

RIGHTS REPORTER FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

rightreporter.net | Issued 14 May 2017



RIGHTS REPORTER FOUNDATION

The Rights Reporter Foundation (RRF) is a non-profit organisation founded by Hungarian activists to advocate for the human rights of vulnerable populations. We use the power of video for community mobilisation and advocacy campaigning. Our vision is of a society where policies affecting vulnerable communities are evidence-informed and respect human rights, as well as developed and implemented with the meaningful involvement of these communities. The main focus of our work is on people who use drugs, sex workers, and people who live with HIV, but we are glad to work with other stigmatised communities, such as LGBTQ people, ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees, and homeless people. Our mission is to educate the public about the role of evidence in policy formulation, to provide a voice for vulnerable communities, and to improve the advocacy efforts of NGOs by providing technical assistance and training. The RRF team is based in Budapest, and most of our activities focus on Europe, but we have cooperated with a number of NGOs beyond Europe, from New Zealand to Canada, from Mexico to Indonesia.



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All the films and articles in this publication can be found at drugreporter.net.

rightsreporter.net

May 2017

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**AN INTERNATIONAL NEWSHUB
AND ONLINE VIDEO DATABASE**

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DRUG reporter

A FOOT IN THE DOOR
Watch our new movie on a New Approach to Legal Highs in New Zealand!



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April 27, 2017 News, DU News, Russian Drug Policy

Forced To Be Healthy

Watch this film produced by Drug Users News at Drugreporter about Russian rehabilitation centres, where people are held for their own money, while violating their rights, and using inhumane methods.

FILMS [Read more >>](#)



April 10, 2017 EDPI

People Who Use Drugs Clean-up Their Neighbourhood In Slovakia

"We wanted to show to the whole neighbourhood that people who use drugs are not indifferent and have a great power to do great things. It is only a matter of opportunity." Odysseus, a Slovakian harm reduction NGO uses video advocacy to reach out local communities.

News, Needle and syringe programs



March 27, 2017 EDPI

FORBIDDEN - Comics

Forbidden is an issue of four comics produced by The Romanian Harm Reduction Network with the support of Drugreporter as part of the national campaign to support harm reduction in Romania.

News, Harm Reduction, Legal Highs, Regulation and Control



March 23, 2017 Dose of Science, Psychosocial Medicines

Music And Psychedelics - An Interview With Mendel Kaelen

In this month's Dose of Science, rather than focusing on a specific academic paper, we present an interview with Mendel Kaelen, a neuroscience researcher at Imperial College London, working in collaboration with Professor David Nutt and Dr. Robin Carhart-Harris. In this piece, we get an unprecedented window into the scientific conceptualization behind one of the world's only active human neuroimaging laboratories investigating the effects of LSD in combination with music.

[Read more >>](#)



March 20, 2017 FILMS

Drugreporter Film Sessions at the Harm Reduction International Conference: Call For Submissions!

The Rights Reporter Foundation and Harm Reduction International now welcomes entries to the Drugreporter Film Sessions at the 25th Harm Reduction International Conference! Rights Reporter Foundation et Harm Reduction International accueillent les propositions de films de

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An essay by the NoBox Transitions Foundation, Inc., an NGO based in the Philippines



The Portuguese Experience...
"It's easy for [people who use drugs] to..."

FILMS

- [Forced To Be Healthy](#)
- [Drugreporter Film Sessions at the Harm Reduction International Conference: Call For Submissions!](#)
- ["We Do Not Wish To Walk Indifferently Away"](#)
- [Otto Pischl: The Collective Unconsciousness Of Art And Drugs](#)
- ["Sport Isn't For Drug Users"... Or Is It?"](#)

IN FOCUS

REPORTER

A LEADING DRUG POLICY NEWS SITE IN EUROPE

DRUGREPORTER.NET



2016 was a year of growth and development for the Drugreporter website. We added extensive new content, features, and blogs, and reached out new audiences. We have published 62 English news articles between January and November. According to Google Analytics, our website has been viewed by 165,332 individual users between January and December 2016. We have an intensive presence on social media, with daily posts, especially on Facebook, where our English page has 26,000 likes. Our Twitter page has more than 5,600 followers.

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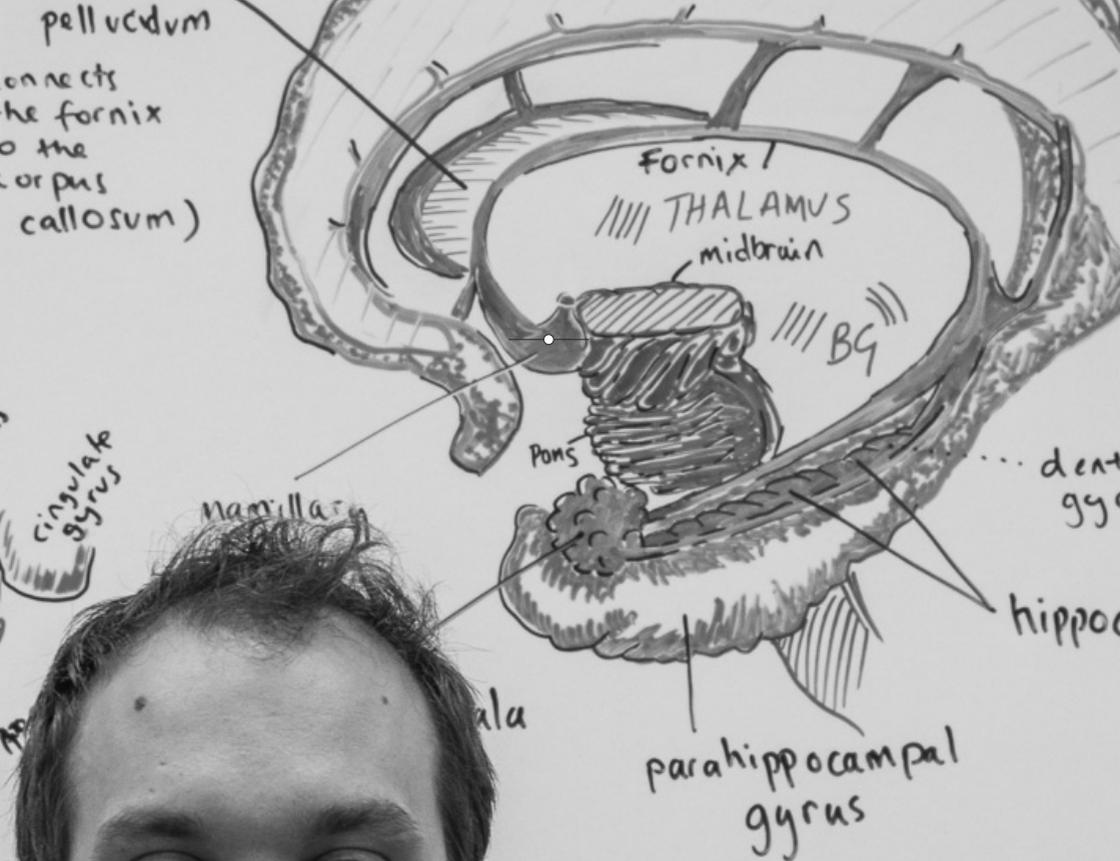


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twitter



[YOUTUBE.COM/C/DRUGREPORTERTV](https://www.youtube.com/c/DrugReporterTV)



DOSE OF SCIENCE

Our new blog features the cutting edge of scientific research on drugs. The blog is written by young researchers targeting students who are interested in drug sciences. The editor of the series is Balázs Szigeti, a researcher of neuroscience. In 2016 you could read about the science behind MDMA's neurotoxicity debate, the 'cognitive impairment theory' on cannabis, the therapeutical use of LSD in alcohol dependence, the relationship between psychedelics and long-term mental health, the life and science of Timothy Leary, and many more.

BALÁZS SZIGETI
editor
Dose of Science

INTERVIEW SERIES



We launched a new interview series that aims to present individuals who play an important role in local, national, or international drug policy reform and harm reduction.

This year we interviewed Marianella Kloka from Greece, Ricardo Fuertes from Portugal, Alexis Goodseel, the Director of the EMCDDA, Marco Perduca, a major cannabis reformer

in Italy, Georg Wurth, Chairman of the German Cannabis Association, and David Liddell, Head Of The Scottish Drugs Forum.

These interviews not only introduce us to new trends in harm reduction but are a source of inspiration for young activists and professionals working in the field.



We have launched a Russian language Drugreporter blog with the name DUNews, in a strategic partnership with the Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs. We provide Russian language video activists, Igor Kouzmenko and Alexey Kurmanaevskii a platform and technical assistance to produce films. They document human rights violations and give voice to the drug user communities. Our partners filmed the dire circumstances

at the Yekaterinburg Hospital in Russia, where HIV and co-infected people who use drugs are treated. They visited Vienna in March 2016 to find out what Eastern-European and Central-Asian countries can learn from its advanced urban harm reduction system. They also visited Prague to explore drug laws and harm reduction services there. They produced a video series on the state of drug policies and harm reduction in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

СUN

DRUG USERS NEWS



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Through this collaboration, over the past year we have not only increased our technical level, we also learned a lot about how, for example, to attract an audience, how to make the right video description, and how to use social networks for expanding the audience, because all of this, sometimes, is more important than making video.

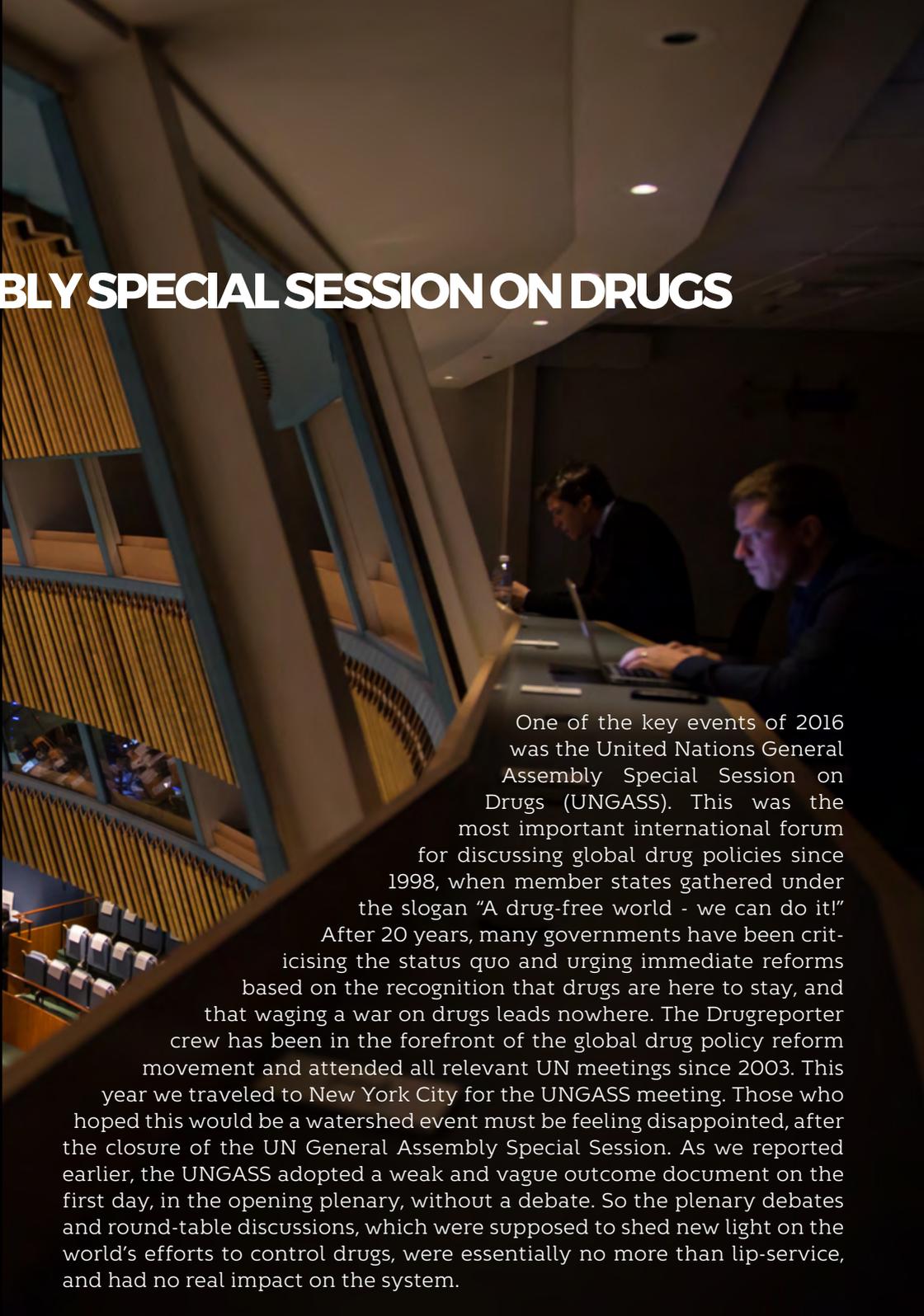
Igor Kouzmenko. Drug USers News

STEREO VIDEOCAM
STEREO VIDEOCAM PRO



UNGASS: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



A photograph of a modern conference room. In the foreground, there are several rows of tiered seating with light-colored wood slats. In the background, two men in dark suits are seated at a long, dark conference table. One man is looking at a laptop, and the other is looking towards the camera. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and a curved wall with wood paneling.

BLY SPECIAL SESSION ON DRUGS

One of the key events of 2016 was the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS). This was the most important international forum for discussing global drug policies since 1998, when member states gathered under the slogan “A drug-free world - we can do it!”

After 20 years, many governments have been criticising the status quo and urging immediate reforms based on the recognition that drugs are here to stay, and that waging a war on drugs leads nowhere. The Drugreporter crew has been in the forefront of the global drug policy reform movement and attended all relevant UN meetings since 2003. This year we traveled to New York City for the UNGASS meeting. Those who hoped this would be a watershed event must be feeling disappointed, after the closure of the UN General Assembly Special Session. As we reported earlier, the UNGASS adopted a weak and vague outcome document on the first day, in the opening plenary, without a debate. So the plenary debates and round-table discussions, which were supposed to shed new light on the world’s efforts to control drugs, were essentially no more than lip-service, and had no real impact on the system.



We have always been among the sceptics who didn't believe that the UNGASS would bring much change, so this was not a real disappointment for us. We think drug policy reform has never come from the UN, and it never will. The UN is only a mirror that reflects the power structure of the world and what is happening at a national level. Its systemic inertia does not permit it to be the catalyst for change. That said, it doesn't mean that all advocacy efforts targeting

the UN are necessarily meaningless. The UN is an important forum for power-play among world powers, and provides a platform for interaction between civil society and member states. What is more, it is a stage which NGOs can use, in order to highlight the flaws of the system in front of the watching eyes of the public.

That's why we, the Rights Reporter Foundation, attended the event and produced a movie about it.



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We found the Drugreporter movie on UNGASS useful and we used parts of it in our TV show on RTL Klub.



Mihály Vidos, editor, Magyarul Balóval political TV show, RTL Klub

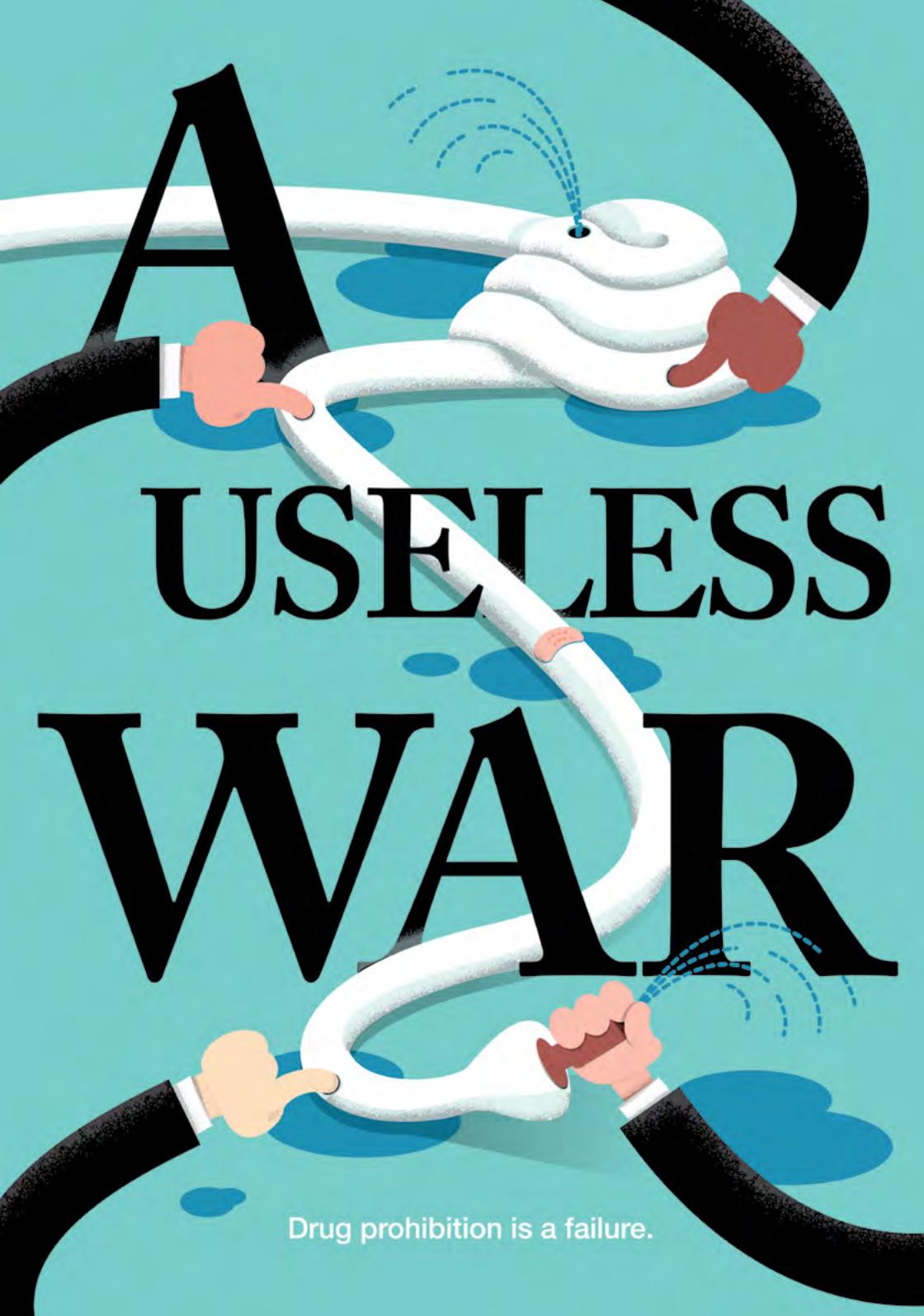
Second Prize of the "Let's Get Real About Drugs" poster contest: "Grasp this!" by Meaghan Li, New Zealand



“LET’S GET REAL ABOUT DRUGS!” POSTER CONTEST



The RRF launched a poster contest to raise awareness on the alternatives of punitive drug policies on the occasion of the UNGASS 2016.



A stylized illustration on a teal background. A thick white cable is being pulled from both ends by four hands in black suits. The cable is coiled in the middle, with blue smoke or steam rising from it. The text 'A USELESS WAR' is written in large, bold, black letters across the center of the image.

A USELESS WAR

Drug prohibition is a failure.

UNGASS FOLLOW-UP EVENTS



There is very little public awareness in individual countries about the global scale of drug problems - and drug policies. We decided to bring the message of global drug policy reform to some European cities, including Budapest, Belgrade, Prague, and Warsaw. We asked local harm reduction NGOs to exhibit

the best posters of the contest and to organise a public screening of our UNGASS movie, followed by a discussion panel. These events provided these organisations with an opportunity to be engaged with by decision makers, professionals, and the media.



The NGO Re Generation team was very satisfied with the outcomes. Irena Molnar, the Program Officer announced it on the National Radio Station 202. Around 40 people came to the event, most of them as we hoped from civil society organisations, and also students from Belgrade University. The discussion was very active and broad, people were very engaged and interested, especially for the matter of legalisation of medical cannabis.

Jovana Arsenijevic, director, Re:generacija, Serbia





A DAY IN THE LIFE: THE WORLD OF HUMANS WHO USE DRUGS

adayinthelifemovie.com

Our largest project in 2016 was a feature documentary, filmed in seven cities around the world. This feature-length documentary takes us through one day in the lives of eight people, from seven cities, in different countries of the world, from first thing in the morning, through to the night. They all have something in common - all of them use drugs. But these people are not defined by their drug use. All of them have their unique personalities, stories, and social networks. And the environment in which they live, the attitudes they face, the laws to which they are subject, and the health services available to them, all have an enormous impact on their lives. This film seeks to challenge common myths and preconceptions about drugs and the people who use them. It gives a voice to those representing one of the most marginalised communities in our world, allowing

them to tell their stories of love, hate, suffering, and happiness. It shows how they engage in social activism to break the silence and fight the stigma which shadows their days.

This one and a half hour film was produced in cooperation with the members of our newly founded Drugreporter Video Network, many of whom are alumni of RRF's video advocacy training. We asked these activists to film one day of a person who uses drugs in their home towns and show the world from their unique perspectives. The raw footage was edited and directed by our Video Manager, István Gábor Takács. It was premiered at the VERZIO International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival in Budapest in November and will be screened in many cities across the world in 2017 - please visit the website of the movie and check if there is a screening in your area!





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From the Crimea to Budapest, from New York and Mexico City to Indonesia and Nigera, this poignant film gives us an astonishingly intimate look at the lives, tribulations and inspiring resilience of drug using human beings. The message is one of compassion, the vision is that effective responses to the international drug crisis are within our grasp

Gabor Maté M.D., Author, *In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction*



““

The prejudice and stigma faced every day and everywhere in the world by people who use drugs, will not decrease unless together with them, we can fight misconceptions and change the negative perception they suffer from society. It is what this powerful movie is aiming to do.

Michel Kazatchkine, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia



“

Our first obligation is our clients. It's our mission. In our organisation we are working voluntary, working for the society, it's the second side of our obligation.

Denis Dedajic, Asocijacija Margina needle exchange program, Zenica

OUR CLIENTS ARE OUR MISSION: HARM REDUCTION IN BOSNIA

Harm reduction - that is, pragmatic and compassionate help for drug users - is in crisis in South-Eastern Europe. Most programs distributing clean needles among drug users to prevent infections were funded by international donors, especially the Global Fund, but it is now leaving these countries. Unfortunately national governments do not want to ensure the sustainable

transition to domestic funding so programs are closing. The RRF has been documenting this process in many countries, including Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and - this year - Bosnia-Herzegovina. Our movie features those selfless harm reduction professionals who try to save lives in spite of vanishing support and funding.



THE RENAISSANCE OF PSYCHEDELIC RESEARCH

The research on psychedelic drugs is important because it can change our understanding of the human mind. Luckily this stream of research is becoming mainstream again after several decades of repression. The RRF crew attended a conference on multidisciplinary research on psychedelic experiences in Amsterdam in June 2016. We

interviewed key figures, such as Rick Doblin, Amanda Fielding, Draulio De Araújo, and Roland Griffith, who told us about the new exciting research findings and put them into political and social context. Our movie was premiered in Budapest where hundreds of young people came to listen to a panel discussion after the film.



DYING A SLOW DEATH: INSIDE INDONESIA'S DRUG WAR



In early 2015, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, declared a war on drugs. This means more punishment, stigma and suffering for people who use drugs. Our strategic partner from Indonesia, PKNI, a community network of people who use drugs, asked us to help to improve their communication and give voice to their communities. We delivered a video advocacy training and produced a movie in co-production with them on the devastating consequences of the war on drugs on people.

Beginning with the execution of 14 drug traffickers earlier this year, the film details how Indonesia is sliding toward compulsory drug treatment, increased extortion and bribery, while creating more barriers to the access of health and support services. The developments shown in the film represent a significant step backwards for Indonesian drug policy. Indonesia has previously been praised for expanding harm reduction programmes such as provision of needle syringe and methadone maintenance therapy that have partly been credited with curbing HIV among people who inject drugs from 52% in 2009 to 36% as of 2012. Now the country is moving toward a paradigm that undermines the effectiveness and reach of such programmes, pushing people who use drugs increasingly underground and toward increasingly riskier practices.

The movie was presented in four cities at simultaneous public screenings, where community activists could speak up for a more humane drug policy.

INSIDE INDONESIA'S DRUG WAR

DYING
A SLOW
DEATH

A Film by Istvan Gabor Takacs



#enddrugwar



#enddrugwar

www.pkni.org





INPUD CONSENSUS STATEMENT

We produced a short advocacy video for the International Network of People Who Use Drugs, about their newly published Consensus Statement on Drug Use Under Prohibition. The Consensus Statement was launched in Kuala Lumpur in 2015, and focusses on human rights, health, and the law, in relation to people who use drugs.

RAISING AWARENESS ON HIV AND HEPATITIS C PREVENTION

The RRF cooperated with the Alternativa Foundation from Budapest on a project funded by the Norwegian NGO Grant to raise awareness of HIV and Hepatitis C prevention and testing among injecting drug users in Hungary. We created several videos to document the project, our summary movie, "My Blood Is Hot", was

viewed by thousands of people and was presented to a large crowd of professionals and media at the closing conference of the project. Our videos provided a unique opportunity for the most vulnerable people to talk about the importance of harm reduction without the risk that the mainstream media will abuse their personal data.



DRUG POLICY IS RACE POLICY

While at the UNGASS in New York, we attended the conference of the Drug Policy Alliance. Hundreds of drug reformers gathered at the "Drug Policy and the Politics of Race" event, organised at Columbia University on Sunday, to discuss how repressive drug policies affect the lives of communities of colour. We recorded the speeches of the conference and published them. We also recorded all the speeches of the Church event, where pastors were talking about the effects of the drug war on communities.



HARM REDUCTION IN AUSTRALIA



When we visited Australia to attend the International AIDS Conference in 2015, we created a lot of footage we couldn't edit immediately because of other work. This summer, we had some time to work on this footage, and produced three videos highlighting different aspects of harm reduction in Australia. The first video features Access Health, an integrated care centre run by the Salvation Army in Melbourne. It provides a wide range of services for marginalised drug users and sex workers, ranging from sterile

injecting equipment to training, shelter, and social care. The second film is based on an interview with Vanda Hamilton, a lawyer at the St. Kilda Legal Service, an organisation which assists people who use drugs to exercise their rights and fight discrimination. The third video is a short interview with Dr. Alex Wodak, a pioneer and leading expert on harm reduction, who explained to us what the world can learn from the Australian example of harm reduction policies.



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: SEX WORKERS ARE EXCLUDED FROM BUDAPEST PRIDE

The Pride movement is about fighting social exclusion and discrimination - but what if the Pride organisers themselves exclude and discriminate against those who are in the greatest need of support - LGBTI sex workers?

This is what happened in Budapest, where a workshop on sex work was banned from the festival. We filmed the workshop and wrote a blog about this issue, which was widely discussed in the LGBTI community.



VIDEO REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS 2016

Drugreporter's video advocacy team filmed the CND session in Vienna. We produced a video in preparation for UNGASS, summarising the positions of member states.

We also published some key speeches and actively participated and filmed the press conferences (eg. the press conference of the US delegation).

DRUGREPORTER VIDEO NETWORK

In 2015 we created a network for video activists engaged in advocating for drug policy reform and harm reduction development all around the world. The network is coordinated by the Rights Reporter Foundation, with the aim of strengthening collaboration and sharing information and resources between members. Some of the network members are people who have been given training in video advocacy by members of the Foundation; others joined the group based on their similar interests and goals. We produce movies together by sharing information and footage. The Rights Reporter Foundation supports its members with funding to produce videos. Currently there are 30 members of the network from 18 countries. In 2016 David Pesek (SANANIM, Czech Republic) produced a movie about a public debate around the decriminalisation

of drugs in the Czech Republic, and another film about the role of sport activities in community organising among drug users. Pawel Libera (Polish Drug Policy Network, Poland) produced a video on the struggle for medical cannabis in Poland. Another film by our Polish partner is about the situation of harm reduction in Poland. Irena Molnar (ReGeneracija, Serbia) worked on the same issue and produced a movie about the access to medical cannabis in Serbia. Brun Gonzales and Karina Muscarina (Mexico) produced a video about a global conference on ibogaine treatment in Mexico City, supported by our network. There are other projects in Mexico, Italy, Germany, Nigeria and Serbia, that we supported, which are currently in post production or production phase.

DRUGREPORTER FILM CLUB

We continued the Drugreporter Film Club at the Auróra Klub in Budapest to improve access to our films and to engage with our audience more actively. We organised three events this year. The first was the Support. Don't Punish campaign event on 23 June 2016, where we had an interactive presentation with videos about new developments and trends in global drug policies. The event was attended by almost 100 people. The second event was on the 5th of October, where we screened our

movie on the conference about psychedelic research in Amsterdam, and we had a round table discussion with three young Hungarian researchers. This event was a tremendous success, more than 400 people showed up, and we had to prepare an online screening in another hall to be able to seat everyone. The third event was on the 9th of December where we screened the movie "A Day in the Life" to a full house.



ADVOCACY

AT THE

LEVEL

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON DRUGS



The director of RRF, Peter Sarosi, has been the member of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs, an expert group of the European Commission since its inception in 2007. The current Forum consists of 43 NGOs from EU member states, representing diverse groups, ideological approaches and geographic areas. He is now a member of the Core Group and leads the working group on the evaluation of the EU Drug Strategy and Action Plan. The working group was involved in the external evaluation of the previous Action Plan, which expired at the end of 2016, and in the preparation of the new Action Plan, to be adopted in 2017. These EU-level documents serve as important advocacy tools for service providers and activists.

The RRF also played a key role in coordinating and chairing the meeting organised by the CEU School of Public Policy in Brussels on 7 May, where NGOs from all over Europe gathered to discuss the impact of the UNGASS and share lessons learnt.

The head of RRF continued his role as a Steering Committee member and the Co-Chair of the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network, where he provided technical assistance and advice to the Executive Director. He attended a regional EHRN conference in February in Vilnius, where he was one of the chairs of the meeting.

The Executive Director attended the Warsaw conference on urban drug policies in February 2016, where he was one of the most active members of the drafting team of the Warsaw Declaration. He presented the Room for Change campaign to the conference participants and our movie on the closure of NSPs in Budapest was screened, as well as a movie produced by our Polish allies (Where Do Poles Inject?). The conference was a great opportunity to publicise our advocacy activities in Poland.

MEDIA AND VIDEO ADVOCACY TRAINING



It is always a pleasure to see our videos have a social impact - but it is an even greater pleasure to see that other organisations and activists are following our example and producing their own movies. That is why we decided to train activists to communicate with the media and to produce and use videos for change. As part of the Meet and Learn Project, we were invited to deliver two days of video advocacy training for harm reduction professionals in Skopje, Macedonia. We are happy to see that some of those people who we trained, have subsequently produced high quality

videos, including David Pesek from the NGO SANANIM (Prague), and Miroslava Zilinska from the NGO Odysseus (Slovakia).

In October we were invited by the Youth Organization for Drug Action (YODA) to train more than 30 students from various European countries to work with the mainstream media. We introduced them to ways in which they can improve their communication with journalists and asked them to participate in practical exercises, such as creating press releases and giving test TV interviews, which were then analyzed together with the group.



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Rights Reporter Foundation belongs to our most valued partners for their highly professional approach, in-depth understanding of drug policies worldwide and true dedication to stand up for those who need support in changing them. Our joint video about harm reduction services in Bratislava brought together important stakeholders and resulted in new opportunities for building cooperation with state representatives on local and even national level. Thanks to you, we could show the reality of harm reduction services and people who use drugs in Bratislava that is often ignored. We can now continue to advocate for them by ourselves also thanks to your practical video advocacy training and international partnerships we built in our common project.

Iveta Chovancova, Odyssey, Slovakia

“

The training was amazingly interesting and delivered in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere, so no way anyone could get bored! We also could have an experience of giving an interview in the front of camera. I think this was the most beneficial exercise for all of us. We could really see how does it feel when you must answer very tricky and aggressive questions. I find this exercise very valuable, especially that drug policy area we work in can be quite a controversial area for many people and we might be subjects to accusations..

Iga Jeziorska, Youth Organisations for Drug Action



HOW WE CAN ASSIST YOU



If you are a community activist or work for an NGO, we can help you in multiple ways.

We can provide you with technical support in designing and implementing awareness-raising campaigns, to address barriers to services, systemic discrimination, or criminalisation.

We can travel to your country and produce a film about current advocacy issues, including human rights abuses, effective services, campaigns, etc.

We can produce a video about your organisation, highlighting your key activities and successes. The video can be used for promoting your NGO, mobilising members, fundraising, or other purposes.

If you are organising a major conference or other event, you might consider contracting us to film key sessions/speeches, as well as to produce and edit a short conference video on site, to be screened at the closing session (in case your event lasts for more than one day). Videos can reach people who could not attend the event, with key messages.

We can train you or your staff members and peers to use the camera, to use editing software, to do interviews, and to produce and distribute videos. No need to have any special technical skills, apart from a basic knowledge of computer use.

We can train you or your staff members about how to communicate more effectively with the mainstream media - our training includes practical exercises, such as writing test press releases and giving test TV interviews, which can be discussed with the group.

OUR STAFF



Péter Sárosi
Executive Director



István Gábor Takács
Video Manager



Magda Major
Head of Office

NEWS AND VIDEOS FROM THE FRONTLINE OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON DRUGS

RIGHTS REPORTER FOUNDATION



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GLOBALGIVING.ORG/PROJECTS/DEBUNKING-THE-WAR-ON-DRUGS

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RIGHTS REPORTER FOUNDATION
BUDAPEST, 2017.