



INTERNATIONAL DRUG USERS DAY

The power of peers and peer leadership

On International Drug User's Day, we remember our family, friends, peers, colleagues, and loved ones whose lives have been lost and impacted by the war on drugs, a war on people who use drugs.

The war on drugs has fuelled oppression, social control and discrimination. The systematic violation of human rights has, in turn, fuelled the drug users right movement.

In 2005 the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) was established and our founding statement: The Vancouver Declaration (2006) sets out the reasons for why the world needs a global network led by people who use drugs.

Peer leadership is as relevant, necessary, and as powerful a force today as it was then. This year INPUD commemorates International Drug User's Day by honouring drug user leaders around the world. Those who have endlessly fought to protect the rights of people who use drugs, including being at the frontlines, risking arrest, harassment, and discrimination.

There are peer leaders working in conflict and difficult operating environments literally risking their lives daily. This work is only becoming more dangerous with the growing rise and influence of anti-rights and anti-gender movements.

Without peer leaders, needles and syringes would not reach the most marginalised people who use drugs; without peer leaders, naloxone would not save as many lives; without peer leaders, the demand for legal and policy reform would not be as fierce. Peer leaders are vital to the response.

On International Drug User's Day 2023, we spotlight voices from the drug users rights movement around the world to define what peer leadership is and what it means to them. Today join us in celebrating and amplifying the voices of peer leaders from around the world.