



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020 »



## Our Vision

A global coalition of youth-led organisations who can centre youth voices in drug policy across all levels.

## Our Mission

To develop the capacity of young people from all over the world to be agents of change, transforming drug policy with a gender, racial and social justice perspective, respecting multiculturalism, and benefiting communities that have been most affected by the War on Drugs.



FUNDED BY



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## NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My first year working as the Executive Director of Youth RISE has been an absolute privilege and has brought me so much joy throughout a difficult year. Having been involved with Youth RISE for a few years before becoming the Executive Director I understand the important role we can play in promoting a full spectrum approach to harm reduction and involving young people who use drugs in policy decision making processes.

The year has of course presented a number of challenges as our members have had to adjust to life in a pandemic. The lack of in-person meetings this year has left our already remote and international work feeling that bit more isolated. Most of all I've really missed the opportunity to meet so many of the wonderful people I work with from all over the world. In person events such as our Annual Strategy Meeting, which we had to cancel this year, give us a valuable opportunity to work together and make significant decisions as well as simply being in the same timezone and giving us an opportunity to socialize at the end of the day. It's been hard not seeing our many old friends and missing out on the opportunities to make new experiences with new ones.

Soon we can make these memories all over again, but in the meantime I continue to be amazed by the incredibly passionate young people I'm privileged to work with every day. The amount of time and energy committed to make Youth RISE so successful in such a difficult year for the organization and for everyone as individuals is inspiring to me and has made my first year that much easier.



This hard work will be evident over the next pages of this annual report as we present 12 months worth of remote-workshops, Zoom-meetings, and socially-distant advocacy events.



## YOUTH RISE IN 2020 OVERVIEW

2020 was a year of organizational strengthening for Youth RISE, with the aim of ensuring our legal registration and financial independence in the near future having been very capably fiscally hosted again this year by our friends at **» YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS FOR DRUG ACTION (YODA)**. This year we successfully managed three separate projects from two different funding sources - **» THE ROBERT CARR FUND FOR CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS** and **» THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA**.

Youth RISE has created a number of key organizational policies and procedures, such as our Financial Policy, Risk Management Policy, Human Resources Policy, as well as our Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association for us to register in Estonia. On top of this we have expanded our organization by accepting **7** new International Working Group Members, bringing us to a total of **18**, including an Executive Director, three Project Managers, a Communications Officer, a Latin America and the Caribbean Communications Officer and a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

**OUR MEMBERSHIP HAS ALSO EXTENDED TO ORGANIZATIONS IN 2020 - WITH SIX ORGANIZATIONS JOINING THE YOUTH RISE NETWORK IN THIS NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR.**

This year we have also founded a new Board of Directors, and we would like to thank the previous Board members Caitlin Padgett and Anita Krug for their incredible dedication to Youth RISE in recent years and their commitment to revitalizing Youth RISE's Board and the organization as a whole. Caitlin and Anita will continue to work closely with us to ensure a smooth transition to the new Board of Directors.



YOUTH RISE ARE CONTINUING OUR WORK TO REACH OUR LONG-TERM GOAL OF LEGALLY REGISTERING THE ORGANIZATION IN 2021. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH LAWYERS IN ESTONIA TO REGISTER AS AN NGO AND WE ARE BEGINNING OUR PREPARATION FOR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE WITH MANAGING A SET OF ACTIVITIES FROM OUR TWO ROBERT CARR FUND BUDGETS, AS WELL AS MANAGING OUR GLOBAL FUND BUDGET ENTIRELY INDEPENDENTLY NEXT YEAR.

We have also been able to provide opportunities for our members to develop their local organizations through our small grants program. Small grants were distributed to Peru and Mexico, Argentina, the United States of America, Spain, Hungary, and Lithuania to help develop organizations in those countries and wider regions. As the year developed, we were also delighted to be able to offer Covid relief small grants to address the developing needs of young people who use drugs during the pandemic to our members in Pakistan, Nepal, and Argentina.



This year we also took part in a number of campaigns, primarily online given the nature of the pandemic, including **» Support. Don't Punish.** where we were happy to give funding and other supports to organizations in Ireland, Nepal, and Pakistan, as well as for an art contest across all of Latin America. We also helped organize a webinar as part of the Paradigma De-Centralized E-Conference with Youth RISE being represented by MJ Stowe and Carolina Ahumada making presentations on the call.



TOWARDS THE END OF THE YEAR, AN OPPORTUNITY CAME UP TO WORK WITH » **BLUED INTERNATIONAL**, AN LGBTQ+ DATING APP BASED IN HONG KONG AND OPERATING ACROSS ASIA AS WELL AS INTERNATIONALLY WITH OVER 14 MILLION USERS WORLDWIDE.



**BLUED**  
*Gay social App*

This project will involve our Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Mayank Singh taking part in a livestream on the app to discuss drug use, break down some of the stigma associated with talking about drug use and mental health, as well as launching a survey, the results of which will be used to develop harm reduction content for the app.

## NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NETWORK STRENGTHENING SMALL GRANTS

### REGULAR SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

## Introduction

Every year, Youth RISE distributes small grants amongst its International Working Group members and Organizational members, financed through the Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund (RCNF) with the aims of supporting community organizations and initiative groups of young people affected by drug policies. This year, the focus was to support harm reduction networks and members to result in organizational strengthening.

Small grants under this theme were granted to our members in every continent, demonstrating the strength and reach of Youth RISE's network and support. These grants were given to members and organizations in South Africa, Ghana, Lithuania, Argentina, Barcelona, the USA and Peru.



## South Africa

Our International Working Group member from South Africa, MJ Stowe, implemented this small grant with the aim of identifying champions in the street-based community of people who use drugs with the knowledge and tools to be able to both identify and respond to opioid-related overdose by administering naloxone.



These people can now act as focal points and links between the community and relevant organizations. There is very poor access of naloxone in South Africa, as it can only be obtained with a prescription and only available as an intramuscular injection. Yet, many of the country's people who inject drugs live on the street and inject heroin, and it is likely that most fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses are occurring among this population, with little to no access to this life saving treatment. Naloxone should be a critical component of community-based responses to opioid overdose and this small grant was used to facilitate several training sessions with a total of more than 40 participants, in a country where no community-based naloxone distribution programmes exist. As noted by MJ, there is still much to be done, as the laws around naloxone in South Africa limiting the capabilities of community organizations to provide these trainings, as there has to be a healthcare professional recruited for these workshops and naloxone being so difficult to access by those who need it most.

## Ghana

Our International Working Group member from Ghana, Daniel Nii Ankrah and his organization, Medicare EMRR, implemented this grant through a digital campaign, media discussions, advocacy consultations, and mapping stakeholders in West Africa.





The digital campaign was part of a series of online activities to draw attention to the progressive Narcotics Control Law (NCC) that was passed in the country in March 2020, and to get the general public talking about drugs, drug policies and overdose. A brief digital training and an impactful capacity building activity were both organized online, inspiring young people to campaign about the protection of the rights of people who use drugs and gave facts on overdose in Ghana, while linking this knowledge to recent NCC law. This digital campaign was significant as it brought together young Ghanians on Twitter to collaborate on issues of drug use as well as amplify the advocacy for the implementation of the NCC law beyond its passing.



The media discussion took place in the form of a radio discussion with Daniel and a partner from the Community and Family Aid Foundation, in which they discussed the content of the NCC law and gave context-specific examples, and discussed overdose awareness. This resulted in opening up a space for the media and civil society partners to discuss issues of drug use and policy, leveraging the media space to advocate for drug policy reforms as well as informing people about overdose, and how to support people who use drugs.



The advocacy consultations that this grant supported allowed for the contribution of Youth RISE in reviewing the NCC bill and advocating for its passing into law. This grant also supported Daniel in mapping out and identifying strategic CSO partners who can support their advocacy work on drug policy reforms and promoting the rights of people who use drugs across West Africa.

## Lithuania

One of our project managers, Eliza Kurcevic and her organization » **‘JAUNA BANGA’** or ‘Young Wave’ utilized their small grant to develop essential internal documents and to develop the organization’s strategy for 2021-2022.



Although ‘Young Wave’ was established in 2017, and has been incredibly successful, it has existed without internal documents, or an organizational strategy, which would strengthen the organisation. The organization used the small grant to create key financial documents, making it more transparent, and easier to track the current projects and related payments. As the organization is currently going through a period of transition, it became increasingly important to address organizational difficulties, so the grant was also used to create an organizational strategy, as well as a new vision and mission.



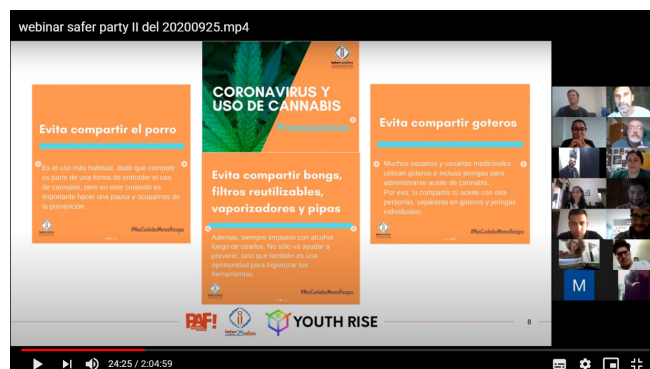
**THIS STRATEGY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, THE NEEDS OF VOLUNTEERS, MAKING CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION, IT FOCUSES ON FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION AND CAN ENSURE BOTH THE CONTINUITY OF THE ORGANIZATION’S ACTIVITIES AND THE EXPANSION OF ITS SERVICES AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR QUALITY.**



## Argentina

Carolina, our Latin América and the Caribbean Communications Officer, and representative from Argentina, and her organization **» INTERCAMBIOS** used their small grant to launch 3 webinars. These webinars trained youth organizations from the Southern Cone (Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina) in harm reduction, so they could apply this knowledge to the agenda of their respective groups.

From political organizations to adolescents, young people living with HIV to cannabis organizations, they came together for the joint creation of informative materials associated with the principles of harm reduction.



## Spain



**» METZINERES**, a womxn-exclusive harm reduction program in Catalonia, used their small grant to empower young women and non-binary people who use drugs to engage in activism, harm reduction services and communitarian activities.

They did this through organizing weekly Pa'ella activism meetups, with other collectives of the neighbourhood, and weekly meetups for the network of women who use drugs (XADUD). These activities are anchored in peer-led interventions and embracing other collectives of vulnerable women, promoting their human rights, harm reduction, and intersectional feminism, and welcome sex worker collectives, homeless people collectives, and youth.



## USA

Our International Working Group member from the USA, Kelly Ebbert, used her small grant to set up her new organization, 'Live to Love Project'. They began with creating organizational documents such as an official strategy document, a revised budget, financial tracking documents, and more.

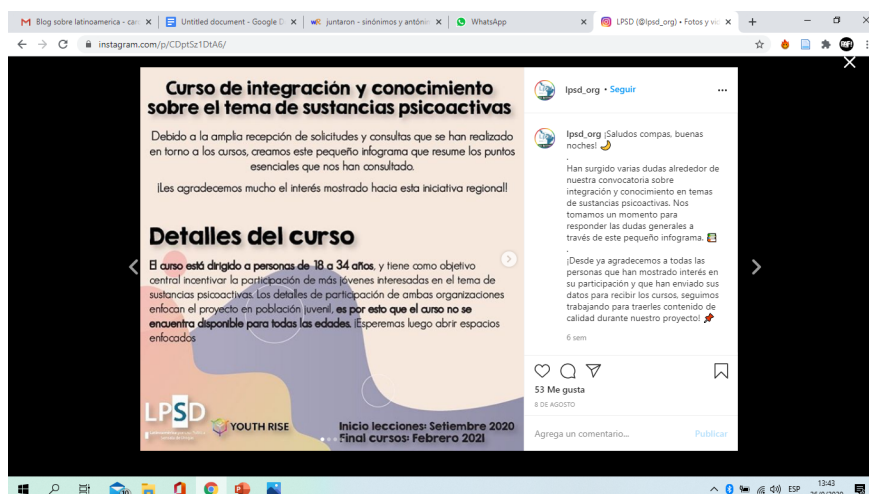


They also invested in technological resources to assist in their development, such as a mouse and keyboard, and software such as Adobe Cloud and SquareSpace. They also launched their website, wrote blogs and have been posting consistently across social media platforms to raise awareness of their mission. The small grant has also been used to help them attend several conferences to expand their knowledge base, as well as plan for major social media campaigns.

## Peru

Humberto Rotondo, our International Working Group member from Peru, and the organization he is a member of, Latin America for a Sensible Drug Policy, used this grant to conduct an online integration and knowledge course on psychoactive substances. It was also used to implement the website and institutional emails for the members of the organization. The online course was aimed at 30 members of the organization and 22 external students, on the topics of harm reduction, law, economics, anthropology, tools for activism, lobbying and project management.

The course is made up of 12 modules taught every 15 days, and contains a final project, in which students will form groups to do their own project on drug policy and harm reduction and the 3 best projects receive a grant.





## Hungary

Beatrix Vas, our International Working Group member from Hungary and SSDP Budapest applied for this grant, to be implemented with SSDP Österreich and » PSYCARE. The small grant was used to support the reorganization of SSDP Budapest into a broader association for Hungarian youth, with the aim of registering as a non-profit organization. It had been recognized that SSDP Budapest, centered around the CEU-campus was not sustainable, and would significantly increase the number of members and the impact it has if the organization was to evolve past its student-centred format. Therefore the grant was used to map areas where they could reach their target group of young people interested in issues around drug education, policy and research and recruit them to participate in organizing campaigns, events and activities as part of the newly formed association.

They successfully gathered a contact list of around 50 people, and have been working towards holding a General Assembly, as well as working on organizational and founding documents. This small grant has also been used to establish and deepen relationships with and between harm reduction organizations in the Central and Eastern Europe region, and collecting best practices in nightlife harm reduction, with a special focus on drug checking activities. To do this, they have been developing a qualitative comparative report on the state of nightlife harm reduction in this region, and developing a policy advocacy strategy to identify gaps in service provision in Hungary, and how practices of other organizations could be adapted.

## COVID RELIEF SMALL GRANTS

In September, we opened up applications for our Covid-19 Relief Small Grants Programme, in which we distributed 4 grants to our members in Nepal, Argentina, and Pakistan. The main goal of this programme was to support harm reduction networks and members to continue to provide essential services during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

## Nepal

Sandeep Shahi, our International Working Group member from Nepal implemented 2 of our Covid-19 relief small grants. He identified the need for food supplies for people who use drugs in the country, as they were being left without any support from the government during this time and were being left out by their own communities.



Youth RISE Nepal set up an Emergency Response Team to identify and locate young people who use drugs who were struggling with their daily food intake due to the strict lockdown. They distributed food supplies as emergency relief to these people and their families, as well as to one rehabilitation center located in rural Nepal where more than 40 people who use drugs were taking shelter. The Covid-19 small grant was also used to collaborate with active local young people from Seven Street in two major districts of Nepal, in which more relief supplies were distributed to people who inject drugs and people living with HIV/AIDS and their families during the lockdown.

## Pakistan

Maqbool Hussain, our International Working Group member from Pakistan, and his organization 'Ujala Welfare Organization' implemented their Covid-19 relief small grant through a training workshop, a dialogue with local journalists, and outreach sessions on Covid-19 prevention and drug education, as well as ration distribution. The training workshop consisted of a two day training on the basics of peer education, HIV/AIDS, drugs, drug policies and harm reduction to participants from different villages in Pakistan. This training also utilized the Youth RISE Peer Education Guide to ensure the workshops were interactive and the participants could take what they learned to their peers. The dialogue session was organized with the journalists of Lodhran Press Club and scholars, in which the participants were asked to critically review the National Drug Policy 2019, and engaging in

a healthy dialogue that enabled the journalists to change their views on people who use drugs and policies of punishment.

The final part of this small grant was used to create a survey to identify where to host outreach sessions on Covid-19 prevention and drug education, and for the distribution of one month of ration packages to 60 families of people who use drugs that are affected by Covid-19.



## Argentina

Carolina, our Communications Officer for Latin América and the Caribbean, is implementing this Covid small grant with her organization » **INTERCAMBIOS**, more specifically PAF! It is going to be used to develop informative and harm reduction materials that will be delivered in interventions to people in pubs/bars (and other recreational scenarios in the new normal). These materials are the product of a research PAF! made during April and August about the consumption of drugs during lockdown and isolation.

## MEETINGS AND ADVOCACY

### Civil Society meeting on decriminalization in Ghana

Youth RISE joined a coalition of drug policy reform civil society organizations to discuss and to assess opportunities for advocacy around the » **NARCOTICS COMMISSION BILL (NCC BILL 2019)** before the Ghanaian parliament. The meeting in Accra, convened by Ane Maria-Goretti of the » **INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY CONSORTIUM**, brought together like-minded partners to form a common position and develop a strategy to achieve the passing of the NCC B-ill into law.



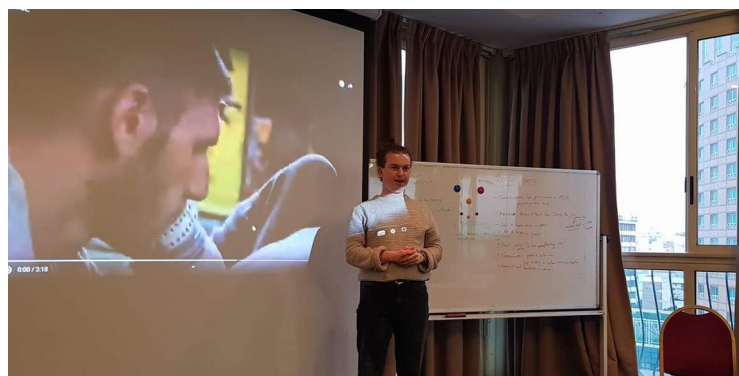
For civil society organizations and partners, this was an opportunity to collaborate with policymakers and make critical inputs into the bill for its subsequent passing. Our International Working Group member Daniel Nii Ankrah represented Youth RISE at the meeting and was part of a strategic planning committee that has been set up to advance the advocacy on the NCC Bill.

He has been working in a team to develop cutting edge strategies relevant to the bill consideration process and to consolidate the alliance's efforts to get the bill passed into law. On Friday, March 20th, the Parliament of Ghana passed the Narcotics Control Commission Bill into law.

## Harm Reduction Consortium meeting in Beirut

In January, as part of our Robert Carr Network Fund Civil Society Grant, Youth RISE attended meetings in Beirut. The meeting, hosted by » **MENAHRA**, included presentations of one of our previously produced » **ADVOCACY VIDEOS** as well as our » **2019 ANNUAL REPORT** by our Executive Director Ailish Brennan. As part of the meetings, a report from a performed Governance Scan was presented by consultant Graham Shaw which discussed the immediate and long term needs of Youth RISE related to our organizational structure.

On top of this, a site visit was arranged for organizations present to a local service provider » **SIDC**. Here we were presented with an overview of the local situation on the ground and the trends currently being seen in harm reduction services in Beirut. A general overview of the budget and workplan for 2020 was also conducted, where participants highlighted potential areas for collaboration - most notably CND and HIV2020. Each organization outlined their plans for various campaigns, each line of their budget and workplan, as well as outlining opportunities for collaboration.





## 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The 63rd Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs took place this year with Youth RISE heavily represented at a side-event organized by Students for Sensible Drug Policy entitled ***Young People Using Drugs - Bridging the Gap Between Human Rights and Young Key Populations***. The side-event was well attended on a Tuesday morning at 8am with a number of government delegations and key representatives from partner organizations in attendance.



**YOUTH RISE  
INTERNATIONAL  
WORKING GROUP  
MEMBERS SEYI KEHINDE,  
DANIEL NII ANKRAH,  
JOANA CANEDO, AND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AILISH BRENNAN SPOKE  
ON THE PANEL.**

Aside from this, many additional advocacy efforts went successfully with Ailish and Seyi engaging in productive meetings with their respective national government delegations, as well as Seyi speaking successfully at the launch of a report by Frontline AIDS entitled ***Advancing The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women Who Use Drugs***. Other external events were successful including our annual Paradigma meeting, along with meetings organized by INPUD and IDPC.

## AIDS 2020 - 23rd International AIDS Conference

Youth RISE was invited to participate in the AIDS 2020 Youth Pre-Conference by former International Working Group Member Oz. The Pre-Conference had the aim to get the perspective of young people and the organizations working with and representing them. Youth RISE used the time at the Pre-Conference, which also included an interview with Executive Director Ailish Brennan and former IWG Oz, to highlight the importance of Youth RISE and our members prioritizing community-led harm reduction especially within the context of the ongoing pandemic and the need for strategic and rapid responses to the issues faced by the community. The session also highlighted the work of our IWG Joana with Metzineres in Barcelona and MJ with Harm Reduction South Africa and SANPUD.

With the help of IDPC's youth representative Ciarán Weir we also outlined four key demands moving forward:

**We must ensure that there is active and meaningful participation of youth and youth-related organizations in the development, implementation and evaluation of HIV policies and programs.**

**We need to see evidence-based, age-appropriate education aiming to provide objective information on drug use that prioritizes the reduction of harm and HIV Incidence rather than relying on fear and intimidation.**

**Acknowledge and invest in harm reduction and sexual health services such as supervised injection facilities, educational material about minimizing risks associated with using drugs and HIV, and the decriminalisation or discouragement of the provision of these life-saving services.**

**Fast track the understanding, access and public awareness of life-saving interventions including Pre (PREP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).**

## UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Youth RISE formulated a submission to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention with information and testimonials being compiled on Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Nepal, Ghana, Uganda, Brazil, Portugal, the United States and Algeria. The submission discussed thematic areas such as Pre-Trial Detention and Mandatory Treatment, Police Profiling and Prison Demographics, the Legal Age of Liability, Harm Reduction in Prisons, and Recent Negative Trends observed. This submission provided a great opportunity for Youth RISE to have the issues faced by young people who use drugs heard in discussions related to law enforcement and in a subject area where our voice is not traditionally heard.

## International Overdose Awareness Day 2020

For this year's International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD), Youth RISE ran an online Photovoice campaign. We put out a call to our International Working Group Members (IWGs), our supporters, and partner organizations for a photo that displays the story of why this global day is important to them, along with a story to explain. We received photos and stories from all over the world, truly representing

Youth RISE's global reach and membership, they were received from Pakistan, Nigeria, Ireland, the USA, and Nepal. We also published a statement for International Overdose Awareness Day, drawing attention to how the crisis of overdoses within the community of young people who use drugs is preventable, but there is still a significant lack of consideration for overdose prevention globally.

To mitigate the risk of overdose among young people who use drugs, we called for the following changes be implemented:

**i) Governments fund the scaling up and access to OST at all shelters in locations where the capacity for OST initiation exists through partnership with civil society and academic institutions.**

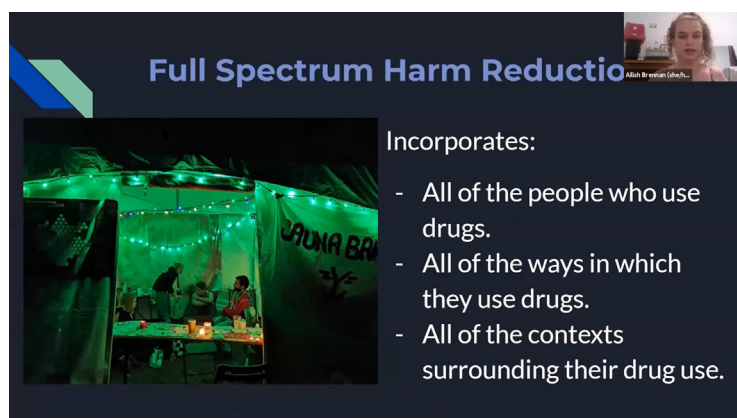
**ii) That governments enable civil society and academic institutions to establish opioid overdose prevention programmes, that focus on education and skills-based training of people who use opioids. Additionally, increased community-based access to naloxone in health and substance use treatment centres and the provision of naloxone to OST clients, paired with appropriate administration training, is needed.**

**iii) That governments fund and allow community-led supervised consumption sites to open in locations where there is a demand. To facilitate these sites, governments must also decriminalize the possession and use of all drugs so as to truly fight to end overdoses in their countries.**

## HIV 2020

In August, The Young People Leading the Way HIV2020 online session took place, hosted by Y+ Global with Youth LEAD, Youth RISE, YPEER, UNYPA, RNJ+, Teenergizer, Fundacion Chile Positivo and J+LAC. Executive Director Ailish Brennan spoke on the panel on behalf of Youth RISE, presenting the approach of Full Spectrum

Harm Reduction as a best practice. An overview of key components of Full Spectrum Harm Reduction was provided and it was explained why it is both important and effective as a tool in the HIV response.



## UNAIDS Strategy Development Process

The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is currently in the process of developing its next Strategy for 2021 and beyond; providing opportunities for community consultations, the outcomes of which will be incorporated in the process of the strategy development.



On August 16, 2020, Youth RISE organized a virtual focus group discussion with the participation of young people from all over the world, to discuss how UNAIDS and the global HIV/AIDS response could better serve the needs of young people who use drugs. Members of Youth RISE, friends and allies gathered online to analyze how the current strategy performs in terms of reaching key affected populations of young people who use drugs, how the current structures and services are able to serve actual needs, and how contextual elements, such as punitive drug laws affect young people's access to life-saving harm reduction services.

**BASED ON THE OUTCOME OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION, YOUTH RISE HAS SUBMITTED A LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNING BODY OF UNAIDS, CENTERED AROUND THE CALL FOR MAKING THE GLOBAL HIV RESPONSE MORE INCLUSIVE AND FIT TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS.**

## Global Drug Policy Index

In 2020, the "Harm Reduction Consortium" was awarded funding by the **» ROBERT CARR FUND (RCF)** to deliver an exciting new project entitled: "The Global Drug Policy Index (GDPI): A bold new approach to improve policies, harm reduction funding, and the lives of people who use drugs". The project centres around the development and delivery of a new composite index to document, measure and compare government policies related to illicit drugs.

As part of the GDPI project development process, we have participated in multiple online workshops and expert meetings. Youth RISE Communication Officers Ruby and Carolina take part in the Communications Working Group, while Executive Director Ailish and International Working Group members Joana and Beatrix have participated in a focus group

discussion with drug and data experts to brainstorm initial ideas and thoughts regarding the feasibility and value of the GDPI approach; the geographical scope of the project; dimensions to include, and available data sources; how to weigh each indicator/dimension identified; how to manage data gaps and extrapolation; and the design and format of the GDPI products.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING AND EXPANSION

### Introduction

One of the main goals of Youth RISE this year has been to develop our organization as a whole, something we worked on in a number of different ways. Last year, as part of the Harm Reduction Consortium, a Governance Capacity Scan was performed on Youth RISE and our Consortium partners which outlined areas of weakness in our governance. Following this, and along with our usual strengthening and expansion efforts, Youth RISE worked hard to improve the internal governance of the organization as well as supporting our members to strengthen their organizations through our small grants.

### New IWGs

ONE OF THE FIRST TASKS OF EVERY YEAR IS TO RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN OUR NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP MEMBERS. OUR IWGS ARE REALLY AT THE CORE OF OUR WORK AND THE STRONGER OUR INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP MEMBERS ARE THE MORE EFFECTIVE YOUTH RISE IS. WHILE WE WERE UNFORTUNATE TO LOSE SOME STRONG MEMBERS THIS YEAR WE WORKED TO ENSURE THAT YOUTH RISE COULD EXPAND IN REGIONS WE HAVE RECENTLY HAD LESS REPRESENTATION IN. SPECIFICALLY, WITH THE HELP OF OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, WE LOOKED TO ADVERTISE FOR NEW IWG APPLICANTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA) REGIONS.

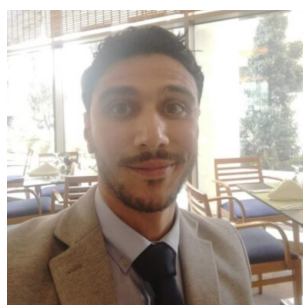
In MENA we're glad to be able to work with Amine Gahfez this year as an International Working Group member for Algeria. Amine is a medical doctor so, as you might imagine, this has been a challenging year for him where he has been working tirelessly in the Covid response which has meant his work with us has been limited.

In Latin America we received a number of strong applications and have been working with Carolina Ahumada from Argentina, who is also now serving as our Latin America and Caribbean Communications Officer, and Humberto Rotondo from Peru. Carolina and Humberto have contributed massively to an increased Youth RISE presence in the

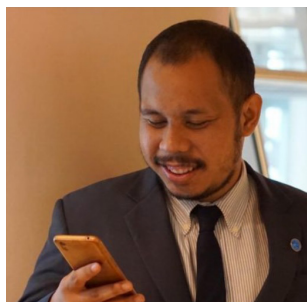
region and we are happy to have supported them with our small grants as well. We have also added new members from Indonesia, the United Kingdom, Hungary, and Ireland to further strengthen our organization to 18 members in every region, including paid staff members.



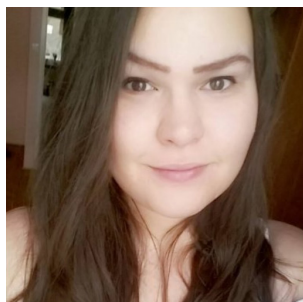
**Ruby**  
Communnications  
Officer  
Ireland



**Amine**  
International  
Working Group  
Member  
Algeria



**Yohan**  
International  
Working Group  
Member  
Indonesia



**Beatrix**  
International  
Working Group  
Member  
Hungary



**Carolina**  
Latin America &  
the Caribbean  
Communications  
Officer  
Argentina



**Humberto**  
International  
Working Group  
Member  
Peru



**Daisy**  
International  
Working Group  
Member  
United Kingdom



## Organizational Membership

This year was the first year Youth RISE has been able to offer a new membership opportunity to organizations. With this membership system still being in its initial stages it is an exciting time for new members as they can shape the structure to suit their needs. We are proud to have added six members this year currently coming from Pakistan, Liberia, Estonia, Albania, and Nigeria.

Our organizational members have been able to take part in many of our online activities this year including our Digital Campaigning and Communications Workshop as well as our UNAIDS Focus Group Discussion. Hopefully in the future we can continue to formalize the organizational membership structure and provide more opportunities for the members.

## New Board and Registration

One of the main goals we set this year was to re-establish a full Board of Directors with the view of becoming legally registered in 2021. Anita Krug and Caitlin Padgett have served as Board members for the last few years in a sort of informal role, providing oversight and advice we are extremely grateful for without the support of additional Board members or the structure of regular meetings. With their

help, we have appointed five new Board members and have held our first meeting in November. We are delighted to welcome Archana Oinam, Adeolu Ogunrombi, Natalie Ginsberg, Mohawk Greene, and Zara Snapp as our new Board members. Founding a new Board of Directors was an important step towards us becoming legally registered in Estonia and gaining financial independence.

## Organizational Policies and Procedures

Following the Governance Capacity Scan last year we hired the consultant who carried out the scan Graham Shaw to work with us to produce a number of necessary internal policy documents. Graham produced Human Resources, Financial, Risk Management Policies and Procedures along with Articles of Association and our Memorandum of Association. These policies are necessary for our registration in Estonia and will provide a written framework for our work in the coming years to ensure we maintain best practices.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRENGTHENING

2020 was a big year for us in terms of improving our Communication, and organizing trainings for our partner's and other youth activists in digital campaigning and advocacy, building the capacity of not just our members, but affiliate organizations too. We hired a new Communications Officer in February, MJ Stowe, who worked in this role until his resignation in August due to new responsibilities in his organization, the South African Network of People Who Use Drugs (SANPUD).

We then hired two new Communications Officers in August, with Ruby Rose Lawlor becoming the general Communications Officer and Carolina Ahumada becoming the brand new position of Latin América and the Caribbean Communications Officer! Carolina is responsible for promoting Youth RISE in Latin América and the Caribbean growing our presence there.

**IN DOING THIS, SHE SET UP A NEW INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT, NAMED 'YOUTHRISE\_LATINX', AND HAS BEEN POSTING CONSISTENTLY ON IT AND REACHED AS MUCH AS 188 FOLLOWERS IN JUST 2 MONTHS!**

Craig Dwyer from 'ForaChange' organization, conducted a 3 day training with our International Working Group members, and members from our affiliate organizations, on digital campaigning and advocacy in June. This training gave an in depth explanation of how to organize online as organizations striving for change, which was essential for us all to learn in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

and everyone moving online to carry out their campaigns and advocacy. These sessions were recorded and uploaded to our YouTube page to widen the reach of these trainings sessions even more. Craig also conducted a social media audit for us, in which he analysed our impact online, on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages, and gave us guidance on where to improve.

The report from this audit came at the perfect time, as we had just taken on our new Communications Officers and they could align their strategy with these recommendations. It also laid the groundwork for beginning to track the analytics of our pages, which Ruby has been doing tracking since.

We engaged in a number of online global campaigns, with a digital campaign for International Overdose Awareness Day that consisted of a successful photovoice campaign that included pictures that our IWG members submitted with a story as to why this day is important to them.

**THIS YEAR, WE HAVE POSTED 25 BLOGS, 3 BLOGS IN SPANISH, AND 4 STATEMENTS, SENT 4 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS, POSTED 6 YOUTUBE VIDEOS, MORE THAN 60 INSTAGRAM POSTS ON THE GENERAL YOUTH RISE PAGE, AND MORE THAN 15 ON THE LATINX PAGE, MORE THAN 150 TWEETS, AND MORE THAN 180 FACEBOOK POSTS.**

We also created a video for our campaign for International Drug User's Day, that showed images of our members holding up signs stating that they are 'not just a statistic', with the aim of advocating for young people who use drugs rights to be upheld and their needs met, and not just used as statistics in the War on Drugs.

During the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which our members attended, we posted 5 blogs, detailing all relevant information from the conference, particularly relevant to young people who use drugs. We also took part in the International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD) online campaign titled #PeersInThePandemic, posting daily in line with their campaign guide. Some of our successes this year with our reach and engagement on our social media pages include, our growth in followers across our platforms.

**WITH OUR FOLLOWERS ON OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE MORE THAN DOUBLED FROM MARCH TO DECEMBER, WITH 200 FOLLOWERS IN MARCH AND MORE THAN 570 IN NOVEMBER. ON FACEBOOK, OUR PAGE LIKES INCREASED FROM 4,080 IN JANUARY, TO 4,168 IN NOVEMBER, AND OUR FOLLOWERS AND ENGAGEMENT GREW SIGNIFICANTLY ON TWITTER.**



To finish up this years advocacy online, Beatrix and Ruby have produced a video for World AIDS Day, building on the video we created for the same day 4 years ago, with current statistics and concerns for young people who use drugs in regards HIV/AIDS, and highlighting the lack of improvement since the creation of the original video in the prevention of HIV/AIDS amongst this key population. We also have created a video version of this Annual Report, with clips from the various panels we took part on online, and introductions from each International Working Group members.

## OTHER ROBERT CARR FUND PROJECTS

Our two main budgets for this year have come as the second year of a three-year budget cycle with the » **ROBERT CARR FUND FOR CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS**, as part of the 4Youth and Harm Reduction Consortia.

## TripApp

TripApp is a project initially developed as a partnership between » **YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS FOR DRUG ACTION (YODA)** and » **NEWNET** through an Erasmus grant.

TRIPAPP CURRENTLY MAPS **3000+ HARM REDUCTION SERVICES IN 15+ COUNTRIES** AND IS AVAILABLE IN 15 LANGUAGES.



We are currently working on making it easier to upload new services, to update existing services and to link websites to the service database. In 2021, we will be aiming to map as many harm reduction services as possible. In the future, we will be working on a service evaluation function and adding new languages (including right-to-left languages like Urdu).

## Youth RISE Academy

Youth RISE Academy is an e-learning platform we have been working on as part of the 4 Youth Consortium to create a number of online modules, available in different languages, on a number of topics related to harm reduction, advocacy, and public health and human rights.

The screenshot shows the Youth RISE Academy website interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the 'YOUTH RISE ACADEMY' logo on the left and navigation links for 'All courses', 'Members', 'Groups', 'Blogs', and 'English' on the right. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Introduction to harm reduction'. Under this title, there is a section labeled 'Course Content' with a blue 'Expand All' button. The course content is listed in three rows, each with a circular icon, the topic name, the number of quizzes, and an 'Expand' button:

Topic	Quizzes	Action
Models of drug use	1 Quiz	Expand
Drugs and their effects	1 Quiz	Expand
Routes of Administration	1 Quiz	Expand

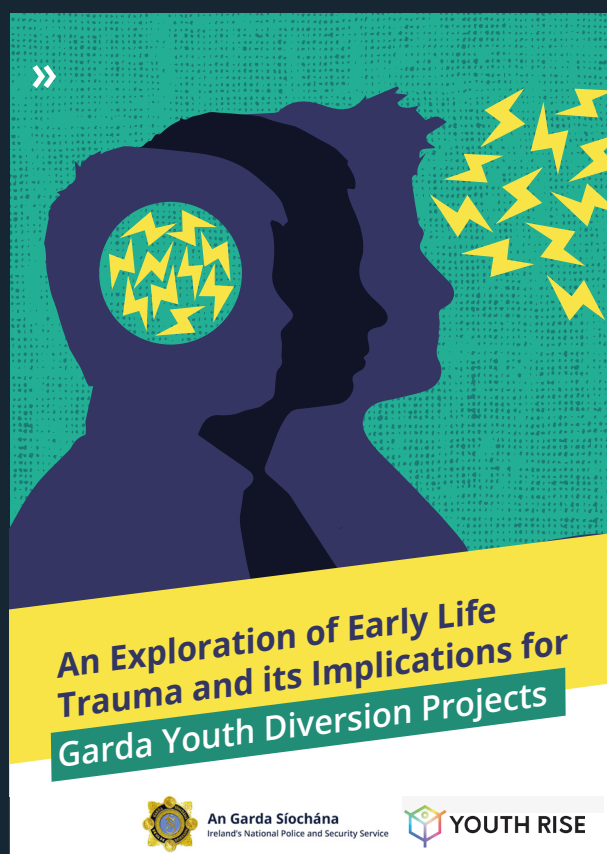
The modules will be available in a number of different languages with the harm reduction modules being completed and piloted this year and the advocacy, and public health and human rights modules being piloted next year. We are starting piloting in India, Nepal, Peru and Argentina with over 100 pilot users.

THE MODULES ON HARM REDUCTION ARE MODELS OF DRUG USE, DRUGS AND THEIR EFFECT, ROUTES OF ADMINISTRATION, DRUG RELATED EMERGENCIES AND HARM REDUCTION WITH CONTENT RANGING FROM BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT DRUGS TO DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE HARMS ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT METHODS OF TAKING DRUGS AS WELL AS HOW TO PREVENT THESE HARMS. THE ELEARNING PLATFORM WILL ALSO FACILITATE SOCIAL LEARNING WITH LEARNERS BEING ABLE **TO ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER THROUGH FORUMS AND DIRECT MESSAGING.**

## » Trauma Informed Policing Report

On the 27th November, research co-funded by Youth RISE and the **» GARDA YOUTH DIVERSION BUREAU,** which runs the Irish police's Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs), was launched. The research was conducted by **» QUALITY MATTERS** and **» UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK'S SCHOOL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY** and aimed to understand how trauma affects young people engaging with GYDPs with a view to improving services in the long term.

A majority of over 100 young people interacting with GYDPs were found to have four or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). This is far higher than the general population and is more similar to the profile of people accessing homeless services in other research. People from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas were also found to have a higher number of ACEs as has been reported elsewhere. The report provides further evidence for a move towards trauma-informed policing and a greater focus on addressing socioeconomic disadvantage to improve health and community safety.





## GLOBAL FUND PROJECTS

### PROJECT "COUNT ME IN", SUPPORTED BY THE GLOBAL FUND COMMUNITY RIGHTS AND GENDER SPECIAL INITIATIVE

The aim of the project is to create an enabling and empowering environment in the selected countries to promote the involvement of Young Key Affected Populations in the

» GLOBAL FUND processes at country level.

In 2020, Youth RISE supported 3 countries in the project "Count Me In": Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova.

## Pakistan

The organization **Social Sangat** received training and a small grant in 2019 for activities to promote Young Key Affected Populations involvement in the national process of the Global Fund. Most of the activities were completed in 2019, however in January 2020 a dialogue was organized with Young Key Affected Populations, youth activists, human rights defenders, government officials and legislators to share the issues of Young Key Affected Populations and discuss possible policies to protect the rights of Young Key Affected Populations. Members of Y+ Pakistan provided written recommendations which were discussed among all stakeholders.

#### THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS WERE:

**1. Need to prevent and respond to  
violence against YKPs;**

**2. Need to address stigma and  
discrimination;**

### 3. Need for comprehensive sexual health education, and sexual and reproductive health services.

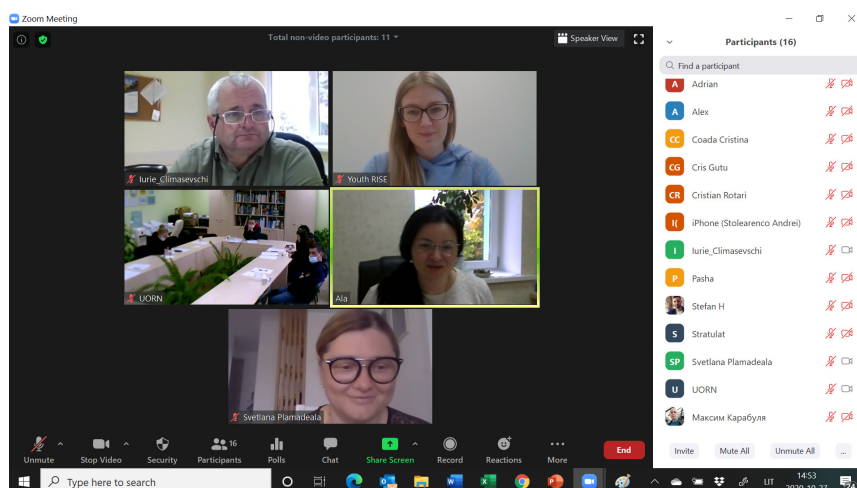
### 4. Need for youth-friendly law and policy implementation.

Legislators promised to discuss the issues, needs and recommendations of young people in the upcoming constitutional assembly sessions and will work to ensure they are included in policies. However, they expressed the constraints and pressure they are faced with from religious influencers who make it very difficult, in an Islamic Republic, to discuss the rights of Young Key Affected Populations.

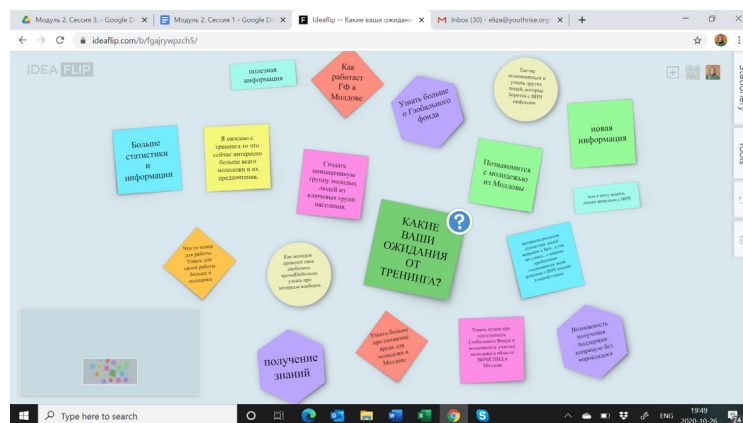
## Moldova and Kyrgyzstan

In collaboration with local partners (**Union for HIV Prevention and Harm Reduction** in Moldova and **Harm Reduction Network** in Kyrgyzstan) Youth RISE carried out two capacity building workshops based on the “Count Me In: A Training Manual to Capacitate Young People to Engage on the Global Fund Processes” developed by **Youth LEAD** with support from the **Global Fund Community Rights Gender - Strategic Initiative**. The workshops were aimed at strengthening the participants’ level of understanding about the national HIV epidemic and response, as well as the Global Fund structures, funding model and more. Both workshops were the first of their kind in each country.

In Moldova, sixteen participants joined from different Young Key Affected Populations including young people who use or inject drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men and young people living with HIV joined an online workshop over four days in October and November.



For the first time, these young people had the opportunity to interact with representatives in the field who spoke to them about the importance of Young Key Affected Populations involvement in the country-level processes. **On the last day of the training, a work plan for the small grant to be completed by the end of January 2021 with the following activities was developed:**



**Analysis of the needs of young people from groups at increased risk of HIV infection and living with HIV in the context of the implementation of harm reduction programmes and psycho-social support programmes as part of the National Programme on Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and STIs for 2021-2025;**

**Presentation to the CCM HIV/AIDS working group the results of the above analysis;**

**Development of an appeal on the role and needs of young people in the context of HIV/AIDS to members of the CCM members and the coordinator of the National Programme on Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and STIs for 2021-2025.**



In Kyrgyzstan, twenty-one participants from different Young Key Affected Populations, including young people who use or inject drugs, sex workers, young LGBTQI+ people and young people living with HIV, joined a two day workshop in October. During the training, the participants analyzed the local response to the HIV epidemic and created an initiative group of Young Key Affected Populations in Kyrgyzstan.



Participants also developed a workplan and budget for a small grant to be completed in January 2021 with the following activities:

**Development of a 'Youth Ask Statement' with key issues related to YKPs and recommendations how they can be overcome these issues;**

**Analysis of NPS & HIV among YKPs in one particular area in Kyrgyzstan. As well to prepare a report with results and recommendations, which will be presented to key stakeholders to include these recommendations into the National Strategic Plan on HIV;**

**Organization of a dialogue with key stakeholders to present results of the analysis, as well to launch the youth initiative group.**





THE “COUNT ME IN” YOUTH CONSORTIUM, CONSISTING OF YOUTH LEAD, Y+GLOBAL AND YOUTH RISE, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GLOBAL FUND YOUTH COUNCIL AND WITH SUPPORT FROM THE GLOBAL FUND CRG DEPARTMENT HELD 3 CONSULTATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CENTERED AROUND THE UPCOMING GLOBAL FUND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN EECA AND LAC REGION.

As more young people are being affected by AIDS, TB, and Malaria, it is imperative that young people’s voices are heard and incorporated into the next Global Fund Strategy. The consultation focused on The Global Fund’s engagement with young people in terms of global health security, Universal Health Coverage, programming, human rights, and partnerships. In EECA region 30 participants took part and in the LAC region the consultation was held with 23 participants.

The objectives of the consultation were to gain a diverse youth perspective on the thematic areas for the Global Fund Strategy development and to integrate the reports from the regional Global Fund Youth Strategy consultations into a final youth statement for the Global Fund Strategy development.

## CONSORTIUM PARTNERS



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