

## 'Support Don't Punish' global action: *a focus on women who use drugs*

"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. The campaign seeks to put harm reduction on the political agenda by strengthening the mobilisation capacity of affected communities and their allies, opening dialogue with policy makers, and raising awareness among the media and the public.

This year, a number of organisations and groups led by or meaningfully involving women who use drugs around the world organised actions to highlight the need to end violence against, and improve drug policies for women from a health and harm reduction perspective. To unify the global campaign, WHRIN collaborated with a number of regional and national level networks using the slogan "**Women fighting back against the war on drug users – support and solidarity**" as well as the colour **orange** (to pick up on the [international theme colour](#) for eliminating violence against women, to help create spaces to highlight access to health and human rights for women who use drugs. In addition, an optional [press release](#) was prepared for local adaptation and participants were encouraged to invite media to hear and receive statements from their organisation/s.

An exciting variety of actions took place during the week of 26th June 2019 that included webinars, development of advocacy videos, street demonstrations, art workshops and exhibitions, media and government engagement and more. Some of the actions are summarised here:

### Mauritius

In Mauritius a position paper was prepared and sent to the government of Mauritius highlighting the issues faced by WUD and asking for a review of policies. In addition, focus groups were held followed by a photo and [media campaign](#) and [march](#) This represented a first for women who use drugs to be leading on activity specific to the Mauri-



### USA

In the USA, the Urban Survivors Union, with over 20 affiliate groups located across the country, hosted events across a number of sites and ran a well promoted webinar highlighting women's lived experience and connecting national issues with issues women are facing around the world.



## Ukraine

In Ukraine - Club Eney developed a creative and powerful [video clip](#) to expose both the impact of bad drug policy on women and to demonstrate to importance of harm reduction approaches. Women wore orange t-shirts and spoke of their life stories and the video was shared with over twenty groups and through social media.



Women leaders created the film by women, about women and for women who use drugs and it has already received positive reviews.

## Bekasi Indonesia

In Bekasi Indonesia, a women who use drugs organisation used the campaign to stress that new policies are needed to stop all forms of violence and discrimination against their community. Actions included a well-attended march to Bekasi City Government Office, public discussion about human rights for women who use drugs and a [press release](#).



## Portugal

In Portugal, CASO used the campaign to boost mobilization among women who use drugs. T-shirts and posters were developed through a workshop on simple fabric and paper printing techniques using the global campaign image and the Portuguese version of the slogan “Women fighting back against the war on drug users – support and solidarity”, while encouraging personal composition.



The customization of a t-shirt or a poster was not only an act of creation but also an opportunity for appropriation of the personal meaning of such a campaign; the sense of being a woman fighting back against the war on drugs.

## Canberra Australia

In Canberra Australia, CAHMA ran a campaign titled “wear orange, paint it orange”. A series of [activities](#) were included throughout June 2019. Women are invited to bring their favourite orange items for the purpose of personalizing the space and as symbols of people’s everyday lives which are heavily impacted by bad drug policy. Women were invited to write anonymously (inside the paper cut-out female silhouettes) about the impact that war on drugs has on their lives. An art workshop and competition were held, culminating on 26<sup>th</sup> June with a very popular art exhibition.



## Estonia

The Estonian Association of People who Use Psychotropic Substances ‘LUNEST’ prepared orange handkerchiefs as a symbol of the fight against violence, [in support](#) of the women's movement.



## Ukraine

In Ukraine, HPLGBT [called for the government to revise](#) drug policy and drug laws, as well as promote the introduction of a new, more humane model of attitudes towards drug-dependent transgender people.



The Eurasian Women’s Network on AIDS joined the Support Don’t Punish campaign emphasizing support for harm reduction policies and [called for special attention to women who use drugs](#), with focus on best practices aimed at improving the status of women in the context of sexual and reproductive health rights.



Many thanks to Metzineres, EHRA, ENPUD, ANPUD, INWUD, IDPC, Talking Drugs and all participating individuals, groups and organisations. Together we have shown that women who use drugs are not (and never have been) invisible and ignorable. It is not plausible to speak of elimination of violence and inclusion of women “in all our diversity” or targets that “leave no one behind” without the meaningful involvement of women who use drugs.

**Photo gallery of actions and participants around the world focussing on women who use drugs for Support Don't Punish, 2019.**

