



"Designing a Better World"

Self-help groups under precarious life circumstances:
How do we solve social and practical issues for those who left
drugs and criminality behind?



From left: Jörgen Svidén, ECAD; Romualds Ražuks, Jurmala; Janina Romanova, ECAD



Photo jurmala.lv



Photo jurmala.lv

ECAD Conference

Jurmala 9-10 September 2010

One of the corner pillars of ECAD's activities is to disseminate knowledge in the area of anti-drug policy and practice. The other one is to strengthen contacts between the member cities. Both of these tasks were fulfilled at the conference on self-help groups arranged by ECAD in co-operation with Jurmala municipality and a Swedish public organization X-CONS.

About 50 participants listened to a number of evidential lectures and presentations given by representatives of authorities and concerned public organizations from Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Ukraine. The focus was on the possibilities for former addicts and criminals to reintegrate into society.

Among many thought-provoking contributions, a lecture given by the X-CONS telling how former convicts and addicts start on

their own initiative a self-help group was particularly engaging. X-CONS provide an honest and drug-free social network; run a few halfway houses; carry out an outreach work at prisons and institutions; and generally set an example for those who want to break with their previous lives.

A lecture about the work of a rehabilitation centre "Mindaugas" in Lithuania has also aroused a keen interest in the audience.

ECAD hopes that the conference participants, many of them occupying important positions in the society, have become inspired and renewed their energy so that they to a greater extent could assist former addicts and criminals on that often long and tiresome road to a drug-free and honest life.

Jörgen Svidén, Director/ECAD

Read Mayors' address on page 2
More about X-CONS work on page 4

Comments

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon introduced new Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of UNODC:

"I have chosen him [Yury Fedotov] because of his strong commitment to the United Nations cause, his credentials, expertise and experience as the distinguished former Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia and also Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom. I am sure that he will be one of the most exemplary, splendid and distinguished leaders of the United Nations here."

Comment from World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD):

"WFAD encourages Mr Fedotov to stand firm on the issue of living up to the high standards of the UN Conventions on drugs. They constitute the platform for the work against illicit drug use on which effective practical work has to be build that serves the health and welfare of mankind."

★ ECAD NEWS

Comment from Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC):

"Mr Costa, as Executive Director, participated in informal dialogues with NGOs during the annual sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. He also held an annual meeting with the Officers of the VNGOC at which we exchanged information and identified areas of mutual interest and collaboration for the future. I very much hope that you will continue this engagement and that we will have an early opportunity to meet and explore next steps."

You can read more about Yury Fedotov in the previous issues of the ECAD Newsletter

"The course of action we have chosen provides for good results"...

Romualds Ražuks, Chairman of Jurmala City Council



Jurmala is a resort city that takes continuous effort to provide for safe and secure living and visiting of the municipality. Consequently, we wish that Jurmala were a city that is free of drugs and other dependencies. This could also mean a considerable decrease of crime and morbidity with dangerous contagious diseases. We have valuable experience to share.

Our success in combating drug addiction and its consequences has been greatly facilitated by the cooperation with the conference organizers – the non-profit organization "European Cities Against Drugs". Since 2007 Jurmala has been a member of the organization along with other 250 European cities.

First of all we take care that free accessibility of drugs is eliminated. Our State Police has developed very successful co-operation with the Municipal Police of Jurmala, Welfare Department of Jurmala City Council and other municipal institutions.

In 2009, 88 administrative and 63 criminal cases were initiated in Jurmala for breaching the laws on distribution of drugs (the city's population is 55,600 people). According to statistics, the situation in

Jurmala still gives some reason for alarm; however, it also evidences our merciless attitude towards breaching the law. Figures suggest the intensity with which the work is carried out in Jurmala.

Our daily task is prevention of drug addiction and following the principle of the least harm. Our mobile syringe exchange point and centre of Dependency Prevention also carries out free-of-charge express tests of HIV and Hepatitis B virus infections and distributes information booklets. In average, the centre serves 70 clients per month. Similar practice is supported by the UN Office of drugs and Crime, however the opinions on such activities divide as syringe exchange is sometimes compared to the legalization of drugs. We have also started the methadone programme in order to help people get rid of drug addiction.

Jurmala experience shows that in 2009 the first-time infection with HIV and hepatitis virus has decreased. There has also been a reduction of the mortality due to overdosing of drugs. Facts suggest that the course of action we have chosen provides for good results.

New plans for the British drug policy

The British government plans to publish a new drug strategy later this year. During a consultation period the government's experts are looking at various models and programmes. British media report that a more abstinence-based approach to tackling drug use is to expect. The government is working on proposals to stop the widespread prescription of methadone for heroin users and instead increase the use of "cold turkey" residential treatment programmes. Drug services are expected to be paid by results if they manage to get addicts off heroin and cocaine. It also emerged that ministers are considering withholding benefits from those refusing treatment.

Commentary: Addicted To Failure

It was not wrong to treat drug addicts. Substitute drugs can provide the stability that is a prerequisite for returning people to a purposeful life. But far too many people have been left "parked" on methadone. Last year, 65,000 prisoners were put on the drug, which is itself highly addictive. There have been no targets for getting individuals off it: the prescriptions can be repeated for a lifetime. So the Prison Service has become a net exporter of drug-users on methadone. That is a colossal admission of failure.

Only 3 per cent of people treated with methadone are drug-free three years later. A third of those who die from drug-related causes have methadone in their bodies. That is a statistic that should make politicians deeply uncomfortable, since the drug has been paid for by taxpayers. It is an alarming thought that the State has become drug dealer-in-chief.

/thetimes.co.uk

Efficacy of Mandatory RSDT

New Study Shows Efficacy of Mandatory Random Student Drug Testing

The U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences conducted an experimental evaluation of mandatory random student drug testing (MRSDT) programs. Researchers compared students who participated in activities which made them subject to MRSDT to students in the same activities in schools without testing programs.

Contrary to news reports that high school drug testing showed no long-term effects on drug use, this study demonstrated the value of MRSDT. Students subject to MRSDT reported a statistically significant lower rate of past 30-day use of substances included in their schools' drug testing panels than comparable students in schools without MRSDT. While opponents of school-based random drug testing programs claim that they deter student participation in extra-curricular activities, MRSDT had no effect on student participation rates. Student drug testing programs reinforce schools' comprehensive substance use prevention programs as a deterrent against youth substance use.

The U.S. Department of Education is to be commended for supporting this ambitious study and shedding light on the many benefits of school-based random student drug testing programs.

For more information on IBH and random student drug testing visit www.ibhinc.org and www.PreventionNotPunishment.org.

He Said She Said

He said: *He has all the time in the world...*

She said: *Do you have any time at all?*



Colombia: an honest reaction

New anti-drugs campaign targets the public

Colombia has long been recognized a drug-producing country and major supplier of drugs to the international markets. Local consumption of drugs has mostly been overlooked, but new data shows that more and more people in Colombia are now consuming some kind of illicit drug.

According to the last National Study on Drugs, released in 2008 by the Colombian Ministry of Social Protection, the National Narcotics Directorate and UNODC Colombia, 540,000 people between the ages of 12 and 65 were found to have used some kind of illicit drug in the preceding year.

The Colombian Government, working together with UNODC, is determined to make the country a "drug-free territory". Recently, the Government launched a new public awareness campaign in the capital, Bogotá, called "Colombia, a drug free territory". The campaign, in the form of television, radio and online infomercials, is being carried out in major cities in the country.

The main objective of this awareness campaign is to transform the social and cultural representation of lifestyles that promote the use of drugs. The campaign promotes prevention strategies through education and information, and is aimed at highly vulnerable groups by promoting healthy choices. It calls on people to make healthy and drug-free choices in different contexts of life such as at school, at home, with family and in the neighborhood.

So far, hundreds of members of the public including youth, students and government officials have signed up to the campaign by putting their signatures on a map of the country that declares Colombia a drug-free territory.

The Representative of UNODC in Colombia, Aldo Lale-Demoz, recognizes the efforts of the Colombian Government in its fight against the use of drugs. "We congratulate the Government for conducting the National Study on Drugs, which had not been carried out in the last 10 years. We also congratulate them for the actions taken once the results of the report were made known. Instead of covering up the numbers, they took public policy actions to mitigate the problem, one of them being this campaign," said Mr. Lale-Demoz during the launching of the campaign.

"Up until a few years ago, various regions of the country were recognized as producers and exit doors of great quantities of drugs which supply the international markets. Now, thanks to control measures enforced by the military and the police, exportations roads have partly closed down, and the amount of drug previously available for external consumption now supplies a home market and fuels national consumption, made easily available to young people", says Maria Mercedes Dueñas, the campaign manager.

/www.unodc.org

Norwegian government to introduce "narcometer"

The Norwegian government would like to introduce "narcometer", legal limits and other measures against driving under the influence of drugs. During the last 10-20 years, the number of people driving under the influence of narcotic drugs and medicines has increased significantly. According to a survey, one in a hundred drivers constitutes an immediate traffic danger due to drunkenness caused by narcotic drugs and medicines.

/Actnow.nu

Santos agrees with Calderon: Discussion on drug legalization is needed

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos declared his support for Mexican President Felipe Calderon's call for a discussion on drug legalization. "We are entering an era of the narco-trafficking business where one must have these type of reflections," he said.

"President Calderon is right to call for this to be discussed, without meaning that one is in agreement or not with the position of legalization."

The Colombian president announced that he will seek to form a united stance with Mexico and Peru on the legalization issue if the U.S. state of California votes to legalize marijuana consumption in a referendum scheduled for November.

Santos however criticized the legalization proposal, saying that if California were to legalize marijuana consumption, "how would we explain to an indigenous person on a Colombian mountain that producing marijuana is illegal and take him to jail, or destroy the marijuana, when in the U.S. it is legal to consume it?" Santos said.

The Colombian leader said that some in the U.S. argue that marijuana should be legalized because it is a "soft" drug, unlike other "hard" drugs such as cocaine. "Where do you draw the line?" he asked.

/colombiareports.com/

Don't be misinformed – very few teens use illicit drugs

Drug use among students (10th grade, 15 years old) in 2009-2010: Survey by SOFOT, Department for social and preventive services of Kristiansand, Norway.

Main findings

- Those students who started to drink earliest, drink both more often and more than their peers;
- 16% of students smoke tobacco;
- Strong correlation between smoking and drinking;
- Strong correlation between smoking and use of cannabis: 70% of those who smoke daily have also smoked cannabis.
- Less drunkenness among students who live with both parents.

This local survey has been conducted among students of both private and municipal schools in Kristiansand since the 1990s. The report analyses answers the students give concerning their own relation to substance use and what they think about others' use.

The report points out a misleading belief in regard to teen substance use which is common among both adults and kids. Many overestimate the spread of substance abuse among the young people. This can be a result of the negatively biased coverage of the issue by the media or reflect the environment the young are a part of, the report authors say. They draw attention to the fact that this year report as well as the previous ones show that the overwhelming majority of students use very little or nothing of substances, including nicotine. To make this data well known among students, their parents and other involved adults can be a first step in drug prevention work. The knowledge of peer's relation to alcohol and other substances can lighten the group pressure and postpone drug debut which is one of the goals set in the city's drug action plan for 2008 – 2012.

<http://www.kristiansand.kommune.no/>

Young former criminals work at the police station

The Police in Stockholm are more than satisfied with the outcomes of a project "Gåsen", which resulted in revealing many adolescences misusing cannabis. Now a continuation will follow. Young people arrested for drug-related crimes will be right after their arrest given a chance to meet representatives of a public organisation for former criminals, X-CONS.

During September, young members of X-CONS will be working at a police station in one of the southern suburbs of the Swedish capital and talk directly with the detained youngsters. Previous police actions showed that far from all adolescences want to get in touch with the police, social services or health system.

The idea is that the specially educated members of the organisation X-CONS will use their own experience from earlier criminal and substance abuse history to get in contact with the arrested teenagers. The aim with the first contact is to make young offenders interested in going to organisation's courses or participating in other activities. X-CONS offers a different environment, a new circle of friends which motivates the youngsters to break their criminal career and stop substance abuse.

- The fact that we are at the police station makes it much easier for us to get a direct contact with young people. We meet them right after the first interrogation by the police takes place, says Richard Karlsson from Young X-CONS to the Swedish internet resource Drugnews.

This cooperation aims at finding as many young people as possible who have debuted on their slippery way down by misusing narcotic drugs and committing crimes. September, the start of a new school year, is a good month for this type of police action since many adolescents make their drug debuts during summer.

After the end of this project, the X-CONS will come back to their routine by contacting young offenders by the phone. Everyone at the organisation understands that a meeting face-to-face is a much stronger tool of getting in touch than any phone conversation ever can be. It is one of the reasons why the young activists are so happy to have this unique opportunity to meet their peers directly in the police building...

The cooperation project required though quite a lot of resources.

/Drugnews.nu

Netherweed grows stronger

THC concentrations in weed, netherweed and hash in Dutch coffee shops 2009-2010; report by the Trimbos Institute

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the main psychoactive compound in marihuana and hashish. The aim of this study is to investigate the concentration of THC in marihuana and hash as sold in Dutch coffeeshops.

In addition it was studied whether there are differences between the cannabis products originating from Dutch grown hemp (nederwiet) and those derived from imported hemp. It is the tenth year that this study has been performed. Apart from THC, the content of two other cannabinoids, cannabidiol (CBD) and cannabinol (CBN), has been studied.

The names and addresses of 50 Dutch coffeeshops were randomly selected.

For the purpose of this study, 66 samples of nederwiet (Sinsemilla), 15 samples of imported marihuana, 16 samples of Dutch hash and 56 samples of hash prepared from imported marihuana were anonymously bought in the selected coffeeshops. In addition, 49 samples of the most potent (herbal) marihuana product available in the coffeshop, were bought¹⁰.

As a rule samples of 1 gram were bought.

The average THC-content of all the marihuana samples together was 16.7% and that of the hash-samples 22.0%. The average THC-content of nederwiet (17.8%) was significantly higher than that of the imported marihuana (7.5%). Hash derived from Dutch hemp contained more THC (32.6%) than hash originating from foreign cannabis (19.0%). The average THC-percentage of nederwiet was higher in 2010 than in 2009 (17.8 vs. 15.1%). The THC-percentage in foreign marihuana was significantly lower than the year before (9.9% in 2009 vs 7.5% in 2010). The average THC-percentage of the marihuana samples that were bought as most potent (17.9%) did not differ from that of the most popular varieties of nederwiet. Nederwiet contains significantly less CBD than imported marihuana.

Prices that had to be paid for foreign marihuana were lower than those for any of the other cannabis products. The prices of nederhasj were higher. The average price for a gram nederwiet increased from 2007 to 2009 (up to 50%), but last year prices remained at the level of 2009.

/Frans Koopmans, De Hoop Foundation

*Our European societies have experimented and evaluated both tolerance and intolerance to illicit drug use and drug abuse. It is our reflection upon this which guides us towards non-use. This in regard to **our communities'** well-being.*



ECAD is Europe's leading organization promoting a drug free Europe and representing millions of European citizens. ECAD member cities work to develop initiatives against drug abuse supporting the United Nations Conventions.
Has your city joined ECAD?

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