

FINAL REPORT OF THE REGIONAL CAMPAIGN

# WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE.



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**Acknowledgments**

We are grateful to the following activists and experts who provided their valuable comments for this report:

Elena Bilokon, Chair, NGO "Moy Dom" (Kazakhstan); Oxana Buzovici, Coordinator, Union for HIV Prevention and Harm Reduction (Moldova); Judy Chang, Executive Director, INPUD; Dr. Nick Crofts, Director, Law Enforcement and HIV Network; Irena Ermolaeva, Director, Public Foundation "Asteria" (Kyrgyzstan); Svetlana Garkusha, Senior Inspector for Women's Protection from Violence, Temirtau Police Department (Kazakhstan); Eka Iakobishvili, Program Officer, OSF Eurasia Program; Ala Iatco, Chair, Union for HIV Prevention and Harm Reduction (Moldova); Dr. Zhannat Kosmukhamedova, Gender and HIV, Law Enforcement and HIV, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNODC; Inna Michaeli, Women Human Rights Defenders Coordinator, AWID; Olga Rychkova, Program Officer, International Harm Reduction Development Program, OSF; Ina Tcaci, National HIV/AIDS Officer, UNODC in Moldova; Ludmila Vins, Director, NGO "Chance Plus" (Russia)

**Women on the cover:**

Irina Bukharina and Julia Gerasimenko from NGO "Moy dom", Kazakhstan with the center's client Marina.  
Photo by Lina Fisheye.

Final report of the regional campaign WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE. Vilnius 2017.

# INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) campaign "Women Against Violence." This three-year campaign (2014–2016) aimed to:

- **highlight the problem** of police violence against women who use drugs (WUD) in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA);
- **mobilize and build the capacity** of WUD to help them defend their rights;
- **support partnerships** between public health organizations and law enforcement agencies at the international, national, and local levels.

*The idea of targeting police violence came from the field; it was dictated by the women's lived experiences in the Eurasia region. EHRN is the expert organization at listening to voices on the ground, and taking this call paid off.*



EKA IA Kobishvili, OSF

*Why is working with the police so important? Harm reduction helps people in difficult situations; often these are people who have broken the law. For them, the police are a primary stakeholder, so they can inform people about available options and put them in contact with harm reduction programs. Importantly, police officers influence public opinion in cities and rural areas where drug users are stigmatized. Thus the police must become an integral part of harm reduction efforts.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOVICI, UORN

The campaign was coordinated by the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) and implemented by EHRN and its partners: WUD groups and harm reduction organizations from 16 cities in seven countries: **Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine**.

EHRN and its partners identified the following factors that contribute to police violence against WUD:

- a low level of awareness among the police and decision-makers of police violence against WUD;
- insufficient mobilization and empowerment of WUD;
- their lack of the necessary knowledge and experience to address police violence;
- the absence of partnership and dialogue between WUD, the police, decision-makers, and other stakeholders; and
- stigma and discrimination against WUD.

We identified the following two areas as being critical to address these factors:

- **Priority Area 1:** Building dialogue with law enforcement to create a favorable environment for human rights and HIV prevention
- **Priority Area 2:** Strengthening the capacity of WUD to defend their rights.

## Year 1 The Year of Breaking the Silence (2014)

The objective of the first year was to raise police and decision-makers' awareness of police violence against WUD by mobilizing women and building their capacity to document and communicate police violence. The main objective of the sec-

## Year 2 The Year of Dialogue (2015)

ond year was to build dialogue between WUD, decision-makers, and other stakeholders in order to create effective solutions to combat police violence against WUD. The main objective of the third year was to monitor imple-

## Year 3 The Year of Monitoring and Accountability (2016)

mentation of police and other government stakeholders' commitments to combat violence against WUD.

A central theme of the campaign was the empowerment of WUD. This report describes how the campaign supported women's empowerment on three levels: individual, collective, and structural, in the following four strategic areas:

- supporting WUD leaders;
- building activists' legal skills;
- documenting human rights violations; and
- encouraging women-friendly policing.

To describe the campaign "Women Against Violence," this report first provides background information on the problem of gender-based violence, in particular police violence against WUD in the EECA region, and its negative effects on women's health and well-being. It then describes the concept of women's empowerment and its relevance to public health and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and support. The report then describes the campaign results, discusses the tools there were used to achieve those results, highlights lessons learned, and offers recommendations for next steps.

# BACKGROUND

How many WUD live in the EECA region? We should bear in mind that existing data are not likely to be accurate. First, official gender-disaggregated data on PUD are generally not available. Second, in most cases data are not disaggregated by types of drugs used, meaning that the number of injecting drug users is not specified. Third, many drug users are not registered; there-

**TABLE 1. DRUG USE AMONG WOMEN IN THE SEVEN COUNTRIES**

Country	People who use drugs	Of them, women (%)	Of them, women (total)
Belarus	75,000	18.6%	14,000
Georgia	40,000	10%	4,000
Kazakhstan	–	–	–
Kyrgyzstan	3,560	13.7%	488
Moldova	8,390	–	–
Russia	1,800,000	30%	540,000
Ukraine	–	–	–
Total	1,900,000		558,000

Sources: EHRN, 2014 (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h)

## Gender-Based and Police Violence

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), gender-based violence may include "physical, mental, emotional and other forms of abuse and harassment directed towards women" (UNODC, 2016). Research and practice have shown the multiple negative effects of violence on women's health and well-being. The UN General Assembly's Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS highlights the negative impact of violence against women on their abil-

ity to protect themselves from HIV (UN General Assembly, 2016). Violence exacerbates existing risks of transmission of HIV and other blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections (Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, 2011), and negatively affects women's ability to practice safe sex and safer drug use (UNODC, 2014). Individuals subjected to violence may engage in risky practices due to depression or reduced self-esteem (Chiu et al., 2011).

*Both violence against women and gender-oriented services are neglected areas of the harm reduction movement. While global guidelines exist, action is insufficient.*



JUDY CHANG, INPUD

fore, official data do not reflect the actual rates of drug use.

Some approximate data are presented in Table 1, demonstrating that there are at least 558,000 WUD in the seven countries (therefore, the audience of the regional campaign if we consider both its primary and secondary effects). Considering that these are conservative estimates and that we do not have reliable data for Kazakhstan and Ukraine, the actual number of WUD in the seven countries is almost certainly much higher.

Women in our region routinely encounter physical, moral or sexual violence. In Belarus, according to official data, up to 30% of women have experienced domestic violence (EHRN, 2014a). Estimates from Georgia show that over 35% of women have experienced some type of violence or coercion, and about 7% have experienced violence from their sexual partners (EHRN, 2014b). In Ukraine, up to 44% of women have experienced domestic violence (EHRN, 2014g).

Police violence is an especially damaging type of violence because it is "perpetrated or condoned by the State" (UN General Assembly, 1993). Police violence against WUD is facilitated by public policies that criminalize drugs. In many countries, such policies force women to endure violence, make it difficult or impossible for them to report violence, and ultimately prevent them from using public health services (Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, 2011). Given that criminalized groups such as drug users are at a high risk of contracting HIV, police behavior has a crucial impact on the risk of HIV transmission – for example, when police officers arrest people for possession of syringes or condoms (Crofts and Patterson, 2016).

Police violence has long-term negative effects on communities (Chiu et al., 2011). It reduces women's motivation to use public

health facilities and programs (UNODC, 2014; 2016). When the police has a stigmatizing attitude towards members of vulnerable groups, it often reflects the community perception that drug users or sex workers do not have the same rights as other citizens (Crofts and Patterson, 2016).

Considering that in most countries of the EECA region drug possession – even in small amounts – (and often drug use) is punishable by law, WUD have to interact with the police on a regular basis. In our region, police violence towards WUD is particularly pervasive. In Kyrgyzstan, a survey by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Astoria shows that WUD and women who engage in sex work are routinely targeted by the police; many have been subjected to rape or physical violence (EHRN, 2014d). Research done in Moldova shows that most police officers are prejudiced against drug users and associate them with criminals; WUD report their experiences of police officers expressing hatred, violence, and discrimination (EHRN, 2014e). In Russia, WUD are routinely subjected to threats, beatings, and demands for sexual favors. A study conducted in St. Petersburg shows that up to 25% of WUD in that city have experienced sexual violence committed by police officers (EHRN, 2014f).

## Country Responses to Violence against Women

Drug policies that criminalize WUD are present in most countries. Russia's drug policies are some of the harshest in the region, and protections against violations of the rights of PUD are lacking (EHRN, 2014f). In Belarus, drug policy has recently toughened, resulting in an increase in the number of arrests and detentions of PUD (EHRN, 2014a). A key consequence of harsh drug policies is that WUD are afraid to report violence for fear of exposure as drug users. In Georgia, policymakers recognizing this problem recently acknowledged the need to address the negative effects of drug policies as part of a broader context of women's rights (EHRN, 2014b). However, in most other countries this is not yet a mainstream policy topic.

Some of the seven countries have relatively strong legal and policy frameworks to prevent and address violence against women, while others have weaker frameworks. But even the countries with the best frameworks have gaps when it comes

*When arranging a meeting between women activists and police officers, we chose to invite police over to our office because, unlike Kazakhstan, there are no women-oriented police units in Kyrgyzstan, and police officers are more secretive.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

to specific provisions to protect marginalized women, including WUD. For example, Ukraine is one of the pioneers in the region in terms of legislation and policies addressing violence. Nevertheless, Ukraine's national gender policies do not specifically

protect the rights of marginalized women, and WUD generally have difficulties navigating the legal system, which is highly prejudiced against them (EHRN, 2014g). In Belarus, over the past 10 years several laws, policies and plans to address gender inequality and violence against women have been introduced, leading to an increase in the number of complaints from victims of violence; however, the country's legislation and policies do not pay sufficient attention to issues affecting vulnerable women (EHRN, 2014a).

Georgia's policies and government strategies have a strong focus on equality and human rights. The country's Ombudsman has recently highlighted violations of women's rights as a result of punitive drug policies; however, this has not yet translated into relevant laws (EHRN, 2014b). In Moldova, there are contradictions between basic legislation that guarantees gender quality, and a secondary regulatory framework that encourages discrimination against PUD by allowing forced drug treatment, disclosure of confidential patient information, and arbitrary searches of drug users' property (EHRN, 2014e). In Kazakhstan, national legislation and related strategies emphasize gender equality, including with regard to addressing gender-based violence. These documents, however, do not refer specifically to marginalized women; police violence against WUD is wide-

spread but is hard to document because of women's fear of reporting mistreatment by police (EHRN, 2014c). In Kyrgyzstan, recent changes to national legislation have improved the situation regarding gender equality; however, there is insufficient government capacity to address gender issues (EHRN, 2014d).

Russia does not have comprehensive legislation, strategies, and policies on women's rights, and relevant policy institutions are lacking (EHRN, 2014f). Despite the omnipresent problem of violence against women, policies and practices have not been reformed, and the broader environment is conducive to police corruption and a lack of accountability of the Russian police to society, exacerbating the problem of police violence against vulnerable women.

One of the major consequences of harsh drug policies and stigma against drug users is that WUD have limited access to services for victims of gender-based violence. For example, in Ukraine, most shelters do not accept active WUD, and there is generally no supportive network for them outside efforts by NGOs (EHRN, 2014g). In Kyrgyzstan, there are no state shelters — not just for WUD but also for any victims of violence (EHRN, 2014d).

**Considering these gaps in the policies and practices protecting the rights of women, the regional campaign "Women Against Violence" focused its work in two areas:**

- **Priority Area 1:** Building dialogue with law enforcement to create a favorable environment for human rights and HIV prevention
- **Priority Area 2:** Strengthening the capacity of WUD to defend their rights.

An overview of these areas is provided further ahead.

### Priority Area 1: Building dialogue with law enforcement

To address the problem of police violence against WUD, the regional campaign "Women Against Violence" included a broad range of police-oriented awareness-raising, training and capacity-building activities. This work corresponds to international guidelines and best practices. For example, UNODC (2016) recommends paying attention to raising police aware-

ness of gender-based violence and training police officers on HIV and violence against women, to create an enabling environment for equal access to services. It also recommends that harm reduction advocates support gender-sensitive policing by helping the police develop procedures and instructions for interacting with women (UNODC, 2016).

According to the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (2011), it is imperative to highlight the link between police violence and HIV and to train police officers on women's rights. UNAIDS (2012) also recommends informing and sensitizing policymakers and the police about their potential role in supporting the right to health of members of vulnerable groups. This should include facilitated meetings of HIV programs, their clients, and the police to discuss ways of excluding police violations "to help ensure that individuals living with and vulnerable to HIV can access HIV services and lead full and dignified lives, free from discrimination, violence, extortion, harassment and arbitrary arrest and detention" (UNAIDS, 2012). Finally, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (2014) recommends training for the police on human rights with community participation both with a long-term goal of structural policy changes and as a short-term intervention to create an enabling environment for public health interventions and build communication between communities and the police.

*Police officers are most likely to be in contact with women who use drugs. They may or may not be trusted by those women, but they will be in touch regardless, so it makes sense to engage them.*



INA TCACI, UNODC MOLDOVA

*Partnerships between the police and harm reduction are still a new thing. Although 70% of police time is spent on things that are not directly related to law enforcement, their involvement in public health may still be seen as not 'real' police work. HIV/AIDS donors do not always see working with the police as something relevant. Activists, too, may see the police as an enemy.*



DR. NICK CROFTS, LEAHN

*There is a need to prepare the ground for working with the police; otherwise, there will be resistance and misunderstanding. Given that the police is a vertical and highly hierarchical structure, they have detailed advanced planning procedures put in place, so there is a need to schedule the activities with the police in advance and ensure continuity by conducting regular meeting, workshops, activities every two to three months. This might eventually lead to the perception by the police that these types of activities are part of their routine daily work.*



INA TCACI, UNODC MOLDOVA

### Priority Area 2: Strengthening the capacity of WUD to defend their rights

The regional campaign "Women Against Violence" aimed at empowering WUD. In the context of HIV/AIDS, and more broadly in the context of public health, WUD are disempowered because they are denied the capacity to make lifesaving choices. As discussed above, repressive policies, stigma, and discrimination put these women at increased risk of HIV/AIDS, as they have insufficient access to prevention, treatment and care, reproductive health and, more broadly, public health services.

Marginalized women are powerless and cannot participate in policymaking (Kabeer, 2001), effectively making it impossible for them to challenge society's structures that stigmatize and discriminate against them.

Consequently, empowerment is a process to help disempowered people regain the capacity to make choices (Kabeer, 2001). Empowerment is a socio-political process aimed at changing

the distribution of political, social, and economic power within society (Batliwala, 2007). It works at three levels (Kabeer, 2001):

- Individual: empowerment enhances individual capacity (agency) to achieve one's goals, including by encouraging a sense of purpose, reflection and action
- Collective: empowerment helps change the terms for granting access to material, social, and human resources that are essential to self-realization (this access is regulated by the societal rules, norms, and practices)
- Structural: empowerment addresses factors that shape and reproduce the distribution of power in society.

In other words, empowerment cannot be achieved without significant shifts at the individual, collective, and structural levels.

The campaign "Women Against Violence" sought to empower women by putting them at the center of campaign activities. Similarly to police-related work, this corresponds to international guidelines and best practices. The UN General Assembly's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women calls for the recognition of the role of women's movements in addressing violence against women, and recommends cooperating with such organizations at all levels (UN General Assembly, 1993).

UNODC (2016) recommends supporting and assisting programs led and implemented by WUD. It stipulates that successful measures to address violence require support for the meaningful involvement of WUD in planning, implementing, and monitoring the quality of gender-oriented services, including related capacity-building, training, and peer education,

*The campaign was a great start in addressing violence against women who use drugs. At that time, there was a lack of understanding of how to address the problem of police violence; not just to build awareness on police violence against women who use drugs but also what could be done about it.*



JUDY CHANG, INPUD

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

While the impact of empowerment work is not easily quantifiable, it can be measured in reduced gender inequalities (Kabeer, 2001). Although it is not possible to achieve wide-ranging societal changes in the course of a three-year campaign, our campaign had a significant impact at the following levels:

**Individual:** documenting violations helped women become aware of their rights. Their sense of dignity, confidence, and self-esteem increased as a result of the campaign. A number of leaders and spokespersons on police violence emerged from the community.

**Collective:** WUD mobilized to address police violence. A community-based system of reporting police violence was developed. Through initiative groups, training, and participation in events and study tours, activists in the seven countries realized that community organizing can provide solutions. First steps were taken towards mainstreaming issues of concern to WUD into the global women's rights movement.

**Structural:** for the first time in our region, the problem of police violence against WUD appeared on the decision-makers' agenda. In several countries, police leadership and authorities voiced their commitment to combating police violence. In a few countries, civil society organizations signed memorandums of understanding with the police, specifying mutual commitments and joint activities to address violence. Several countries developed national and local strategies and action plans that include provisions to respond to police violence. An informal regional network of women-friendly police officers emerged.

These developments have already resulted in tangible changes and helped lay the groundwork for future initiatives to change harmful norms and practices that support gender inequalities, design gender-oriented public health programs, and achieve humane drug policies.

Especially given that police violence is underreported, the sheer number of cases collected makes this campaign a success and a model for other campaigns.



JUDY CHANG, INPUD

### The campaign "Women Against Violence" in figures:

**850** cases of police violations of women's rights were documented and publicized through the regional online platform <https://waveeca.crowdmap.com>

**477** WUD participated in the campaign

**103** representatives from various sectors, including 19 police representatives, participated in round tables dedicated to violence against women

**64** partnerships between women's organizations, human rights experts, police officers, and others were established

**50** WUD participated in webinars on human rights

**46** women-friendly police officers received certificates of gratitude from civil society organizations

**44** workshops and training sessions and other informational and educational opportunities involved 152 WUD, law enforcement and health care professionals, journalists, and other stakeholders

**41** WUD received legal support and consultations

**32** training and capacity-building sessions were organized for WUD activists

**15** new informational materials were developed for WUD and law enforcement agencies, often by the women themselves

**11** video testimonies of women's experiences of police violence were prepared and posted online

**10** press conferences and other advocacy events were organized, enabling WUD to communicate directly with police officers and decision-makers representing the needs of their communities

**9** existing women's initiative groups were supported, and 3 new groups were created

**7** submissions to UN human rights bodies were prepared

**3** activists received scholarships to document violations of women's rights and work with vulnerable women

# CAMPAIGN TOOLS

The regional campaign utilized 18 distinct tools in four strategic areas:

1. Supporting WUD leaders
2. Building activists' legal skills
3. Documenting human rights violations
4. Supporting women-friendly policing

Below we describe each of these tools by discussing the specific issues to which these tools were applied and the results of their application.

## 1. Supporting WUD Leaders

### SMALL GRANTS FOR ACTIVISTS

Since 2013, EHRN, in coordination with ENPUD, has implemented a small grants program for community activists "Through Peers' Efforts." Four rounds of the program have taken place, and Rounds 2 and 4 in particular had a strong focus on women's issues. Round 2, implemented in 2014 with financial support from the Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund and the M-A-C AIDS Fund, aimed to involve WUD community organizations in the regional campaign "Women Against Violence." Seven organizations from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine participated. Some of the results of the program include:

- documenting over 850 cases of police violations of women's rights and publicizing them through the regional online platform <https://waveeca.crowdmap.com>;
  - preparing 11 video testimonies of women's experiences with police violence;
  - documenting four examples of WUD-friendly policing practices;
  - organizing six round tables and meetings with police officers and policymakers to discuss violence against women;
  - organizing 26 training and capacity-building sessions for WUD activists; and
  - providing legal support and consultations to 41 WUD.
- Round 4, implemented in 2016 with financial support from the

*When a marginalized woman knows her rights and knows, for example, that she can't be detained beyond a certain number of hours, to us that's already an achievement. Even better if she shares that knowledge with other women, reducing their chances of being harassed by the police.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

M-A-C AIDS Fund, focused on mobilizing WUD organizations and initiative groups and on helping them participate in human rights advocacy, including by building partnerships with national and local police agencies. Nine organizations from five countries participated.

Here are some of the results of Round 4; these and other results are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections:

- 477 WUD participated in the program
- 246 cases of violations of women's rights were documented, helping bring the problem to public attention
- 10 press conferences and other advocacy events were organized, enabling WUD to communicate directly with police officers and decision-makers representing the needs of their communities
- 15 new informational materials were developed for WUD and law enforcement agencies, often by the women themselves. Their topics ranged from health issues to human rights.

Round 4, implemented in 2016 with financial support from the

### INITIATIVE GROUPS

This work was done mainly in the framework of Round 4 of the program "Through Peers' Efforts" (2016). EHRN helped WUD create three new initiative groups and supported nine existing community-based groups in five countries. The existing groups were strengthened as a result of training and advocacy activities and partnerships established through the program.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

*Someone with limited educational background and criminal experience needs one to two years to learn how to work with the police.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

In the framework of a project with the Levi Strauss Foundation (2016), EHRN supported WUD activists in three countries: Armenia, Estonia, and Tajikistan<sup>1</sup>, building their capacity to document and publicize cases of human rights violations. Three activists took part in the regional meeting "Seeking Alternatives to Repressive Drug Policies" organized by EHRN in Kyiv to establish international and intersectoral cooperation on evidence-based drug policies. The activists also participated in a Street Lawyers meeting in Chisinau where they were taught how to use existing legal mechanisms to protect their rights and how to identify human rights violations. EHRN signed individual contracts with the three activists, whose tasks included documenting violations of WUD rights, providing case management services and referrals to WUD, and educating them on human rights issues. The program is still ongoing, but here are its intermediate results:

- 43 cases of violations of rights of WUD were documented
- 26 referrals to social and health services took place
- 3 videos with personal stories of WUD were recorded
- 5 meetings of WUD self-support groups were organized
- 6 training sessions for WUD were organized
- 2 photo reports about WUD were prepared
- 1 meeting between WUD and police representatives was organized.

### CAPACITY-BUILDING

Building the capacity of activists is an integral part of all EHRN programs. In the framework of the regional campaign, capacity-building included developing an e-learning tool, using it to conduct training sessions and webinars, providing ongoing mentoring via Skype and technical assistance with legal cases and presentations, and event participation. For example, in May 2014 about 20 activists representing communities of PUD and people living with HIV (PLHIV) and harm reduction programs from across the region participated in the educational session "Creating winning advocacy campaigns through stakeholders mapping," organized as part of the Regional Forum on health care and human rights of PUD "Harm Reduction Works – Fund It!" in Chisinau. The participants discussed their advocacy strategies, the types of stakeholders that had to be engaged in their advocacy campaigns, and how to use various tools to achieve their goals. The activists also discussed the role of evidence in advocacy campaigns, ways to increase the influence of PUD in discussions on drug policy, and other important issues. Other capacity-building activities are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

### REGIONAL NETWORK

*In Kyrgyzstan, we have already established partnerships with sex worker and LGBT women's organizations. We have agreed to share training opportunities and to invite each other to our events. We submitted a report to CEDAW as a coalition of our three communities.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

Activists from individual countries feel much stronger when they have support from their peers and colleagues from other countries. A regional network of WUD activists can have a synergistic effect, significantly increasing the impact of its individual members. WUD activists need support to create and maintain a regional network, and EHRN provided opportunities for activists to work together. In November 2016, we organized a meeting for WUD activists in Tbilisi to discuss the campaign re-

<sup>1</sup> Although these countries were initially not part of the regional campaign "Women Against Violence", the Levi Strauss Foundation project connected them to it.

sults, as well as the broader issues of drug policy, gender quality, and collaboration. As a result of the meeting, the activists prepared a video advocacy message in conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Other opportunities for international networking emerged during the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) Forum in Brazil and the Regional Forum "Seeking Alternatives to Repressive Drug Policies" in Kyiv, Ukraine (both 2016), and the Regional Forum "Harm Reduction Works – Fund It!" in Chisinau (2014) where we organized a performance to highlight the campaign. Finally, WUD activists have communicated through a special Google Group.

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

*Participating in Moldova's Women's Forum with policymakers was probably the first-ever opportunity to discuss issues faced by women who use drugs. Six groups representing vulnerable groups were formed at the Forum, including a WUD group.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOVICI, UORN

In addition to helping build and supporting networks of WUD activists, the program facilitated partnerships between activists and human rights organizations, police departments, policymakers, and other stakeholders. In the course of Round 4 of the program "Through Peers' Efforts" WUD activists built 64 partnerships with human rights experts, police officers, and others. These partnerships resulted in positive changes for WUD, helping ensure that their voice would be heard. Police officers also benefited, as they had a chance to learn more about public health, HIV prevention, and human rights. In 2014, partnerships with the police helped make the initiative "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" a success; police officers joined activists in round-table discussions dedicated to raising awareness about police violence against WUD.

In Kazakhstan, PLHIV activists have observed that the new relationship with the police helped them become more confident

that they can demand access to health services. For Kazakh police, on the other hand, communication with community-based organizations presents unique opportunities to understand the plight of WUD and to develop respect for them. In Ukraine, a recent police reform resulted in hiring new cadres that often have insufficient knowledge of HIV and issues faced by WUD. This presented the program with an opportunity to inform the police about women's needs, human rights, and HIV and harm reduction, as well as to help the police become a link between WUD and harm reduction services. As a result, activists established a partnership with the national police, resulting in joint activity planning, training, and awareness campaigns. Finally, through their participation in the AWID Forum in Brazil (2016), WUD activists established relationships with women's rights organizations and movements from around the world.

## NETWORKING EVENTS

In the course of the regional campaign, we helped WUD activists from the seven countries participate in several high-profile conferences and workshops where they made presentations detailing their experiences of living as WUD in our region, answered questions, and networked with peers and stakeholders.

In May 2014, we organized a session "Violence against WUD: how to increase access to justice?" in the framework of the Regional Forum "Harm Reduction Works – Fund It!" in Chisinau. The session aimed to identify barriers faced by WUD when seeking legal justice, and mechanisms and next steps for addressing violence and protecting the rights of WUD in our region. About 40 people joined the session, mostly activists representing the PUD and PLHIV communities and harm reduction programs, but also representatives of UN organizations (UNODC, UNDP) and donors (OSF, Global Fund). The speakers included Olga Ponomareva (WUD activist from Ukraine), Dorel Nistor and Vladimir Cioban (police representatives from Moldova), Anand Grover (UN HRC Special Rapporteur), and Mikhail Golichenko (representative of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network).

In May 2015, EHRN and WUD activists took part in a session "Women against Violence: presenting results of the 1st year of the campaign" at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria. The session's goal was to discuss partnerships between activists and the police. It was

jointly organized by EHRN and UNODC. Speakers included WUD activists and harm reduction specialists Olga Ponomareva (Ukraine), Yulia Palagniuk (Ukraine), Natalya Minayeva (Kazakhstan), and Oxana Buzovici (Moldova), as well as Vladimir Cazacov (Moldova police representative), Aldo Lale-Demoz (UNODC representative), and Erika Matuizaite (EHRN representative). Eka Iakobishvili, international human rights lawyer and expert on human rights and drug policies, facilitated the session.

Also in Vienna, at the 2016 session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, EHRN and UNODC jointly organized a session titled "Women and Drug Policy" that brought together women representing INPUD, EHRN, the NGO Club Svitank (Ukraine), Prévention Information Lutte contre le SIDA (PILS), and the Women's Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN). These five women spoke about their experiences as drug users and harm reductionists, and discussed the damage caused by punitive drug policies.

delegation included 11 activists from our region, as well as representatives of the International Network of Women who Use Drugs (INWUD) and WHRIN. Together with the Open Society Foundations, we hosted the session "Punitive drug policies and women's rights: Addressing violence against criminalized women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia." Irena Ermolaeva (Kyrgyzstan), Olga Ponomareva (Ukraine), and Oksana Buzovici (Moldova) made presentations highlighting their experiences and lessons learned through their advocacy and human rights work. The session was facilitated by Eka Iakobishvili, human rights lawyer and EHRN expert on drug policy issues.

*The AWID Forum was a great opportunity to learn and to relate to the global feminist movement. It was a step towards mainstreaming WUD rights as women's rights.*



EKA IA Kobishvili, OSF

In addition to this session, we launched an information campaign, "Women for Humanistic Drug Policies," to bring issues faced by WUD to the attention of Forum participants. The campaign addressed drug policies from the perspective of human rights, highlighting health inequalities, violence against women, and social and economic exclusion. We also prepared and distributed at the Forum leaflets on violence against women, access to health care programs, human rights, and gender equality, as well as other materials including paper placemats with infographics about the realities of women's lives, handheld fans with practical information about relevant organizations around the world, notepads with detailed information about the issues facing WUD, as well as bags and T-shirts with the campaign slogan.

To facilitate our activists' participation in the AWID Forum, we helped them prepare and follow up. Before the Forum, we invited the women to a regional meeting in Kyiv where we helped them allocate responsibilities and prepare their statements. Given the networking that our WUD activists did with other women's rights activists in the course of the Forum, we then helped them write follow-up letters to potential partners.

## 2. Building Activists' Legal Skills

*The campaign created a field for women to fight for their rights. It is hard to work with the law if you are part of a marginalized group and your legal skills are limited.*



EKA IAKOBISHVILI, OSF

### PUBLICATIONS

In the course of the regional campaign, EHRN prepared a number of publications, including e-learning tools, reports, and policy papers. The primary goal of these publications is to increase public awareness of women's rights in our region, identify best practice examples that can be used by WUD activists, and build the activists' capacity to respond to violence. The publications are available on our website, and some of them are briefly described below:

- The policy brief "Halting HIV by Reducing Violence against Women: The Case for Reforming Drug Policies in Eastern Europe and Central Asia" (2013), developed in partnership with the International Gender Policy Network, is available in Russian. This publication describes various aspects of violence and ways to address it, and discusses the importance of gender-oriented harm reduction services and relevant policy changes.
- The report "Access of women who use drugs to harm reduction services in Eastern Europe" (2014) outlines what is known about WUD in six focus countries of our region, including legislation and policies in these countries, access to health care, and legal options for victims of violence. The report includes recommendations based on available data and a review of the social, political, and economic factors that shape the risks and barriers faced by WUD. These recommendations identify key next steps to be taken at the local, national, and international levels to build an effective response to the identified challenges.
- The "Police Violence Against Women Checklist" (2014) is a "Women Against Violence" campaign leaflet intended to help campaign partners document police violence.
- Submissions to UN human rights mechanisms (2014) aim to raise the issue of police violence against WUD in our region by asking the UN Committee on the Status of Women to look into the issue. These are seven submissions made by EHRN on behalf of WUD activists in Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. These submissions are based on complaints and testimonies of WUD received by EHRN and national partners in the framework of the regional campaign through the online platform <https://waveeca.crowdmap.com>.
- The e-learning tool "Police Violence Against Women Who Use Drugs" (launched in 2014) offers self-guided education on police violence against WUD. It was designed for WUD activists and for those working with them (for example, for harm reductionists, social workers, and health care professionals). The tool consists of three modules. Module I teaches how to identify cases of police violence and what police actions could be considered as violations of human rights. Module II explains the importance of gathering evidence and documenting human rights violations. Module III introduces different means of access to justice mechanisms (such as police, ombudspersons, prosecutors, and courts) and explains how to use these means to restore justice when human rights are violated. The e-learning tool offers real-life case scenarios with the help of Marina, a character who has experienced multiple episodes of violence. All three modules follow Marina's story to understand her legal case, gather related evidence, and help her obtain justice, checking the module user's knowledge in the process.
- The briefing paper "Law Enforcement and Women Who Use Drugs: improving police relations and cooperation for better public health, community safety and human rights protection" (2015) is intended as a starting point to help bridge gaps in understanding the important issues faced by WUD in their interactions with the police. The aim is to facilitate improved interactions and future cooperation between activists and the police, thereby prioritizing public health approaches in police work.
- The article "Little Strokes Fell Great Oaks: Women from the PWUD community meet with Gulsara Aliyeva, a retired police officer" (2015) tells about a meeting that was organized

in January 2015 at NGO "Astoria" between WUD activists and Gulsara Aliyeva, a retired police officer and Country Coordinator at the Police and HIV Network in Kyrgyzstan.

- The article "Vladimir Cazacov: reform changed not only police officers' uniforms, but also their mentality, including in terms of their work with people who use drugs" (2015) is an interview with Vladimir Cazacov, Deputy Chief at the General Department of Public Security of Moldova. In the interview, he talks about Moldova's experience with drug treatment, drug policing, and police reforms.
- The article "Common understanding helps building positive relationships between women who use drugs and police" (2015) is an interview with Jim Pugel, regional campaign ambassador and Chief Deputy Sheriff from King County Sheriff's Office, Seattle, USA. He talks about his experience of addressing gender-based violence through dialogue and partnerships between the police and civil society.

In addition, the regional campaign webpage <http://www.harm-reduction.org/actions/women-against-violence> contains a number of video materials, including a presentation of the regional campaign by Eka Iakobishvili, EHRN human rights lawyer; a video in which Anand Grover, then-UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, calls upon WUD to protect their rights and combat gender-based violence; and a video by Gulsara Aliyeva, a retired police colonel from Kyrgyzstan, calling upon her former colleagues to fight violence against women.

### TRAINING FOR ACTIVISTS

EHRN uses every available opportunity to train WUD activists through webinars, training sessions, and workshops, as well as through their participation in the Street Lawyers program. In the course of Round 4 of the program "Through Peers' Efforts," 44 workshops, training sessions, and other informational and educational opportunities involved 152 WUD, law enforcement and health care professionals, journalists, and other stakeholders. These training activities helped build the capacity of new and existing WUD activists to enable them to confidently participate in decision-making. Importantly, many WUD leaders in turn trained other women, which has resulted in a growing pool of activists.

*In the framework of the Street Lawyers program we had webinars for human rights activists based on the cases identified. The format of one case per webinar was useful because that allowed for in-depth discussions, which allowed women activists to gain expertise in human rights and understanding of legal issues.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

In March and May 2016, training sessions were organized in Kharkov, Ukraine, and Temirtau, Kazakhstan. The target group for the sessions was women who were participating in the opioid substitution therapy (OST) program or were active drug users. In addition, women already trained as Street Lawyers took part in the Temirtau training session. Both sessions focused on working with the activists to help them learn how to identify and address violence against women. The participants were split into groups that performed specific tasks, which helped ensure their active participation in the training. Each group presented its work, which led to productive discussions. A police inspector on women's issues participated in the Temirtau training, helping further improve its quality. As a result of the training, most of the participants obtained basic skills and knowledge of human rights, and enough motivation to train other activists and work as Street Lawyers.

*In Kyrgyzstan, women who use drugs are already outlaws, and they won't complain about police violence, knowing what could happen to them. Our NGO, Astoria, doesn't complain on their behalf either, because we can't ensure their safety during an investigation, and we don't want to sacrifice our women to potentially win a case.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

In the course of the campaign, 50 WUD participated in webinars on human rights. These webinars were led by Eka Iakobishvili, EHRN human rights expert, based on the human rights training module developed by EHRN. The module provides eight weeks' worth of e-learning courses on human rights and drug policies. It is specifically designed for populations who are most at risk and in need of protection.

### STUDY TOURS FOR ACTIVISTS

In September 2014, EHRN, in cooperation with Danish Street Lawyers' organization Gadejuristen, organized a study visit for a group of street lawyers and harm reductionists from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine to Copenhagen, Denmark. The goal of the visit was to learn more about the Danish Street Lawyers program to use this knowledge for improving access to legal services for PUD in the EECA region. The study tour participants learned about Danish social and health services for vulnerable populations, including PUD. They visited

a remand prison, a heroin treatment clinic, safe consumption rooms, and shelters. The group also met with a police commissioner from Copenhagen Police and with members of the Danish Drug Users' Union. The participants learned that the Danish Street Lawyers program uses a holistic approach where the focus is on meeting their clients' basic needs such as food, shelter, and medicines.

In May 2015, EHRN brought representatives of its partner organizations and the police from Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to Vienna, Austria, in order to present the results of the first year of the regional campaign at the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to discuss cooperation between the police and communities. To learn about cooperation between municipal authorities, the police, and vulnerable groups in Vienna, study tour participants visited the city's legal and social assistance programs Jedmayer-Suchthilfe Wien GmbH and Verein Wiener Frauenhäuser.

### 3. Documenting Human Rights Violations

*The data collected through documenting and mapping violence against women was used to develop alternative reports and submissions to the UN human rights bodies. It impacted committee reviews and concluding observations. At a broader level, the campaign also contributed to international soft law.*



EKA IAКОBISHVILI, OSF

### ONLINE PLATFORM

During Year 1 of the campaign, EHRN's partners in the seven countries collected information on police violence and published it using a special online platform <https://waveeca.crowdmap.com/>. In addition, WUD participating in the campaign shared their personal stories and testimonies using a regional Russian-language database. In one year, we collected and published information about 850 cases of police violence against women. The majority of the cases that were documented

were related to threats, extortion and blackmail, and physical violence. Over 55% of the cases were documented in Ukraine, another 17% in Russia, and 9% in Moldova. In Years 2 and 3, new cases were not actively collected, but the platform is still available online.

### VIDEO TOOLS

In the course of the campaign, Yulia Palagniuk (Ukraine) recorded a number of video testimonies by WUD. These include a recording of the June 2014 webinar on women's rights and government obligations to protect those rights, held for WUD in Chernovtsy. The women who participated in the webinar considered it a positive experience and concluded that it would help them defend their rights. Other testimonies are related to police violence, harassment, and extortion experienced by WUD in Ukraine, as well as to their experiences of police violations of human rights in the penitentiary system (recorded by women convicted for possession of small amounts of drugs).

### SUBMISSIONS TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES

As described above, in July 2014, EHRN submitted a plea to the UN Committee on the Status of Women in order to raise the issue of police violence against WUD in our region. The plea included seven submissions from the countries where the regional campaign was implemented, based on WUD complaints and testimonies documented using the online platform. In Moldova, the information collected in the course of the campaign was used to submit a complaint to UN Women. As follow-up, UN Women asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova to clarify the situation.

*In 2015, we made violence against women a topic for public discussion when we organized a round-table meeting with the General Police Inspectorate, non-profits, and international organizations. As a result, we signed an agreement on preventing violence.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOВICI, UORN

### WORKING WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Between November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and December 10, Human Rights Day, the world celebrates 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. In 2014, campaign partners from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine joined the initiative and organized round-table discussions with police

### 4. Supporting Women-Friendly Policing

*Collaboration between activists and the police helps both sides 're-humanize' each other, especially when it involves extracurricular social interaction and training.*



DR. NICK CROFTS, LEAHN

representatives and other stakeholders to raise awareness of police violence against WUD and to discuss possible solutions and opportunities for cooperation. Some 103 representatives from the five countries took part in the events, including 10 PUD representatives and 19 police representatives, as well as many providers of services for PUD, human rights experts, politicians, and representatives of the media and international organizations. During these events, police representatives were encouraged to be open to partnerships with civil society. The police in Moldova and Kazakhstan reacted positively and demonstrated openness to this collaboration, whereas in Georgia that proved more challenging, as the police were not ready to discuss cooperation (however, other key government agencies were represented). In Moldova, the round table helped WUD advocates establish a partnership with a human rights and advocacy organization.

*The campaign was innovative, with new tools of documenting and reporting police violence. It was an exercise of learning in action, where women were taught about human rights first, and then to seek application of that knowledge in practice — in meetings with the police, municipalities, and other agencies in their respective communities. Being involved in these capacity-building efforts, seeing women making the campaign impactful was a nurturing experience for me.*



EKA IAКОBISHVILI, OSF

### PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ACTIVISTS AND POLICE

Following Year 1 of the campaign, EHRN partners in the individual countries established partnerships with law enforcement agencies. In Moldova, Kazakhstan and Russia, declarations on cooperation with the police included police commitments to combat violence against WUD. In Kazakhstan, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the NGO Moy Dom and the Temirtau Police Department. The relationship between

WUD activists and the Senior Police Inspector for Women's Protection from Violence in Temirtau was strengthened, including the development of a model for a gender-sensitive police unit to address violence against women. In Russia, the Penitentiary Department in Sverdlovsk Oblast agreed to sign the memorandum alongside police and the NGO Chance Plus, enabling access to all detained WUD for human rights organizations. In Ukraine, WUD activists participated in developing recommendations for the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, and Social Policy to improve the protection of WUD rights. These recommendations were included in the national plan of action "Women, Peace, and Security" (2015–2019). In Georgia, all round-table participants signed a declaration on the need for combating police violence, and the government agencies that were present expressed their readiness to cooperate in addressing police violence and referring women to the harm reduction program in the city of Batumi.

*Given that policing is a closed culture and police officers don't usually pay attention to information from external sources, it's best to base communication strategies upon peer education methods, with officers educating and training each other.*



DR. NICK CROFTS, LEAHN

*Our police officers participated in a training course on violence, which has resulted in them being more aware of the problem.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOVICI, UORN

## TRAINING FOR THE POLICE

A number of training sessions for police officers were organized in the framework of the program "Through Peers' Efforts." For example, in Temirtau, the NGO Moy Dom trained 20 police officers on human rights, HIV, and combating violence against women within the scope of changing their attitudes towards

WUD. The trainees were then tested on their knowledge of the topics discussed during the training. In Kharkiv, Ukraine, the NGO Afina organized three workshops for the police, covering Ukraine's drug policy and harm reduction, drug users' rights, stigma, and discrimination. Also in Ukraine, the NGO Svitank organized two workshops for 20 patrol officers in Volnovakha and Borispol, addressing HIV and harm reduction, as well as human rights issues.

### Police and Public Health: an Overview

Traditionally, police activities have rarely included a public health component (Van Dijk and Crofts, 2016). However, in wealthy, democratic countries such as the UK, there are already positive examples of police involvement in public health interventions (Crofts and Patterson, 2016). An early example is police participation in strengthening response to mental disorders. The UK's Crisis Intervention Team model emphasized training for the police and their collaboration with mental health experts, communities, and people with mental disorders, including referrals to care and changes to police rules and procedures (Wood and Watson, 2016).

According to Van Dijk and Crofts (2016), the police are trying to carve a niche in a world where global challenges such as HIV are commonplace. Consequently, police forces are undergoing a transition from being authoritarian and repressive to being participatory and prevention-oriented (something that public health systems have also had to do). As a result, police functions in some countries have prioritized public health over policing; this has resulted in expanded policing options that include innovations such as diverting drug users from punishment to treatment (Van Dijk and Crofts, 2016). So far, however, experience has shown the lack of cross-system environments for collaboration between the police and communities, which reduces the effectiveness of police interventions in public health (Wood and Watson, 2016).

Even if police officers working the streets may see a need for alternatives to criminal prosecution for non-violent drug offenders, their work is evaluated based on the number of arrests they make (Iakobishvili, 2015). Taking into account a

public health point of view may help change policing practices (Van Dijk and Crofts, 2016). Police officers will need to explicitly recognize their responsibilities for promoting and protecting health, as well as to prioritize community well-being (Anderson and Burris, 2016). For example, public health and policing goals could be better aligned by highlighting the health risks from syringes discarded unsafely (Crofts and Patterson, 2016).

Despite the differences between the two worlds, it is important that police and public health systems cooperate and possibly even integrate their systems to benefit society at large (Anderson and Burris, 2016). Given that both public health organizations and the police have tasks related to regulating social behavior, they could interact at a point where social inequality affects social behavior, contributing to risks (Van Dijk and Crofts, 2016). Violence against women is an area where such cooperation could be developed (Punch and James, 2016).

*Sometimes good police officers are left on their own. This is why networks are so important: they bring progressive police officers together. Police officers often like being part of international networks.*



DR. NICK CROFTS, LEAHN

## STUDY TOURS FOR THE POLICE

As noted above, in May 2015, EHRN took police representatives from Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to Vienna to participate in a session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to visit municipal legal and social services. There, police representatives observed collaboration between municipal services, the police, and public health and community organizations.

*In 2015, we thanked women-friendly police officers by giving them certificates; PUD activists participated in the ceremony.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOVICI, UORN

*'Women Against Violence' was a useful campaign, as it enhanced the dialog with the police and the law enforcement authority that was initiated by UNODC. Three years ago the police and communities in Moldova weren't ready to work with each other. After a multilateral dialog with both communities and the police, the paradigm has shifted, as now the community doesn't perceive law enforcement as solely a punishing authority, while the police don't perceive people who use drugs only as perpetrators. This new approach underlies the Moldovan police reform of shifting towards communitarian police, reform which is still ongoing.*



INA TCACI, UNODC MOLDOVA

## AWARDS FOR WOMEN-FRIENDLY POLICING

In 2015 and 2016, in conjunction with International Women's Day, community organizations in our region gave awards to law enforcement representatives, recognizing their efforts to support WUD. In 2015, five police officers in three countries were regarded as "friendly", while in 2016, 11 organizations from six countries followed the tradition by giving certificates of gratitude to 46 police officers. Examples of efforts by these officers included referring detained women to a shelter run by the NGO Asteria in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; cooperating with the NGO Vertical in Kyiv; supporting the NGO Spodivannya's work with young WUD in Zaporozhye, Ukraine; and providing assistance to the NGO Answer in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*The police used to have a negative attitude towards OST, but that has changed. Our outreach workers have confirmed that police officers now treat OST clients much better, so people can attend the program more openly; this has already resulted in a growing number of OST clients, including women.*



ALA IATCO AND OXANA BUZOVICI, UORN

The regional campaign "Women Against Violence" was implemented between 2014 and 2016 in seven EECA countries: Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine. Its key theme, police violence against women, was suggested by women's communities.

According to estimates, at least 558,000 WUD (probably many more) live in these seven countries. Like many other women in our region, they routinely face gender-based violence. However, in addition, WUD also suffer from police violence, which has multiple negative effects on their health and well-being. Harsh drug policies contribute to police violence against women, significantly increasing the risks of HIV and other public health threats.

Considering this, and in accordance with international guidelines and best practices, the regional campaign "Women Against Violence" focused its efforts on empowering women on three levels: individual, collective, and structural. This was done by supporting women's initiative groups, documenting violations of human rights, and building activists' capacity to advocate for changes to policies and practices that encourage police violence. As a result, the police and authorities in several countries took concrete steps to address police violence and joined forces with activists to develop strategies and plans responding to police violence. Most importantly, hundreds of women in the EECA region became aware of their rights and

*The campaign brought together some of the most professional and committed individuals. Its wealth certainly was a strong and intelligent team that worked hard to bring a change to those most affected.*



EKA IAKOBISHVILI, OSF

more confident protecting those rights, and a number of leaders and spokespersons on police violence emerged from the community. These developments helped lay the groundwork for future initiatives addressing police violence and other issues affecting WUD.

*About 10 police officers participated in our events, and about four of them (all women) now treat women better than they used to. However, you need to continue working with the police, as otherwise they may slip back easily. All it takes is one wrong internal order, so we need to contain any negative tendencies.*



IRENA ERMOLAEVA, ASTERIA

*The campaign was important in terms of empowering women and changing their view of the police. Next, it will be necessary to develop referral schemes and to work with the police at the local level; this will require more effort. Just providing tools and not helping the police use those tools is not sustainable.*



INA TCACI, UNODC MOLDOVA

Below are recommendations for next steps born out of campaign findings and conversations with activists and experts:

- Despite its short duration and limited scale, the campaign "Women Against Violence" achieved impressive results. Campaign results and findings should be disseminated among EHRN stakeholders in EECA, with particular attention to countries that did not participate in the campaign.
- Efforts at women's empowerment are not always easily quantifiable, which may discourage donors and program

implementers. However, it needs to be remembered that an excessive orientation towards quantifiable indicators can "shift agency into the hands of professional intermediaries... and away from marginalized women and communities" (Batliwala, 2007). It is imperative to continue encouraging and supporting women's initiative groups as much as possible, including capacity-building activities. In particular, the small grants program for community activists should be continued, as it is a cost-effective way of supporting activism, building activist capacity, and supporting a progressive policy agenda.

*We need to use feminist narratives such as the importance of women's control over their bodies. We also need to invest in community empowerment and developing the skills of the community. Our voices and perspectives must be presented at conferences and other relevant events.*



JUDY CHANG, INPUD

AIDS, 2011). Documenting cases of violence against women needs to continue, including a focus on the connections between violence and HIV/AIDS and other threats to public health.

- Despite the connection between policing practices and HIV transmission rates, many HIV programs have not focused on policing, and research on the impact of partnerships between the police and public health programs is scarce (Crofts and Patterson, 2016). It is necessary to continue developing partnerships with the police to support harm reduction programs in EECA, and to document and publicize best practices.

*It is important to look at police impunity and lack of accountability, as well as their lack of motivation for disciplining officers complicit in violence against women.*



JUDY CHANG, INPUD

- Support for women's organizations should include building their communication and leadership skills, including by linking them with women's and feminist organizations that work to tackle violence against women (UNODC, 2016). Work on mainstreaming issues affecting WUD into the international women's movement should continue.
- Given that all harm reduction programs should recognize the importance of gender equality, protection of women's rights, and non-discriminatory access to public health services (UNODC, 2016), it is necessary to continue creating a favorable environment for gender-oriented harm reduction programs. This includes advocating for policy changes and specific advocacy initiatives. A focus on gender-oriented services should include transgender people who use drugs.
- Harm reduction practitioners need to understand the connection between violence and women's refusal to use public health services; they should work to address violence against women (Global Coalition on Women and

**3 YEARS REGIONAL CAMPAIGN****WOMEN  
AGAINST  
VIOLENCE.****YEAR 1:  
THE YEAR OF  
BREAKING  
THE SILENCE  
(2014)**

Raise police and decision-makers' awareness of police violence against WUD by mobilizing women and building their capacity to document and communicate police violence.

**YEAR 2:  
THE YEAR  
OF DIALOGUE  
(2015)**

Build dialogue between WUD, decision-makers, and other stakeholders in order to create effective solutions to combat police violence against WUD.

**YEAR 3:  
THE YEAR OF  
MONITORING AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
(2016)**

Monitor implementation of police and other government stakeholders' commitments to combat police violence against WUD.

**16 CITIES IN 7 COUNTRIES:**

AT LEAST **558,000**  
WUD LIVING IN THOSE COUNTRIES

**477**

WUD participated in the campaign

**41**

WUD received legal support and consultations

**9** existing women's initiative groups were supported**3** new groups were created**3** activists received scholarships to document violations of women's rights and work with vulnerable women

**850** cases of police violations of women's rights were documented and publicized through the regional online platform <https://waveeca.crowdmap.com>



**11** video testimonies of women's experiences of police violence were prepared and posted online



**64** partnerships between women's organizations, human rights experts, police officers, and others were established

**46**

women-friendly police officers received certificates of gratitude from civil society organizations

**7**

submissions to UN human rights bodies

In 2014 "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign: joint round-table discussions between activists and police officers dedicated to raising awareness about police violence against WUD.

**44**

work shops and training sessions and other informational and educational opportunities involved 152 WUD, law enforcement and health care professionals, journalists, and other stakeholders

**32**

training and capacity-building sessions were organized for WUD activists

**15**

new informational materials were developed for WUD and law enforcement agencies, often by the women themselves

**50**

WUD participated in webinars on human rights

**103**

representatives from various sectors, including 19 police representatives, participated in round tables dedicated to violence against women

**EHRN DEVELOPED A HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS TO CONDUCT WEBINARS ON POLICE VIOLENCE**



**Study tours to:** Vienna, Austria representatives of partner organizations and the police from Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine and Copenhagen, Denmark study visit for a group of street lawyers and harm reductionists from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.

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Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) is a regional network of harm reduction programs and their allies from across 29 countries in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Together, we work to advocate for the universal human rights of people who use drugs and to protect their lives and health.

Established in 1997, the Network unites over 600 institutional and individual members, tapping into a wealth of regional best practices, expertise and resources in harm reduction, drug policy reform, HIV/AIDS, TB, HCV, and overdose prevention.

As a regional network, EHRN plays a key role as a liaison between local, national and international organizations. EHRN ensures that regional needs receive appropriate representation in international and regional forums, and helps build capacity for service provision and advocacy at the national level. EHRN draws on international good practice models and on its knowledge about local realities to produce technical support tailored to regional experiences and needs. Finally, EHRN builds consensus among national organizations and drug user community groups, helping them to amplify their voices, exchange skills and join forces in advocacy campaigns.