

CRUCIAL ROLE OF COMMUNITY VOICE

What is Community Expertise?



Community Expertise is the knowledge and understanding that people have of what it's like to live in their community and of the impact the drugs problem is having on people's lives and on their quality of life.

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG POLICY

The EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs has produced a ***Document on Quality Standards for Civil Society Involvement In Drug Policy*** which sets out this key principle of EU Drug Policy

“Involving civil society is not a cherry-picking and box-ticking exercise and it should not be used to rubber stamp decisions. The autonomy and right of dissent of civil society actors is an essential and integral part of meaningful engagement in democracies and should be both expected and respected as part of the process. The purpose of dissent is to ensure that policy is informed by views and experiences that are wider than those of the state actors alone and it should be seen in this light as a constructive contribution to the policy-making process.”

ADDRESSING LINKS BETWEEN DRUGS AND POVERTY



Rabbin Report 1996

There is a high correlation between the areas where the problem is most acute and the areas which have been designated, on the basis of objective criteria, as economically and socially disadvantaged



Trutz Haas report for Dept of Health 2016

The analysis presented confirms the existence of a strong 'social gradient' in relation to problem drug use



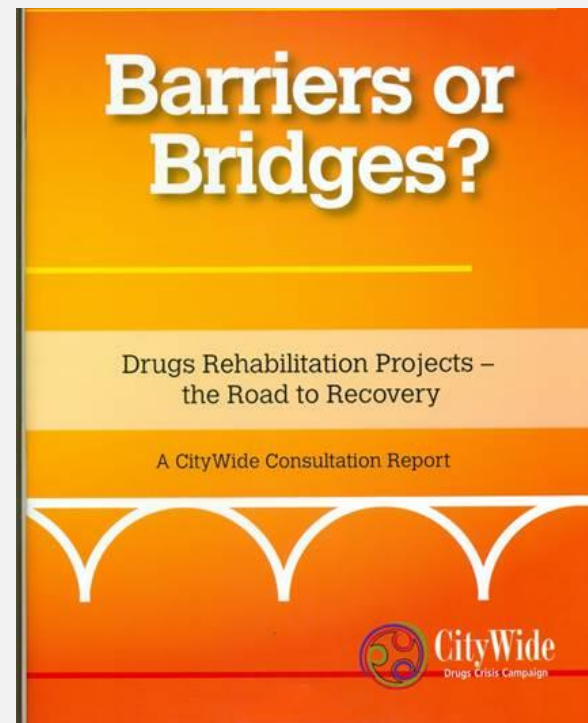
We hope that the Citizen's Assembly will also provide an opportunity to look at the evidence of the strong and persistent link between serious drug problems and poverty, and the impact of those problems on the poorest communities, and to consider how the National Drugs Strategy can be part of a broader societal response to addressing poverty, inequality and marginalisation

CW Submission to Mid-Term Review March 2021

RECOGNISING ROLE OF COMMUNITY DRUG PROJECTS



Community Drug Projects: Responding to drug-related harms from a community development approach
2020 Citywide report by Dr Aileen O’Gorman,



2014 Barriers or Bridges? Drugs Rehabilitation Projects – the Road to Recovery

RECOGNISING ROLE OF COMMUNITY DRUG PROJECTS

CityWide
Drugs Crisis Campaign



**Support
&
Future**



Citywide Videos 2014
**The value of Community Drug Rehab
Projects**

CityWide
Drugs Crisis Campaign



**Lifelines
&
Value**

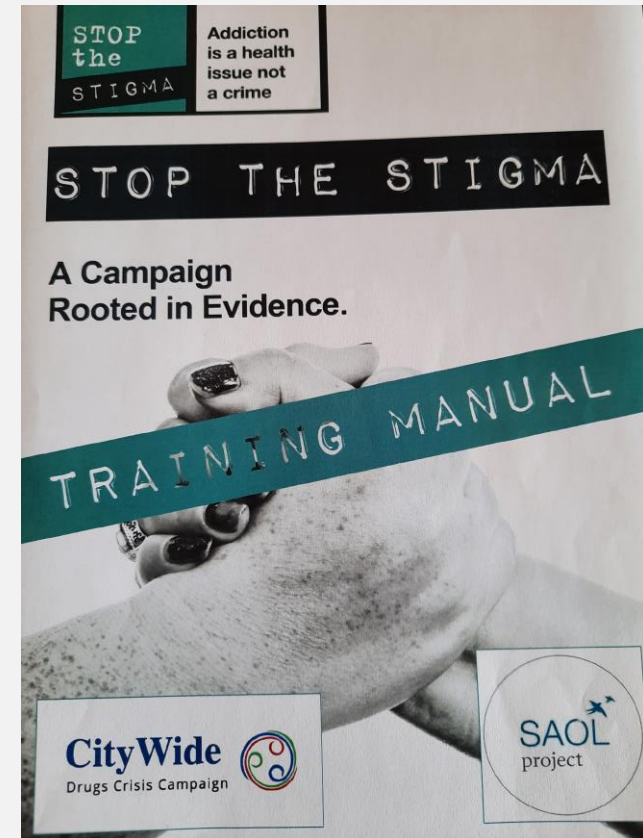


#Citywide25

INVESTING IN NATIONAL ANTI-STIGMA CAMPAIGN

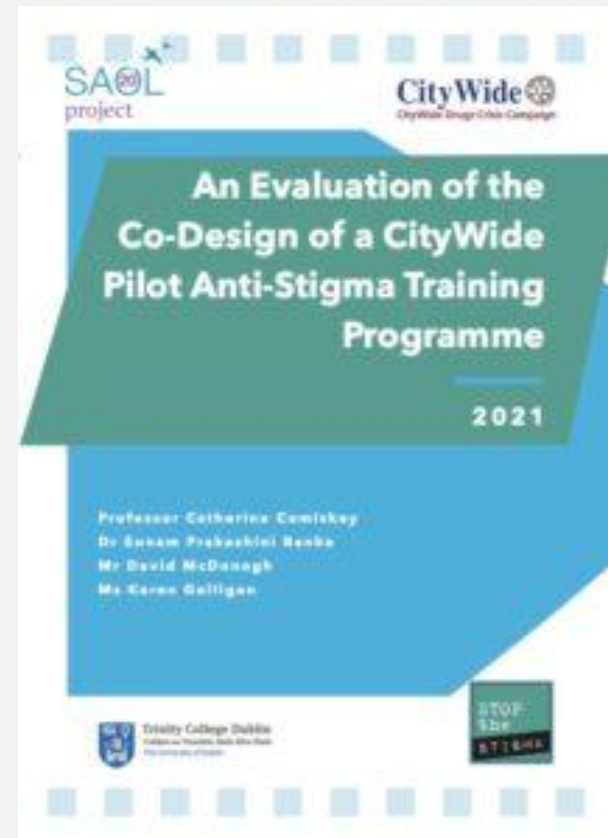


**Addiction
is a health
issue not
a crime**



#Citywide25

ANTI-STIGMA COLLABORATION



REMOVING CRIMINAL SANCTIONS

Between 1996 and 2020 *more than a quarter of a million (257,765) recorded crimes for possession of drugs for personal use*



Decriminalisation: A New Direction for Drugs Policy?

Is there a difference between decriminalisation and legalisation?

YES. By **decriminalising** drugs, a person found in possession of drugs for **personal use** would not be given a criminal conviction.

Instead, depending on the circumstance they could be given a warning, a fine or be directed to drug awareness classes or to drug treatment, etc.

However, in cases where a person was found to be selling or importing drugs, or engaged in theft, assault, intimidation, smuggling, trafficking or dealing etc they would still be prosecuted under the criminal justice system.

This is entirely different to the concept of **'legalising'** drugs, where using, buying, importing and selling drugs would be regulated by the state in the same way as alcohol and tobacco.

What are the impacts of being convicted for personal drug use?

Current Irish law does not recognise a point at which an adult offender's debt to society has been paid. This means that a person carries a conviction for their whole life.

The sentence imposed by a court (whether a fine, community service or imprisonment) will be completed at some point, but the conviction and, in particular, the requirement to disclose it, never lapses.

Having a criminal conviction for drug use can stop a person being allowed to travel, get a visa, gain employment, access training and to get insurance.

Does decriminalisation increase drug use?

There is **NO** evidence that decriminalisation increases drug use.

In fact some countries such as Portugal have seen a **reduction** in the number of problematic drug users rather than an increase since they decriminalised drugs, while others have seen no change in the levels of drug use.

1. Drenth, J. D. Drug Decriminalisation in Portugal – Lessons For Creating Fair And Sustainable Drug Policies. Washington DC: Data Institute, 2008.



FAQ Decriminalisation of Drug Use

What is decriminalisation?

What decriminalisation means is that a person found in possession of drugs for personal use will **no longer be treated as a criminal** or given a criminal conviction, although administrative or civil sanctions may apply, and will instead be referred to appropriate health and social services.

Is decriminalisation the same as legalisation?

NO. Decriminalisation is not legalisation. With decriminalisation, the individual drug user and their use of a drug is no longer treated as a criminal offence, but the drugs trade remains illegal and subject to criminal law and its drug that is currently legal to trade legally.

Will a decriminalisation policy lead to a reduction of drug levels?

PROBABLY. Under the current Misuse of Drugs Act 1987 it is a criminal offence to possess, produce, sell or supply drugs that are listed in the Act and substance abuse. Decriminalisation means the current law would be changed so that having drugs in your possession for personal use would no longer be treated as a criminal offence, non-administrative sanctions can be applied instead. Possession of drugs for sale or supply will remain a criminal offence.

Will decriminalisation help reduce the health risks associated with street drug use?

YES. The evidence indicates that decriminalisation helps reduce the health risks associated with drug use by shifting the focus to a health-led rather than a criminal justice approach. This encourages and enables drug users to access drug treatment, which is in line with our current National Drug Strategy Recovery Plan – Supporting Recovery.

Will decriminalisation lead to an increase or decrease in drug use?

NO. There have been 22,000,000 users in Ireland, 2018. It is not clear if drug use has increased across the many countries that have brought in decriminalisation and major national and international bodies have found no link between the severity of punishment and the level of drug use in society.

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) states, "There is **no evidence** that increased punitive enforcement and harsh levels of drug use have increased decriminalisation or **are** associated with increased use."
- In its 2014 policy paper on Drugs, International Comparison, the UK Home Office found that, "Looking across different countries, there is **no significant correlation** between the toughness of a country's approach and the prevalence of adult drug use."



EMPOWERED BY THE COMPLETED POLICE OFFICER AND

EMPOWERED BY THE COMPLETED POLICE OFFICER AND

EMPOWERED BY THE COMPLETED POLICE OFFICER AND

EMPOWERED BY THE COMPLETED POLICE OFFICER AND

Citywide Submissions on Decriminalisation

2015

2018

2019

REMOVING CRIMINAL SANCTIONS

CityWide
Drugs Crisis Campaign



**Crime &
Punishment**



Citywide video 2014

War on Drugs debate 2015

