

Annual Report 2019

At the intersection of
drug policy, public health
and human rights



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Who We Are and What We Do

*We work at the intersection of drug policy,
public health and human rights.*

Harm Reduction International (HRI) is a leading non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to reducing the negative health, social and legal impacts of drug use and drug policy. We promote the rights of people who use drugs and their communities through research and advocacy, to help achieve a world where drug policies and laws contribute to healthier, safer societies.

We work to:

- **Monitor gaps and progress globally in the availability of health and social services for people who use drugs;**
- **Ensure that no one's rights are violated in the name of drug control;**
- **Ensure that lifesaving harm reduction interventions are adequately funded.**

Our work comes together at our biennial international conference, which is the main global forum for the exchange of information and best practices at the intersection of drug policy, public health and human rights.

We are an NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We actively participate in international and regional fora and initiatives, to build networks that strengthen harm reduction advocacy around the world. These activities support the achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives.

To advance our United Nations (UN) level advocacy, HRI contributes to the Vienna NGO Committee and the Civil Society Taskforce on Drugs (a joint initiative of the Vienna and New York NGO Committees), the Geneva Platform on Human Rights, Health and Psychoactive Substances (2017-2019), and the World Health Organization Working Group on Hepatitis and Substance Use. HRI is an invited, expert member of the Strategic Advisory Group to the United Nations on HIV and Drug Use (SAG). We also contribute to the European Union (EU) Civil Society Forum on Drugs, the United Kingdom Harm Reduction Working Group, and the Correlation European Harm Reduction Network.

We are members of STOPAIDS, the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, and the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN).

Letter from the Executive Director

Harm Reduction International has reached a critical juncture. We can see that our work has pushed the global debate forward, and has contributed to stronger analysis and decision making at the national and international level. But at the same time, the scale up of harm reduction and evidence-based approaches to drug use have stalled up against new challenges in resource-strained environments and under a resurgence of the war on drugs narrative.

2019 was a pivotal year for us as we worked to make our research and advocacy more interconnected and intersectional. It means a lot to me that all of our work speaks to our commitment to social justice and evidence-based decision making in public policy.

In May of 2019, we brought the international harm reduction community together in Portugal for a historic conference which irrefutably linked decriminalisation and harm reduction. At the conference, leaders emphasised the critical intersections between harm reduction, race, health, sex work, poverty and gender, and demanded an end to complacency – inspiring action around the world.

Our global tracking of harm reduction policy and interventions is now more accurate and up-to-date than ever. In a first for HRI, we published an annual update to our biennial publication, *The Global State of Harm Reduction*, which included updates to some of the key data in the report including the opening of new drug consumption rooms and the availability of needle and syringe programmes.

Of particular importance were our efforts to elevate the need for a comprehensive harm reduction response to stimulant use – an area which remains underdeveloped and underfunded, despite the rising prevalence of stimulant use in many regions of the world.

2019 saw a surge of interest in the death penalty for drug offences in the news and on the political agenda in many countries, making our monitoring of and advocacy against this inhumane practice even more important. We supported the first ever convening of

actors from across South Asia and the Middle East on capital punishment; convened Indonesian leaders to engage the judiciary on limiting the application of the death penalty; and worked to reveal the degree of intersectional disadvantage faced by migrant workers on death row for drug offences.

Finally, HRI engaged influential international leaders, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), philanthropic donors and governments, to push for commitments to address the massive funding gap for harm reduction in low- and middle-income countries. Together with national partners, we urged governments to greater levels of transparency in their spending and for the reallocation of funds to effective harm reduction interventions.

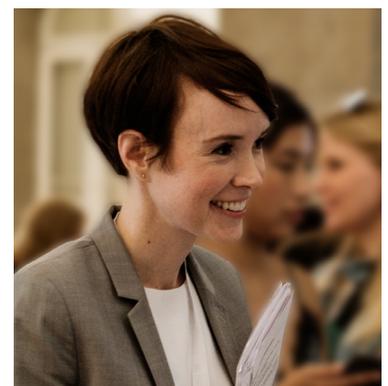
I am immensely proud of what we achieved in 2019, and in our ability to convene diverse stakeholders from around the world, take on challenging issues, and bridge national and international advocacy.

Writing this letter from the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, I am acutely aware of the high stakes we are up against in the world of health and human rights in the months and years ahead, but also of the renewed urgency of our mission. In this time of crisis, we must protect the most vulnerable people in society, including people who use drugs, through sustained and effective advocacy.

Our work is now more urgent than ever.



Naomi Burke-Shyne
Executive Director



Our Work

1

International Conference

HR19: People Before Politics

HRI Convenes the International Harm Reduction Community in Porto, Portugal for Our Most Diverse Conference Yet

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The theme of this meeting – People Before Politics – is a call to mobilise energy and conviction to shift the world’s focus from the current emphasis on punitive law enforcement to one that emphasises the wellbeing and rights of people who use drugs.

Michelle Bachelet,
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Photo by: Steve Forrest





Our Work

International Conference

Harm Reduction International's history is firmly rooted in the Harm Reduction International Conference, which began in Liverpool in 1990. The conference, now held biennially, is an integral part of our work to mobilise for reform. It is the main global forum for the exchange of information at the intersection of human rights, public health and drug policy.

Our 2019 conference (HR19) was held in Porto, Portugal from 28 April to 1 May, in partnership with local agency APDES (Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento). HR19 was our most diverse conference yet, with nearly 1200 delegates from 89 countries, including service providers, policy makers, UN officials, researchers, advocates and networks of people who use drugs. Over three days of dynamic discussions, the conference highlighted new research and led to strong outcomes, including the Mayor of Porto formally announcing the opening of the city's first drug consumption room.

The conference was opened by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet and H.E. the Former President of Portugal, Jorge Fernando Branco de Sampaio. Their presence alone signified a shift in global engagement in support of the rights of people who use drugs and evidence-based drug policy, and their dialogue emphasised the vital need for such a gathering as well as the need for ongoing research and advocacy for drug policy reform.

The Deputy Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Dr Shannon Hader, reiterated UNAIDS' commitment to putting people before politics. She expressed UNAIDS' intention to continue to work to create a safe and respectful space for civil society at the policy and decision making tables, so that evidence and experience can guide our effective response.

Bikas Gurung from the Asian Network of People who

Use Drugs set out his vision for the future in the plenary saying: **"Our demand is that if my child or your child uses drugs, they are not killed, they are not beaten. When someone decides to use drugs they must be loved, cared for and offered services. This is not a world drug problem, this is a world drug policy problem."**

The conference team ensured that the theme — People Before Politics — was at the heart of the conference programming and that the event was a successful convergence of the people with whom we work. People who use drugs led conversations at the conference; academics presented breakthrough research; social justice advocates, many of whom work in hostile environments in their home countries, were able to connect and strategise; and international leaders voiced their support, in recognition of the importance and weight of our issues.

We were pleased to support and join key partners in their satellite meetings before and after the conference, including the World Health Organization, the International Network of People who Use Drugs, the International Network on Hepatitis in Substance Users and UNITE - a global platform of parliamentarians committed to ending HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and other infectious diseases as global health threats by 2030.

In addition to helping ensure the participation of 144 delegates from eight Lusophone countries at the conference, APDES hosted the first ever global Lusophone convening. They also gave conference delegates first-hand exposure to harm reduction services in Porto and the decriminalisation model in action.

The conference generated significant media interest, including via formal conference media partnerships with VICE and Público.

Our Work

2

Public Health and Social Policy

Public Health and Social Policy: At the Forefront of Harm Reduction Research and Tracking



The Global State of Harm Reduction remains the only independent analysis on harm reduction developments worldwide, in terms of policy and service provision, and is a leading resource for people who use drugs, academics, advocates and UN agencies.

Our Work

Public Health and Social Policy

The Public Health and Social Policy team conducts original research and analysis to track developments in harm reduction and ensure that people who use drugs have the health and social services they need. This is published in our flagship publication, *The Global State of Harm Reduction*.

The Global State of Harm Reduction remains the only independent analysis on harm reduction developments worldwide, in terms of policy and service provision, and is a leading resource for people who use drugs, academics, advocates and UN agencies. Our continual monitoring of trends in harm reduction helps to inform the evidence-base in this area, and serves as a resource for people working in the fields of public health, human rights and drug use.

In 2019, the Public Health and Social Policy team produced briefing papers on six key issue areas including women and harm reduction; harm reduction for stimulants; prisons and harm reduction; hepatitis C and harm reduction; drug consumption rooms; and drug checking.

- Our work with partners in Spain and South Africa allowed us to highlight the compounded vulnerability of women who use drugs in health systems, and structural barriers to services.
- We created space for the exchange of ideas on harm reduction responses for stimulant use, including through a briefing paper, side events at HR19, and ongoing connections with harm reduction leaders in this space.
- With new collaborations – sharing data for the Map-Crowd mapping initiative on hepatitis C, supporting the development of the first regional convening of the International Network on Hepatitis in Substance Users in South Africa, and joining the World Health Organization Working Group on Hepatitis and Substance Use – we are better positioned to emphasise the connection between hepatitis and harm reduction in all our advocacy.

Bringing a Gender Perspective to Our Work

Both the Public Health and Human Rights teams worked on projects which looked at the impact of specific policies and practices on women. The Public Health and Social Policy team partnered with the South Africa Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) in Durban and with Metzineres in Barcelona, Spain to document the barriers to harm reduction services experienced by women in prison and in the community.

The initiative facilitated exchange, strengthened capacity in qualitative research and documentation, and boosted the legitimacy of local women's voices. SANPUD plans to use the research to highlight the positive impact of a police champion on women's access to services (best practice model). Metzineres worked on a radio show to share research findings and humanise the experiences of women who use drugs.

The team carried out a literature review analysing structural barriers to harm reduction services for women and this original research was used to produce advocacy briefings with partners.

The Human Rights and Justice team also addressed gender and drug policy in 2019. Recognising the unique vulnerability of women charged with drug offences in retentionist countries in Asia, the team convened women's rights advocates and death penalty abolitionists to develop new strategies for abolition. This took the form of a series of regional meetings held in partnership with the Cornell Centre on the Death Penalty Worldwide.

Our Work

3

Human Rights and Justice

Human Rights and Justice: Strengthening and Expanding Our Death Penalty Work



Our Work

Human Rights and Justice

The Human Rights and Justice team monitors rights abuses committed globally in the name of drug control, and advocates to promote the human rights of people who use drugs and their communities.

Currently, our research and analysis tracks the use of the death penalty for drug offences, extrajudicial killings in the name of drug control, and the compulsory detention of people who use drugs, to help fight for the rights of some of the most marginalised groups in society.

The death penalty for drug offences was the primary focus of the Human Rights and Justice team in 2019. The team launched its annual report, *The Death Penalty for Drug Offences: Global Overview 2018*, at the World Congress Against the Death Penalty in Brussels (Belgium) in February 2019. The report received extensive media coverage including mentions in Al Jazeera, the Guardian, the Jakarta Post, and the Star Online (Malaysia), among many others.

The team also spoke out against Sri Lanka's move towards ending a 43-year moratorium on the death penalty, by direct engagement with the EU and via a joint request for action to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. This rapid-response work shone a light on the situation and led to the team being quoted in the New York Times, Associated Press and the Washington Post.

The Human Rights and Justice team worked to support lawyers, jurists and human rights actors in their strategic advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty.

Giada Girelli, a human rights analyst with the Harm Reduction International drug policy research group, said there is no evidence that carrying out executions in Sri Lanka would serve "as an effective deterrent to drug use or trafficking."

- In October 2019, we supported the first ever convening of lawyers, researchers, historians, faith leaders and human rights actors from across South Asia and the Middle East on the death penalty, in Kathmandu, Nepal. Organised in partnership with Justice Project Pakistan, the convening elevated the issue of the death penalty for drug offences among the wider network of actors and aimed to strengthen narratives for abolition.
- In December 2019, together with LBH Masyarakat in Indonesia, we convened a regional judicial dialogue on the death penalty. We engaged judges on sentencing guidelines on capital cases and shared lessons from Malaysia's progress towards abolition, with a view to further curbing the use of the death sentence in retentionist countries.

The Human Rights and Justice team worked with the University of Oxford Centre for Criminology to produce briefing papers on the impact of the death penalty on foreign migrants and women, which were presented to government representatives at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2019. With opening and closing statements from the Ambassadors of Mexico, New Zealand and the EU, the event garnered significant attention in a sensitive political environment.

Our Work

4

Sustainable Financing

Sustainable Financing: Increasing Influence and Impact at the International Level

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We are the only NGO tracking global harm reduction funding trends, including support provided by international donors and domestic governments, and their impact on the global response to HIV and other health issues

Our Work

Sustainable Financing

The Sustainable Financing team provides tools, strategic analysis and evidence to support advocacy for the adequate funding of harm reduction globally. We are the only NGO tracking harm reduction funding trends, including support provided by international donors and domestic governments, and their impact on the global response to HIV and other health issues.

In 2019, the Sustainable Financing team built on its ground-breaking research on financing for harm reduction in low- and middle-income countries to galvanize advocates and call for increased political commitment in the context of the replenishment of the Global Fund. Our research reveals that the Global Fund remains the largest donor for harm reduction in low- and middle-income countries, and for this reason, is a key point of engagement for the Sustainable Financing team.

The team connected with the influential Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) to urge the Global Fund to preserve catalytic investment funds, that are critical for harm reduction advocacy. The team also provided detailed briefings on harm reduction to members of the Global Fund Strategy Committee in advance of key meetings.

The Sustainable Financing team cemented their strong ties with UNAIDS in 2019. Following HRI's advocacy, UNAIDS amplified our call for the redirection of funds from law enforcement to health and harm reduction in their key publications and guidance.

HRI further elevated the issue of funding for harm reduction by convening the first ever side event on

harm reduction at the Global Fund Replenishment Conference in Lyon, France. A representative from the Ministry of Health of Senegal, together with the International Network of People who Use Drugs and the HIV/AIDS Alliance India, echoed HRI's call for the Global Fund to recognise the urgent need for funding for harm reduction. The Deputy Director of UNAIDS, Dr Shannon Hader, who gave the opening remarks at the event, highlighted the critical role that the Global Fund and donors play in providing funding for harm reduction in low- and middle-income countries.

Our increasing international influence increases our effectiveness at the national and local level, along with our key national and regional partners.

The Sustainable Financing team continued its work with civil society in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Georgia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, to support evidence-based national level advocacy in 2019 by:

- Creating and disseminating tools to track harm reduction investment and accountability;
- Tracking law enforcement spending;
- Providing small grants to support national level advocacy and;
- Building up skills around national advocacy funding, budget advocacy and cost effectiveness.

Our Work Sustainable Financing

Call to action at HR19 in Porto

The Sustainable Financing team leveraged the conference to launch a 'Call to Action' urging governments, philanthropic donors and the private sector to step up and fully fund the Global Fund – emphasising the importance of Global Fund replenishment to harm reduction. The Call to Action was signed by 150 NGOs, individuals and members of parliament.

The signed Call to Action was presented at our high profile HR19 event on the Global Fund replenishment.

It was the first time we convened the Global Fund and key government representatives on the topic of harm reduction funding. We welcomed high-level representation from the Global Fund - Marijke Wijnroks, Chief of Staff at the Global Fund.

Most significantly, the Portuguese Secretary of State for Health announced the trebling of the Portuguese government's pledge to the Global Fund at the event.



Our Board of Trustees

Harm Reduction International is governed by a board of trustees under a foundations model of governance, in which the directors are also the members of the organisation. Board appointments are made by resolution of the board itself.

Members of the board of directors also serve as trustees of Harm Reduction International, in compliance with the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Our board of trustees as of 31 December 2019 were:

-
- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ Mr John Ryan (Chair) | ○ Prof. Patrick O'Hare |
| ○ Ms Susie McLean (Vice-Chair) | ○ Ms Olga Belyaeva |
| ○ Mr Ivan Varentsov (Secretary) | ○ Ms Lucy Burns |
| ○ Ms Patricia Haddad (Treasurer) | ○ Ms Saumya Kailasapathy |

In 2019, the Harm Reduction International board of trustees committed to strengthening the skills and diversity of the board, and appointed two new trustees with skills in public relations and communications, and global health financing.

Our Donors

Harm Reduction International is supported by:

- Open Society Foundations
- European Commission
- The Robert Carr Fund
- Elton John AIDS Foundation
- MAC AIDS Fund
- The Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria
- The Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland
- The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This is in addition to collaboration and partnerships with UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime.

Statement of Financial Position

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	£34,334	£22,667
Total	£34,334	£22,667
Current assets		
Debtors	£60,878	£330,192
Cash at Bank and in hand	£369,550	£161,117
Total	£430,428	£491,309
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(£359,185)	(£439,674)
Net Current Assets	£71,243	£51,635
Total Net Assets	£105,577	£74,302
Charity Funds		
Restricted funds	£54,203	£139,775
Unrestricted funds	£51,374	(£65,473)
Total funds	£105,577	£74,302

Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating income and expenditure account)
for the year ended 31 December 2019

	Unrestricted Funds 2019	Restricted Funds 2019	Total Funds 2019	Total Funds 2018
Income from				
Donations and legacies	£90	-	£90	£218
Charitable activities	£969,380	£495,625	£1,465,005	£645,042
Investments	£153	-	£153	£92
Total Income	£969,623	£495,625	£1,465,248	£645,352
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	£852,737	£581,236	£1,433,973	£748,599
Total expenditure	£852,737	£581,236	£1,433,973	£748,599
Net income/ (expenditure)	£116,886	(£85,611)	£31,275	(£103,247)
Transfers between Funds	(£39)	£39	-	-
Net movement in funds	£116,847	(£85,572)	£31,275	(£103,247)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	(£65,473)	£139,775	£74,302	£177,549
Net movement in funds	£116,847	(£85,572)	£31,275	(£103,247)
Total funds carried forward	£51,374	£54,203	£105,577	£74,302

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