

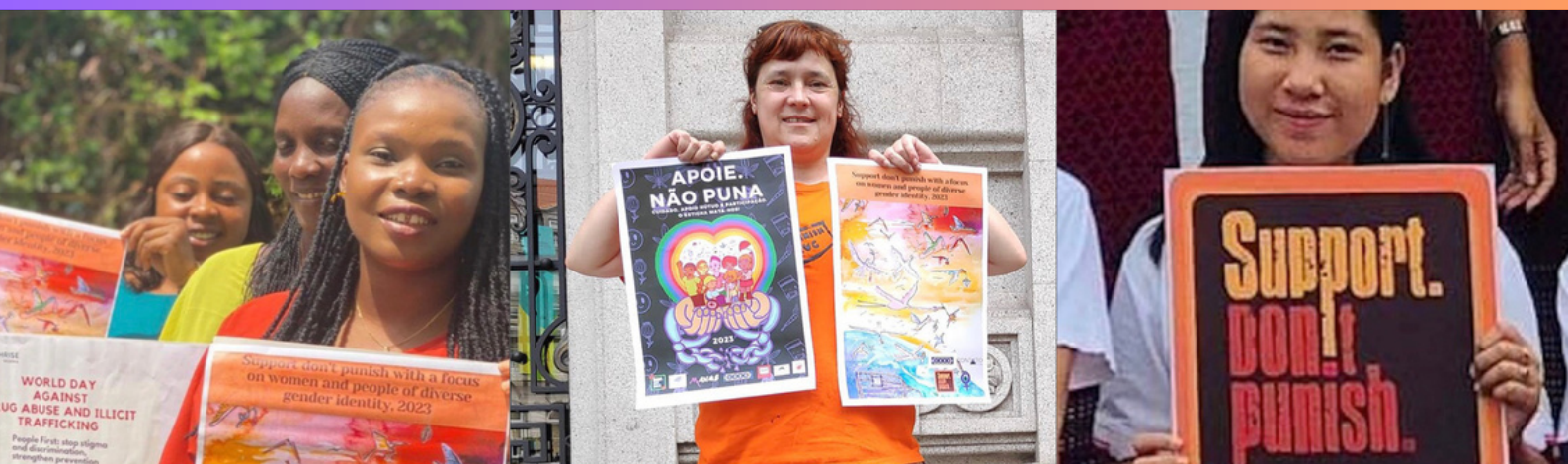
Support don't punish with a focus on women and people of diverse gender identity, 2023



The 2023 Support don't Punish with a focus on women and people of diverse gender identity is growing year on year, with a new peak in activity for 2023. This report summarises some of the activities that were reported from Kenya, Ukraine, Namibia, Eurasia, Nigeria, Portugal, Indonesia, Catalonia, Mauritius, Georgia, and Myanmar. Embedded hyperlinks connect with related social media.

Please share this report with those who participated, your networks and as may be useful in advocacy efforts.

Acknowledgements to all amazing campaigners and to artist Yvonne Samuel for the beautiful 2023 poster.



Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme and Coast Sex Workers Alliance – Kenya



For the support don't punish with focus on women and people of diverse gender identity who use drugs campaign, the Coast Sex Workers Alliance (COSWA) in partnership with Bar Hostess Empowerment (BHESP) held a community dialogue with sex workers who use drugs and health care workers to amplify the unmet sexual and reproductive health needs of sex workers who use drugs, merged with the roles that health care workers can play in bridging access gaps.



Through this action, BHESP together with COSWA engaged 48 sex workers who use drugs and 24 health workers on a sexual and reproductive health dialogue guided by the WHRIN **toolkit**. Key highlights from the dialogue included those relating to the module addressing issues around gender identity where almost all participants present, including the health care workers, were not previously aware about different sexual orientation, expression and identity. Gender non-conforming persons present added power to the campaign.

All 72 participants (from Nairobi and Mombasa) were given a copy of the toolkit to use in knowledge dissemination for future activities. Overall, BHESP and COSWA were delighted that the campaign provided an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between health workers and sex workers who use drugs in creating awareness and improving knowledge on sexual and reproductive health. Health workers also committed to integrate sexual and reproductive health into their normal outreach activities. **Social media** and **photos** documented the event.

Club Eney - Ukraine

Since 2001, Club Eney has been protecting the rights of people who use drugs, paying special attention to women because the organisation comprised people from this community who have experience with both the use of psychoactive substances and the personal violation of rights. Over the years, many stories from women about violence, unemployment, deprivation of maternity and other rights violations have been received. No less often, other people are hyperbolizing the problem, attempting to suggest that there are no rights violations, and if there are, then these women themselves deserve it. However, Club Eney know for sure that no women deserve violence, stigma and discrimination.

In order to improve the lives of women and people of diverse gender identities who use drugs, Club Eney applied for official permission to conduct a Flash mob titled: "*The UN recommends equal rights and opportunities for women who use drugs*" which was spread on **social media** to encourage participation. A total of 20 women from 7 regions of Ukraine took part in the flash mob designed to attract public attention to this topic. The action also provided opportunity to meet face to face, share experience and support each other.



In 2022, Club Eney and WHRIN had submitted a joint shadow report on the situation of women who use drugs, highlighting examples of violations of women's rights in Ukraine to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and received 3 clear recommendations for our country related specifically to women who use drugs as follows:

- 30(e) to ensure that women who use drugs have access to adequate services so that all women who are victims of gender-based violence in Ukraine have protection and support including access to adequate shelters, health care and legal assistance;
- 40(a) reduce unemployment among women who use drugs;
- 46(c) to provide support to drug-using mothers and refrain from automatically depriving them of custody of their children.

During the campaign, the CEDAW recommendations were promoted and different women who use drugs shared about the violation of their rights. (Stories and more photos can be see using the hashtag #womenstoriesdp). Women who use drugs activists posted photos and stories of various women on their pages and on the pages of partner organisations.

Kwale Network of People who Use Drugs (KwanPUD) - Kenya

KwaNPUD embrace the engagement of women who use drugs within its movement so that women can gain power to govern their own issues without being patronized by men. KwaNPUD conducted a hybrid engagement with other national leaders from Kenya Sex Work Alliance, Women in Response AIDS and Drug Abuse (WRADA) which is women who use drugs-led movement, SWOP (sex worker-led organisation) Ambassadors, the the Key Population Consortium of Kenya and Kenya Network of People Who Use Drugs. The meeting provided a platform for women who use drugs to deliberate with national leaders, establishing an ongoing hybrid engagement with national leadership sharing challenges, experience and hope to the community of women who use drugs from Kwale County of Kenya.

Discussions, concerns and agreements included:

- Different women raised issues on sex work clients with regard to sexual and gender-based violence. WRADA pledged to provide legal support through pro-bono advocates.
- The other case was around denial of inheritance due to being a woman who uses drugs. WRADA agreed to follow up the case and KwaNPUD offered to seek legal support to address the concern.



Harm Reduction for PWUD and PWID (MANDALA) and Women's health and rights (Femea) – Georgia

The members of Mandala and Femea discussed various topics related to the philosophy of harm reduction, the effects of stigma and discrimination, and the influence of drug policy on quality of life. They also delved into how these factors impact the culture and safety of music events, considering both the perspectives of individuals attending and the organisers of such events. Additionally, the conversation touched upon sexual safety concerns, highlighting the challenges faced by women who use drugs and offering recommendations to address them. In light of these discussions, a set of house rule recommendations were formulated, prioritising the prevention of sexual harassment and violence towards women, along with prompt detection and response to support survivors. These recommendations were communicated in writing to event organisers across different spaces.



YouthRISE Nigeria

The 2023 campaign engaged the community of women who use drugs and the public online and offline through activities to shape narratives, propose solutions to address stigma and discrimination and prioritise support toward women who use drugs through 3 distinct approaches. A one-day community consultation meeting was conducted for women who use opioids, aiming to identify barriers to naloxone access for women. The meeting had eleven women in attendance to share their experiences overdose in the community, identify barriers they have in accessing naloxone, and proffer recommendations. An example of an identified barrier is the unavailability of naloxone within the community, so it was recommended that a peer champion distribution approach within communities should be employed to ensure access for women who use opioids.



Stakeholders, community gatekeepers, and law enforcement agencies in Akwa Ibom State were engaged in a dialogue to address stigma and discrimination against women who use drugs. The activity engaged a diverse audience, including students, parents, people who use drugs community members, and local authorities. The high turnout demonstrated the community's interest in addressing stigma against people who use drugs.



Social media was utilised to engage the public and address the narrative of stigma and discrimination against women who use drugs through infographics, videos, and educative slides. This series of media activities enlightened the public on the realities of women who use drugs in the context of the negative stereotypes that sustain stigma and discrimination, negatively affecting health, human rights, and social inclusion.

Womxn's Voice – Indonesia



The Indonesian Support Don't Punish (SDP) Global Day of Action 2023 with focus on women and people of diverse gender expression who use drugs carried the theme 'Your Response is Your Power'. The best source of knowledge about what a person needs in order to feel safe is the person themselves. In this special moment, Womxn's Voice held a community discussion on legal and human rights which was attended by almost 50 community members from the Bogor, West Java area. The event was opened with remarks from community figures who strongly support such positive activities. The event included involvement from a female lawyer who is dedicated to providing legal aid to the community.

Overall, the Q&A session was very active and before the activity was closed, all participants were invited to simultaneously scan the QR Code from the 'Holla ARLINN' Hotline - as well as a symbol connecting with the hotline for reporting gender-based violence cases which was officially launched.

Expert Fem Council, ENPUD – Eurasia



The representatives of the Expert Fem-Council are women who live with an "open face" despite all the risks for feminist activists in the field of drug policy and women's rights in the EECA region. The Council planned to participate in the campaign via 2 core actions.

The first planned action involved the production of branded clothing, where, over the month of June, women who use drugs in the city of Chernivtsi who have a sewing workshop and are very skilled at sewing quality clothes enact the production.

The second action involved auctioning the products and promoting the campaign via **social media** and a **video**. Promotion aimed to focus on the vision of a world in which every woman is free to choose her sexual orientation, gender identity, style and way of life. A world where women who use drugs are allowed to be themselves, to develop and fulfil their potential. The planned auction proceeds were to be directed to supporting a shelter for women from key populations.

Young Feminists Movement – Namibia



The Young Feminists Movement (Y-Fem) is a national feminist human rights organisation focused on grassroots movements and advancing women's rights by promoting bodily autonomy, access to health, education and justice. Women and people of diverse gender identities who use drugs often speak of the rejection and discriminatory treatment faced socially as well as in state institutes such as hospitals and law enforcement agencies.

- *“Marginalised communities are consistently at the base of the social ladder and also the people who face the heaviest impacts of harm as a result of drug use.”* Shared during the wellness meeting with documentary participants
- *“When I go report, they say ‘you are a man, why are you dressed like a lady,’ they call me moffie, and they don’t help me”* - SDP Namibia Documentary (Moffie is an Afrikaans derogatory term used to attack people of the LGBTQ+ community)

A harm reduction wellness workshop was held with the goal of checking in on the team that participated in the Support Don't Punish documentary. The filming involved unpacking emotionally heavy experiences and there was a need to ensure that everyone was doing okay. The wellness session began with a gratitude breathing exercise followed by an ice breaker. Respectful language that humanises women who use drugs is crucial. To explore this, a “Love Letter” game was used.

The following lessons were gained from this game:

- 1) It is important to let people know that they are loved
- 2) The love coming your way is coming because you deserve to be loved. You're as much a person as anyone else and are just as worthy of love and care.
- 3) You are never going through a struggle alone, there are people here who are there for you.



The group discussed the need to shift power to favour individuals who are systematically destabilised. Power in society is held by those who have the ability to successfully push their agendas. In Namibia, these include law makers, employed people, religious and political leaders.

A session was run on power dynamics in society and how these often work against people who use drugs, followed by discussion on how these can be tackled through personal, community and governmental interventions. Associated social media can be viewed [here](#).

Catalan People who Use Drugs (CATNPUD) - Catalonia



Dozens of people gathered at the Rambla del Raval in Barcelona to celebrate the special day. For another year, anti-prohibitionist organisations and activists from around Catalunya showcased their commitment and unity via **CATNPUD** (the Catalan Network of People Who Use Drugs). The day kicked off with reading a **manifesto** that outlined some of the principal objectives of Catalunya's 2023 campaign. In the "Anti-Prohibitionist Olympics", participants worked in teams, demonstrating their knowledge on themes related to the campaign and the world of substances. Alongside a delicious meal, Metzineres' director Aura Roig and lawyer Marta Valldaura presented a guide which offers practical tools to more easily navigate certain interactions with the police and judicial system.

Radio worked with CATNPUD to stream a live episode of 'The Dark Side of el Raval' by members of Fundació Àmbit Prevenió. The episode brought together people who use drugs, who came to share experiences from their daily lives. Following Vidda Priego's marvelous autobiographical monologue about her reality as a trans bisexual person, DJ MariKarmen Free turned the location on the Rambla del Raval into a small oasis, with dance, song, and jumping, where diversity and intersectionality were the protagonists.



The very next day on June 27th, the Hospital Sant Joan de Reus hosted a photography exhibit called 'Amb Cara de Dona': a journey through the stories of the members of Dona Arsu Tot –an entity belonging to Asociación A Reus Som Útils. The manifesto was read at the hospital's front entrance with Canal Reus TV present as well as other groups and activists who came in support of Dr. Tre Borràs to denounce the injustices being faced by the hospital's 'Servicio de Adicciones y Salud Mental'.

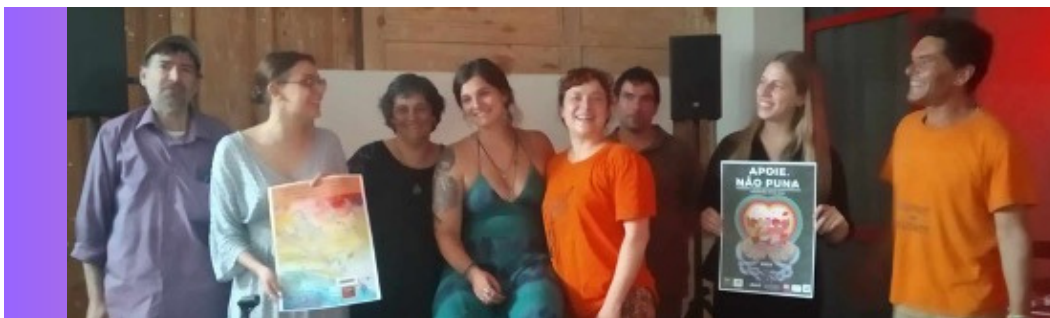
Mauritian Peer Network in Harm Reduction



The Peer Network in Harm Reduction was launched and its objectives were highlighted. 30 persons composed of 10 women, 2 transgender, and 18 men were present for this campaign. A brief explanation of the Support Don't Punish campaign was provided by network representative, Cindy. The Peer Network in Harm Reduction provided factual information on different policies and laws which will be promoted in the coming months in Mauritius. Cindy presented 'Pik Propre' (which means 'safe Injecting practices') to encourage people who use drugs to use sterile and safe materials. Most of the participants knew about the recommendations but continued to share materials because of police repression. Paraphernalia kits will be introduced in the following weeks in Mauritius to minimize risk.

Two women spoke of their lived experience and acknowledge that NGOs have been active with mostly the best outcomes. However, the women spoke of unresolved issues such as having their babies being held by the Child Development Unit after they give birth at the hospital simply because they are on the methadone programme. Additionally, methadone is still distributed from Police Station yards with obvious attendant disadvantages as a barrier to health access.

MUSA - Portugal



MUSA, an informal, mutual support group of women who use drugs, was founded with assistance from CASO. MUSA has expanded to engage a wider group of women, especially those working in harm reduction services who have expressed their support for MUSA. An open letter was developed to draw attention to the specific needs of cis women, trans people and other people of gender diverse expression who use drugs, the multiple discriminations that affect them and the measures that need to be urgently implemented.

This year's campaign took unexplored paths and was the most political ever, bringing demands addressed to central, regional and local authorities, services and professionals. The **open letter** for gender-sensitive services was launched on the day of the Campaign and will remain open until the end of August. The letter does not yet have a deadline in anticipation of the need for persistence to build the required support base. Along the way, MUSA strengthened feminist leadership in public actions and a narcofeminist identity.

Women Nest – Kenya

Women Nest support don't punish campaign goal was to highlight impact of punitive drug policies/laws on women who use drugs. This was accomplished by conducting a one-week online campaign starting on Monday 26th where posters presenting various human rights violations were shared on social media and a sensitization discussion was held with various duty bearers from the justice system. In this meeting, women who use drugs shared their experiences of human rights violations from the prison managers, prosecutors, police, probation officers and court executive officers. In response, the justice system actors promised to offer support to stop such violations. The prosecutor said she would ensure that opioid dependent women presented in court and experiencing withdrawal symptoms had access to methadone before taking a plea.

Further she promised that women who use drugs would not be jailed for possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use. The probation officers said that they would prepare more comprehensive reports to support non-custodial sentencing of women who use drugs.



On Friday 30th June 2023, Women Nest in collaboration with Formerly Incarcerated Women in Africa conducted a webinar highlighting the impact of the 'Drug War' on women in Africa noting how punitive drug policies/laws in various countries in Africa had contributed to the unreasonable rising incarceration of women in Africa.



Drug Policy Advocacy Group (DPAG) – Myanmar

For the 2023 Support Don't Punish campaign, DPAG organised a special focus on women who use drugs and people of diverse gender identity activity. Objectives were:

- To promote awareness among the general population on the needs and challenges faced by people who use drugs, particularly women and people of diverse gender identity.
- To collaborate with local youth groups, CSOs and key affected population networks in organising the campaign and distribution of key messages.
- To demonstrate solidarity with the global campaign and collaborate with regional and international partners on harm reduction and drug policy reform such as WHRIN and IDPC.

Short video clips were posted with key messages from people with lived experience of drug use including women, trans people, sex workers, and ethnic youth. Messages given were *“Stop discriminating against women who use drugs and people of diverse gender identities.”*, *“We are not criminals. We need access to health and harm reduction services, and a safe place.”*, *“We all are human beings. Help and sympathize with people who use drugs.”*, *“Help/Support women who use drugs.”*, *“We all are human beings.”* The video clips were also subtitled in English language and posted on DPAG Facebook page. Photos with key messages were also posted on the same social media link. The videos and photos were viewed by 7000 followers and received positive comments from viewers. Printed campaign materials such as T-shirts, stickers, vinyl posters and boards with short messages were distributed between DPAG networks and partners located in major cities.

The campaign brought motivation and mobilisation of different CSO partners including communities affected by punitive drug policies and practices.



Many thanks to all those who participated in support don't punish with a focus on women and people of diverse gender identity 2023. Please share this summary with all who were involved and others to showcase the need to end punitive responses to drug use as part of the movement for gender equality and human rights for all.

