

Support Don't Punish Coordinated Country Campaign 2020



The campaign
seeks to put
harm reduction
on the political
agenda



Support. Don't Punish (SDP) is a global grassroots-centred initiative in support of harm reduction and drug policies that prioritise public health and human rights. The campaign seeks to put harm reduction on the political agenda by strengthening the mobilisation capacity of affected communities and their allies, opening a dialogue with the people responsible for formulating policies, and raising awareness among the media and the public. The campaign's yearly high point is the Global Day of Action, which takes place on, or around, 26 June which coincides with the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Whilst this date has historically been used by governments to showcase their drug control "achievements" in coercive terms, the campaign's Global Day of Action seeks to shift that day's narrative away from coercion and instead emphasise the need and importance for drug policies to be based on health and human rights.

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The European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD) is a regional network representing people who use drugs in Northern, Southern and Western Europe. EuroNPUD plays a vital role in promoting harm reduction and drug law reform in Europe, and it has been one of the key partners in SDP campaign. A number of EuroNPUD member drug user groups applied to International Drug Policy Consortium for small grants to run the SDP actions. EuroNPUD picked up the funding for these proposals and provided grants of €450 to seven country drug user groups to undertake activities linked to the SDP global day of action on 26 June. The groups that received the grants were Respect Drug Users Union (Respect) in the UK, CATNPUD and Metzineres in Catalonia, Društvo AREAL in Slovenia, ItaNPUD in Italy, CASO in Portugal and PeerNUPs in Greece. IDPC added additional funding in discussion with the grantees to help target additional resources where they were needed. The partner groups discussed a coordinated campaign message based on securing the advocacy gains that have been secured in light of COVID-19. These include rapid access to OST treatment, take-home doses of OST for a week or more, more flexible support and supervision, housing the street homeless and embracing of peer-led harm reduction. EuroNPUD also commissioned Mali, the designer behind the branding of the Metzineres, to produce a poster based on the message of 'Time for a New Normal'. Building on EuroNPUD diverse member groups, the poster has been translated into nine languages. Posters were then co-branded with different local and national drug user groups to support their country actions.



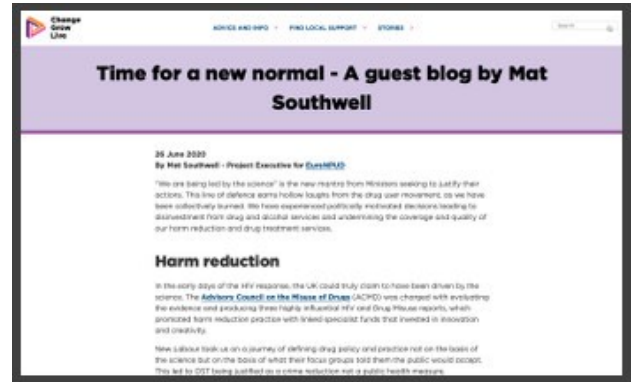
Country actions

United Kingdom

In the UK, the grant was received by Respect which is based in Bath. Respect has been running a pilot campaign on peer-to-peer naloxone and secondary needle syringe programmes which has remarkably taken off during COVID-19, and the grant from EuroNPUD was spent on funding payments for peers collaborating on this project. The pivotal role in the project played by friendship suppliers who are drug suppliers that supply drugs on a small scale in order to fund their own drug habit. Initially, the project involved two friendship suppliers giving out needles, syringes and other drug paraphernalia to their customers, but this has later been scaled up to nine friendship suppliers. While friendship suppliers were in charge of distributing needles and syringes, Mat Southwell, the organiser from Respect, delivered naloxone training and distributed naloxone kits to the customers whose drug use indicated they would benefit from this intervention.

The project in Bath involved the core group of ten drug user activists and peers, interacting with 100 drug users.

Besides Mat Southwell, two other drug-using peers from Respect are also in the process of becoming volunteers at local drug service DHI. This will allow the project to move further and reach more drug users. As friendship suppliers identify peers in their network who would benefit from naloxone intervention, DHI volunteers will train them to do the education about naloxone to their customers themselves, after which a DHI volunteer will be called to issue naloxone to every drug user that was given naloxone training by a friendship supplier. The meeting has been conducted about setting this working relationship up, and new people are already being paid for doing this work. The next stage includes setting up a meeting for the friendship suppliers and DHI member of staff and a peer worker from Hepatitis C Trust. All friendship suppliers will be trained in secondary needle and syringe programme, peer-to-peer naloxone and Hepatitis C awareness and elimination. They will also be involved in the guerrilla crack pipe pilot, which will include doing a questionnaire, giving people one or two different crack pipes and promoting avoidance of sharing pipes in order to prevent Hepatitis C and COVID-19 transmissions.



The pilot will initially be limited to two weeks, but a purchase of a large volume of new crack pipes with donations is already planned, and the project is set to continue as a six-month pilot. Friendship suppliers will also be involved in Hepatitis C elimination. They will screen their customers who are injecting drug users and who might benefit from Hepatitis C testing. They will also be provided with dry blood spot self-testing kits and offered support in testing customers who are at risk of Hepatitis C transmission, whereas DHI volunteers will then help people who test positive to move on into treatment.

The project in Bath involved the core group of ten drug user activists and peers, interacting with 100 drug users. While the grant was given specifically to Respect to run the pilot, the posters 'Time for New Normal' were also branded for three other drug user groups in the UK. In addition to Respect, these included Lancashire Users Forum, Boro Harm Reduction Union and Lambeth Service Users Council.

This project is expected to develop further as funding is being mobilised in partnership with Release to support OST advocacy and to highlight the benefits of peer-led harm reduction. The aim is to protect the positive changes achieved during the COVID-19 lockdown and to document and disseminate learning from the Bath pilot. Furthermore, the action of the UK drug user groups in response to COVID-19 resulted in people noticing that harm reduction needs mobilisation and recognising that drug users are the experts who should be active participants in the field of harm reduction, and not merely passive recipients of the services. This has brought positive outcomes; for example, Change Grow Live are now actively supporting peer-led harm reduction and progressive OST, and they have invited Mat Southwell from Respect to make a presentation to their prescribing doctors and nurses in October 2020.



Catalonia (CATNPUD)



Meaningful action around SDP was also undertaken in other countries. The association ARSU, which is part of CATNPUD organised an event to commemorate the Global Day of Action at La Illeta, the harm reduction centre in Reus. The event was attended by around thirty drug user activists, as well as harm reduction professionals and people from the local neighbourhood. Altogether, sixty people took part in the event. The day consisted of reading a manifesto, the realisation of a live radio program of Radio Liberarsu, live performance of local artist @akila and open mic session aimed at raising awareness of the importance of fighting the stigma attached to people who use drugs. Finally, a human mosaic was built with the slogan 'Support Don't Punish'. Free breakfast and lunch were provided to the attendees of the event, with posters 'Time for New Normal' displayed in the office and on the street to emphasise the focus of the day. The event received media coverage on the website of the Catalan Health Department of Catalunya. In the weeks prior to the event, ARSU also took part in the demonstration to support housing for drug users and homeless people, and ARSU's work at La Illeta and its activism for homeless people was covered in the article published in Tarragona Digital.

The event received media coverage on the website of the Catalan Health Department of Catalunya.

Catalonia (Metzineres)

Metzineres, a Catalonian project for women who use drugs, organised an outdoor day in the Raval district of Barcelona that sought to strengthen ties

with the local community. Metzineres wanted to break the perception that people who use drugs are merely the recipients of services; instead, they aimed to emphasise they are active participants in the community and should not be interpreted as a problem, but as a part of the solution. Metzineres make no distinction between drug users and professionals in their organisation and wanted to transport this ethos among the wider community in their local neighbourhood. They recorded videos of interviews with other members of the



neighbourhood in which they explored the impact of their collaborative work. Energy Control is a harm reduction project in the field of harm reduction associated with recreational drug use and they recorded a short video with a poem about the impact of war on drugs. Metzineres organised a The Day of Action, which consisted of showing both organisation's videos to the attendees from the neighbourhood, while sharing a communal lunch, socialising, engaging in discussion, and jointly making a graffiti to commemorate the day. The event was a great



success, as it offered a platform for meaningful connection and collaboration of about a hundred attendees from a variety of different personal and professional backgrounds.



Slovenia



Društvo AREAL coordinated a gathering and discussion at Metelkova, an autonomous social and cultural centre in Ljubljana in collaboration with Šent, the Slovenian Association for Mental Health. They also distributed posters, T-shirts and badges to promote the SDP campaign. Furthermore, Društvo AREAL members took part in protests against the current right-wing government, raising awareness of the SDP campaign among the protesters and advocating for changes concerning the human rights of people who use drugs. Such engagement allowed Društvo AREAL to build meaningful relationships with progressive left-wing political forces with whom they plan to collaborate in future projects that will focus on increasing the accessibility of services and protection of rights of people who use drugs. Particular matters of concern in Slovenia are lack of naloxone distribution and lack of support services for migrants who use drugs, on both of which Društvo AREAL has completed material work recently and plans to continue doing so in the future.



Italy

Due to the exceptional situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, some events within the SDP campaign have taken place virtually as such arrangement allowed them to reach a wider audience. ItaNPUD organised an online event, contacted organisations in the harm reduction

field in Italy and conducted interviews that focus on psychedelics, drug testing, drug policy, harm reduction and drug user activism. The webinar was organised in collaboration with CASO. In the evening of 26 June, ItaNPUD also engaged in outreach work in Rome. They distributed flyers and posters about ItaNPUD and SDP campaign, provided attendees with non-alcoholic drinks and biscuits and led a discussion about harm reduction. A gathering with the distribution of flyers and debate about drug policy was also organised in Torino. Events were attended by approximately 100 people in total, and posters 'Time for New Normal' were displayed at the event in Torino and on various social media.

Portugal



CASO organised three structured mini-training sessions about overdose and naloxone in Porto. Five members of CASO and 15 drug-using peers took part in the project. CASO also raised awareness about harm reduction and safer drug use in the context of COVID-19 epidemic and displayed 'Time for New Normal' posters at the in-person event and on the social media. Additionally, CASO collaborated with ItaNPUD in development and delivery of the webinar where they presented how the Portuguese model is operating during the pandemic and engaged in the discussion on the objectives drug user activists want to reach around COVID-19, such as rapid access to OST and take-home doses for longer periods. CASO also organised a separate SDP day for women and non-binary people, as well as twice-weekly



outreach days during which they distributed needles, syringes and condoms to hard-to-reach drug-using peers during the lockdown period. For the future, CASO plans to focus on providing online support and webinars whilst keeping in mind the need to find the balance between in-person and online events. Additionally, they plan to deliver structured naloxone training not only to peers, but also to their families, friends and people in homeless shelters, and they are strongly advocating for all members of outreach teams to carry naloxone and be trained in its usage.

Greece



PeerNUPs arranged several events for The Global Day of Action, starting with a gathering in the shelter for homeless drug users in Athens which was attended by peers, residents of the shelter and member organisations of the Greek NGO Platform for Psychoactive Substances, including Diogenes Drug Policy Dialogue, Positive Voice, Centre for Life, Prometheus and Praksis. At the event in the shelter, PeerNUPs had a long panel with SDP signs, and they gave out T-shirts, badges and flyers about harm reduction advice in relation to COVID-19 in Greek and English. They also issued flyers on methamphetamine harm reduction developed from a Canadian resource. Methamphetamine use has recently increased in Greece, especially among women. As people were coming and going, it was difficult to establish the number of people who attended the event at the shelter in total. However, the event was overall busy, and the feedback from the attendees was very positive. The event also received media coverage, with one of Greek TV channels attending the event and doing interviews with the participants. The event at the shelter finished around 2pm and shortly after, two members of PeerNUPs had an appointment with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and George Stamatis,



Secretary-General for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty where they discussed the health and social needs of drug users. Attendees at this meeting also included the president and vice-president of Kethea, the rehabilitation and social reintegration network in Greece. In the evening, PeerNUPs organised another gathering in the Municipal Market of Kypseli which focused on homelessness in the world of drug use. The speakers included Niki Voudouri, Fotini Leombila, Konstantinos Kokkolis, Tassos Smetopoulos, Alekos Anastasiou, Nikos Fitsialos, Marios Atzemis, Daphne Chronopoulou and Christos Anastasiou. The event attracted a diverse audience of peers and members of the public who acquired up-to-date knowledge about the homelessness and drug use from insightful contributions from the speakers.

The event also received media coverage, with one of Greek TV channels attending the event and doing interviews with the participants

Multiple country action within the SDP campaign has this year continued its tradition and attracted an increasing number of activists and local partners in numerous cities around Europe. EuroNPUD member groups utilised the received grants in a variety of different and innovative ways, thoughtfully responding to the local situation and effectively addressing the challenges associated with COVID-19. With their activities, member groups raised awareness about harm reduction among the public, attracted media attention and built relationships with the local community, politicians and partnership organisations. They are determined to continue with such activities in the future, both in their everyday practice and around specific events, such as future SDP and International Overdose Awareness Days.

