

Civil Society Advocacy for Increased Harm Reduction Investments and Coverage

Memorandum of Understanding

*Eurasian Harm Reduction Network
Harm Reduction International
International Drug Policy Consortium
International Network of People who Use Drugs
Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association
Youth RISE*

I. BACKGROUND

We cannot end AIDS until we address injecting drug use, which has been reported in 158 countries and territories worldwide and is one of the main drivers of the global HIV pandemic. There are around 16 million people who inject drugs worldwide: including 3 million people living with HIV and 10 million people living with HCV. In many parts of the world, people who inject drugs comprise the overwhelming majority of those living with HIV, and that number is growing.

In half of these countries, basic HIV prevention measures needed to slow or reverse epidemics (such as needle and syringe provision and opioid substitution therapy) are unavailable. In most others, they are being delivered far below the scale required to have an impact. Access to harm reduction services in prisons is even worse, even in countries with an otherwise robust HIV response. Some of the key reasons for this are:

- **Inadequate investments in harm reduction.** Donor support for harm reduction remains woefully inadequate, amounting to just US\$160 million in low and middle income countries in 2007, compared to the estimated US\$2.3 billion required by 2015. Ninety percent of the funding comes from international donors, with key middle income countries in particular danger as donors change their eligibility and priorities.
- **Inadequate policy environments.** The importance of creating enabling policy environments for an effective HIV response has long been recognised. The UNAIDS Investment Framework, for example, emphasises the importance of “critical enablers” that “create environments conducive to rational HIV responses... and demand for programmes and improve their performance”. Yet people who use drugs remain criminalised in almost every country of the world, creating huge barriers to the implementation and scale-up of effective HIV prevention interventions, and fuelling human rights abuses.
- **Civil society capacity.** The crucial role of civil society in the HIV response has been widely acknowledged – yet many networks and organisations in this field lack the capacity to meaningfully engage with policy making processes and truly influence decisions.

This programme of work will directly address these problems at the local level, through global and regional action.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to agree the terms of a joint programme of research, advocacy and community strengthening in order to expand funding for and accessibility to HIV-related harm reduction programmes, for consideration by the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund. Bringing together six of the leading international and regional harm reduction, drug policy and drug user activist networks into a joint Consortium, the project will deliver a coordinated set of activities targeted at the national, regional and international levels. This will, in turn, build community and political support for harm reduction and the rights of people who use drugs.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

- a) **Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN): www.harm-reduction.org**
EHRN is a regional network with a mission to promote humane, evidence-based harm reduction approaches to drug use, with the aim of improving health and protecting human rights at the individual, community, and societal level. EHRN is the principle recipient and lead applicant for the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund proposal.
- b) **Harm Reduction International (HRI): www.ihra.net**
HRI is a global membership-based association of harm reduction organisations, advocates and service providers. It works to reduce drug related harms by promoting evidence based public health policy and practices and human rights based approaches to drug policy through an integrated programme of research, analysis, advocacy and civil society strengthening.
- c) **International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC): www.idpc.net**
IDPC is a global network of more than 100 NGOs that specialise in issues related to the production and use of controlled drugs. It aims to promote objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at the national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. IDPC works to increase the visibility and strength of civil society in national, regional, international fora related to drugs and health.
- d) **International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD): www.inpud.net**
INPUD is the peak international NGO for people who use drugs and brings the voice of the community into international advocacy arenas on public health (principally HIV and HCV), harm reduction, drug law reform and human rights. INPUD is a non-financial partner in the Consortium.
- e) **Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHR): www.menahra.org**
MENAHR is the first network on harm reduction in the MENA region, covering 20 countries. Its mission is to support, develop and advocate for harm reduction approaches in the field of drug use, HIV/AIDS, public health, and social exclusion by following the principles of humanity, tolerance and partnership with respect to human rights and freedoms.
- f) **Youth RISE: www.youthrise.org**
Youth RISE is an international, youth-led network of young people promoting evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction strategies with the involvement of young people who use drugs and are affected by drug policies. Youth RISE envisions a world where society responds to drug use among young people through humane and evidence based policy and practice.

IV. SHARED OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSORTIUM

The overarching mission of this Consortium is to end HIV transmission among people who inject drugs by promoting better policy environments and the scale-up of quality, effective harm reduction services – in line with the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund (RCNF)'s own vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS related deaths.

The aim of this two-year programme of work is therefore to increase the number of people who inject drugs who have access to quality harm reduction services in supportive policy environments.

In order to achieve this aim, the Consortium Partners will work together to achieve the following objectives:

1. To significantly increase expenditure for HIV-related harm reduction programmes and services from national and international sources, particularly in low and middle income countries, and highlight the need for more strategic investments by donors and governments (linking directly to Outcome 4 of the RCNF Results Framework).
2. To challenge repressive laws and policies that act as barriers to effective harm reduction and HIV programming, and to protect the rights of inadequately served populations across the world (linking directly to Outcomes 2 and 3 of the RCNF Results Framework).
3. To build the capacity of civil society, especially networks of people who use drugs, to effectively advocate for: increased financing; the scale-up of youth-friendly and women-friendly harm reduction services; the integration of HIV, TB and drug treatment services proportionate to disease burdens; the evaluation and reform of existing drug policies; and the engagement of people who use drugs in policy decisions (linking directly to Outcome 1 of the RCNF Results Framework).
4. To increase the coordination and effectiveness of advocacy efforts, linking global, regional and national civil society organisations together, and facilitating their engagement with national, regional and international policy makers in order to achieve shared goals (linking directly to Outcome 1 of the RCNF Results Framework).
5. To raise public and political awareness of the issues facing people who use drugs, through research, reports, strategic media engagement and campaigns (linking directly to Outcome 2 of the RCNF Results Framework).

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

The Consortium Partners agree to work together to deliver the coordinated set of activities as described in detail in the joint bid to the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund.

In general terms, each Partner will be responsible for:

a) **Eurasian Harm Reduction Network:**

- Serving as principle recipient and lead applicant for purposes of the application to the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund, and all administrative and reporting responsibilities related to that role.
- Leading on all programme activities in the Eurasian region, at both regional and national levels.
- Supporting the development of the Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs.

b) **Harm Reduction International**

- Leading on research and monitoring of harm reduction scale up and investment at the international and national levels to inform strategic advocacy.
- Leading on harm reduction and human rights advocacy with international institutions and mechanisms.
- Supporting the engagement of national and regional partners, including organisations of people who use drugs, in the above activities.

c) **International Drug Policy Consortium**

- Leading on research and monitoring on drug policy reform at the international and national levels to inform strategic advocacy.
- Leading on drug policy reform advocacy with international institutions and mechanisms, particularly at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.
- Supporting the engagement of national and regional partners, including organisations of people who use drugs, in the above activities.

d) **International Network of People who Use Drugs**

- Leading on the engagement of people who use drugs in all programme activities at international, regional and national levels.
- Supporting the development of the Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs and the Middle East and North Africa Network of People who Use Drugs.

e) **Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association**

- Leading on all programme activities in the MENA region, at both regional and national levels.
- Supporting the development of the Middle East and North Africa Network of People who Use Drugs.

f) **Youth RISE**

- Leading on the engagement of young people in all programme activities at international, regional and national levels.
- Leading on the engagement with national, regional and international youth organisations.

VI. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Consortium Partners agree to submit a joint consolidated budget to the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund, reflecting each partner's financial requirements in order to fulfil the described programme of work. In the event of the programme of work receiving partial funding:

- a) If the donor specifically approves some activities rather than others, these funds will be allocated to the Consortium partner as directed by the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund.
- b) If not VI(a), approved funds will be disbursed to each Consortium partner based on the same percentages as were allocated to each in the original proposal budget.

VII. PARTNER CONDUCT AND RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

All Consortium Partners are expected to behave in a way which enhances the reputation of the Consortium and our collective work, and protects the interests and reputations of the other Partners. Any disagreement or disputes are to be quickly reconciled at source on the first attempt. Second attempts are to be resolved between the Executive Directors, Board Chairs or equivalents of the Partners. Every effort will be made to avoid the recourse of litigation; however, if litigation becomes necessary, the matter will be resolved under the law of England and Wales.

VIII. TERMS AND AMENDMENT

In the event of a successful Consortium bid to the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund in 2013, this Memorandum shall enter into effect for a period of two years beginning 1 January 2014.

All Consortium Partners reserve the right to renegotiate this Memorandum upon the mutual consent of the other Partners, so long as such renegotiation does not affect the successful delivery of the overall programme of activities, or the commitments agreed between the Consortium and the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund

Signed, 18 July 2013

Serge Votyagov
Executive Director
EHRN

Rick Lines
Executive Director
HRI

Ann Fordham
Executive Director
IDPC

Eliot Albers
Executive Director
INPUD

Elie Aaraj
Executive Director
MENAHR

Anita Krug
Executive Director
Youth RISE