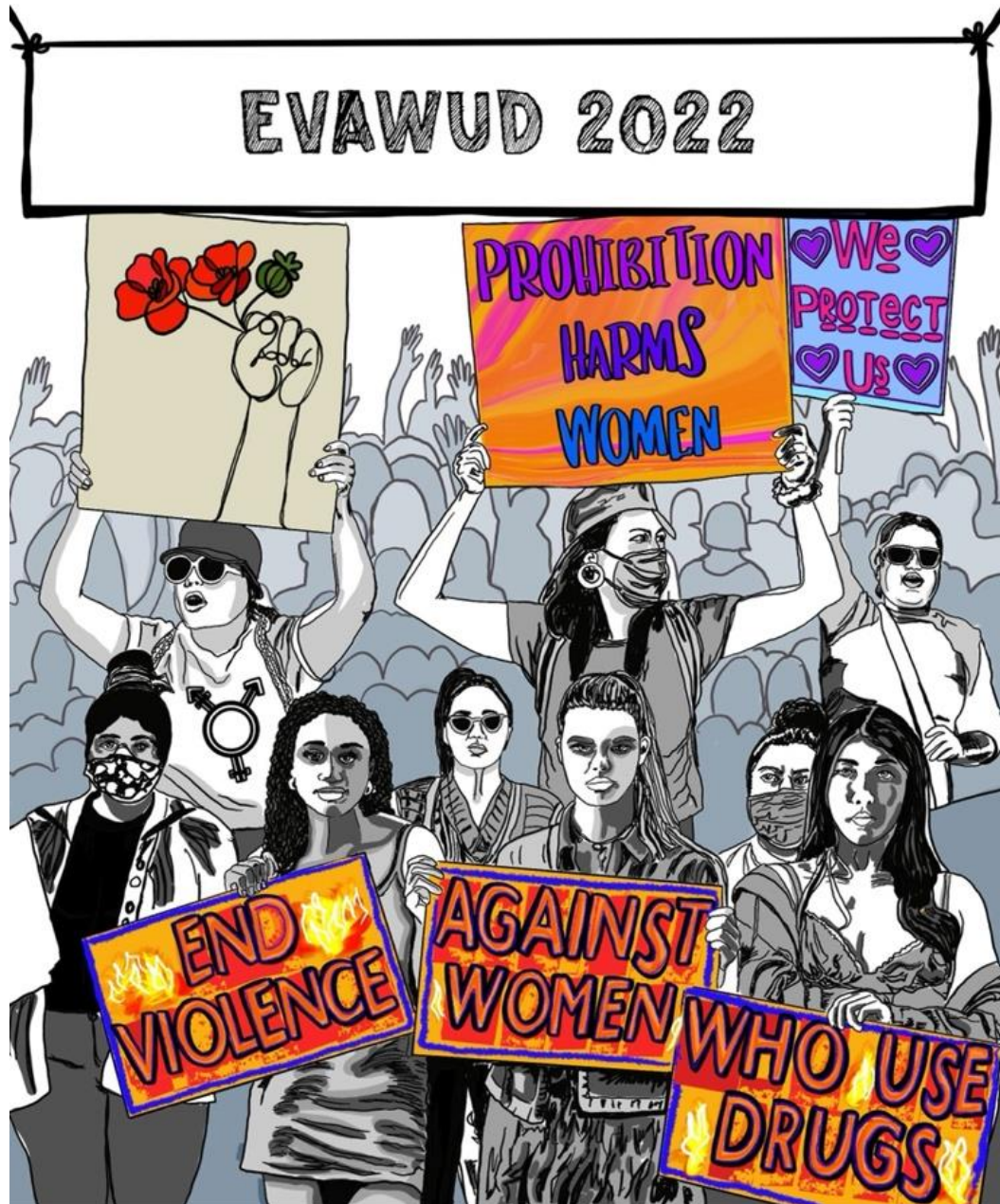


The Elimination of Violence Against Women who Use Drugs campaign



Global action summary

Coinciding with the United Nations international day to eliminate violence against women, and the subsequent 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign (25 November to 10 December), women who use drugs and their allies around the world, unified in their determination to stop systemic and gender-based violence against women who use drugs, again unleashed a diverse and dynamic series of actions.

Women who use drugs are exposed to higher rates of violence than women in the general public. This violence includes, (but is not limited to) rape, sexual harassment, extortion, loss of child custody, imprisonment for mere personal possession, extra judicial killing, capital punishment, obstetric violence and penalisation for drug use in pregnancy. Prohibition either directly causes or greatly exacerbates conditions for all of these violations. Gender-based violence cannot be eliminated if those most affected are not directly and meaningfully involved at all levels in relevant policy and programming.

Women who use drugs are boldly stepping out to take their place in the women's movement and efforts to stop gender-based violence. Collectively we and our allies call for governments to end the gendered, failed and murderous policy of drug prohibition.

A growing number of consortia actions and engagement with partners has further amplified engagement in 2022. The following summary (with hyperlinks) features some of the actions performed by women who use drugs and our allies around the world, in Portugal, Uganda, Greece, Ukraine, France, Serbia, Kenya, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Malawi, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Estonia, Georgia, Italy, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Moldova.

Nigeria Consortia: YouthRISE Nigeria, Global Care for Health Support Initiative (GCHSI) and Autamaimasa Health Foundation (AHF)

The Nigeria EVAWUD22 campaign engaged communities and social media to identify and address the enabling factors of gender-based violence against women who use drugs. The consortia met with the office of the Ministry of Women Affairs and National Human Right Commission to discuss inclusion of women who use drugs in the national response to gender-based violence.

Immediate outcomes of the engagement were inclusion in the consortia in the National Human Rights Commission and Civil Society Forum, as well as consortia participation, representing the community of women who use drugs in the National Human Rights Awareness Road Walk YouthRISE Nigeria, (GCHSI), and AFH supported community engagement activities with communication materials, especially the EVAWUD22 campaign poster, culminating in a sports activity to promote the inclusion and protection of women who use drugs.

YouthRISE Nigeria, (GCHSI), and AFH utilized social media through press briefs, infographics, puzzles and story sharing to engage the public on the realities of women who use drugs, in the context of the negative stereotypes that sustain gender based violence against women who use drugs, negatively impacting health, human rights, and social inclusion. Additional photos can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).



womxn Voice, Indonesia

Womxn Voice holds the aspiration that, through collective awareness built up by collaboration between various parties and by speaking up for what is right, it is possible that gender-based violence cases will decrease and no one will be afraid to speak up against it. With the sub-theme “*I am Changing the Things I Cannot Accept*”, Womxn Voice worked to build cross-sectoral networks with other women's human rights organizations, with focus on the issue of violence against women and non-binary people who use drugs.

Womxn Voice were invited to join an event held by the Jakarta Feminists and GoJEK (a major transport enterprise) in order to launch their procedure to prevent violence against women in the workplace. Taking this opportunity, together with AKSI Keadilan Indonesia (AKSI) and Forum Akar Rumput Indonesia (FARI), Womxn Voice provided an information booth on drugs, violence and human rights. By creating light games and asking the crowd a few questions, the booth was quite successful in attracting attention. Those who could answer were given EVAWUD campaign t-shirts.



The event was effective in engaging the community of women who use drugs and other women's organizations as well as corporate groups and society. More than 5 people came to our booth to consult and receive legal assistance.

With additional support from International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), [a short video](#) containing statements from women and trans women who use drugs were created to encourage people to become advocates and support the women's movement in efforts to end gender-based violence against women and non-binary people who use drugs.

Metzineres, Barcelona, Spain

Metzineres joined the EVAWUD campaign for a third consecutive year to call for ending violence against womxn who use drugs with a calendar full of activities.

81 participants were engaged over 17 days with activity that included;

- involvement in demonstrations held on November 24 and 25; recording a radio program about violence against sex workers;
- the EVAWUD poster and press release translated into Catalan and disseminated;
- workshops held on mutual care, breaking stigma, and self-defence between womxn survivors;
- visits to the theatre, and
- cineforum afternoons focused on the EVAWUD theme.

The associated photo gallery can be viewed [here](#).



GAT, Portugal

Women and gender non-conforming people joined the EVAWUD campaign by 'visibilizing' collective energies beyond the traditional labels of 'women who use drugs' or 'doing sex work'. The MANAS collective decided that feeling beautiful and safe would be a goal through to 2023.

The EVAWUD22 highlight was "[Our rights are fashion](#)" (working with a photographer and make-up artist professionals at the Fine Arts University of Lisbon) joining 5 women who use drugs beyond the label of people who use drugs by working on self-image as women surviving multiple stigma and simultaneously demanding rights to beauty and care. At the same time, as a result of the photography sessions, a [calendar](#) was created with the final outputs from this 16 days of activism.

Additional activities included screening the documentary "Six Women One Seed" and "Mary Poppers" (drag) performance against toxic masculinity with EMCDDA, and a march against intimate partner and police violence.



CASO, Portugal

At the local level, the EVAWUD22 campaign was centred on two main harm reduction sites: a recently opened supervised consumption program (PCV) in Porto, and Conta'to, a drop-in space in the city centre. Both moments involved significant community mobilization around the printing of orange t-shirts and the wearing of the t-shirt as a symbolic act of solidarity to the cause of Elimination of Violence against Women who Use Drugs. However, the conditions for each event were significantly different and occasioned contacts and involvements of different levels.



With the harm reduction teams working in parallel, the community of people who use drugs focused discussion on the concern that women who use drugs are often treated as responsible for the violence they have suffered and have been left out in responses to gender-based violence, particularly with regard to complaint mechanisms, legal aid, housing and social services. Other violations were discussed, notably including revocation of parental rights.

Although the social media campaign was less active than anticipated, it helped create conditions with key policy makers (such as SICAD and the Porto City Council) to relaunch the issues of ensuring adequate resources and legislative frameworks to uphold the safety and human rights of women and non-binary people who use drugs.



Uganda Harm Reduction Network (UHRN)

UHRN organised an awareness raising campaign titled; *'Demystifying Myths and Misconceptions that Perpetuate Violence against Women who use Drugs in Uganda'* which was run both on social media platforms and physically during the 16 days of activism.

All through the campaign, UHRN shared social media messages aimed at demystifying myths and misconceptions against women who use drugs that perpetuate violence, and called upon everyone to end violence against women who use drugs. The campaign messages targeted all groups of society, including law enforcement, government and community members to understand that violence against women who use drugs is a violation of human rights. The campaign called for commitments and actions to eliminate violence against women who use drugs.

On the last day of the EVAWUD22 campaign, some community of women who use drugs representatives in Uganda held a peaceful match along the street of one of the divisions in Kampala district, dressed in branded orange t-shirts and carrying placards with messages calling upon the public to 'End Violence Against Women who Use Drugs'.



Journal l'Arbre À Palabres, France

[Journal l'Arbre À Palabres](#) in Marseille, while not a WHRIN grantee, participated with translations and modifications of the EVAWUD22 poster and production of t-shirts ready to use for the November 25 march, along with displays prepared along the march route.

Activists held discussions with other people present at the march, around violence against women and other minoritised genders who use drugs. A small meeting was held on December 8 at Parc Longchamps in Marseille with women from the community of people who use drugs, to drink coffee or tea in the sun and take photos for the campaign, then shared on [instagram](#) with the other participating groups.

A final meeting was held on December 09 between several allied associations and community members to launch a harm reduction network (the HARENE network) where again the EVAWUD themes were taken forward.



Club Eney, Ukraine

Club Eney held a meeting of activists, took photos with the EVAWUD22 campaign poster, and developed a publication detailing important requirements. A closed [film screening](#) of a thematic film was held for women from key communities (women who use drugs, sex workers, positive women) and decision makers.



Women shared their stories about violence and supported each other, with all confirming their willingness to fight violence against women who use drugs.

A supportive photo shoot was conducted for women who use drugs with resulting photos utilised to create a 'flash mob' on Facebook. All participating women posted temporary avatars with the results of a photo shoot and EVAWUD22 campaign logos. The united, supportive and visible campaign was fully developed and led by women who use drugs in Ukraine.



CHEMICAL SISTER'S, Italy

Chemical Sisters started the 16 Days of Action campaign with online activism launching the campaign, tagging participants and creating online material. On 25 November, the Sisters went to the drop-in centre and participated in activities for the day to eliminate violence against women. Nail polish, hair colour and information material on harm reduction and gender non-conforming bodies were distributed. It was a beautiful day of talking and sharing. In the evening, the group attended a show on gender-based violence, covering admission for 10 women who use drugs (the proceeds went to the association that organised the show).



On 26 November, a workshop called 'how to recognise and counter gender-based violence during nightlife' was held at Comala space. Printed information material, hot drinks and some biscuits were shared. On 27th, a harm reduction stand was established in an occupied space in Turin, namely at the local independent radio station, Radio Blackout. There was a tekno night and Chemical Sisters were there to provide a safe zone, water, condoms, sweets, hot drinks, safer injecting use material, safer sniff kit etc.

On Monday 28th, Chemical Sisters were interviewed by a famous national radio station, Radio Radicale specifically to talk about the EVAWUD campaign, and the campaign Press Release which was translated and published in FuoriLuogo, a newspaper of the Forum Droghe network. On 1 December, the Italian 'chi mi ama mi segua' campaign on HIV awareness was promoted, also connection with the EVAWUD campaign.

NGO_Regeneration, Serbia

Regeneration wanted to highlight that, due to stigma, discrimination, lack of knowledge and relevant research, women who use drugs lack support, services and care and are lost in the system. On 28th of November, the NGO Regeneration organised a conference 'Lost in the System' with the support of relevant stakeholders and decision makers, highlighting the need for targeted data collection within and beyond government and harm reduction services and support systems that are missing when it comes to women who use drugs. The need for reform of the system towards a gendered approach was promoted. 20 people attended the conference, including participants from CSOs, the public health institute of Serbia, and the office for combating drugs.

During the 16 days of activism, a daily post was shared on social media, starting with what data and services are (un)available, overviewing different research results and (re)contextualizing them, highlighting the difference between accessibility and availability, and also calling on relevant institutions and organisations for accountability and rethinking their approach. Reasons to support the need for full spectrum, gender sensitive services were highlighted.

During the campaign, different relevant content and tools were disseminated including tools addressing GBV prevention and promotion of the Regeneration [Guide tool](#) on how to work with women who use drugs who are experiencing violence. The need for implementation of a referral system was likewise promoted.

This action was a first of its kind in Serbia, and contributed to advocacy actions towards a more comprehensive approach to women who use drugs and their needs, and will serve as a baseline for further activities, programs and actions.



Kenya Consortia:

Women Nest, Women in Response to HIV/AIDS and Drug Addiction (WRADA), Women in Global Health (WGH), Western Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (WEKESWA), Kisumu Initiative of People who Use Drugs (KINPUD), and the Kwale Network of People who Use Drugs (KwanPUD).

The Kenya consortia of harm reduction partners undertook activities across different counties nationwide. In Nairobi, Women Nest and WRADA took the lead collaborating with Women in Global Health (WGH) for the launch of the EVAWUD campaign in Mathare informal settlements.

In Kisumu County, WEKESWA and KINPUD held a sensitisation meeting with police staffing the gender desk, to challenge denial of child custody for sex workers who use drugs.

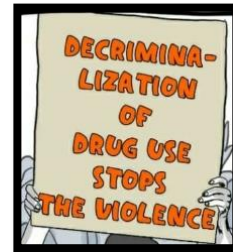
They also joined Kisumu County government in [the official launch of activities](#) related to 16 days of



activism to end violence against women. In the coast region, KwaNPUD took the lead in holding experiential discussion on violence against women who use drugs and sharing on means used to survive violence. All Kenya consortia members also took part in an online campaign where 16 posters with different advocacy messages were shared during the period.



Stigma and Discrimination leads to Violence



Centre for Key Populations Rights (CKPoR), Malawi

On December 10, International Human Rights Day and conclusion of the 16 days of activism to eliminate violence against women, the Centre for Key Populations Rights (CKPoR) coordinated a campaign where women from the community of people who use drugs and all other relevant stakeholders were involved. Women who use drugs shared their experience on violence faced and established a gender based violence rapid response team. Additionally, CKPoR have now instigated planning to develop a minimum package for gender based violence rapid response.



Canada Consortia: Regent Park Community Health Centre and COUNTERfit

Regent Park Community Health Centre (CHC), in partnership with COUNTERfit Harm Reduction Program (an initiative of South Riverdale Community Health Centre), engaged in a multi-site campaign in Downtown/East Toronto called “*Safety is Community – Addressing Violence through Community Building*”. The goal was to engage womxn who use drugs throughout the 16 days in discussions around violence, using a strengths-based approach to focus on what makes womxn who use drugs feel safe.

Theme designs were shared each week day over social media both to encourage participation and to share the message to end violence against womxn who use drugs!



From Nov 25-Dec 8th, the theme of building safety through building community was raised in drop-ins, kit-making and other groups for womxn that use drugs or do sex work. Participants talked about what they do to keep themselves free from violence, what makes them feel safe, what they think drives the violence, and what they envision for a world free of violence against womxn who use drugs.

Womxn discussed needing housing, worrying about friends going missing, the practical things people do to stay safer (like calling when you get home), and the need to reform drug and sex work policy.

Ideas were written down and brought to the final event to celebrate the strength and safety that womxn build in their own communities. The event invited community members to come for lunch, conversation and music. Womxn designed cloth squares and together sewed a quilt to document these ideas, and to symbolize how communities are a blanket wrapped around ourselves. Finished fabric squares were then sewn together into a quilt to create a “safety blanket” that is on display at Regent Park CHC. Participants were given Tim Horton’s gift cards, subway tokens and an honorarium for their time.



PeerNUPS, Greece

PeerNUPS was active in organizing virtual discourse through an EVAWUD22 web discussion on gender-based violence affecting women who use drugs. Additionally, two live meetings were held, in Athens and in Mykonos, where PeerNUPS women went out in the streets to share EVAWUD22 t-shirts, poster, slogans and experiences with women who use drugs. Understandably, yet sadly, very few women were prepared to share their picture as stigma is very strong in Greece and for a woman, being identified as a drug user very often brings extra risk affecting family relationships and child custody through to even losing employment or place of residence.



Youth RISE, Mexico

A reflection and self-care circle for women who use drugs residents of the Mexican Metropolitan Area, - (CRAMUD by its acronym in Spanish) was organised for the EVAWUD22 campaign.

CRAMUD arose with the intention of disseminating information and useful tools that promote harm reduction strategies among young women who use drugs while aiming to build alliances between government and NGO stakeholders to promote the right of women to a life free of violence and to strengthen access to social, health and justice services. The inaugural activity took place in face-to-face and virtual - hybrid format.



A discussion was held on gender, violence against women who use drugs and harm reduction. With the support of Mexican NGOs like LPSD (Latinoamérica por una Política Sensata de Drogas) and Los Boticarios, the meeting was held at the facilities of a family development organisation for youth in the municipality of Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico.



Peer Based Harm Reduction WA. (PBHRWA). Australia

PBHRWA produced a poster including contact details for 1-800 RESPECT, a national counselling service in Australia. The poster produced was displayed in-house and circulated to partner organisations for distribution through their services. These included over 100 remote and regional needle and syringe programs.

Women service users were consulted by completing a questionnaire in return for an incentive payment. Feedback from the consultation was invaluable and included the following relating to using fresh flowers: “...use silk flowers... to help raise awareness for longer. Fake flowers will go further...”. A small resource was attached to individual orange artificial flowers, including contact details for 1-800 RESPECT, and Entry Point, who provide free homelessness support. The flowers were provided to women who accessed the service at the start and end of the 16 days of action.

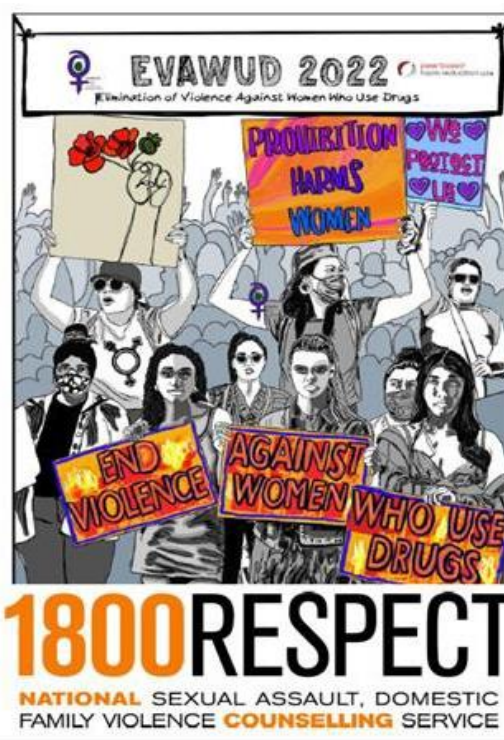
Over 300 service users accessing PBHRWA services during the 16 days of action presented as women and were told about the EVAWUD22 campaign. The campaign materials and slogan were incorporated into social media content for a post on the @PBHRWA Facebook page.

The flowers were well received by everyone. The first flower was given to a person who disclosed a recent attack. Staff were able to refer them to 1-800 RESPECT for emotional support.

One of the last people to receive a flower became emotional with appreciation and stated:

“I’m not upset, it’s just that no one ever gives me flowers.”

PBHRWA supports people in crisis situations and/or fleeing violence by providing referrals, resources and travel cards to get to a place of safety. Thanks to the feedback that was received through the consultation, the artificial flowers and referral contact details can be also passed from one person to another and continue to spread the campaign message.



PBHRWA staff with the flowers, resource and post

EWNA, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

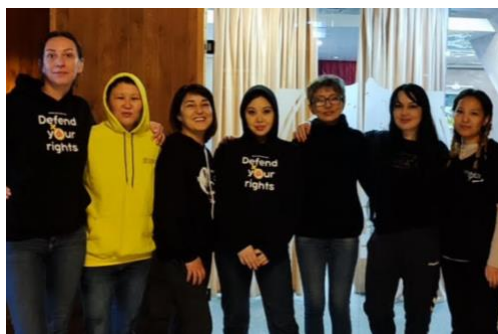
For EVAWUD22, the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS ([EWNA](#)) called for an end to all forms of violence against women who use drugs in a joint [statement](#).

EWNA provided [mini-grants](#) to women activists from 8 countries (Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine and Estonia) as a part of the 8th regional campaign "No excuse for violence!". They held women-led activities aimed to mobilize the community of women who use drugs against violence in the EECA region, including but not limited to

- Gatherings of women who use drugs and women living with HIV to discuss unmet needs in addressing GBV
- Collecting, documenting and sharing the stories of women violence survivors
- Screening and discussion of documentaries about women who use drugs
- Discussions of the Barcelona Declaration
- Exchange visits to crisis centers and shelters to sensitize personnel to the needs of women who use drugs and support violence survivors
- Thematic performances with participation of women who use drugs
- In-between countries exchanges and dialogues with community leaders and advocates.



Kazakhstan



Kyrgyzstan



Ukraine



Estonia

From Nov 25th to Dec 10th, EWNA posted violence survivors stories on its [Facebook](#) page. The campaign was supported by the Alliance for Public Health and stories were published on the [REAct campaign](#) “16 Days of Activism against GBV”. (See the [full EWNA Campaign report](#))

WHRIN extends gratitude and congratulations to all those participating in the EVAWUD22 campaign. Together, women who use drugs are gaining momentum in protecting the rights and safety of members of our community. EVAWUD activities are increasingly targeted towards service, policy and practice adjustments and reforms designed to protect and assist women and gender non-conforming people who use drugs who are experiencing or at risk of violence. Please keep us posted on any further campaign and related activities so we can promote, share and hopefully replicate your progress in other locations. Please also share this report through your networks.

<http://whrin.site>