

IHRA 2011 REPORT BEIRUT, LEBANON



The theme of this year's conference is building capacity, redressing neglect. For us as young people this year's conference is highly relevant. We have been affected by systematic neglect. Neglected in service provision, neglected in decision making, neglected from program design, implementation and evaluation. The specific needs of youth are neglected.

The young people who are present here in this room today have demonstrated leadership and action in redressing the neglect of their peers. We came from all corners of the globe, Nigeria to Nepal, Australia to Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar to Mexico, to spend three days together for Youth RISE's first ever pre-conference.



Anita Krug
International Coordinator



An important space was provided for us to engage in dialogue and discussion across cultures and contexts, and explore issues that are of importance to us as young people who use drugs, who are affected by drug policy, who work with young drug users, and who advocate for drug policy reform for the best interests of children and young people.

On the final day of the pre-conference, we came together to collectively highlight issues that we feel are most important to be addressed, and begin the development of recommendations for drug policy, and a response to drug use that addresses the real needs of young drug users. Here they are.

Criminalization of young drug users is one of our major concerns. Current policies that criminalize drug use result in mass incarceration, and criminal records lead to life long stigma and push young people to the fringes of society.

Young people who use drugs deserve equal rights. We have a right to freedom from discrimination based on age, HIV status, drug use, sexual orientation and gender.

Young people have a right to education and should not be excluded from education or employment because of their drug use. Include drug education in official national curricula, and develop education programs that reach young people who are not in the education system. Young people must also be educated on their legal and human rights. Knowledge leads to empowerment to claim these rights.

Harm reduction must be confidential and accessible, based on a holistic approach and local needs assessments that are culturally and contextually appropriate.

As young people, we do not only inject opiates. Harm reduction must go beyond injecting drug use, and address harms associated with the wide variety of drugs that young people use today.

Remove tokenism, and meaningfully engage young people affected by drug policies in the overall processes starting from needs assessment to development of projects, to implementation, M&E and decision making.

We are also moving our demands beyond our right to participation, to engagement into the realm of real conversations. For example conversations about the relationship of faith and drug use, addressing mental health of young drug users, going beyond NSPs and exploring non-traditional harm reduction for young

people, and challenges young people face with funding youth-led programs. And real dialogue with you, as leaders and adults about what are the challenges you experience when working with young people.

This year we are holding ourselves and our leaders accountable. We understand our gaps and recognize our challenges. As young people here representing the voice of young drug users, we understand the importance of being accountable to our constituency. We face challenges of voicing and engaging especially marginalized people such sex workers, those incarcerated or in forced treatment, young people under the age of 16, and those affected by the drug trade.

True commitment of you to young people means committing yourself to not only trying to understand us as a client base, but recognizing our capacities and engaging us as young researchers, as young service providers, as young policy makers. Commit yourself to bringing the most marginalized young people into the organizations you work for and the advocacy you do. This requires real commitment.

We want you to know that we are here, we are active, and we are willing. Work with us in transforming passivity to leadership, discrimination into equality, and neglect into empowerment.

YOUTH RISE OPENING IHRA'S 22ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

"I would like to request all the young people sitting in this hall to stand up and show our presence to let know, actively participate and decide about ourselves" Whooooooooooo.. Young people in the hall stood up from the mass of attendees in the conference with cheers and I was one of them. We were few in number but had a great meaning because we were delivering the messages; we choose - Leadership over passivity, Empowerment over neglect and Equality over discrimination.

In the opening of the 22nd International conference of IHRA, Anita Krug - Coordinator of Youth RISE was one of the main speakers. Every youth attending the conference were waiting for her speech. Mr. Rick Lines, chair of the opening session invited her to speak and she ended her wonderful speech with the quote given above. Really it was a great day for all the youths who attended or missed the moment in the conference. People could see the youths awaken to stepping forward for the welfare of all the young people affected by drug policy and for ensuring the reduction of drug related harm on young people around the world.



Bikash Gurung
Asia, Nepal

I am Bikash Gurung - IWG member representing Asia in Youth RISE. I am a former injecting drug user of Nepal. The situation of young drug users in Nepal is very crucial. I have spent 6 years of my life in drug use and 8 months during those years in prison and many friends of mine are still in prison or suffering due to drug use. The drug users in our country are criminalized so, neglected and discriminated. On the other hand, I was unable to receive HR services during my drug use. In such environment however I became able to stop my drug use.

Currently I am Program Coordinator of an NGO, Gateway Foundation Nepal that also works for young people who use drug. I had never attended any international harm reduction conference before. International conference of IHRA in Beirut, Lebanon is one of my biggest events in my life. With lots of confusion, excitement and fear I summed up my guts to get here from Nepal. After attending the opening session of the conference, I felt that I was never alone to

work for ensuring rights of young people using drugs. I realized that I was just not connected with the young people doing the same around the world. So, now I have learned new things from the sessions I attended in the conference and I am going to share and implement the learning in my region. Lastly, I just want to say that I am so glad to get such a great opportunity to attend the HR conference so, thank you.

YOUTH RISE PRE-CONFERENCE

I am really privileged to be part of the Youth RISE Pre-Conference that took place prior to the IHRA Conference in Beirut. It has been a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about the tremendous and wonderful work the young motivated and inspired young people are doing in the field of Drug Use and Harm Reduction all round the World.

I was majorly inspired by the sessions that ranged from drug policy advocacy campaigns, young people and drug policy, law enforcement, human rights and project development and many more that were all led by young people in the Youth RISE network. Opportunities for networking also

availed itself where I met with like-minded young drug activists, shared contacts and possibilities discussed several possibilities of expanding work within and outside the network.



Eric Ojok
Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda



Yamina-Sara Chekroun
North America, Canada

The first workshop I attended at the Youth RISE Pre-Conference for the 2011 Harm Reduction Association Conference in Zouk, Lebanon, was the Efforts and Opportunities for Drug Policy Reform workshop. Structured as a panel discussion with four speakers from different regions of the world, we encountered different ways to advocate for drug policy reform. Most importantly, these presentations outlined that there are alternative frameworks to policy reform in which individuals can be engaged to produce the kind of change that they want to see surrounding this very important issue. The following is a summary of these discussions as they happened on April 1st at the Zouk Mikael Youth Cultural Centre.

The first speaker was Tamas Vargas from Open Society Institute, a foundation which gives grants in the area of drug policy reform to other groups that do work surrounding advocacy in drug policy reform, demanding drug policies based on human rights and public health rather than being based on law enforcement. These organizations are promoting drug policy which rely on scientific evidence rather than ideology and prejudice, common models we often see today. What is important when working towards policy reform is keeping focus on the target group, and these are local, regional and national policymakers who have leverage on policy outcomes. One particularly important organization is the United Nations, based on the fact that the UN is an important international body which has adopted three control conventions surrounding drugs due to pressure from the United States.

There are two main ways that we can advocate for change. The first is the direct way, which involves approaching drug policymakers directly through engaging in research and presenting reports based on the findings. This kind of approach can lead to issuing declarations such as the Vienna Declaration, the Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy and the Global Commission on Drug Policy. Along with formation of these these commissions and declarations, petitions have also been

used to garnish attention and support. For the 2011 IHRA conference, the Beirut Declaration has been issued in order to advocate for better international policies around HIV and injection drug use, which account one third of all HIV infections outside of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The second way, is the indirect way. As many of us have encountered, it is very difficult to persuade policymakers without persuading the public first. The reason being that drug policy is a delicate issue and politicians are usually unwilling to take it up if they do not see as a concern within their constituency. In this way, politicians will only take part in major reform when the general public endorses it. But how can we get the public to be interested in the issue of drug policy reform?

The media, says Vargas, is one of the most important tools. We can use media to make websites that make a difference, like talkingdrug.org (see below for more information) or even social networking websites such as Facebook (see group War on Drugs; A War on People). Another way is through viral marketing campaigns that produce content that people will feel inclined to pass on to their peers such as short film and poster contests that engage youth in the process. We should use these means, websites, social networking and viral marketing campaigns, in order to present best practices in an enjoyable style.

The final step, which is already underway, is involving our communities as a whole. This means doctors, law enforcement, security officials, scientists, school teachers, school unions and youth organizations.

The second speaker was Marie Nougier who works for the International Drug Policy Consortium which acts as a global advocacy mechanism and is based in the UK. The IDPC was created in response to the global drug regime, in which the most powerful institutions are the UN office on Drugs and Crimes, the International Narcotics Control Board and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Although these institutions are in place, there have been extrajudicial consequences for people involved with drug use, and because of this reality that cannot be ignored, many organization and policy makers have considered alternatives to current drug policy. As such, the IDCP has the following policy principles; assessment of priorities and evidence, compliance of human rights, a focus on reducing drug related harm, social inclusion of marginalized groups and an effort to involve civil society in policy making. It is an overall pragmatic approach that strives for evidence based outcomes, promoting examples of best practices, and an overall balanced approach to drug policy which promotes

a coherent and integrated approach to drug policy. The IDCP supports civil society in this process by providing them with trainings (e.g; they organized a training for police officers in Peru by showing them how to support harm reduction interventions rather than undermine them), information and practical advice.

The third panelist, Jane Slater who works for the Transform Drug Policy Foundation is part of the Count the Costs; 50 Years of the War on Drugs project. This project, like the ones I have outlined above, is an effort to ensure that there are evidence-based drug policies being made. Not only does 2011 mark the 50 year anniversary of this truly ideology war declared by Ronal Regan, but we see today a growing recognition that the War on Drugs has failed due to the visible signed of its unintended consequences. These have been an increase in supply and demand, large black market, policy displacement, the manner in which much of society perceives and deals with users of implicit drugs and the reality that often individuals who get addicted to substances end up excluded, marginalized and unable to find help when they need and want it.

The seven costs on the war on drugs, as outlined by Transform the Drug Policy, have been the undermining of international development and security, a threat to public health by the spreading of diseases such as Hepatitis C and HIV, the promotion of stigma and discrimination, the undermining of human rights (such as the use of the death penalty for drug related offences), the creation of crime and the enrichment of criminals, deforestation & pollution, and finally, the wasted billions of dollars on law enforcement which has ultimately failed in what it has set up to do. Visit countthecosts.com to submit your evidence (photos, videos, articles) about the what you perceive has been the unintended consequences of the war on drugs!

The final speaker on the panel was Rupert George, Project Manager for talkingdrugs.org from Release. What is talkingdrugs.org? It's a website, explains Rupert, dedicated to providing a message aimed for a global audience which talks about reforming drug policy. People have a limited understanding of the issues surrounding drug policy reform, and this website is about letting people into the dialogue by letting them explore and come to

an understanding of the issues. The website consists of an online magazine which covers all issues related to drugs from the personal to the political. It has over 5,000 pieces of content in over 20 languages and has involved over 200 volunteers in 2 years with over 50,000 visitors a month. The major challenge has been to create a website which explains harm reduction policy reform to a global audience by presenting information in a culturally relevant way. By using simple narratives, the website has been able to educate the

public on the underlying failure of drug control. This simple narrative-based approach is effective because it describes things such as human rights abuses as actions rather than through complicated language, which has a far greater impact than when we use more complex ways of describing these events.

I can't believe that I have already learned so much from these intelligent, innovative and amazing young activists from around the globe!

YOUTH CALL FOR REVIEW OF GLOBAL DRUG POLICY



Aram Barra
Latin America, Mexico

In many countries around the world drug use is very much related to structural and systematic problems of states. This is to say that while there are young drug users all over the globe, the harms associated to it grow when the health and education institutions of a given country cannot respond to the real needs of the affected communities. In this sense, the war on drugs does nothing but exponentially grow the impacts of development of nations, in particular of their newer generations.

“It is not rocket science”, says Adeolu Ogunrombi of Youth RISE and the Youth HIV/AIDS Network in Nigeria. “Young people are at the centre of Africa’s HIV epidemic and are rapidly growing they consumption of drugs”, he continued. However, this is of particular relevance for the development agenda as exacerbating factors include poverty, homelessness and unemployment.

Meanwhile, Lisa Sánchez from Espolea in Mexico, called attention to the fact that up to three out of every ten people joining treatment in that country every day are young people. Nevertheless, “there is a huge lack of data regarding young people and the new trends of drug use, mixes and the correlation between non injectable use of drugs and STIs or HIV” says Lisa.

Even more worrying for Mexico are the over 30,000 deaths that the current strategy followed by the government has left in only four years. Central America already sees spill overs of violence due this war and expert groups in Colombia expect that it ends up backfiring on them too.

The lack of education and employment opportunities for young people are, in this sense, a transnational problem. Nikhil Gurung, from Nepal, sees a similar problem too: “We have no idea of who peo-

ple who inject drugs are or what youth friendly harm reduction services would look like for them”. The lack of disaggregated data and the abstinence or simply “say no” approach seems rather non-functional of a strategy to cover the reality in South Asia.

The obstacles that young people face to reform drug policy in different parts of the world seems rather similar when it comes to a lack of participation from most affected communities. Young people play a key role in questioning, building and providing new ideas for services. Youth are not currently involved in either policy or programme design.

If we are to redress neglect, we must all agree that young people are not only passive recipients of drugs policies, but we are active in prevention, harm reduction and treatment responses and are relevant actors in making decisions regarding the policies that affect our own lives. We are active in a continued question for assessment of behalf of our governments of their drug policies. We want to reform what our own future looks like and we want to do it starting by questioning our status quo.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS?



Nikhil Gurung
Asia, Nepal

Hello everyone, I am Nikhil Gurung, a fortunate youth with a history of drug use from the world's fourteenth poorest country "Nepal". It is herculean task for a young person from a drug use background and living in the resource poor settings where the state priorities are not focused on drug policy reform and access to life saving harm reduction services to influence change.

This is my first international harm reduction conference which was possible through the platform of Youth RISE and the generous support from Open Society Institute and

International Harm Reduction Association. I am thankful to them from the core of my heart because not many young people in my position are fortunate enough to attend such big event. It was really empowering to hear that this conference had more young people than ever, and to witness a young Lebanese female who used drugs dare to speak out and make their government accountable for their repressive drug policy.

This gives me hope and inspiration. It was not new for me to hear that young people are injecting; getting infected with HIV and other viral hepatitis such HBV & HCV each day; getting incarcerated, or killed by a drug cartel in Mexico. I was wondering what will be my 'take home message'. As young people, we cannot rely on the adult dominated harm reduction and other service centers to address the real needs of young people using drugs. It takes less than 365 seconds to get infected through the sharing of a needle. We cannot afford to wait.

LEBANESE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE



Raya Haidar & Ahmad Saleh
Middle East, Lebanon

In Lebanon, the possession, use, trafficking and cultivation and production of drugs are considered illegal and punishable by the law. Yet the law does fall short on its universal application on high profile figures with a known state of cultivating hashish in areas such as Bekaa, making it a discriminatory as well as an unjust law.

And even though there was no official “war-on-drugs” policy by the Lebanese government, yet much of work countering substance use was directed towards prevention through the “no drugs” messages (can we say ideology here?!). Little efforts were invested in meaningful and evidence-based treatment, rehabilitation or even mitigation of the patterns of substance use in the country.

Yet there was a movement of several civil organizations in the country that attempted to introduce the concepts of harm reduction to substance use (such as the don’t-drink-and-drive campaigns, introduction of pilot programs for needle and syringes exchange as well as opioids substitution therapy and the likes...). The movement was very successful in mainstreaming such concepts and proving that harm reduction does work with more tangible results. This success was topped with the arrival of the 2011 international harm reduction conference (IHRC) which accompanied the legalization of OST programs in the country. That major breakthrough became a wave of potentials for the future of substance users and those affected by it to witness a change in the policies of the government towards this issue.



As many of us were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm that was demonstrated by the different parties in the world and especially in the country to catch this wave, Youth R.I.S.E. was in front leading the way. Before the start of the main conference, the network organized a three-day Pre-conference workshop that gathered the many young individuals attending the conference. These youth were introduced into the concepts of harm reduction, its controversies and its promises. The Pre-Conference escalated to setting recommendations by the youth that were voiced out and aloud at the opening of the conference and throughout it.

On the 3rd of April of 2011, the IHRC came to Beirut and Youth R.I.S.E. was there, prepared to lead the way on from a youth-sensitive perspective.



REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFERENCE

IHRA's 22nd International Conference teaches you many lessons. But it is outside of the conference venue that I have probably learned my most memorable lesson so far. My friends Lea from Lebanon and Brun from Mexico and I were given an exciting opportunity to discuss live the burning issues of the harmful effects of punitive drug policies on young people's lives from around the world on the local national television channel MTV.

We often have intellectual discussions with like-minded people on decriminalizing drug use – we might disagree on the ways, methods, and instruments, but never the essence of the issues. When you talk with people who might have never heard about harm reduction and often intentionally or unintentionally stigmatize young people who use drugs, you face more challenges, but the rewards are equally more fulfilling. It is always a little victory when you can convince a journalist, a person

on the street, your mom... Punishment is never a good solution. It doesn't only work – it perpetuates emotional, physical, and sexual violence towards young people. Messages like these should not stay within the conference venue. They should reach out to people who often receive information based on misunderstandings, not evidence.

A LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

With my presentation, Young People, Drugs and Risky Sexual Behaviors in Latin America I was looking to pinpoint the importance of recognizing the harmful impacts of the use of drugs related to the sexual behaviors among the young people in Latin America. The situation in our country and in our general region regarding drug consumption is more oriented towards cannabis, cocaine/crack, and amphetamine stimulants so the effect it has on our youth is a big factor that can lead to unprotected sexual relations, undesired pregnancies, prevalence of HIV and other STI's, besides all of the other health related issues that the use of drugs can have on young people specifically and people of all ages in general.

I thank the MTV journalists for openness and understanding. Social change requires support from the community. And it is truly enriching when community welcomes young people's ideas instead of imposing the backwards government policies just because that is the way it always was.

My participation was intended to be a reference point for people to realize that drug use can turn into a very complicated issue as long as it is looked upon as a just a policy or governmental thing and not as an individual and social topic, where personal points of view and personal understanding leads to positive or negative outcomes depending on the approach one has upon the potential risk surrounding drug use. This approach is intended as an effort to empower young people to take responsibility over their bodies and minds and over the consequences those decisions affects their health and wellbeing. I think that this approach is the only way to finally solve the debate of how should one address these issues without falling short or missing the main problems.



Brun Gonzales
Latin America, Mexico

YOUNG PEOPLE: RESEARCH GAPS



Lynn Itani
Middle East, Lebanon

One of the interesting sessions that I attended was the “Young People in Search of Evidence” main session. As an epidemiologist, as well as a Youth RISE member interested in academic and scientific evidence, this session explained that data about the young age group in specific is incomplete. One of the speakers, Maria Phelan, made a presentation titled “Excluded and ignored: the gaps and failings in research on youth drug use and the implications for harm reduction” that I found particularly interesting. In this article, I will speak about some of the points raised in hope that these research gaps will soon be filled!

First, most of the data we have is usually not disaggregated by age – we do not have enough

information specific to our age group! With respect to school-based surveys, there are global-based school surveys. Yet, the data focuses mainly on frequency and the prevalence of drug use, rather than assessing harms related to drugs. Not only that, but also the mechanism of data collection varies between countries. This means that the results are incomparable for countries and regions.

In addition, we can't be sure that young people are reporting honest and shy information. In many situations, they might shy away from saying the truth in fear of discrimination or being reported. Although such studies are cost-effective and include a large number of participants, these surveys miss out on youth that are deprived of schooling. Also, we must not ignore the depersonalization in this process, as it is essential to understand that young people may not be able to translate their complex drug use behavior into an a,b,c or d answer.

Alternatively, recommendations included having street-based surveys as well as studying service providers of harm reduction. Moreover, data collection from low and middle income countries should be improved. It is important when conducting research that young people who use drugs are captured in the process!

IT'S NOT ABOUT TOURISM: THE REALITY OF YOUNG WOMEN AND DRUG USE IN LEBANON

The Middle East, Lebanon an amazing place to be... all the delegates at the IHRA conference enjoyed the city; the life of the city and the people of this city. As any town in the world you can find marginalized people that we do not get the chance to see them during the conference or the visit. One major group in this group is young women who use drugs. Young women in Lebanon have been able to claim their rights and are always fighting for equal employment and educational opportunities. Today we stand at a point where this is almost achievable, however you still have the sense of a patriarchal society. Drugs and sex are the biggest taboos; it is a controversial issue. Even though today it is becoming easier to talk about them, they still are stigmatized topics.

Now, imagine being a young woman who is using drugs in Lebanon. During my four years of working in the field I met with more than

100 young women who use drugs. They all held in them a fear that comes from the society's stigma and from the implementation of the drug policy.



Chantale Kallas
Middle East, Lebanon



To better understand this, a questionnaire on the current drug policies was administered to young women in different settings ranging from local rehab centers, Opiate Substitution Therapy to current users; with the sole aim of knowing their perspective and needs.

The main drug policy that tackles drug use states that whoever is proven to be using drugs will be imprisoned from 3 months to 3 years unless they go to treatment. Of course other articles play a role in better defining the policies around drug use but this article sets the standards.

The basics of drug policies is knowing them, yet out of the 31 participants only 7 knew the law and just one was able to state it as it. For the others the law is "Drugs = Jail" and that it is totally unfair, illogical or simply pay money or you go to jail.

They fear the law and they feel threatened by it more than two thirds of the participants stated it clearly, at the same time the drug control policy has no impact on their drug use and when it does it increases their use. What does that mean? If a drug control policy is set it aims at decreasing drug use and when the set outcomes are not achieved we can say it failed and is ineffective.

"FOR DRUG USE: I LOST MY CAMERA AND I LOST MY APARTMENT AND I LOST MY DIGNITY HERE IN THIS PRISON" (21, IN DETENTION)

So what do they fear? The law enforcement strategies that violate their basic human rights ranging from hygiene, to safety, to medical needs; at the same time this reality stays hidden as if young people who use drugs have no rights that we should respect.

"Verbal Abuse as if drug users are animals, the worst in society, a criminal this is how they see us." - age 23, in a rehab center

Several NGOs and key stakeholders are revising the laws and trying to improve them; however it is important to take into consideration the young women who use drugs opinion. Hear their voices and what they have to say because at the end of the day rules, laws and policies are set to protect the most affected... so give them a place at the table.

SEX WORKER'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS



Erlind Plaku
South East Europe, Albania

**“ I SUFFERED SO MUCH BE-
CAUSE OF MY ADDICTION
BUT MY WORST SUFFERING
WAS BECAUSE OF LAW EN-
FORCEMENT AGENTS” (28, IN
TREATMENT)**

One of the most basic approaches of harm reduction is promoting human rights of people who use drugs and of course sex workers. However, in a lot of countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia sex workers are a target group that face stigma and discrimination. If that isn't enough something is over that, add to it the on going violence against them from the law enforcement agents.

“The police beat you up, demand you money and will detain you until you pay” those are the words of several sex worker's interviewed. A consequence of violence is fear that pushes the sex workers to isolated zones where harm reduction services are not available and outreach workers cannot attain. Accordingly, no clean needles are distributed nor provision of condoms; hence a rise in the susceptibility to several infections such as HIV, Hep C and other STDs. It is also very important to note the high correlation between sex work and injecting opioid drugs in the region.

We have to stand by them; listen to their basic needs ranging from the access to the health care centres to friendly harm reduction services to a variety of treatment such as MMT (opioid substitution therapy).
Violence is INEFFECTIVE.

	Physical Assault		Sexual Assault	
Bulgaria	70 %	(7/10)	20%	(2/10)
Kyrgyzstan	64.2%	(9/14)	89.5%	(17/19)
Latvia	42.9%	(9/21)	23.8%	(5/21)
Lithuania	15%	(3/20)	-	-
Macedonia	100%	(17/17)	82.4%	(14/17)
Poland	-	-	7.7%	(1/13)
Russia (north west district)	30%	(6/20)	30%	(6/20)
Russia (Siberia)	55%	(11/20)	55%	(11/20)
Serbia	62.5%	(5/8)	75%	(6/8)
Slovakia	5%	(1/20)	30%	(6/20)
Ukraine	85%	(17/20)	45%	(9/20)

A study from SWAN (Sex worker's Rights Advocacy) was developed in 11 countries in Europe and Central Asia.

Research for sex work December 2010 (SWAN)



Lisa Campbell Salazar
North America, Canada

YOUTH & PARTY DRUGS

While harm reduction continues to focus on opiate interventions, youth who use drugs consume a wide variety of sub-

stances. It is important for harm reduction youth programs to conduct needs assessments that evaluate the wide range of substances that young people use today. While opiate consumption is huge globally, amphetamine-type substances are the most rapidly rising trend around the world.

Amphetamine-Type Substances (ATS) include crystal meth, speed and ecstasy (MDMA). As well, there are many pharmaceutical grade stimulants that are used recreationally, such as Ritalin, Adderall and Dexedrine. While there is lots of focus on opiate substitution therapy and overdose prevention, there is still much work to do in order to develop evidence-based interventions for amphetamines. Amphetamine overdoses in particular are easy to prevent, and with proper hydration, frequent breaks and moderate doses amphetamine users can reduce harms.

On top of ATS, other substances like psychedelics are very popular among youth and deserve their own harm reduction measures, including Ketamine, Mushrooms, LSD, as well as research chemicals like 2-CI/B, bromo-fly and AMT. While Ketamine is most popular through insufflation, in many major North American cities Ketamine users are increasingly turning to injection, many of them first time injectors who do not access traditional harm reduction services. Ketamine injectors often prefer to inject intramuscularly, and as such need specialized harm reduction services, including longer needle tips. While Ketamine overdose is rare (lethal dose ~3g), when mixed with other opiates or alcohol, users may feel nauseous and may risk shallow breathing and the risk of choking on vomit.

While amphetamines and psychedelics are hugely popular, it is important to remember that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are the most popular substances for youth globally. It is important that harm reduction programs do not just focus on illicit substances, as legal highs are the most accessible to youth. On top of these legal drugs, there are a variety of research chemicals that are emerging of which the long-term effects and toxicity are unknown.

Drugs like mephedrone and MDPV are legal stimulants, which are easily available online and often escape scheduling by drug control bodies. While policymakers have recently scheduled mephedrone, research chemists immediately started marketing MDPV as an alternative legal high. This cat and mouse approach to drug policy encourages youth party drug users to turn to riskier less-know legal substances, as opposed to traditional party drugs.

Finally, as many youth who use party drugs do not identify with traditional harm reduction clients, they are less likely to access services. As such, it is vital that youth harm reduction services reach beyond youth opiate users to provide effective evidence-based interventions. Many of these youth do not identify as "addicts" and are recreational users, and there have been a variety of peer-based interventions across North America, Europe and Australia that have proven to increase knowledge on safer drug use, access to kits and increase referrals to appropriate health services. On top of these life saving outcomes, peer-based programs are proven to build a sense of community for youth who use drugs, as well as increase access to future employment.

~~LEADERSHIP~~
~~PASSIVITY~~ ~~EQUALITY~~
~~DISCRIMINATION~~
~~EMPOWERMENT~~
~~NEGLECT~~

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