



International Network of People who Use Drugs

Monthly Digest - January 2021

INPUD's Monthly Digest is intended to keep our member and supporters informed about INPUD's activities month to month, as well as updates from national/regional networks and relevant news in drug policy.

The following updates cover January 2021.

Global Advocacy

Global AIDS Strategy 2021 - 2026

After a lengthy consultative phase, the draft Global AIDS Strategy 2021 – 2026 is now under further review with a new draft that looks very different from the one we reported on in December. Concerned that the points raised during the community consultations were not being addressed, [INPUD authored a joint letter](#), with support from the European Network of People who Use Drugs, Harm Reduction International and YouthRise, which reinforced key advocacy points from peers. The letter, endorsed by 35 community-led networks, drug policy and harm reduction organisations, urged several key points to be reinforced in the final document:

- The needs of key populations must be integrated across all areas of the Strategy, including explicitly stating harm reduction is **the** evidence-based response for people who inject drugs.
- Work with countries to re-orient national AIDS responses, legal frameworks, and health systems towards the decriminalisation of drugs and remove age-related barriers to access HIV and other health services.
- Collection of sex and age-disaggregated data must be adequately resourced as a first step to reaching women and young people who use drugs.
- Removal of age limits in harm reduction programmes which prevent young people who use drugs from accessing services
- Women who use drugs must have access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning needs, as well as programmes dealing with intimate partner violence, sexual and gender-based violence including psychological first aid.
- UNAIDS should refer to normative guidance such as the IDUIT and Stimulants Guide for reference on approaching language and differentiated interventions.
- Ensure allocation of at least 30% of funding to community-led service delivery.
- Securing political and financial commitment for communities to be recognised as experts within the response.



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The letter was well received by the UNAIDS strategy team, and the next draft we received the following week incorporated many of the points we raised. As the Global AIDS Strategy gets closer to full approval in March, we will continue to find ways to emphasise our key points and the concerns raised by community members in the consultation meetings.

#PeersInThePandemic

We have uploaded all of the videos from our #PeersInThePandemic campaign, which we ran at the end of 2020, onto our [YouTube channel](#). We encourage all to continue to share these videos during the pandemic and keep making bold calls for our five key demands. We are working on organising a peer webinar in February which will serve as a semi-continuation of the campaign, and allow our community to discuss what changes to health and legal services we must advocate for together in 2021.

Publications

[COVID-19 and people who use drugs; seizing opportunity in times of chaos](#)

This commentary submitted to the International Journal of Drug Policy was written by Ernst Wisse as the lead author and published with INPUD Executive Director Judy Chang, Mat Southwell and Naomi Burke-Shyne. It argues COVID-19 lockdown measures have created additional challenges to accessing prevention and health services for people who use drugs by overloading existing health structures and service delivery, while also exposing the deep cracks in our public health infrastructure. At the same time the pandemic has created opportunities to break through existing barriers to prevention and health service delivery.

[Imperfect Progress: treatment options for opioid dependence](#)

By 2025, UN member states have set a target for 95% of people living with HIV to know their status, for 95% of those will receive antiretroviral therapy (ART), and for 95% of those receiving ART to achieve viral suppression. This article in The Lancet, written in response to a study in Vietnam arguing against preference of treatment, discusses why people should get their choice of treatment options so that barriers can be lifted to achieve the 95-95-95 targets.



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Programmatic and Administrative Updates

[INPUD Seeks Policy and Advocacy Coordinator](#)

(Deadline 18 February)

INPUD is seeking a committed team member to join the INPUD Secretariat to advise and coordinate our Global Advocacy work, funded under the Love Alliance project. The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator's work will involve the realisation of the project's focus on global advocacy, amplifying linkages between global, regional and national advocacy and partnerships. The Policy and Advocacy Coordinator will contribute to INPUD's mission and advocacy work by conducting strategic advocacy at the global level to ensure key decision-making platforms and fora are shaped by the needs and priorities of people who use drugs. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with the Executive Director and relevant team members. The Coordinator will also oversee the development of advocacy and technical documents grounded in the needs and perspectives of the community.

For the full criteria and information on how to apply, [please see the job description and person specification here](#).

Robert Carr Consortium Monitoring & Evaluation Meeting

During the week of January 25th members of the Consortium of People who Use Drugs – consisting of INPUD, the South African Network of People who Use Drug, the Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs, and the African Network of People who Use Drugs - met alongside the Harm Reduction Consortium met for a three day virtual meeting to discuss our activities over the last year and plans for the future. It was a fantastic opportunity to take a step back and acknowledge all of the incredible work being done by peers across the world to strengthen networks, accountability and advocacy for the rights and health of people who use drugs. It is often hard to see the impacts of this work in the moment, especially in a pandemic environment, and laying it all out during these meetings provided validation on the positive impacts of all our hard work.

[NGOInABox.Net](#)

NGOInABox is a new website, supported through the Robert Carr Fund and developed jointly by the Consortium of People who Use Drugs and the Harm Reduction Consortium, containing collated materials intended to assist community and civil society networks establish and maintain good governance systems and practices. It includes resources on developing key organisational policies, contracting, risk management and more. All of these resources are open access and can be freely downloaded and adapted, as needed.

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News and Other Updates

[Community-led harm reduction displaced in Slovenia](#)

On January 19, police and private security forces under the direction of the Municipality of Ljubljana demolished the building serving as the headquarters of the community-led harm reduction organisation Društvo AREAL, along with other grassroots groups. According to a [press release](#) by the collective, at least 13 people were arrested with at least 6 requiring emergency medical care. Crucial harm reduction equipment such as naloxone and sterile syringes were lost in the destruction, and authorities have yet to return confidential documents regarding upcoming initiatives by Društvo AREAL.

The attack on our peers in Ljubljana is an attack on our entire global community. We ask that everyone share widely the injustices which are occurring here and stay tuned for more instruction on how we can help Društvo AREAL build back stronger than ever.

[Vote for Charles Henderson for the 2021 Impact 25 Awards](#)

Charles Henderson, Deputy Director of the New South Wales Users & AIDS Association (NUAA), has been nominated for an Impact 25 Award in recognition of his decades of advocacy and service to the Australian drug using community. NUAA is one of the oldest peer-based organisations in the world, and Charles has been at the forefront of their work for years. He deserves this recognition, so please [follow this link](#) and vote for Charles to win this award.

Coming Up

[Taking the Lead: Addressing the Critical Role of Communities in Research](#)

Much of the research which informs policy and decision making systemically excludes communities and key populations such as people who use drugs, people who live on the streets, transgender people, sex workers and men who have sex with men. Narratives which inform research projects too often come from academic backgrounds which are detached from real life issues. Given this, it is more crucial than ever for community-led organisations to engage in research and learn to apply it to our work.

Join us for a free webinar discussing the importance of communities engaging in research by presenting the success of a recent community-led, multi-country values and preferences study on Hepatitis C Self-Testing. This event will be in English with Russian translation services available. [Please register beforehand here.](#)

[64th Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#)

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The 64th CND will be held 12-16 April at the Vienna International Centre. Due to the ongoing pandemic this year's meeting will be a hybrid event with both in-person and virtual programming. The exact programme and format of how this will work are still TBA, and INPUD will keep our membership updated of opportunities to get engaged. We have submitted one side event co-sponsored by the Canadian HIV Legal Network and UNAIDS which will discuss community-led responses on decriminalisation, COVID-19 and harm reduction.

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