



Drug policy justice 'must be central to harm reduction'

HARM REDUCTION WAS NOW BEING CAST IN A LARGER FRAMEWORK OF JUSTICE,

Joanne Csete of New York's Columbia University told delegates in yesterday's opening keynote address. 'But we would do well to sharpen our ideas of drug policy justice and make them more central to our harm reduction work, as well as focus on drug wars as instruments of poverty, racism and the subordination of women.'

People needed to be outraged by the 'repugnant misuse of criminal law and abusive law enforcement practices against drugs', she said, as well as the 'insidious intersection of the war on drugs with poverty and other forms of marginalisation.'

One third of young African American men in the US were in the criminal justice system, she told the conference, even though rates of drug use were no higher among African Americans than the rest of the population. In much of the US this represented a 'beat-down from all sides', as even a minor drug conviction could mean never being able to vote or receive benefits.

All of the discriminations that had been addressed by '60s civil rights legislation had been

'reinstated' by the war on drugs, she said. 'We are often tempted to think of the war on drugs as irrational – the policy equivalent of using a rifle to shoot a fly. But in the US, if the goal was to keep people of colour in their place, just as the law began to guarantee their rights, then the rationality is perfect.'

Digging out of this hole was not going to be easy and would need international leadership, she stressed. There had been a step towards drug policy justice last year when the outgoing UNODC director had made a statement about the central place of human rights in drug control and how drug laws frequently overemphasised criminalisation and punishment while underemphasising treatment and respect for human rights.

'It is our great challenge to hold governments and international agencies to this ideal, and to make it a reality,' she told the conference. 'We have so much to do. I hope that the outrage and the passion for justice that motivates so many of you in your work will stay strong until what is outrageous and what is unjust in drug policy are things of the past.'

HIGHLIGHTS

Monday 4 April

MAJOR SESSIONS

11.00 – 12.30

Banquet Hall 4

Drug users speak: perspectives from around the globe

A look at some crucial issues for people who use drugs.

14.00 – 15.30

Banquet Hall 1 & 2

Harm reduction developments in Middle East and North Africa

Safer injecting and initiatives to reduce the incidence of HIV.

Reducing alcohol-related harm

Hamra room

Alcohol policy and tackling risks in different countries.

16.00 – 17.30

Hamra room

Young people in search of evidence

A glimpse of youth drug use and how to reduce harm.

DIALOGUE SPACE

13.00: Introducing MENAHRAs new Global Fund grant.

14.30: Book launch: Harm reduction at work.

15.00: Introduction to drug user organising.

15.30: Youth-friendly resources.

16.00: The roll back of harm reduction in Europe.

16.30: 'Harm reduction' and the 'new recovery': time to evolve a more integrated approach?



About the daily update

The *Daily Update* is produced on behalf of IHRA by CJ Wellings Ltd, publishers of *Drink and Drugs News* (DDN) in the UK. DDN is a free monthly magazine circulated to people working in all areas of the drug and alcohol field, and is read worldwide online. The DDN website, which contains current and back issues of the magazine, is freely accessible at www.drinkanddrugsnews.com. To advertise in DDN email ian@cjwellings.com

Daily updates will be available on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings at the conference, and will include late changes to the programme.

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Getting in the mood...

Local dancers in traditional Lebanese costume get ready to entertain delegates at the opening session of IHRA's 22nd International Conference, *Building capacity, redressing neglect*. Other speakers included Lebanon's Minister for Health, Mohamad Jawad Khalifeh and journalist and TV personality, Georges Kordahi.

Programme changes – MONDAY 4 APRIL 2011

Sessions

- 9.00:** Plenary session. Nafsiah Mboi will be replaced by Kemal Siregar.
- 11.00:** Banquet Hall 1 & 2. M01, Konstantin Lyezhentsev – 423. Launching price reduction dialogue to ensure access to life-saving HCV treatment – has been cancelled.
- 14.00:** Banquet Hall 1 & 2. C01. Gordon Mortimore will be replaced by Murtaza Majeed.
- 14.00:** Banquet Hall 4. C03. Simone Merkinaitė – 1057. European harm reductionists and HIV community unite to bring about evidence based drug policies in the EU and neighbouring countries – has been cancelled.
- 14.00:** Rabieh. C04 Wendy Muckle – 525. Harm reduction and integrated care: an evaluation of the special care unit for women in ottawa has been

cancelled and will be replaced by Mehred Hosseinpour: Perceived causes of initial decisions to take drugs among female drug treatment seekers at Lorestan Province, Iran.

- 16.00:** Rabieh. CO9 Patricial Allard will be replaced by Louis Letellier de St-Just.

Workshops

- 1610** Change of trainers for Challenges to the adoption of harm reduction policies. Emran Razaghi and Nader Nassif will now conduct the workshop.

Dialogue space

- 1.30** Today's session, 'Change we can believe in? The inside story of PEPFAR and US politics on drug policy' has been cancelled as Rich Needle has had authorisation to travel to the conference withdrawn.

Posters

- 700.** Learning from mistakes: Community Mobilization a key to success in harm reduction services – Sok Chamreun Choub. New poster.
- 915.** Ill-treatment as state policy: can Russia face the scrutiny of the Committee against torture? Irina Teplinskaya replaces Mikhail Golichenko.
- 410.** Gender sensitive harm reduction programming: Reducing the vulnerability among female drug users: Alliance Technical Support Hubs' experience of building capacity of technical support providers in this area – Shaleen Rakesh. New poster.
- 532.** Harm reduction is integrated as specialized care within the health network of the city. The example of Sala Baluard. Marcela Coromina, Esther Henar, Ester Aranda. New poster.
- 399.** Success and barriers in referral of injecting drug users and their sexual partners to Integrated Counseling and Testing Centres in the difficult geographical setting of Manipur, North East India – Kingson Shimray. New poster.
- 981.** Gregory Scott's poster will not be presented on board 111.
- Posters withdrawn: 297, 794.**

Other notices

International HIV/Aids Alliance reception – please note that this is by invitation only.

Refreshments – lunch will be served in the exhibition area in both lobby 1 (dome side) and lobby 2 (hotel side) at 12.30 and 14.00. Coffee is served at 10.30-11.00 and afternoon tea is at 15.30-16.00.



New directions and hopes for IHRA

For the first time, this year's conference will feature skill-building sessions and an official conference declaration. *The Daily Update* spoke to IHRA executive director Rick Lines about his hopes for the event

THIS YEAR MARKS THE FIRST TIME the IHRA conference has been held in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, reflecting both the high level of need and the growing strength of local harm reduction organisations. A sizeable Global Fund grant has also recently been awarded to the Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHR), IHRA's main local conference partner.

'The timing couldn't be better to bring people together from across the region in the context of some major international investment,' says IHRA executive director Rick Lines. 'The conference is a good opportunity to raise the profile of the problems in the region, but also to try to springboard the activity of civil society and harm reduction advocates into the grant period.'

Harm reduction practices are making inroads into the region, although more vigorously in some countries than others. 'There are examples where we have extensive harm reduction programmes – Iran is the most well-known, but it's increasing in places like Lebanon, Morocco and Afghanistan,' he says. 'There's definitely increased capacity and increased urgency, but obviously there are a lot of specific barriers – religious and cultural, and some countries with particularly punitive law enforcement policies – which get in the

way of harm reduction and increase the vulnerability of people who use drugs.'

There is, however, an increasingly large and dedicated pool of harm reduction advocates and practitioners, he stresses, often working in difficult circumstances. 'I hope the conference can play a role in bringing some of them together,' he says. It's also his first conference as executive director. 'We're trying to do some different things this year, taking the conference in some new directions. For the first time we have a specific skill building and capacity-building stream to pass on skills.'

Thematically there's a strong stream on women and harm reduction, something he was very committed to developing, while another first will be the release of a formal conference declaration. 'That's very exciting from an advocacy point of view. The conference is only a couple of months before the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on Aids, and there's a feeling that we need to use this opportunity to make a lot of noise about the failure of governments internationally to scale up harm reduction. It's an excellent opportunity for us to have a focused advocacy outcome alongside the networking and information exchange.'



Rick Lines: 'We're trying to do some different things this year...'

Local champions become global players

Beirut's harm reduction is represented by MENAHR, which covers 22 countries in the region. Ahead of his speech at this morning's 'capacity building' session, director Elie Aaraj tells *The Daily Update* how the association is becoming a champion of change

THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA HARM REDUCTION ASSOCIATION (MENAHR) was founded in 2007 and aims to develop harm reduction in the region. It comprises three sub-regional knowledge hubs responsible for capacity building, training, technical assistance, advocacy and documentation, and a network secretariat providing central coordination.

MENAHR serves 22 countries, out of which 12 have had some kind of activity in the area of harm reduction. Such activities range from informal programmes to fully adopted harm reduction policies at country level. While harm reduction has had a slow uptake rate in the region, MENAHR had a major funding proposal accepted by the Global Fund in 2010 that seeks to build on progress, maximising learning on harm reduction to make sure it is adopted.

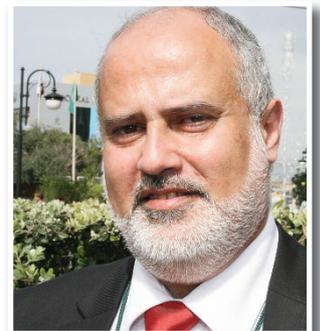
This Global Fund proposal (Round 10) aims to increase the access of people who inject drugs to harm reduction services in the region and includes capacity building for governments and civil society

organisations, as well as addressing gender differences to help reach female drug users.

The proposal includes several objectives. The first is to create an environment conducive to implementing and scaling up harm reduction activities. The second is to build capacity, knowledge and skills of governments and civil society to deliver harm reduction services for drug users. Finally, it aims to 'model' programmes that show feasibility and effectiveness of harm reduction activities.

By bringing together key stakeholders, knowledge-sharing and capacity can be increased. MENAHR is hoping to become a champion of change in the Middle East and North Africa region, ensuring that all segments of society are involved in harm reduction.

Visit the MENAHR stand in the dome area for information. A Dialogue Space session at 12.30 today will discuss the Global Fund proposal. Come along and get involved!



Elie Aaraj: 'MENAHR had a major funding proposal accepted by the Global Fund in 2010.'



Setting in train

The Daily Update hears from **Simon Baldwin** of **Family Health International** about the training he'll be delivering throughout the conference

FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL

(FHI) has been helping to improve the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people for 40 years, working closely with 1,400 partner organisations in 125 countries. This week delegates will have the chance to take part in training sessions run by the organisation's global technical lead on HIV and drug use, Simon Baldwin, alongside his colleague Hough Thu.

The first, on setting up nationwide opioid substitution treatment, will share findings from a pilot programme in Vietnam, where Simon is based, and focus on establishing a workforce, training staff and mentoring, while the second will look at designing vocational training and employment programmes.

'We'll be describing a programme that we've developed in Vietnam with people who go on to the methadone programme

and all of a sudden have a lot more free time,' he says. 'It's about how we can get them engaged in meaningful employment. A lot of employment programmes for marginalised groups in the developing world have looked at giving everyone the same training – so if you're a drug user then you're going to be a motorbike mechanic or a hairdresser. Our programme's quite different in that we try to match people's interests and needs to employment, and provide ongoing support not just to the drug user but to the employer throughout the process.'

The final session will look at a 'multi-sectoral service system' for drug users, analysing what makes an 'ideal mix' of interventions. 'Again, what we've found a lot of the time in the developing world is that countries will set up parallel programmes – a methadone programme in one area, a needle

Simon Baldwin: 'Our programme's quite different in that we... provide ongoing support not just to the drug user but to the employer throughout the process.'

and syringe exchange programme somewhere else and maybe detoxification somewhere else,' he says. 'What we're trying to do is help people understand how important it is to integrate all of those services, and in doing so "reframe" success.'

By this he means defining success in terms that go beyond just abstinence. 'A lot of the time everything else is regarded a failure. But if we can look holistically at the service system – getting a drug user into the system and in contact with an appropriate service, be it a needle and syringe programme, counselling, vocational training or methadone – then even if the drug use still continues, it's much better to have someone engaged with the system as a whole to start to address their needs.'

The organisation has different working methods depending on where it's operating, he stresses. 'In some countries we provide the services ourselves, in others we work through local agencies that we subcontract and provide with technical assistance, and in others we work through the government if they have the capacity – it depends on the operating environment and the needs of the different partners. For example in Vietnam there's not much of a civil society, whereas in other places we do a lot of work through civil society organisations.'

FHI has offices all around the world and has done extensive work in the Middle East – it has a programme operating in Egypt and has recently worked in Jordan. What does he feel about the state of harm reduction in the region – is he happy with the rate of progress? 'I think globally we're making a lot of progress but the Middle East is a region that hasn't had much attention yet. There are a significant number of people who need these services, so it's a wonderful sign that the conference is here and hopefully it can leave a meaningful impact behind, as it has in other parts of the world.'

Simon will be co-delivering *Setting up a nationwide programme on opioid substitution treatment today (Monday), How to set up a vocational training programme for in-treatment drug users tomorrow, and What does a multi-sectoral service system for drug users look like?* on Wednesday. Sessions run at 11am-12.30pm – to sign up visit IHRA in the dome this morning, or the workshop room after that.



Jude Byrne: 'Everything else that was done in the name of harm reduction was playing around the edges.' She received one of the two International Rolleston Awards at the opening session. The other went to Richard Needle, who was unable to attend.

From famine to feast

This morning's major sessions include **Jude Byrne** from the **International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)**. She tells *The Daily Update* how INPUD has given drug users a seat at the negotiating table.

FOR MANY YEARS THE DRUG USER MOVEMENT and drug users remained the outsiders of the harm reduction movement. There have been individuals who have seen beyond our 'ascribed deviance' and pushed hard to have us included in the development and implementation of the harm reduction philosophy – but it was slim pickings indeed!

For over 15 years the occasional 'charismatic junkie' was brought out at various events to give the sense that drug users were welcomed and included – and by some, they truly were. But these individual drug users had to try and translate so many different drug users' lives into a meaningful discourse for the other people who make up the harm reduction movement – doctors, researchers, nurses, drug and alcohol workers. It was a lonely and difficult place.

It wasn't until 2007, when IHRA's Harm Reduction and Human Rights Monitoring and Policy Analysis Programme came into being, that we finally felt that perhaps we did have a seat at the table. For until our essential humanity was acknowledged, and the implied deviance of drug users no longer the dominant theory, everything else that was done in the name of harm reduction was playing around the edges.

Since then INPUD as an organisation has been on a massive learning curve, with a brief as varied and as diverse as our community. We have received funds from organisations as diverse as the Department for International Development (DFID), UNAIDS and Open Society Institute (OSI). Our funding has barely been sufficient at times and we have had to work with only volunteers, but the support from the staff of those funding organisations and other international fora has been extraordinarily positive and embracing. They have gone out of their way to make us feel involved and to ensure we are asked onto committees where our issues are being discussed.

At times we now have a rather more palatable dilemma – a feast of opportunities, which sometimes means we do not have the resources or trained members to keep up with the requests. INPUD currently has representatives on a variety of committees including WHO and UNODC Effective Treatment Programme and UNODC TreatNet Programme, World AIDS Campaign Global Steering Committee, UN General Assembly 2001 Comprehensive AIDS Review, WHO Viral Hepatitis Guidelines, UN Gender Committee, WHO Stop TB Programme, and The UN Global Commission on HIV and the Law. We have also developed and passed our constitution, and written our strategic plan.

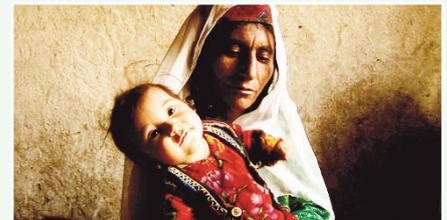
INPUD believes, with the continued funding and support from the international community, we will have the opportunity to train representatives and develop our resources so we can have real and meaningful involvement in all aspects of the harm reduction agenda – and that can only be of benefit.

AT TODAY'S FILM FESTIVAL



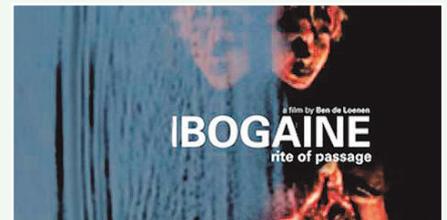
Children of Leningradsky:

Up to 4m children are homeless in post-Soviet Russia, sleeping on streets and railways, in stairways, bins and tunnels, and on hot water pipes to protect themselves from the harsh winter. They sniff glue to curb hunger and escape from world around them. A heartbreaking film from Hanna Polak and Andrzej Celinski.



This is my destiny:

Opium has destroyed Khoshan's life. Her family's land has been sold to pay for her and her husband's addiction, they have been ostracised by their community and their baby has been addicted from birth. Lucy Gordon and Bahareh Hosseini film three people struggling with addiction in different parts of Afghanistan.



Ibogaine – rite of passage:

Ben De Loenen's documentary about the controversial plant extract. Its anti-addictive properties were discovered by American Howard Lotsof, who was addicted to heroin. It became illegal in the US and pharmaceutical companies showed no interest in it – the film asks why.

The MTV International Drugs and Harm Reduction Film Festival 2011 runs from 12.30–18.00 in the cinema, auditorium level.



Women's harm reduction movement goes from strength to strength

Women who use drugs face multiple discrimination. Ruth Birgin tells *The Daily Update* about ways to find support from growing peer networks

AS WELL AS THE STIGMA of drug use, women who inject drugs face gender-specific discrimination, making them even less visible than their male counterparts. Despite the fact that an increasing proportion of drug users worldwide are women, services are overwhelmingly male focused.

Women are frequently alienated from health services, including harm reduction and much needed women-specific services, such as sexual and reproductive health. HIV prevalence is consistently higher among women than men who inject drugs. The absence of appropriate policies and services is increasingly evident in developing and transitional countries, where violations of the rights of women who use drugs – such as routine denial of child custody – are commonplace.

'An increasing proportion of drug users worldwide are women.'

There is a clear need to involve women who use drugs in addressing these inequities. Concerted advocacy is required, alongside programmes and policies that can address their needs. In the past three years, the women's harm reduction movement has founded two important international networks – the International Network of Women who Use Drugs (INWUD) and the Women's Harm

Reduction International Network (WHRIN).

INWUD is part of the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) and was created to provide a private space for women to share issues, concerns and challenges, and to provide a platform to support each other personally and professionally. It has established a women member only e-list and strives to ensure gender balance and sensitivity in INPUD operations. INWUD also collaborates with other agencies to provide a voice for women who use drugs.

WHRIN provides a global platform to raise awareness of the challenges faced by women who use drugs. It works with people from around the world to ensure that women have access to gender-sensitive harm reduction and specific health services such as reproductive health. The network aims to connect people globally and give them the information they need to conduct effective research, change policy and improve services for women who use drugs. Its membership is open to all who support the goals of WHRIN and are willing to contribute to the network.

Register for WHRIN at www.talkingdrugs.org. If you are a member of INPUD, join INWUD by emailing cher_white@hotmail.com. To apply for INPUD membership, email membership@inpud.net

Ruth Birgin will be speaking at tomorrow's session on *Building a women-centred harm reduction response*, 11.00 in Banquet Hall 1 & 2.

Global Fund invites feedback to shape future development

As the largest international donor for harm reduction, the Global Fund seeks to be responsive to its stakeholders. Mark Dibiase tells *The Daily Update* how IHRA delegates can get involved

EVERY TWO TO THREE YEARS, the Global Fund convenes a Partnership Forum – a key part of its governance structure. This is an important consultative process in which the organisation seeks input from a huge range of different stakeholders, to inform development of its future strategies and policies. In 2011, the 4th Partnership Forum will provide a number of opportunities for you to provide feedback, centered on this year's theme, 'Working together, shaping our future: accountability, access, rights'.

'Opportunities for advocates to engage with the largest international donor for harm reduction.'

This year's forum also coincides with a pivotal time in the Global Fund's evolution, as stakeholders can provide input into the organisation's strategy for 2012 to 2016 before its approval by the board in December. Demonstrating a firm commitment to transparency and partnership, the Global Fund will ensure that formal feedback from all consultations is fed back to the board. A number of the Global Fund's current policies are based on previous consultations.

Convened in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 28-30 June 2011, the forum's invite-only conference will provide space for approximately 400 people from various sectors. But there are other important opportunities for engagement before then.

The 2011 e-forum, to be hosted for six weeks between March and May, will help to shape discussions at the main conference. These are great opportunities for harm reduction advocates around the world to engage with the Global Fund – the largest international donor for harm reduction. Whether you are involved in grant management, or an advocate for improved HIV and TB services for people who inject drugs, we encourage you to participate.

For more information on how to participate, please visit: www.aidsportal.org/web/globalfundconsult/home

The Global Fund and partners will be in the Dialogue Space on Wednesday, 14.00-15.00.



IDHDP is pleased to announce a seminar presented by members

HOW DOES DRUG POLICY AFFECT YOUR COUNTRY'S DRUG TREATMENT? AN OVERVIEW

Noura Hall, Lobby Level, Metropolitan Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon

Tuesday, 5 April 2011, from 15:30 to 17:00

The programme will include presentations by IDHDP members from: Afghanistan, Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Egypt, Switzerland, UK, US and others – giving an overview of their country's drug treatment system and how this is helped or hindered by the country's drug policy.

Come and find out how a country's drug policy impacts on treatment and how we can influence change for the better.

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Your opportunity to input into the work of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria!

The Global Fund's biennial Partnership Forum is taking place from March to June 2011, and will provide a unique opportunity for partners to engage and input into the future work of the Global Fund. A key priority area in these consultations is the organization's new five-year strategy, currently in development, for approval in December.

For more information on how to participate, please visit:
www.aidsportal.org/web/globalfundconsult/home

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WDP is a charity providing drug and alcohol services in London and South East England. Our mission is to provide the best advice, support and treatment to those affected by drug and alcohol use.



Hear about our work with families affected by drugs, alcohol and crime at Tuesday's lunchtime poster session
Poster 842 • Board 77

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