

CONCLUSIONS :

The research – purpose, methods, international response

In 2007 the International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD vzw) in cooperation with the Correlation Network conducted a six month on-line research on the profile of the drug users' activism and organizing. The research gathered information about the type of the drug users' organizations (DU / DUO) world-wide, the level of involvement of DU community in the work of the DU activists' (DUA) organizations, about the geographical coverage, as well as about the regions the DUO are most active, and others. The main aims, the areas the DUO work mainly in, the types of funding they get (governmental, municipal, private, local, international, etc.), their partners, targeted allies and opponents, their main expertise, and others were also topics of the research. The full information about the results from the research can be found in the attached file: [Table 2 Online Research Results](#) .

The main aims of the research were to create a detailed database of the DUO world-wide, as well as to map the areas they work-in, their main needs, interests, to identify possibilities for international cooperation, support, etc. In longer-term plan the analyzed results from the research will be used by INPUD vzw and the Correlation Network as a base to develop a medium and long term strategy for involving the DUO that have participated in the study, as well as their partners and colleagues world-wide (that were included later on in the data-base) in the international DU activism and in closer cooperation at international level with other community-based organizations, and professionals and service-providers working with all marginalized communities.

The research started in May' 2007 by publishing a questionnaire, which included questions on all topics mentioned above, as well as control questions on some main topics (e.g. level of involvement of different peer groups, areas of main activities, main expertise, others) on the INPUD web site (<http://www.inpud.org/>). 38 INPUD members and supporters from 21 countries world-wide responded to the request and filled-in the on-line questionnaire. The full information about the DUO, included in the research, their legal status, activities are published in the attached file: [Table 1 Online Research Organizations](#). In the end of October the results from the first six months of the research were evaluated (Table_2). In order to be able to include as many DUO as possible in the database, the on-lined questionnaire is still opened, the data-base is constantly updated, and the results – re-evaluated. The few filled-in questionnaires that were received immediately after the information from the first six months was summarized and evaluated will not have any significant impact on the results from Table 2.

Analysis of the results:

– regional coverage:

The results from the first six months of the research are based on the analysis of the answers of 38 DUO from 21 countries world-wide. Geographically they are spread as follows:

from Europe

countries – number of the countries from the region: 14; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 66.67%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 19; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 51.35%
from European Union

countries – number of the countries from the region: 12; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 57.14%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 17; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 44.74%
from Asia

countries – number of the countries from the region: 3; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 14.29%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 10; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 26.32%
from Oceania

countries – number of the countries from the region: 1; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 4.76%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 1; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 2.63%

from North America

countries – number of the countries from the region: 2; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 9.52%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 6; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 15.79%

from South America

countries – number of the countries and the DUO from the region: 0

from Africa

countries – number of the countries from the region: 1; percentage of the overall number of the countries: 4.76%

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 1; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 2.63%

DUO working at international level

DUO – number of DUO from the region: 1; percentage of the overall number of the DUO: 2.63%

– **main priorities:**

6 DUO (e.g. 15.79% of all DUO that have answered to the questionnaire) have not provided information on the topic. Judging by the main expertise the DUO from the research have appointed for their organizations, by the areas they work mainly in, as well as by the their partners and targeted allies, the main priorities DUO have are listed bellow in descending order:

1. Advocacy
2. Harm Reduction
3. Peer support and education in DU community in general - e.g. for IDUs, for people on substitution treatment, for ravers and people from the party scene
4. Peer support for PLWHA
5. Media production
6. Trainings and workshops, peer meetings
7. Accommodation and service providing programs
8. Detox, treatment, rehabilitation centers
9. Community empowerment and mobilizing
10. Education and drug and BBDs prevention in youth community
11. Public Health system
12. Networking at International level

– **main activities:**

According to the information, provided by the organizations that have taken part in the research, the main activities they have listed in descending order are listed below. 4 DUO from the research have not provided information about their main activities. Part of the side-activities, included in the answers of the DUO from the research, has no statistical significance, so they are not included in the following list. The full information on the topic is available in Table_2. Main activities:

1. advocacy and health/drug policy making
2. peer support for PLWHA
3. peer support for DUs
4. HIV and other blood-borne diseases education and prevention
5. HIV and other blood-borne diseases education and prevention
6. issue/publish e- and printed magazines and newsletters
7. producing other types of informational materials
8. organizing, conducting, moderating trainings, workshops, seminars, peer meetings
9. educational and peer support work in the party scene
10. running accommodation projects
11. drop-in centers with various services
12. raising public awareness about the main problems in the DU community

– **services, provided by the DUO:**

8 DUO (e.g. 21% of all DUO that have answered to the questionnaire) have not provided information on the topic. The services the rest of the DUO from the research provide are listed below in descending order:

1. Awareness and information
2. Peer support for all communities above
3. Outreach and prevention / information
4. Newsletters and magazines
5. Information, educational and promotion materials
6. Drop-in with various services (e.g. basic needs, different classes, tel., Internet, etc.)
7. Needle exchange
8. Drug and BBDs education and prevention
9. Trainings, seminars, and workshops in the area
10. Detox and treatment centers
11. Support and information for party organizers
12. Syringe patrolling
13. Face to face consultations
14. Medical referrals
15. Legal help and Advices
16. Drug checking, Psychological crisis related to drugs consumption support - Relax zone, Chill Out
17. Accurate information through regularly updated Internet sites
18. Help and hot telephone lines

Summary of the results:

The strongest impression by the results of the research is made by the obvious upsurge in the DUO world-wide, as well as the broad range of areas DUO work in, and the various in numbers and profile services they provide. The indisputable prevalence have the European DUO and particularly the ones that come from the EU-member states. Another obvious result is that most of the DUO have appointed advocacy and health/drug policy making as their main priority and main area of activity, which is also proved by the answer of 16 DUO (42.11%) that appoint the policy makers as one of their main targets / involved parties in their work, until 17 of the DUO (44.74%) state that they partly target / involve politicians in their work. This is also connected with the answers of 25 DUO from the research (67.57%) that they have received a governmental funding for their work at municipal, regional and/or national level. Only 1 of the DUO have answered that they have received a governmental funding for activities at international level. The fact that the local municipalities / governments are willing to finance the work of the DUO at local, regional, and national level, but still do not see the need to finance their work at international level can show the need for better coordination, networking, cooperation, exchange of ideas and experience between the local DUO at international level that should result in improving their work at local level, introducing the best known practices that exist world wide in their local communities, and thus - giving the decision-makers from their countries evidence-based proof that the cooperation at International level is vitally important for the activism in the marginalized, community-based organizations. This is also supported by the fact that 52.63% of the DUO that have taken part in the research has received private grants for activities at international level.

The second main activity and priority, appointed by the DUO in the research is harm reduction. The connection between the drug users' organizing and the current global policies on drugs is more than obvious. In the years when the global prohibition and its logical results – restrictions, stigma, HIV and Hep.C epidemics, etc. have reached a peak-point in causing damage and harms to society at large and especially to the DU community, DU organize themselves to advocate for the more effective and the more cost efficient health approach to the problem of drugs use. In the same time peer-support and raising public awareness about the most acute problems in the DU Community are also amongst the prioritized activities of the DUO world-wide.

Still the main benefit from the research is that the profile of the DUO world-wide (and respectively the profile of the DUA that run the DUO from the research) completely differs from the general image of the drug users that have been imposed on society for already decades. The research showed that DUO are capable of running a variety of services and have proved themselves to the decision-makers in their countries as a reliable and capable partner and an indispensable part of the organized civil society. The next logical and inevitable step is to develop and expand the newly founded DUO unions and networks at International level, and proving the decision-makers from all international institutions involved that the DUO should be considered not only as competent and equal partners, but also as indispensable experts in the drug-policy making process.