

HIV AND HARM REDUCTION FOR EASTERN AFRICA PROJECT ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

HIV and Harm Reduction (HR) in the Eastern Africa Context

Project Focus areas:

- **Harm Reduction Policy Advocacy**
- **Community Systems Strengthening**
- **Generation of evidence to support policy and practice**

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Support Don't PUNISH Procession in Zanzibar 2016

Eastern Africa is characterized by a generalized HIV epidemic with sexual transmission being the main mode of transmission. Within this generalized epidemic there are concentrated epidemics among Key Populations (KPs). The concentrated epidemic is disproportionately severe in terms of infection rates, government commitment, and access to services for

those who are most vulnerable, including People who inject drugs (PWID). 'HIV and Harm Reduction in Eastern Africa' aims to help bridge these inequalities.

Across the region, HIV prevalence varies in the general population, ranging from less than 1% in Zanzibar, Mauritius and Seychelles to about 2% in Burundi and Ethiopia to more than 5% in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

While some progress has been made and the number of new infections is dropping in most countries in Eastern Africa, the HIV epidemic is not being sufficiently addressed amongst KPs especially PWID, men having sex

with men (MSM), sex workers (SWs) and migrants. In addition, there are still significant gender-based and geographical factors driving HIV transmission. There are more women (58%) than men living with HIV in the region. Other affected populations include prisoners, children and young people (aged 15 to 24).

The region lacks information and related programming, coupled by stigma and discrimination, criminalization and punitive laws and policies, gender violence especially amongst WWID, limitations within existing health and community systems cumulatively have resulted to a "hidden" population that is rarely seen, heard and listened to by all key stakeholders.

The "hidden" population has over time been unable to access prevention, treatment and support services, which conventionally were and still are more responsive towards the general population than the Key population

The EAHRN Partners

Sub Recipients

- ◆ Organization for Support Services, Health and development (OSSHD) Ethiopia
- ◆ Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE)
- ◆ Alliance Burundaise Contre le SIDA (ABS) -Burundi
- ◆ HIV and AIDs Support Organization(HASO) -Seychelles
- ◆ Community Health Alliance Uganda (CHAU)
- ◆ Commission for National Coordination and Drug Control (CNCDC)- Zanzibar
- ◆ Kenya Harm Reduction Network-(KHRN)

Networks

- ◆ Tanzania Network of People using Drugs (TanPUD)
- ◆ Uganda Harm Reduction Network(UHRN)
- ◆ Kenya Network of People Using Drug (KenPUD)
- ◆ Drug Users Network Seychelles (DUNS)
- ◆ Zanzibar Network of People Who Used Drugs (ZANPUD)
- ◆ Burundi Network of Drug Users (BUNPUD)

Technical Assistance Providers

- ◆ International HIV/AIDS Alliance- (IHAA)
- ◆ International Network of People Who Use Drugs - (INPUD)
- ◆ International Drug Policy Consortium-(IDPC)
- ◆ London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LHSTM)
- ◆ Alliance For Public Health Ukraine
- ◆ East Africa Network of AIDS Service Organization (EANNASO)

Harm Reduction Policy Advocacy



High Level Policy Meeting Delegates: Arusha Tanzania

Eastern Africa has a harsh and punitive environment faced by PWID. This is further exacerbated by a lack of awareness and political will amongst policy makers, leading to insufficient provision of the harm reduction services that have been proven to militate against new HIV infections among PWID. These punitive drug policies have hindered access to harm reduction services for PWID across the region, and are putting PWID in a vulnerable position.

In line with this, the project has established champions for harm reduction policy through collaboration with the East African Community, the National Parliamentary AIDS Committees in member countries, Ministries of Health, CSOs and

regional and national drug control entities.

The project has integrated harm reduction components with the work of the EAC so the EAC objectives of harmonizing regional policies and standards will incorporate harm reduction interventions and ensure mutual accountability, organizational coherence, strategic synergies and alignment of support with the EAC's Health Strategy, 2012-2030.

The first regional conference on HIV and harm reduction has been planned in 2017 to assess the status of harm reduction in the region and to coordinate harm reduction developments.

'We need a clear legal framework that will translate to good policies addressing drug use and harm reduction in Eastern Africa'

Hon. Waiganjo, Kenya

KANCO organized a three day high level meeting in Arusha Tanzania, embarking on a journey of anchoring Harm Reduction in the regional policies.

The main aim of the meeting was to marshal support for harm reduction in the region from governments in a bid to advocate for effective responses for harm reduction through skills building and appropriate investments.

The meeting climaxed in the signing of the Arusha Declaration on Harm Reduction, which called for scale up, strengthening and funding of harm reduction services in the region.

It further calls for creation of an enabling policy environment under which evidence based

services can be implemented and achieve their full potential, calling for further research and generation of strategic information funding as well as strengthening of communities of PWIDs. The Arusha Declaration commits the signatory states to:

1. Encourage and facilitate more country specific studies to inform response and programs on drug use and health
2. Advocate for the development at both national and regional institutions relevant , policies and regulations To promote access to health and social services towards PWIDs
3. Advocate for the domestication and where necessary, formulate policies and legislation on health and drug use and ensure their implementation
4. Advocate for the scale up, strengthening and funding of Harm Reduction interventions for people who use drugs in Eastern Africa
5. Coordinate and provide oversight for Harm Reduction programs Across the East African region: and
6. Do everything in [their] means, not limited to the above, to create an enabling environment to increase access for accessible Harm Reduction Interventions

See full Declaration: <http://kanco.org/?s=Arusha+Declaration+on+Harm+Reduction>

Celebrating our Harm reduction Champions Across the Region!

Members Of Parliament (MPs)

Joseph Mhagama Tanzania

Omar S. Abeid Tanzania

Mary Nagu- Tanzania

Alyek Judy Uganda

John Waiganjo Kenya

Ken Okoth- Kenya

Evelyn Chemutai Uganda

Agustinho Neto Kenya

Mkeshimana Leonidas Burundi

Rachael Ameso Kenya

Law Enforcement Representatives

Ignitius Tinka Zerugaba Police Commissioner Uganda

Kheriyangu Hamisi - Deputy Police Commissioner Zanzibar



Community Systems Strengthening

The community Systems Strengthening (CSS) objective in the HIV and Harm Reduction Project aims to strengthen community systems for a sustained HIV response among Persons who Inject Drugs (PWIDS) in the Eastern African Region. Under the Global Fund grant, KANCO is actively working to support and capacity build communities of people who use drugs (PWUDs), as part of CSS. This is against a background of a prohibiting policy environment in most of the countries in the region on drug use, cascading down to the users in the environment.

Where are we?

KANCO has supported formation of new networks of drug users in Seychelles, Burundi and Zanzibar.

Drug Users for Seychelles (DUPS), Burundi Network for people who Use Drugs (BUNPUD) and Zanzibar Network of People who use Drugs (ZANPUD) have been formed. Through the grant, KANCO has also strengthened previous existing drug networks; KeNPUD, TANPUD, through capacity building in governance, administration, policy & advocacy and communications. There has been infrastructural support and human resource development for the networks. This has translated to a significant number of the member countries having in country drug user's networks. These networks are expected to and working towards representing the voices of the drug users across the region to address the health, social and economic needs of

people using drugs.

KANCO has also through the grant supported the formation of Eastern Africa Harm Reduction Network (EAHRN), an umbrella body for the country networks

Planning of the first East African Harm Reduction Conference is underway which goes down in history as the first and largest conglomeration discussing drug use and related issues focused on the region with a hoped outcome of a high level statement on harm reduction from the African States. The conference aims to be community centered, with the community of drug users being at the heart of planning and execution of the conference



Setting up of the East African Harm Reduction Network

The need to support the Eastern African Community of people who use drugs, to access HIV and harm reduction services through creating an enabling environment has remained an urgent issue. All countries in Eastern Africa have populations of people who use and inject drugs that have remained underground and their needs unaddressed. It was critical to support the formation of in country networks where none existed, build the capacity of existing ones and develop a regional network to give them an advocacy platform and representation.

The rationale for setting up EAHRN was that national and local level networks could work very well within, but a regional body would best amplify and unite these country voices to shape the regional harm reduction agenda particularly in the areas of the legal and favorable environment to access health care services. This remains the crux behind the formation of the EAHRN,

Formation of the body has been done consultatively through an initial regional stakeholders forum that brought together members of the drug users community, Harm

Reduction Implementers, NGOs, Advocates, Donors and regional governments, and was later followed up by elections of the board representatives. The network is presently is being hosted in Uganda.

The EAHRN is mandated to spearhead policy advocacy and resource mobilization to support Harm Reduction responses in the Eastern Africa region.

'We cannot be able to move without creating the right leadership, we need to take responsibility'

Allan Ragi, Executive Director KANCO

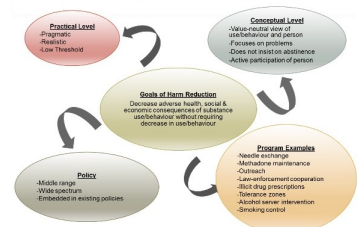
In country Networks established under the Project

- ⇒ Drug Users Network Seychelles (DUNS)
- ⇒ Burundi Network for people who Use Drugs (BUNPUD)
- ⇒ Zanzibar Network of People who use Drugs (ZANPUD)

Regionally:

- ⇒ The Eastern African Harm Reduction Network (EAHRN)

HARM REDUCTION MODEL



Research: Generating information to manage drug use in Eastern Africa



Image showing heroin trade routes: Courtesy of the Economist

The last decade has seen increasing drug trade in Eastern Africa, with Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania being highlighted as key transit points in drug trafficking. The UNODC has pointed towards the importance of East Africa as a trade route for heroin from Afghanistan in several reports. Although predominantly a trade route, there is an increase in consumption, especially of heroin in Eastern Africa states, with Kenya, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Tanzania coming up as destination states presenting ready demand.

Despite the growing drug use problem in the region, there has been a slow response to managing drug related effects. Across the Eastern African countries, most policies on drug control have been severely punitive on drug users, resulting in

hidden populations of drug users, and exacerbating the health effects of drug use as a result of limited harm reduction interventions.

Lack of strategic information has been a major hindrance in drug related interventions. It is against this backdrop that KANCO, through a grant from the Global Fund, has initiated a multi-country research program, as part of a broader harm reduction program covering the Eastern African countries implementing the grant., focusing on population estimates & rapid assessments, qualitative and modeling studies. The overall project

aims to increase access to essential HIV and harm reduction services for people who inject drugs in Eastern Africa, with the research focusing on generating and utilizing strategic information on drug use related interventions in the region. The program has been designed to cater for specific information needs across the countries.

The research is generating evidence that will be used to make a case for harm reduction in the region; provide estimations to work with, quantify the need in terms of resources and commodities and give guidance on future direction of harm reduction programs and where more focus needs to be put.

All these research pieces are exciting, as they promise to give a current picture of the drug using scenes in this region and in turn the need in relation to contextualized harm reduction approaches. The studies will go a long way in policy advocacy for the region towards improving the lived experiences of drug users by addressing their health needs.



Research is at the heart of an effective Harm Reduction Response in the Eastern Africa Region

Country	Research Focus/Intervention
Burundi	Population Estimates and Rapid Assessments Demonstration Site
Uganda	Population Estimates and Rapid Assessments Demonstration site
Kenya	Qualitative Studies and Modeling Impact
Tanzania	Qualitative Studies and Modeling Impact
Ethiopia	Population Estimates and Rapid Assessments
Mauritius	Qualitative Study
Zanzibar	Population Estimates and Rapid Assessments

Community Involvement in generation of Evidence: TACOSODE and TaNPUD



Representatives from TACOSODE, TanPUD and KANCO Involved in the Harm Reduction research in Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the three countries that is conducting a qualitative research piece, together with Kenya and Mauritius, with the aim of investigating how the social environment shapes access to harm reduction and care. The study in Tanzania focuses on access to methadone assisted therapy among people who inject drugs in Dar Es Salaam.

The study is being led by a team of researchers from Muhimbili Hospital (Dr. Elia Mmbaga and Dr. Jesse Mmbambo), in partnership with Tanzania

Council for Social Development (TACOSODE) (Nobelrich Makere and John Nudunguru). The study has also collaborated with Tanzania Network for People Using Drugs (TaNPUD) a network organization that works towards advocating for the rights of drug users in the country.

In the process of implementing the study, the research team recruited one of the members of TaNPUD as a research assistant. Masiabi is a member of TaNPUD, and was recruited for field

work and data collection. His experiences as a person in recovery facilitated in ensuring that sampling for the study was able to reach a diverse representation of people using drugs in Tanzania. As John Nudunguru, a research team member from TACOSODE points out ' Having him in the team enabled us to get perspectives from drug users who would have been difficult to reach if we did not have someone who understood the community well'

Masiabi describes his experience with the research process as enlightening. He notes that participating in the research has created an appetite for him and among his peers as they look forward to the research findings. He says the research is very timely and useful for him both as a community member as well as a member of TaNPUD, looking forward to utilizing the findings for advocacy on policy and service implementation among people who use drugs in Tanzania.

The study is anticipated to be completed in June, and the research findings will be shared on KANCO and TACOSODE platforms. Keep an eye out for these!

Harm Reduction Publication Links in the Last one year

To win war against HIV infection, we must tackle drug addiction

<http://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/weekend/-revolutionised-the-fight-against-HIV-in-Kenya/1220-3489124-c3gdaaz/>

War on Drugs and Impact on Health Care

<http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/War-on-drugs-impact-on-health-care/440808-3812974-10rutpvz/index.html>

Crucial Steps Needed in the fight Against Drug Abuse

<http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/crucial-steps-needed-in-drugs-abuse-fight/440808-3267374-oldsjz/index.html>

East African legislators back bid to provide medical assistance to drug addicts

<http://www.nation.co.ke/East-African-legislators-back-bid-to-provide-medical-assistance/1148-3484456-g1uorm/index.html>

Fresh Ways Needed to Fight HIV Among Drug Users

<http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Fresh-ways-needed-to-fight-HIV-in-drug-users/440808-3100650-9vicemz/index.html>

Drug Users need Doctors not Policemen

<http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Drug-users-need-doctors-not-policemen/440808-3073014-5gk8cs/index.html>

UHRN Drug Injection Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Pyd8eM9Fdk

UHRN World AIDS Day Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Pyd8eM9Fdk

Support Don't Punish in Uganda

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZWoQakZf6g>

<http://www.observer.ug/lifestyle/42-entertainment/46306-ugandans-mixing-drugs-sparking-mental-illness>

<http://supportdontpunish.org/country/ug/day-of-action-ug-2016/>

Amplifying the Voices of Communities



From left Happy Hassan, the Coordinator TanPUD, KANCO Programs Director, Onesmus Mlewa among other panelists during the International AIDS Conference in 2016 in Durban

In the design and inception of the **HIV and Harm Reduction for Eastern Africa** project, KANCO and partners set out on an ambitious roadmap to strengthen the voices of communities of people who inject drugs (PWIDs) as a key strategy aimed at reduction HIV infections and other blood borne diseases. This is not only in-line with KANCO's vision of **Healthy People Empowered Communities** but also in the spirit of reinforcing the UN-AIDS approach of placing the communities at the centre of the HIV response to realize the vision of ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

The project complements the scale up and sustainability of the existing harm reduction services in the region while ensuring a strong and coordinated voice of PWIDs. This is based on our belief that every voice counts in the realization of a conducive policy & legal environment, eliminating stigma as well access to life saving interventions for this community.

The community is at the heart of KANCO's response to harm reduction in the region, this is to

ensure effective service delivery and promote accountability among stakeholders. The need to have the community driving the response informs the harm reduction implementation strategy in the region which has been:

Strengthening and Promoting the voice of the community of PWUDs: KANCO set out to strengthen existing networks and establish new ones where none existed. This has been possible though the technical support partners like the International network of People Using Drugs (INPUD), and in-country implementing partners. In addition to the formation of networks and linkage with the project sub recipients in each country, there is ongoing mentorship and support in key areas of focus for capacity development including on governance; human resource, ICT, M&E, reporting and documentation.

Peer learning and exposure visits as a key strategy for capacity development: The project facilitates learning visits across the 8 countries with the older networks playing a mentorship role to new ones. Beyond linking the networks with INPUD, there has been linkage of the networks with other harm reduction partners including The International HIV AIDS Alliance, IDPC, Alliance for Public Health and The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for on-going learning and support.

Key achievements and experiences

- ◆ Strengthening the existing networks:
- ◆ Establishment of new networks: Burundi, Ethiopia, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Zanzibar
- ◆ Mapping of site/ engagement of communities
- ◆ Increased visibility of PWID through Support Don't Punish campaigns
- ◆ Improved Participation and engagement in country, regional and international forums
- ◆ Linkage to government for sustainability
- ◆ Involvement of communities in research in collaboration with several higher learning institutions

Challenges

- ◆ Formation of networks. In Ethiopia and Mauritius, it took more time than anticipated to have functional networks due to the fear of institutionalizing formalized networks of users.
- ◆ The learning curve for SRs and SSRs, though taking shape, has also continued to be a challenge

Recommendations and the way forward

- ◆ Continued mentorship especially among the networks to ingrain strong leadership
- ◆ Strengthening the community driven responses, with continuous documenting to inform change
- ◆ In the next phase KANCO will work closely with INPUD and OSSHD to formalize and strengthen the network in Ethiopia.
- ◆ The project will foster strong linkages between EAHRN and the country Networks Strong collaboration with key government institution and development donorsWay Forward

The HIV and Harm Reduction Project in Numbers 2015/2016



13 Harm Reductions Champions created!



93 Policy/Opinion leaders Publicly Supporting Harm Reduction



4 Documented Commitments Of National Decision Making Bodies Recognizing the need for Harm Reduction



Over USD 1.7 M Invested in Harm Reduction Regionally



4 Drug Users Networks Established



8 Regional Policy Discussion Forums Held

Regional consultative forum for stakeholders in Harm Reduction



Regional Harm Reduction Stakeholders Forum

According to UNODC, there is an estimated 256 million people globally who use illicit drugs, with about 1.65 million of these being people who inject drugs and living with HIV. The Eastern Africa region is estimated to be home to about 217,080 PWID

Entrenched in a Criminal Justice approach system to drug laws, there is a blanket punitive environment resulting in the criminalization of people who use drugs (PWUD) and presenting significant barriers to accessing prevention and treatment services where they

exist. The discussion on harm reduction in the Eastern African region therefore can no longer be delayed.

KANCO through the support of the Global Fund has been championing the harm reduction advocacy in the Eastern Africa region with recognition that for effective advocacy and ultimate transition of the drug using environment there needs to be a multi stakeholder effort and collaboration. KANCO organized a three day meeting with multi-stakeholder delegates from the Eastern African countries implementing the harm reduction project, to address different issues around service delivery and policies as they relate to PWIDs.

The meeting with representatives from the Government, civil society,

policy makers, healthcare providers and the community sought to advocate for a favorable environment for PWID to access comprehensive healthcare with the objective to create an enabling environment for harm reduction service delivery in the region. Some of the emerging issues were the need for more data and information to strengthen the investment case for harm reduction, issues of transitions and management of HIV, best practices that can be replicated, the need to counter punitive laws through strengthened advocacy and the specific advocacy issues by country, sustainability of harm reduction interventions and the need for data for informed advocacy and service delivery

'We need everyone on board for the success of harm reduction'

Happy Hassan-TANPUD

The Eastern African Harm Reduction Network Elections

KANCO hosted the regional harm reduction network meeting that brought representatives from the eight African countries to put in place formative structures to oversee the running and operation of the network within the region.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting KANCO Executive Director Allan Ragi observed;

'We have come from the notion that those who use drugs are those who have money, and they are criminals. We have come to know that this is different. We have also come to a level where we can comfortably say why harm reduction is important, and the importance of supporting the people who use drugs.'

The three day discussion sought to agree on a framework, membership composition, and eligibility criteria of the elected board tenures for the elected members and their mandate.

Facilitating one of the discussion forums, KANCO programs Director: Onesmus Mlewa observed:

'There is need to support the eastern African community to access harm reduction services. To be able to achieve this, then an enabling environment is necessary, generating an evidence base and strengthening communities of people who inject drugs'.

The three day forum also provided a sharing and learning forum for partners from different countries on different topical issues affecting

the community of people who inject drugs, policies and the holistic operational environment for programming.

The deliberations led to nomination of an interim committee to oversee the running of the network with competitive elections set to take place later on in the year. The country representatives were commissioned to go back to their countries and have internal discussions that would give insights to the forthcoming elections.



Pre-Election Discussion session

Pictorials



Marking the Support Don't Punish Campaign in Zanzibar 2016



Members of County Assembly Representatives Harm Reduction meeting in Mombasa



Regional Anti Narcotic and Policy makers Learning Exchange Visit in Mombasa



Harm Reduction Partners Capacity Building workshop in Nairobi Kenya



Delegates from the Region during the Anti-narcotics Exchange Learning visit in Mombasa



Media Representatives Training on Harm Reduction in Nairobi



High Level Regional Governments Representatives at the Arusha High Level Policy Meeting in Tanzania



Regional Harm Reduction Stakeholders Forum



KANCO Staff at CUT, a Harm Reduction Implementing Partner in Mauritius for Routine Supervisory Visit



The EAC Expert Working Group and KANCO staff at a Harm Reduction meeting in Mombasa



Regional Members of Parliament Signing the Arusha Declaration on Harm Reduction



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Healthy People Empowered Communities

www.kanco.org:

Facebook: KANCO, Twitter: @KancoKE

Follow the project on Twitter **@EAHRN**

Facebook: **Eastern Africa Harm Reduction Network**

Upcoming...

What? The 1st Eastern Africa Harm Reduction Conference (IEAHRN)

When? November 15th-17th, 2017

Where? Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS), Nairobi Kenya

Who? Organized and Hosted by KANCO and Regional Harm Reduction Partners and Stakeholders

Theme: Leadership and Innovation in Sustainable Development

KANCO is a regional membership network of NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Private Sector actors, Research and Learning Institutions as well as associate members/partners across five continents. That include individuals and International Non Governmental Organization partners, involved in, or that have interest to effectively contribute to the their national AIDS and disease response as well as advocating for favourable health policies that will promote and enhance increased health service access to all.

Established in 1990, KANCO has a membership of over 1200 partners in Kenya and other countries within the region namely: Burundi, Seychelles, Mauritius, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zanzibar. KANCO RESULTS is also a partner with different regional and global advocacy networks such ACTION and RESULT. In 2009, KANCO was accredited as the Linking Organization (LO) of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (The Alliance), a global network that supports communities around the world to reduce the spread of HIV and meet the challenges of HIV and AIDS and related health issues.

Guided by the vision of *healthy people, empowered communities*, KANCO has evolved to become a premier agency for sensitizing, mobilizing and promoting collaboration among civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the region.

