the participation of people who use drugs and other affected communities and that they saw the success of SDP in mobilising community groups as having a unique impact in this regard.

### **How effective has the campaign been in using media and communication channels to increase public awareness and support for harm reduction and sustainable drug policies?**

69% of survey respondents thought their involvement in the SDP campaign had resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion in their area, with higher rates amongst respondents in Africa (82%) and Asia (76%) than Latin America (59%) and Europe (54%).

Data on media items was limited but suggestive of fairly low coverage of the campaign as a whole in mainstream publications. However, local partners reported improvements in media coverage of their events

and also around the narratives that media used to discuss drug policy. The messaging of the campaign was seen to be clear and easily understood by 97% of survey respondents. The IP grant to Acción Técnica Social (section 4.8) was used to create a communications strategy that promoted the importance of a legal basis to guarantee access to harm reduction interventions in Colombia.

The Photo Project is arguably the weakest element of the SDP campaign. Despite strong early growth and an impressive total of over 11,000 photos, recent submission rates have been comparatively poor, with an average of around 300 photos per year over the past five years. Perhaps more importantly, there is a lack of clarity about the current strategic purpose Photo Project, and it has not been used in any active media campaigns (as far as the evaluator is aware).

Social Media subscriber numbers have increased in each year of the campaign. Available social media metrics were limited, but they demonstrated both great potential (over 100,000 X impressions in 2023) and also a suggestion of a lack of clear strategy (fewer Instagram posts and tweets in 2023 compared to 2022). The impression from both IDPC staff and local partners is that the campaign's approach to social media could be improved.

The campaign has supported local partners in becoming more effective at engaging the media, with SDP providing smaller organisations with a global visual identity. There was consistent agreement that political change could only occur when the prevailing narratives of the War on Drugs were successfully challenged, and that SDP was one of many vehicles that could help bring about this change, with some using phrases such as “mosquito strategy” and “war of attrition”. However, engagement with the media and general public were seen as important to changing public opinion, with many expressing that the campaign had provided them with additional tools to do this more effectively. Feedback from local partners gave the impression that many thought that “directly” impacting public opinion was not a realistic aim for a campaign of the scale of SDP but that it helped to continue to challenge the prevailing narratives of the war on drugs, which is something to be considered when the campaign leadership review the ToC.

## Discussion

### **How does the Support. Don't Punish campaign influence the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practices that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities?**

To assess how successful the campaign has been in influencing the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practice that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities, it is important to provide some context to wider societal changes over the campaign's lifetime.

Despite the global prevalence of prohibitionist policies, there is evidence of declining faith in that model, leading to more openness to policy innovation including legalisation of some drugs, abandonment of criminalisation for others, and the creation of safe spaces for services and treatment (Burris, 2017). Over the lifetime of the campaign there has been measurable progress towards adoption of language reminiscent of the narrative of the campaign. In 2012, there were 83 countries recorded as having explicit supportive references to harm reduction in national policy documents. By 2023, this number had increased to 109.



Given the size of the budgets involved, it would not be reasonable to expect the SDP campaign to have had a measurable, direct impact on the global shifts that are occurring in the narrative on drugs. But nor should it be treated as a complete coincidence that over the lifetime of the campaign, there are signs of change. The message of the campaign is clear, and the language that it uses has begun to be more widely adopted. Even the theme of the 2023 UNODC 'World Drug Day', "People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention"<sup>33</sup>, included some of the language of SDP.

73% of survey respondents stated that their involvement in the SDP campaign had influenced changes in drug policy/practices in their area, with higher rates amongst respondents in Africa (89%) and Asia (85%) than Latin America (59%) and Europe (58%). Increasing the visibility of people who use drugs and changing perceptions of policymakers was the most frequently mentioned way in which SDP had impacted drug policy. Linked to this was the importance of groups being recognised as valid participants in policy discussions. Each of these is made more likely by the impact of the campaign on mobilisation of grassroots groups, dialogue with policymakers and humanisation of people who use drugs and other affected communities. The support provided by IDPC, both as a central coordinating hub and as a source of expertise on international drug policy, was highly valued by local partners. Examples of this expertise feeding into the campaign are easy to find, with the most recent SDP briefing on decriminalisation (IDPC, 2023a) summarising international agreements and recent developments on decriminalisation and harm reduction (particularly the UN Common Position and the Global AIDS Strategy) to support advocacy at the national level.

Increasing people who use drugs' knowledge of their existing rights was another important element that respondents identified as having tangible impact on drug practices. The campaign is reducing structural barriers to access to services through the education and mobilisation of grassroots organisations. Humanisation of people who use drugs amongst law enforcement was identified as having had a positive impact, although some local partners were more sceptical in this respect.

Most local partners and sister hubs were both cautious about the extent to which they could directly link SDP activities to policy or practice change, and broadly positive about the impacts of SDP. However, there were plenty of exceptions to this, with local partners linking their SDP involvement directly to reported law changes or draft laws which incorporate harm reduction being implemented in Colombia, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Nepal, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ukraine, Argentina, and Malawi. Each of the case studies included in this evaluation found indications of progress, particularly in relation to the involvement of people who use drugs in policy development.

The ToC, as set out in section 2.5, provides a logical argument for how the activities of the SDP will impact the reform of national drug laws, ensure harm reduction programmes are supported and adequately funded, and reduce police violence. These impacts are brought about by the outcomes of SDP which are improved understanding of harm reduction, increased media coverage, changes in public opinion, people who use drugs' involvement in policy, improved accountability and reduced stigmatisation.

This evaluation has provided strong evidence that SDP has improved understanding of harm reduction amongst relevant authorities (through the inclusion of groups in policy development and provision of

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drugs/index-new.html>

educational resources), increased people who use drugs involvement in policy, improved accountability (though the involvement of grassroots groups) and reduced stigmatisation (through increased visibility of people who use drugs ).

Where the story is probably weakest is around media coverage and public opinion. But even here there are signs of positive change, as noted in the discussion of narrative changes above. There are also ways that the campaign could improve its impact in these areas, with the development of a social media strategy and the provision of media training being high on the list.

Each of these outcomes is linked to intermediate outcomes, including increased grassroots mobilisation, greater collaboration, dialogue with relevant authorities, alternative narratives and evidence and a unifying identity, for all of which this evaluation has provided strong evidence. Each of the activities listed in the ToC, with the exception of the Photo Project, has been shown to be valued and used by local partners.

The impacts identified in the ToC (changes to national drug laws, improved support and funding for harm reduction, and a reduction of police violence and repressive responses to people who use drugs ) are happening in some places, although attributing them to the campaign would be nearly impossible given the complexity of circumstances that bring about genuine policy change. There is, however, a clear logic and evidence to suggest that SDP plays an important part in maintaining and facilitating the conditions required for change. Whether this requires a rethinking of the identified impacts of the ToC is something that the campaign leadership will need to address following this evaluation (as identified in the recommendations).

In terms of the assumptions of the ToC, there is evidence that the ‘War on Drugs’ is not only ineffective at achieving its stated aims, but is actually counterproductive and fails in its own terms, by increasing both drug deaths and violent crime (Coyne & Hall, 2017) Shifting beyond these existing systems of control will require new approaches grounded in human rights and social justice, with a recognition of the importance of intersectional issues (Daniels et al, 2021).

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that inclusive meaningful participation of grassroots groups in policy development leads to better, more effective, and value-aligned drug policies (Ritter, 2022). *“Without engaging the affected community in decisions that affect their lives, governments, academics, and advocates alike risk promoting drug policy reform that is not relevant or meaningful to people who use drugs themselves”* (Greer & Ritter, 2019: p.45) Community involvement within harm reduction programmes can also have positive impacts on health outcomes (Chang et al, 2021). But there is a danger of tokenism, and people who use drugs are often not seen or treated as legitimate stakeholders in policy discussions (Lancaster, 2018)

Trust and partnership of grassroots communities in policy development requires sustained investment to avoid participation becoming tokenistic (Clayson et al, 2018). And this is what the SDP campaign has provided over 11 years: sustained support, trust and recognition. people who use drugs are not a homogenous group with similar beliefs and values (Askew et al, 2022) and so the greater the intersectionality of participation, the more likely that relevant policy will result. The low bar for participation and active encouragement of intersectional groups in SDP has strengthened not just the SDP campaign, but the networks which underlie it. And people who use drugs with experience of drug policy activism are more likely to present confident pro-reform arguments (Askew & Bone, 2019).

So, the story of the SDP campaign is compelling, it shows a clear message, continued growth, has unquestionably increased the involvement of grassroots groups, challenges structural barriers and has a defensible and rational logic. The campaign has limited resources, however, and the IDPC secretariat spend the majority of their time managing the small grants, assessing and managing the IP grants, and supporting local partners on the GDA itself. This does not leave much, if any, time for strategic development of the campaign nor communications or social media strategy.

There is plenty of potential leadership within the existing SDP umbrella, and the improvements that local partners identify equate to more SDP not less. The IDPC need to utilise the existing leadership structures within SDP. The challenges to SDP in the near future will be to ensure sustainable funding to maintain (and hopefully grow) the small grant system, to develop clearer internal structures, improve reporting mechanisms, develop communications and social media strategies, and find innovative ways to expand and strengthen the umbrella.

## **Recommendations**

### **Leadership**

1. Formalise the idea of 'sister hubs' to recognise their leadership role within the campaign. This does not need to be a formal working group as there are no issues of lack of ownership and existing high confidence in the leadership of IDPC. But there does need to be some more concrete recognition of campaign leadership network. Consideration should also be given to the name as "sister hubs" has caused confusion due to existing groups – "campaign hubs" may be more suitable.
2. Newly recognised "campaign hubs" along with other suitable partners should be invited to be part of an SDP leadership group. This should meet (as a minimum) at beginning of year to develop strategy for GDA and after GDA to share successes/resolve issues.

### **Sustainability**

3. Examine new ways of fundraising for the campaign, including crowdfunding.
4. Address the critical need for additional central capacity for the campaign. This could take the form of reviewing existing secretariat responsibilities and identifying areas in which staff time could be saved (see updating website), identifying campaign hubs who could take responsibility for particular strategic areas, but most importantly should be developing a case to donors of the added value the SDP secretariat creates and securing additional funds for more staff time.
5. Work with the newly formed SDP leadership team to ensure that all campaign hubs are adequately funded and that budget lines are included for central campaign responsibilities.

## Strategy

6. The newly formed SDP leadership group should review, amend and agree the proposed Theory of Change contained within this evaluation, with particular focus on whether the identified impacts are appropriate. This should then be made publicly available and used when approaching new donors.
7. Develop a central database of local partners which includes details of local partners, grants provided, GDA activities, feedback, etc which can be used to support progress. This type of development would inevitably be dependent on additional funding, and would need to comply with GDPR and other data protection legislation, but would enable greater campaign coordination and development.
8. Review the strategic case for the Photo Project and agree a way forward with the leadership team. If it is to be kept as a part of the campaign it needs a clearly defined purpose, with links to social media strategy, and a way of managing submissions that does not take resources from IDPC secretariat.
9. Leadership team should consider whether it would be possible to establish a mentoring system within SDP where more experienced volunteer local partners help less established ones to develop their GDA activities.
10. Establish an SDP calendar which sets out when specific elements of the campaign will be agreed/published. This should be realistic and attainable and enable local partners and hubs to plan their SDP work more effectively.
11. Leadership team should consider whether it would be possible to introduce additional days of action into the SDP calendar to coincide with other recognised campaigning dates (e.g. International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March), International Overdose Awareness Day (31<sup>st</sup> August), and International Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup> December)). Given the challenge of limited resources these could initially be focused on Social Media.

## Communications

12. Explore funding options to develop a Social Media strategy for the campaign, of which a section would be relevant to local partners, enabling a more unified social media presence.
13. Develop online media training for local partners and more media template resources to improve media engagement.
14. Leadership group should examine how relevant evidence (e.g. the HRI global state of harm reduction and Global Drug Policy Index (GDPI)) could be summarised into leaflets relevant to specific regions for use by local partners. It may be possible to request formatted data direct from HRI so updating quantitative figures could be partially automated.
15. Develop GDA media strategy ahead of each GDA with SDP leadership group (which should include ways to actively engage with more mainstream media).
16. Continue to create opportunities for local partners to meet (both online and in person) and use these meetings to share successes and develop strategy.

## Reporting/Resources

17. The SDP website can be confusing to navigate, and some resources can be hard to find. If funding could be found, redesigning the website may save secretariat resource and improve campaign outcomes in the longer-term. Otherwise, the website resources should be consolidated and organised (including sections for adaptations and archived materials). Relevant guidance on current drug policy should be clearly date-marked to allow users to identify the most up-to-date resources.
18. Consider developing a "support area" for local partners on the SDP website into which any guidance/information provided to a local partner can be uploaded to be made available to all. This might also contain shortcuts to key resources and Q&A section (with ability to send IDPC questions)
19. Review how to collate information from IDPC and campaign hubs into a single online resource while avoiding duplication of publication. This could include links to the relevant publication pages for each hub.
20. Certain elements of GDA reporting seeming particularly onerous and inefficient (e.g. uploading individual campaign event details). The secretariat should review whether the benefit to the campaign is worth the resources required to maintain. It may be simpler to develop a basic database that could be made available as an Excel download on the website, which contained information on each GDA activity and then provide some higher-level summary statistics for the website.
21. Standardise the feedback from the GDA with aim of more consistent evidence of the campaign's impacts linked to the ToC.
22. Connect with wider campaigning resource libraries (e.g. The Commons Library) or other grassroots centred campaigns (e.g. People's Action) to improve shared learning and promote campaign approaches and achievements.

## Limitations and Future Research

The evaluation was not able to address what kinds of conditions facilitate change favourable to drug policy reform and harm reduction. This is a broad and complicated subject, the answers to which will likely vary depending on the country in question.

The survey of local partners was sent to all SDP contacts but was more likely to be completed by those more actively involved in the campaign (as indicated by the fact that 70% of respondents had received grant funding). We were not able to quantify whether there were local partners who cease to be involved in the campaign. A question was added to the survey on this, but all respondents responded positively. This evaluation found no evidence of local partners who had strongly negative views of the campaign, but that does not mean none exist. It is more likely that they would not engage with this evaluation than that they do not exist, although all evidence suggests they would be in the strong minority.

Due to limitations in time and resources the evaluation was not able to interview decision-makers who had a negative view of the campaign. This may have provided useful insights into how the campaign could widen its impact.

The quality of some of the available data, particularly around GDA tracking and media items, was inconsistent. By nature of the low threshold for participation, the trackers will most likely undercount involvement in the campaign.

Given that sister hubs are financially autonomous from the IDPC secretariat, it would not have been appropriate to request information relating to the grants and support provided to local partners through sister hubs. Similarly, the way in which sister hubs provide support fell outside the scope of this project.

Future research tracking the involvement of individual local partners over time, which would examine how GDA activities change depending on experience, could provide useful insights for inexperienced campaigners.

Additional research into successful strategies for the engagement of policy makers and media contacts may prove useful to the wider movement.

## Annex A Initiatives Programme Details

Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
Intercambios A.C. (Argentina) 2020	Intercambios A.C. is a civil society organisation that aims to develop and apply knowledge in addressing drug-related challenges, within the framework of human rights. Intercambios joined efforts with over 70 organisations (including local governmental departments) to promote a shared campaign message to ensure that physical distancing measures would not negatively impact in the rights of people in situations of vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promoted shared campaign message in 21 cities in Argentina</li> <li>- social media cards with key right-affirming information</li> <li>- videos to share how they were contributing to this national, collective effort</li> <li>- a common declaration on drug policy reform, harm reduction and the COVID-19 crisis was shared and signed by 133 organisations and people.</li> </ul>
BerLun (Germany) 2020	BerLun is a community-led network of Russian-speaking people who use drugs in Berlin. BerLUN's initiative sought to raise support for the need to humanise drug policy, offer support and refuse punishment and called for improved access to drug dependence treatment and other health provisions for people who use drugs.	<p>Activities were organised over the course of seven months under the banner: 'One Europe: Access to treatment for everyone!'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- World AIDS Day rally</li> <li>- Community work on HIV Prevention including weekly gatherings and a discussion event with social work students</li> <li>- Street reporters video channel detailing the lives of people who use drugs under the COVID-19 situation</li> <li>- 2020 Global Day of Action</li> <li>- gathering and speeches on International Drug Users Remembrance Day 2020</li> </ul>
Drug Policy Advocacy Group (DPAG) (Myanmar) 2020	DPAG is a discussion platform for stakeholders with an interest in drug-related policies and practices. Despite the challenges associated with mobilising under the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, DPAG was able to create multiple opportunities for government officials, civil society organisations, community groups and allies to rethink harmful drug policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held 3 online events, on harm reduction, drug policy reform, alternative development and the rights of people who use drugs</li> <li>- campaign materials (pamphlets, stickers, t-shirts, masks, etc.) were distributed among residents of 7 different cities</li> <li>- online photo campaign</li> </ul>

Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
YouthRISE Nigeria, DHRAN and AFRILAW (Nigeria) 2020	This initiative is carried forward by a tripartite partnership. Afrilaw advocates for the rule of law, human rights and justice for all. The Drug Harm Reduction Advocacy Network (DHRAN) is network of activists mobilising for the adoption and expansion of harm reduction services in Nigeria. Youth RISE Nigeria promotes evidence-based drug policy and interventions with the meaningful involvement of young people and most affected communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- series of discussion events (including peers) were organised to develop the capacity of public authorities to respond to the needs of people who use drugs</li> <li>- social made event by young people for young people</li> <li>- social media campaign on harm reduction during COVID-19</li> <li>- Face masks with the SDP logo were distributed among people who use drugs and law enforcement authorities</li> </ul>
South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) (South Africa) 2020	The South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) initially planned for a series of drug checking and naloxone delivery trainings; the production of a photo book with photographs and testimonies of people who use drugs and who live in situations of vulnerability, and a film screening/debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency Relief Support (including medication, PPE and sanitary products) for people who use drugs in Distress Under Current COVID-19 Restrictions</li> <li>- Webinar on the impact of COVID-19 on harm reduction services in South Africa</li> <li>- Naloxone administration and overdose prevention trainings</li> <li>- Photovoice project and story-telling event for the GDA</li> <li>- distribution of SDP branded clothing and materials</li> </ul>
PUD.UA/ VOLNA (Ukraine) 2020	Ukrainian Network of People who Use Drugs (PUD.UA/ VOLNA) unites people living with drug dependence to provide mutual support, protect and promote the human rights of people who use drugs, and improve their quality of life and access to health programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Production of film with real life stories of people who use drugs in Ukraine and UN recommendations about drug policy.</li> <li>- Flash mobs directed at the National Police, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science</li> <li>- Engagement with policymakers, through health and police departments, in 25 regions of Ukraine</li> </ul>
Acción Técnica Social (Colombia) 2022	Acción Técnica Social is a civil society organisation working with governments and local, national and international organisations to design and implement public policies, programmes and strategies in relation to drug use (with a harm reduction perspective. ATS' initiative seeks to enshrine harm reduction into law, guarantee its adequate resourcing and implementation, and ensure access by all people who use drugs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-devise a communications strategy to promote the importance of a legal basis to guarantee access to harm reduction interventions</li> <li>-promote community, civil society and academic participation in policy debates with parliamentarians</li> <li>-publish analysis and awareness pieces on high-reach media outlets and galvanise journalists' work on these issues</li> <li>-engage in relevant hearings and legislative debates.</li> </ul>



Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
SSDP International (Ghana-Nigeria-Liberia) 2022	Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) International is an international grassroots network of students and young people, led by students and young people who are advocating for policy reform on the local, national, continental and global level. SSDP International's initiative seeks to promote youth-accessible harm reduction and drug services in these countries, where they are effectively non-existent, as well as access by young advocates to national drug policy debates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organise focus group discussions to collect young people's stories and recommendations on how to lower barriers in access and promote engagement</li> <li>- produce a report to be presented to national youth advocates as an advocacy tool</li> <li>- to leading drug-related organisations to favour engagement with young people who use drugs</li> <li>- to policymakers to promote engagement and advocate for reform.</li> <li>- concludes with a feedback, evaluation and learning session</li> </ul>
ReSister Indonesia (Indonesia) 2022	ReSister Indonesia is a women-led learning group that exists to increase knowledge and collective awareness on the value of equality. ReSister Indonesia's initiative integrates online and offline activism on the intersections between gender-based violence (GBV) and drug policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- digital campaign to introduce drug-related issues, followed by online discussions on GBV in the context of the war on drugs (serving as an opportunity to strengthen cross-movement solidarity on this issue)</li> <li>- facilitated and confidential community dialogues to foster the exchange of experiences and strategies</li> <li>- policy dialogues with civil society groups working both on gender-based violence and drug policy reform</li> <li>- production of a list of policy recommendations leveraging ongoing legal reform processes</li> <li>- a learning and healing field trip from which lessons and reflections will feed into the production of digital communications materials</li> <li>- concludes with a series of evaluation meetings and a narrative report of the group's experience</li> </ul>
Voices of Community Action & Leadership (VOCAL-Kenya) (Kenya) 2022	VOCAL-Kenya is a health and human rights NGO committed to transforming the current prohibition on drugs and punitive drug control laws by moving towards drug policies based on balanced, evidence-based approaches. VOCAL-Kenya's initiative focuses on legal and judicial activism in relation to an ongoing process of legal reform that risks expanding the punitive capacity of the country's drug laws and imperilling the harm reduction response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mobilise civil society, community members and thought leaders to oppose the law's harmful amendments before the High Court of Kenya</li> <li>- communications campaign via social and traditional media</li> <li>- process of engagement of peers in the follow-up of the court procedures</li> <li>- will also contribute to a broader move toward the development and enactment of legal reforms enshrining access to harm reduction in the country</li> </ul>

Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
Skoun (Lebanon) 2022	Skoun strives to ensure drug use and addiction are treated as a primary health issue. Skoun provides accessible treatment, education and protection for all people who use drugs and are committed to reducing the harms caused by substance use in Lebanon. Skoun's initiative seeks to institutionalise the work of a 'Decriminalisation Coalition' to energise a legal review process of the country's drug laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mobilisation around the SDP 2022 Global Day of Action</li> <li>- production of a joint statement by the Coalition addressing recently elected parliamentarians on the importance of decriminalisation</li> <li>- the institutional development of the Coalition</li> <li>- a review of the draft law to amend the country's drug legislation</li> <li>- the development of an advocacy plan to revive the legal review process, which will include engagement with parliamentarians and media work</li> </ul>
Teens Link Uganda (Uganda) 2022	Teens Link Uganda is a civil society organisation led by young activists from key populations that exists to promote and coordinate efforts to transform young key populations into leaders that can stand up for themselves and their communities to advocate and lead change in harm reduction programming and policy development in Uganda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mobilise support for harm reduction and decriminalisation through the SDP Global Day of Action</li> <li>- equip advocates with innovative skills in digital photography, PhotoVoice for advocacy and storytelling</li> <li>- leveraging these materials through online digital resources</li> <li>- direct engagement with media, policymakers and opinion-formers</li> </ul>
Acción Andina (Bolivia) 2023	Acción Andina – Bolivia is a collective of people who, in direct and constant relationship with the grassroots, work to change prohibitionist drug policies through legal reform, political advocacy, social mobilisation and the promotion of health and social responses to the problems of drug use, without recourse to criminalisation. The project seeks to consolidate the articulation and organisation of women who use psychoactive substances, in a strongly prohibitionist and patriarchal national context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the promotion of social organisation and mobilisation</li> <li>- the creation of platforms and mechanisms of expression for women who have been socially excluded and repeatedly imprisoned</li> <li>- the development of a manifesto and a proposal for harm reduction responses with a gender perspective</li> <li>- the organisation of an exhibition based on literary and artistic work developed by the project</li> </ul>
Free School of Harm Reduction (Brazil) 2023	The Escola Livre de Redução de Danos (Free School of Harm Reduction) is a professional and political organisation with the aim of strengthening human rights and citizenship for people directly affected by the impacts of the prohibitionist policies of the war on drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organise a series of cultural interventions promoting harm reduction and making visible the diversity of cultural expressions by people who use drugs in the city of Recife, Pernambuco</li> <li>- events will also offer space for musicians, dancers, videographers, and other culture specialists to amplify this cultural production.</li> </ul>

Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
Indonesia Act for Justice (Aksi Keadilan Indonesia) (Indonesia) 2023	Aksi Keadilan is a community-based organisation who works on access to justice for people who use drugs, people living with HIV, and other minoritised groups, including the LGBTQ+ community. This initiative will support the 'Art Speaks Justice: Access to Justice for People who Use Drugs' campaign, which through the framework of art activism promotes the importance of access to justice for people who use drugs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aksi will select artists from Jakarta to develop artwork that speaks to the theme</li> <li>- Hold an art exhibition celebrating this cultural production</li> <li>- Hold public discussions, music performances and other artistic expressions in support for access to justice</li> <li>- A social media campaign will support the 'offline' activities, developing related hashtags and messaging</li> </ul>
Association Kéné Dougou Solidarité (Mali) 2023	The Association Kéné Dougou Solidarité (AKS) seeks to promote the health, environmental, educational and socioeconomic conditions of all citizens and, in particular, marginalised populations. AKS is a specialist organisation in the prevention and treatment of HIV. AKS' initiative seeks to engage administrative, penitentiary and police authorities in Sikasso and Kadiolo to advocate for the review of the country's drug policies and, in particular, for the wellbeing of people deprived of liberty in relation to drug offences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information and awareness workshops with a focus on responses based on human rights and public health</li> <li>- know-your-rights outreach campaign for people who use drugs</li> <li>- discussions of health and intersecting issues such as gender, gender violence and human rights in contexts of detention</li> </ul>
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland) 2023	The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) is the leading NGO involved in the protection of human rights in Poland. HFHR's Drug Policy Program aims to promote drug policies rooted in human rights and based on scientific evidence at the local, national and regional level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a series of informal, closed meetings between legal and law enforcement authorities, human rights lawyers, drug policy experts, and representatives from community-led networks to discuss the impacts of enforcing the criminalisation of drug possession</li> <li>- Advocacy and communication activities will be developed to support these forums.</li> </ul>

Organisation(s), Country, Year	Summary	Activities
SKOSH (International/Russia) 2023	SKOSH is a sister organisation for the Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice. The organisation's goal is to promote health, justice, dignity and human rights in the area of drugs and drug policy through education, networking, and technological innovation. SKOSH aims to support community organisations in access to the latest international science and best practices and empower their participation in knowledge production and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the organisation of solidarity and cultural events in the shape of photo exhibitions in Moscow (Russia), memorial events in Berlin (London) and Tbilisi (Georgia), and a ciné-forum in Paris (France) —all with a focus on cultural expressions by anti-prohibitionist activists and service clients in Russia</li> <li>- the restoration of the ARF's database of atrocities committed by Putin's regime in Russia and Ukraine —which was partially destroyed during an attack on the organisation's website by the government</li> <li>- the production of a film on the impact of the Russian 'war on drugs'</li> </ul>

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## Annex C Evaluation Matrix

KEQ	Indicator/Measure	Analysis Type	Data Source
1. How does the Support. Don't Punish campaign influence the introduction of harm reduction and drug policies and practice that prioritise health, human rights, and wellbeing and reduce violence against people who use drugs and other affected communities?	Number and type of positive impact mentioned by GDA participants	Qual thematic analysis	GDA Feedback
	Number and type of improvement needed identified by GDA participants	Qual thematic analysis	GDA Feedback
	Findings of previous evaluations and annual reports	Qual - rapid review	Desk research
	Staff and funders perceptions regarding the influence of the campaign	Qual thematic analysis	Key Informant interviews with: IDPC staff (4) and funders (1)
	Local partner perceptions regarding the influence of the campaign	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
	Stakeholder perceptions regarding the influence of the campaign	Qual thematic or narrative analysis	Key Informant interviews with: sister hubs (3), local partners (5) and decision-makers (1)
2. What resources and support has the SDP campaign provided to grassroots organisations and communities engaged in harm reduction efforts, including sister hubs and local partners, and are they being efficiently allocated ?	Types of support provided by IDPC reported by local partners	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Number of visits to SDP website by year	Quant descriptive statistics	Web Statistics
	Number of events provided grant funding for GDA by year	Quant descriptive statistics	GDA tracking statistics
	Percentage of responding local partners agreeing with statements relating to support and resources	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Resources identified by local partners	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Local partner views on resources and materials provided by the campaign	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
3. In what ways has the SDP	Number of unique local partners, cities and countries involved in GDA by year	Quant descriptive	GDA tracking statistics



KEQ	Indicator/Measure	Analysis Type	Data Source
campaign enhanced the mobilisation and organising capacity of communities and grassroots initiatives focused on harm reduction and drug policy reform?		statistics	
	Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has helped community grow and mobilise	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Percentage of responding local partners agreeing with statements relating to growing networks and feelings of community	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Network mapping of GDA involvement in 2023	Network analysis	GDA tracking statistics
	Local partner perceptions regarding impact on mobilisation and capacity building	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
	Stakeholder perceptions regarding impact on mobilisation and capacity building	Qual thematic or narrative analysis	Key Informant interviews with: sister hubs (3), local partners (5) and decision-makers (1)
	GDA Feedback on impacts and Annual reports involving mobilisation and capacity building	Qual thematic analysis	GDA Feedback and Annual reports thematically analysed
4. To what extent has the campaign facilitated constructive dialogue and collaboration between policymakers, community representatives, and advocates for harm reduction and drug policy reform?	Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has resulted in direct communication with officials, police or politicians	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Local partner perceptions regarding impact on dialogue and collaboration with officials and decision-makers	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
	Stakeholder perceptions regarding impact on dialogue and collaboration with officials and decision-makers	Qual thematic or narrative analysis	Key Informant interviews with: sister hubs (2), local partners (6) and decision-makers (1)
	GDA Feedback on impacts and Annual reports involving dialogue and collaboration with officials and decision-makers	Qual thematic analysis	GDA Feedback and Annual reports thematically analysed
5. How effective has the campaign been in using media and communication channels to increase public awareness and support for harm reduction and sustainable drug policies?	Number of pictures submitted to the picture project by year	Quant descriptive statistics	Photo Project
	Social Media subscribers by year	Quant descriptive statistics	Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram
	Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has resulted in positive media coverage	Quant descriptive	Evaluation Survey

KEQ	Indicator/Measure	Analysis Type	Data Source
	or change in public opinion	statistics	
	Local partner perceptions regarding impact on media coverage and public opinion	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
	Stakeholder perceptions regarding impact on media coverage and public opinion	Qual thematic or narrative analysis	Key Informant interviews with: sister hubs (3), local partners (5) and decision-makers (1)
6. Does the campaign contribute to reducing the stigmatisation, discrimination and dehumanisation faced by people who use drugs and other affected communities?	Percentage of responding local partners who report campaign has resulted in reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation	Quant descriptive statistics	Evaluation Survey
	Local partner perceptions regarding impact on stigmatisation/dehumanisation of people who use drugs and affected communities	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey
	Stakeholder perceptions regarding impact on stigmatisation/dehumanisation of people who use drugs and affected communities	Qual thematic or narrative analysis	Key Informant interviews with: sister hubs (3), local partners (5) and decision-makers (1)
	GDA Feedback on impacts and Annual reports involving reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation	Qual thematic analysis	GDA Feedback and Annual reports thematically analysed
	Local partner perceptions regarding the influence of the campaign	Qual thematic analysis	Evaluation Survey

## Annex D Terms of Reference

### Consultant for conducting a lifetime evaluation of the Support. Don't Punish campaign

#### 1. Introduction

Support. Don't Punish is a global, decentralised, and grassroots-centred campaign that resources and mobilises communities targeted by and resisting repressive drug policies, and their allies. The campaign promotes 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' organising capacity, opening dialogue with policymakers, and raising awareness among the media and the public.

The campaign was created in 2013 in acknowledgement of the need to remove obstacles that impede access to harm reduction and care for people who use drugs, and to promote respect for and solidarity with people who use drugs. It was originally conceived by the [International Drug Policy Consortium \(IDPC\)](#), the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (now [Frontline AIDS](#)), [Harm Reduction International \(HRI\)](#), and the [International Network of People who Use Drugs \(INPUD\)](#) —as part of the Dutch government-funded '[Community Action on Harm Reduction](#)' (CAHR) project.

Since, the campaign has grown significantly under IDPC's stewardship, developing a global network of hundreds of supporting local partners and 'sister hubs' (organisations that actively promote the campaign and contribute to the mobilisation of grassroots groups, including through their own fundraising efforts). Similarly, the campaign has broadened its support networks by welcoming local partners that share its core as well as convergent objectives, in the pursuit of bringing an end to the harmful 'war on drugs'. The campaign's success and worldwide recognition has translated into continued financial support from philanthropic donors including the [Elton John AIDS Foundation \(EJAF\)](#), the [Robert Carr Fund \(RCF\)](#) and the [Open Society Foundations \(OSF\)](#).

#### 2. Evaluation purpose, suggested learning questions and primary intended users

The Support. Don't Punish campaign has been active for 11 years (2013-2023) and gone from strength to strength, growing a network of supporters that spans over 100 countries and mobilises thousands of people every year in almost 300 cities worldwide. To better understand and document this growing legacy, consider avenues for further expansion, and strengthen learning tools, IDPC is looking for an experienced consultant to conduct an evaluation of the campaign's lifetime.

The purpose of the evaluation will be to:

- Identify and document key lifetime outcomes and impacts of the campaign core activities, including the [Global Day of Action](#), the [Initiatives Programme](#), and the [Photo Project](#); as well as the campaign's communications and capacity-development work —to identify lessons that can be shared with the Support. Don't Punish network and strengthen the campaign's case for support and continued growth.
- Recommend strategies to increase engagement and impact; as well as to strengthen coordination and support tasks by the IDPC Secretariat, which serves as the campaign's central hub.
- Gather feedback on perceptions on the campaign's key aims, activities, approach, and communications —to assess consistency and promote improvement.

While we look forward to working with the selected candidate to develop relevant guiding questions, the following 'learning questions' guide our current approach:

- What kinds of conditions facilitate change favourable to drug policy reform and harm reduction?
- Does the Support. Don't Punish campaign represent value added to local partners' mobilisation? How and in which ways can it be developed further?
- What specific strategies can be leveraged to encourage attitudinal change in specific stakeholders? (ex. policymakers, healthcare operators, neighbours, etc.)
- What are reasonable expectations from local partners in terms of mobilisation and impact?

At this point, we consider three primary intended users for this evaluation process:

- *The IDPC Secretariat*, for whom this evaluation will offer crucial insights on our performance as the campaign's central hub, and how to build upon it in service of our collective purpose—including in relation to fundraising activities.
- *The campaign's sister hubs and local partners*, who will be able to see in this evaluation a reflection of their contribution to a global movement for sustainable alternatives to the 'war on drugs', gain insights into shared achievements and avenues to hone engagement and impact, and strengthen their legitimacy in local and national policy debates—including by sharing the evaluation results with relevant policy-makers and funding bodies.
- *Funding bodies* (past, current, and potential), who will find in the evaluation concrete measures on the value and impact of the campaign, and thus use the document to inform their funding decisions.

### 3. Data collection and methodology

The campaign's focus on growing people power and resourcing grassroots mobilisation lends itself well to deploy Outcome Harvesting (OH) and Most Significant Change (MSC) approaches that could leverage the Support. Don't Punish campaign's wealth of qualitative data. Similarly, the global and distributed nature of the campaign may benefit from Social Network Analysis and a network survey. That said, we are open to consider all suggestions in terms of relevant evaluation approaches and techniques and suggest that a combination of different ones is desirable. Furthermore, considering the global nature of the campaign, we understand that some degree of sampling and narrowing of the evaluation's scope will be necessary.

The evaluation methodology could include the following:

- Desk review of selected campaign materials, including:
  - o Prior evaluation reports: 2013-2015 evaluation report, 2017 campaign audit.
  - o Annual campaign reports (2020, 2021, 2022).
  - o Website and social media presence.
  - o Communications guide and materials.
  - o Campaign guides.
- Development and implementation of a feedback process involving key informants:
  - o Online survey available to local partners
  - o Interviews with key informants, which could include 2 representatives from campaign 'sister hubs', 4 campaign local partners, 2 members of IDPC staff, 2 decisionmakers.
  - o Development of case studies to help document key lifetime outcomes and impacts of the campaign core activities.

Furthermore, we are particularly interested in exploring the following domains of change:

- Development of organising, campaigning, and advocacy skills.

- Shifts in campaigners' knowledge of harm reduction and drug policy reform, and in their capacity and confidence to deploy this knowledge persuasively.
- Movement- and coalition-building.
- Attitudinal changes about people who use drugs, harm reduction, drug policy reform and related grassroots groups and civil society organisations by policymakers, journalists, and surrounding communities (i.e., public opinion).
- Changes in laws, norms, and practices about harm reduction and drug policy reform.

#### **4. Expected outcomes**

The final evaluation report should be presented as a Microsoft Word document, in English, and with a maximum of 40 pages (A4 format). Additional annexes may also be added in addition to the page limit. As part of the final evaluation report, at least 4 case studies should be developed to reflect local partners' experiences in mobilising to achieve:

- Reductions in the legitimacy and incidence of punitive responses (ex. police violence, criminalisation) to people who use drugs in favour of supportive and caring approaches, including harm reduction.
- Change in the public and/or policymakers' understandings and adoption of harm reduction concepts, policies, and practices.
- Other successes in terms of increased mobilisation capacity; access to decision-making spaces; positive impact on public opinion, media, policymakers; or progressive changes in norms, policies and practices related to drug policy reform and harm reduction.

Finally, we would be grateful to receive a slide-set (PowerPoint) summarising the final evaluation report's key points and case studies.

## Annex E Survey of Local Partners (English)

*This survey was available in English, French and Spanish.*

### Introduction

Lifetime Evaluation of the Support. Don't Punish Campaign

Thank you for taking the time to open this survey.

The Support. Don't Punish campaign has been active for 11 years and in that time has grown into a network of supporters that spans over 100 countries and mobilises thousands of people every year in almost 300 cities worldwide.

To better understand and document this growing legacy, consider avenues for further expansion, and strengthen learning tools, International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) has commissioned an independent evaluation of the campaign's lifetime. As part of this evaluation, we are looking to gather the views of local partners.

All information provided will be treated in strict confidence and no individual responses will be disclosed. The responses will be viewed only by IDPC staff and the evaluator for the purposes of this research project. For more information, please see IDPC's privacy policy.

The evaluation report will be published on the campaign website and the websites of the Elton John Aids Foundation and IDPC.

We would be grateful if you would complete the survey by 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the latest.

Thank you for your time and assistance. If you have any queries, please contact [ben@myriadresearch.co.uk](mailto:ben@myriadresearch.co.uk)

<p>1. <i>Before you respond to the questions below, in conformity with European Union legislation, we need your consent to use your information for the purposes of the campaign.</i></p> <p>I agree to IDPC and the evaluator storing, processing and sharing (where specified) my responses. I understand any reporting will remain anonymous without additional explicit consent.</p>	<p><i>Tick box</i></p>
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### Your organisation(s)

Please provide the name of your organisation(s), and the countries and cities in which you have been active in the Support. Don't Punish campaign in the most recent year of your involvement:

1. Organisation(s)	[Open Text]
2. Country or countries	[Open Text]
3. City or cities	[Open Text]

### Your involvement

4. Please indicate which of the following years you have	Every year (2013-2023),
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participated in the Support. Don't Punish campaign, including the Global Day of Action and the Picture Project:	2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, Have not yet participated
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5. Do you intend to participate in the Support. Don't Punish campaign in the future?	Yes/No/N/A
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Only for those who do not intend to participate in the future:

6. Please explain why you no longer intend to participate in the Support. Don't Punish campaign:	[Open Text]
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7. Please provide an overview of the activities you have undertaken as part of the Support. Don't Punish campaign, including for the Global Day of Action and the Picture Project:	[Open Text]
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8. Please provide a brief (1-2 sentences) summary of the aim of the Support. Don't Punish campaign in your own words.	[Open Text]
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#### **IDPC support**

9. What kind of support have IDPC provided to you as part of the Support. Don't Punish campaign and was the support useful?	[Open Text]
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10. Which of the following resources or materials provided by IDPC, or made available on the campaign website, have you used or customised? (please select all that apply)	<i>Logos</i> <i>Banners</i> <i>Flyers/Fact Sheets</i> <i>Badges/Stickers</i> <i>T-shirts/Clothing</i> <i>Photo Project</i> <i>Bank of Ideas</i> <i>Template Press Releases or Letters</i> <i>Guidelines/How to Guides/Risk Assessments</i> <i>Global Day of Action Summary Reports</i> <i>Other (please specify)</i>
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11. Are there any ways the Support. Don't Punish campaign could better support you, including with additional resources or materials like those listed above?	[Open Text]
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## Impacts

12. In your opinion, has your involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign influenced changes in policy/practices or reduced stigmatisation/dehumanisation towards people who use drugs and other affected communities in your area?	<i>Yes/No/ N/A</i>
10a. If so, please explain how?	<i>[Open Text]</i>

13. In your opinion, has your involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign resulted in positive media coverage or changes in public opinion in your area?	<i>Yes/No/ N/A</i>
11a. If so, please explain how?	<i>[Open Text]</i>

14. Have you had, or maintained, any direct communication with officials, police or politicians in your area, including involvement on working groups, as a result of your involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign?	<i>Yes/No/ N/A</i>
12a. If so, please provide additional details.	<i>[Open Text]</i>

15. In your opinion, has your involvement in the Support. Don't Punish campaign helped your community grow, be more active or mobilise more effectively?	<i>Yes/No/ N/A</i>
13a. If so, please explain how?	<i>[Open Text]</i>

16. Have you seen any other results, either positive or negative, at the local, regional and/or national level as a result of your involvement in the campaign?	<i>Yes/No/ N/A</i>
14a. If so, please provide additional details.	<i>[Open Text]</i>



## Views of the campaign

<p>17. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the Support. Don't Punish campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aims of the campaign are clear and easily understood</li> <li>• The campaign makes me feel part of a community working towards shared goals</li> <li>• Our local network has grown due to our involvement in the campaign</li> <li>• The campaign has made me more confident in making positive change for my community</li> <li>• The support and resources provided by the campaign has widened the reach of our work</li> <li>• The campaign has improved my knowledge of harm reduction and decriminalisation</li> </ul>	<p>Strongly agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Neither agree nor disagree</p> <p>Disagree</p> <p>Strongly disagree</p> <p>N/A</p>
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## Further Contact

<p>18. We are intending to do a series of short interviews to help us understand the views of local partners. Would you be willing to be contacted if we wanted to, in confidence, follow up on any of your answers?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
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Only for those who agree to be contacted:

<p>19. please provide your contact details below:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Email address:</p>	
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<p>Thank you for completing the survey. Please click submit to finish.</p>	
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