



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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Who We Are and What We Do



Youth RISE (Resources, Information, Support and Education) mobilizes youth to be engaged in **full-spectrum harm reduction** and drug policy reform to promote health and human rights.

We were founded in 2006 with the help of IHRA (now known as Harm Reduction International), and officially launched at the International Harm Reduction Conference in Vancouver, Canada. Youth RISE was started by two visionary, young people who recognized the absence of youth having a voice and a seat at the table in the drug policy and harm reduction arena, so they led the charge to fill the gap.

Since launching, the network has coordinated youth participation and activities in major international conferences, participated in numerous committees, meetings and advisories, and ran training sessions around the world while producing resources focusing on drug policy/harm reduction and young people. Youth RISE now assumes a leadership role in advocating for the empowerment of young people who use drugs and their meaningful engagement in drug policy discussions and decisions and the reform of drug policies for the best interests of young people globally.

OUR VISION

Youth RISE envisions a world in which young people benefit from drug policies and practices based on evidence and human rights, as well as being valued, active partners in the political process on the local, regional, and international levels.

OUR MISSION

Our work aims to amplify, maximise, and centre priorities of young people who use drugs and young people affected by drug policies and full-spectrum harm reduction at local, regional and international levels through coalition building, advocacy, and evidence gathering.

OUR ADDED VALUE

We draw upon a wealth of diverse and intersectional youth experiences and narratives through its international working group members in different regions worldwide. Youth RISE brings a rich legacy of amplifying these voices at various forums – whether at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, high-level discussions, or working groups for technical guidelines affecting young people who use drugs. At all of these forums and more, Youth RISE has centred issues related to age-related barriers to accessing healthcare and harm reduction services, the non-existence of youth-friendly harm reduction services, poor access to objective information on drugs and drug use, and the multilayered harms of criminalisation, leading the way for future advocates and activists on drug policy and inequality.

Note from Executive Directors



As 2022 was my last year in Youth RISE, I would be remiss not to start by thanking all of the amazing people who I had the pleasure of working with in my four years as an IWG, Communications Officer, and finally Executive Director of Youth RISE. I am eternally grateful for the impactful work we were able to do together and the many incredible opportunities I have been provided with. 2022 saw the organization further grow in the midst of the pandemic, brought together through little more than zoom calls and emails, and continuing our work together as a wonderful international team. We have also seen the further strengthening of our connections with partners such as the Women and Harm Reduction International Network and of our advocacy efforts on multiple fronts. Throughout the year we kept the message of Full Spectrum Harm Reduction to the fore - working to represent the community of young people who use drugs in all of our diversity through an intersectional lens. As I now look on from the outside at the fantastic work being done by all in Youth RISE, under the guidance of Ruby, despite all of the difficulties, I am beaming with pride at all of their achievements and I know that Youth RISE will continue to thrive long into the future. Grá mór millteach, with love.

Ailish Brennan, former Executive Director



It was an honour to take on the role of Interim Executive Director of Youth RISE in May 2022. Having been part of the organisation since early 2020, and in the position of International Communications & Advocacy Officer for most of that time, I have seen Youth RISE grow under the leadership of Ailish. It was essential to me that we honour her work by continuing to take Youth RISE to the next level, to effectively work towards our mission and vision statements, and strengthen the organisation. From registering as an NGO in Ireland at the beginning of the year, to becoming fully financially independent, and at the same time making impact worldwide with our projects centring the priorities of young people who use drugs, Youth RISE exceeded expectations. I am so proud of the Management Team and our International Working Group members for pushing through challenging times and remaining as passionate as ever to ensure that we make positive change for all young people who use drugs.

Ruby Lawlor, Executive Director

Summary of Activities in 2022

In 2022, Youth RISE made significant strides in our mission to promote evidence-based drug policies and foster meaningful youth participation in harm reduction practices. Through innovative research, informative webinars, and participation in prestigious conferences, we contributed valuable insights and practical guidance to the field. Our publications addressed pressing issues, including the challenges faced by young sex workers who use drugs, the importance of decriminalization, and the intersection of drug use and mental health. By equipping young advocates with knowledge and skills, Youth RISE empowered them to engage in drug policy reform and advocate for positive change. Our active involvement in international events underscored our commitment to youth inclusion and the advancement of harm reduction efforts. The achievements made in 2022 demonstrate our dedication to evidence-based approaches and the positive impact we can have in promoting progressive drug policies and improving the well-being of young people.

Youth RISE continued to work towards its mission of promoting evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction practices through meaningful youth participation. The organization was able to achieve significant milestones and carry out impactful activities throughout the year.

One of the major activities carried out by Youth RISE in 2022 was the development and launch of our research on and by young sex workers who use drugs. The document "Young Sex Workers Who Use Drugs: Understanding the Intersection of Identities and Needs" aimed to understand the experiences of young sex workers who use drugs and the unique challenges they face. The research sheds light on how young sex workers who use drugs often experience multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization, including stigma, violence, and criminalization. The research emphasized the need for a harm reduction approach that prioritizes the health and well-being of young sex workers who use drugs and calls for the decriminalization of sex work and drug use.

In addition, Youth RISE also carried out a series of webinars and online training series on various topics related to harm reduction and drug policy. Our series "Train the Trainer" provided onsite regional training on access to justice and international online workshops on harm reduction. The series touched upon topics such as access to justice for young people and other inadequately served populations and equipped attendants to become trained members that could pass on their knowledge to their community peers. Additionally, our participation in the Erasmus+ EU Drug Policy Training & Strategy Series for Young People allowed us to equip young people with a deeper understanding of drug policies and advocacy strategies on a regional scale. These webinars and training sessions were designed to increase the knowledge and skills of young harm reduction advocates and provide them with a platform to share their experiences and ideas.

In 2022, we also developed and published a comprehensive list of resources specially developed to equip and empower young people. The handbook “Making Politics Work for Young People” provides a guide on how to conduct drug policy reform and harm reduction advocacy with decision-makers as a young person. The publication “Accessing Illegal Hormones” provides information and guidance for transgender and gender-diverse people who are accessing illegal hormone therapy, offering practical advice on how to access safe and affordable hormone therapy, as well as how to reduce the risks associated with illegal hormone use. The resource “Harm Reduction Services for Young People” summarized recommendations for harm reduction service providers who are willing to engage with and provide services to young people who inject drugs, offering practical guidance on how to develop harm reduction services that are tailored to the needs of young people, including the provision of needle and syringe programs, overdose prevention, and drug treatment services. Finally, the toolkit “Drugs and Mental Health”, a project initiated in 2021 and fully concretized in 2022, explores the relationship between drug use and mental health, providing an overview of the common mental health issues that are associated with drug use, as well as practical advice on how to manage these issues. It also explores the ways in which drug policies can impact mental health outcomes for people who use drugs.

The publications developed by Youth RISE in 2022 provide valuable insights and practical guidance on a range of issues related to drug use, harm reduction, and drug policy. They offer evidence-based recommendations for harm reduction service providers, people who use drugs, and policymakers, and contribute to the ongoing conversation around drug policy reform and harm reduction efforts.

Furthermore, Youth RISE continued to participate in various international conferences and events related to drug policy and harm reduction. In 2022, the organization was able to participate in the virtual meeting of the 65th session Commission on Narcotic Drugs, where it was able to share its experiences and advocate for youth inclusion in drug policy discussions.

Overall, Youth RISE achieved significant progress in its mission to promote evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction practices through meaningful youth participation. The organization was able to develop and disseminate important resources for young harm reduction advocates, increase the knowledge and skills of its members, and advocate for youth inclusion in international drug policy discussions.

Youth RISE is funded by:



Youth RISE Organisational Development

Youth RISE underwent significant changes in 2022, which have contributed not only to the accomplishment of a productive year but also to the sustainability of the organizational operations in the long term. Overall, 2022 was a year of significant growth and change for Youth RISE. We are proud of the hard work and dedication of our team, which has positioned the organization for continued success in the future.

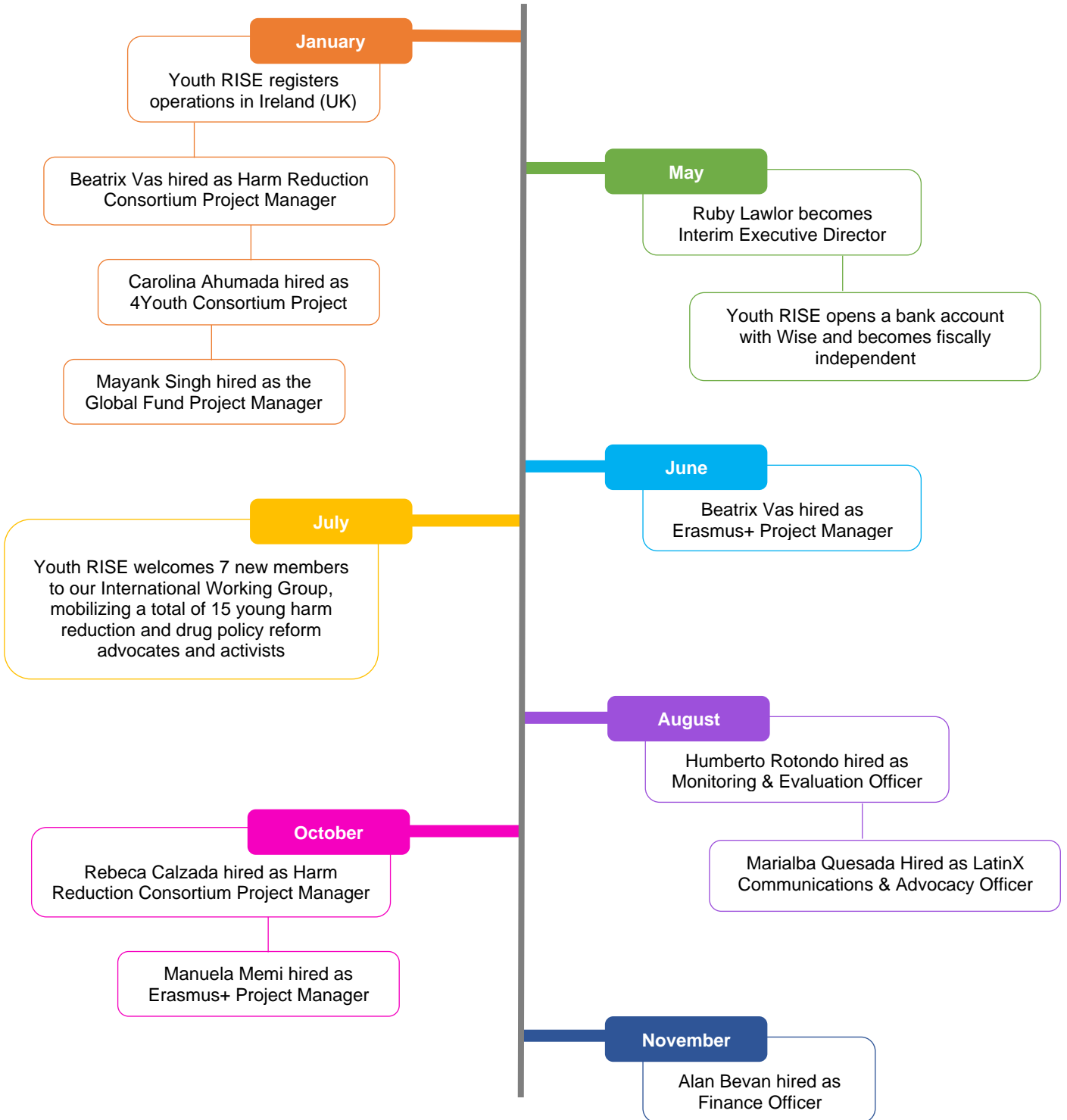
After a successful mandate, Ailish Brennan stepped down from the position of Executive Director in May 2022. We would like to thank Ailish for her tireless work and leadership, which have laid the foundations for the continuation of our work this year. International Communications & Advocacy Officer Ruby Lawlor was appointed Interim Executive Director and undertook both roles with dedication and commitment throughout 2022. In the beginning of 2023, she fully took over the position of Executive Director and stepped down from the position of communications officer.

We are proud to have achieved financial independence, moving away from being fiscally hosted by YODA. We registered in Ireland on January 4, 2022, and worked on setting up a bank account. Our first financial manager was hired in late 2021 to facilitate this process. Creating a bank account in Ireland presented unforeseen difficulties, with banks overwhelmed and less likely to take on non-profit organizations. In May, we shifted our focus to online banks, successfully obtaining a bank account with WISE (formerly TransferWise). While there were initial challenges in understanding how non-profits operate with grants and donor funding, our former Finance Officer, Ross Paterson, and the rest of the team, under

Ruby's guidance, successfully navigated these challenges. To ensure alignment and transparency in how payments were made, the team also finalized our Financial Manual and created our Payment Process Guideline.

In 2022, our organizational management evolved. We implemented weekly management meetings and a reporting system. Our management team was expanded as we welcomed new hires who assumed key roles throughout the year. Beatrix Vas, Carolina Ahumada, and Mayank Singh were hired at the beginning of 2022 to take on the Project Manager positions for the Harm Reduction Consortium, 4Youth Consortium, and Global Fund Consortium. In June, Beatrix Vas also took on the new Erasmus+ Project Management position. In August, we hired a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Humberto Rotondo, and a LatinX Communications & Advocacy Officer, Marialba Quesada. In October we hired Manuela Memi to take over as Erasmus+ Project Manager and hired Rebeca Calzada to take over the Harm Reduction Consortium Project Manager position. Finally, in November 2022, we also hired a new Finance Officer Alan Bevan to continue the great work previously initiated by Ross Paterson.

Management Evolution Timeline



The significant and successful growth in our governance structure would not have been possible without the active guidance from our Board of Directors. Throughout the year, three Board Meetings were held, with all members of the Management Team and one International Working Group representative in attendance. These meetings have provided the management team with invaluable knowledge and practical advice for the development of our work.

Our International Working Group also saw growth in 2022, mobilising a team of 15 young and motivated advocates. Youth RISE's International Working Group (IWG) brings together young advocates, young people who use drugs and young people affected by drug policy from around the world who act as a liaison between the most affected populations and the international community. We welcomed seven new members, including André Gomes from Portugal (living in the UK), Amine Gahfez from Algeria, Kasparas Vasiliauskas from Lithuania, Rebeca Marques Rocha from Brazil (living in Austria) and Sara Monsalvo from Mexico.

As we look back on the past year, we at Youth RISE are deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our generous sponsors from the [Robert Carr Fund](#), the [Global Fund](#), and the [European Commission](#). Your financial support has enabled us to conduct ground-breaking research, develop innovative programs and initiatives, and advocate for policies that support the health and rights of young people who use drugs.

We would also like to thank our partner organizations who have collaborated and supported us throughout this last year. We

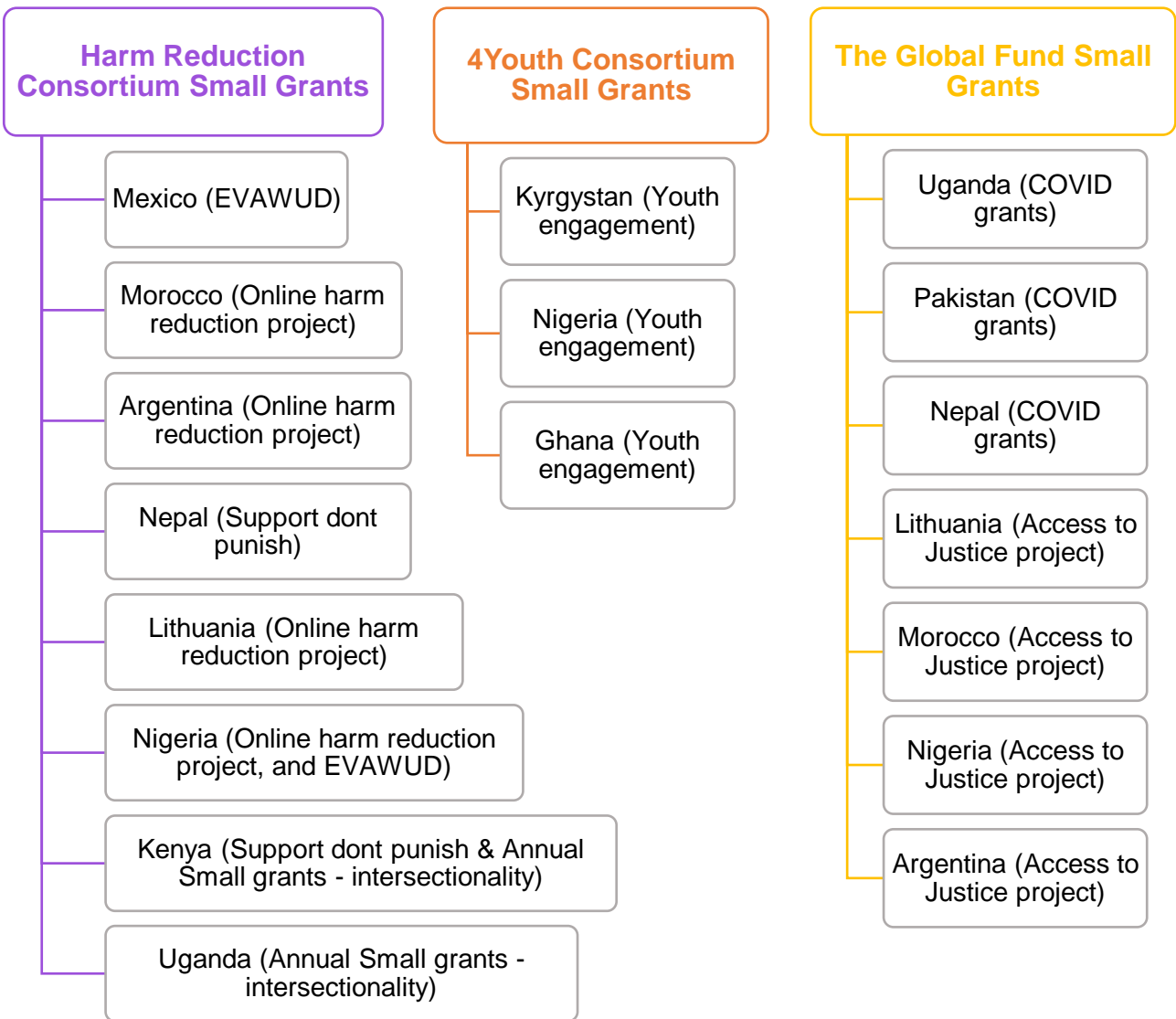
are grateful to all of the organizations from the Harm Reduction Consortium, which brings together the leading international and regional harm reduction, drug policy and drug user networks: International Drug Policy Consortium ([IDPC](#)) (lead organization), Eurasian Harm Reduction Association ([EHRA](#)), Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs ([ENPUD](#)), European Network of People who Use Drugs ([EuroNPUD](#)), Harm Reduction International ([HRI](#)), Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association ([MENAHRRA](#)), Middle East and North Africa Network of People who Use Drugs ([MENANPUD](#)), Women and Harm Reduction International Network ([WHRIN](#)). With your support, we have been able to expand our reach and impact, providing critical services and resources to young people around the world.

We are also thankful to our peers from the 4Youth Consortium - [Youth LEAD](#), [Y-PEER](#) and [Y+ Global](#) - who have tirelessly worked with us to promote the rights and health of young people while also advocating for evidence-based policies focusing on HIV awareness and prevention. Finally, a special thank you goes to our colleagues from [Support Don't Punish](#) and [Students for Sensible Drug Policy International \(SSDP\)](#). Your commitment to our mission of promoting the health, rights, and well-being of young people who use drugs has been essential in helping us to achieve our goals.

Overall, 2022 was a year of significant growth and change for Youth RISE. We are proud of the hard work and dedication of our team, which has positioned the organization for continued success in the future.

Small Grants in 2022

In 2022, Youth RISE continued to work towards its commitment to strengthening and supporting International Working Group member’s organizations. A total of 20 small grants were distributed to 11 organizations from 11 countries. Our partners and members have shown a strong sense of cooperation working as a team to overcome challenges and deliver fantastic work worldwide. We are happy to share these achievements and hope you will also be inspired by the wonderful work of our colleagues. The Small Grants program is funded by the Robert Carr Fund and the Global Fund.



Supporting Youth-led Networks to enhance engagement in Global Fund Processes



Youth RISE is committed to supporting youth-led networks to enhance their engagement in Global Fund processes. Over the past year, our efforts have focused on empowering young people to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities. Our Project Manager Mayank Singh, has led this work, providing technical assistance and capacity-building opportunities to enable youth-led networks to advocate for their priorities and to ensure their voices are heard. Through the distribution of small grants, we have seen a significant increase in the number of youth-led networks participating in Global Fund processes, and their input has led to more inclusive and effective programming. As we move forward, we remain committed to strengthening the capacity of youth-led networks to promote greater youth engagement in Global Fund processes and to build a better future for all.



Mayank is a young researcher and advocate who works to support and promote youth centered programs and policies, with a specific focus on drugs and people who inject drugs in India. His academic background includes sociology, anthropology, and folklore studies.

GHANA

- **Participants:** 30
- **Activity date:** 26-28 January 2023
- **Location:** Accra, Ghana
- **Grantee:** [Network of Young Key Populations](#)

Our small grants program supported the youth-led Network of Young Key Populations in Accra, Ghana. In collaboration with Y+ Global, this engagement contributed to the successful and unprecedented inclusion of young people in the Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM)

dialogues. The initiative ensured the participation of **30 young people** in the National Strategic Plan's review and writing process. Ultimately, it enhanced the capacity of this population to participate more meaningfully in national dialogues and processes related to the Global Fund.

Activities developed:

1. Organized one day workshop to review data on the Global Fund's New Funding Model 3 (NFM3) to inform the New Funding Model 4 (NFM4) engagements by setting up a priority of non-inclusion of young people in the country dialogues.
2. Organized one-day consultation on NFM4 and developed priorities and key ask by supporting 30 YPLHIV/YKP in the NFM4 country dialogue process. This activity helped the network to achieve two slots in the national country dialogue and proposal-making for NFM4.
3. Engagement contributed to the successful inclusion of young people for the first time in a CCM seemed to be receptive - endorsing and even attending community consultations,

facilitating communication between policy representatives and communities, and ensuring meaningful participation and inclusion of young people in their diversity.

4. CCM vice-chair and executive secretary showed solidarity and commitment towards young people and agreed to provide two slots for the young key population during NFM4 Country Dialogue.

We would like to thank the partners who collaborated with us in the organization of this activity: [WAPCAS \(PR\)](#), [Stop TB Partnership Ghana](#), [Coalition of NGOs in Health](#), [Ghana Prevention Coalition](#), [ProLink Ghana \(SR\)](#), [Ghana Aids Commission](#), [CCM Ghana](#), [UNAIDS](#), [National AIDS Control Program](#).



NIGERIA

- **Participants:** 18
- **Activity date:** 1-2 September 2022
- **Location:** Abuja, Nigeria
- **Grantee:** Youth RISE Nigeria and The Youth Network on HIV/AIDS (NYNETHA)

Our small grants program supported the organization of **two gatherings** for the Youth Consultation on National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 in Nigeria, which gathered participants from different Youth-led Organizations. Together, they developed guidelines to support Global Fund processes.

The first consultation was devoted to helping participants understand the Global Fund processes to ensure quality representation in the CCM, the feedback mechanisms, and accountability guidelines. The meeting lasted a total of two days, from September 1-2. At the end, participants elected the representatives for the youth constituency seat on the CCM dialogues.

Overall, the meeting contributed to promoting a better understanding of how the Global Fund operates, its architecture,

the roles of the CCM, and the opportunities available for young people to engage with the Global Fund processes.

In total, 79 young people participated in the election process - 51 of these stakeholders from different organizations including CCM, UNAIDS, the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, and NYNETHA. One young person from the Association of Positive Youths Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (APYIN) was elected as the alternate CCM Member of the Youth Constituency.

Y+ Global and Youth RISE collaboratively supported the resources for such meeting. The Youth Network on HIV/AIDS (NYNETHA) received technical assistance from the Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative Department of the Global Fund.



The second consultation had to be postponed due to unforeseen events, and hence it was held on 27-28 January 2023, funded directly by Youth RISE to Youth RISE Nigeria. During the occasion, another round of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) review was conducted with 34 participants, including Young Key Populations who missed out on the first review phase. This provided them with the opportunity to include comments before the finalization of the plan. It also allowed female sex workers, people who inject drugs, people living with HIV, women who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, and transgender people to review the current

Interventions package targeting their community as provided in the national HIV response, identifying the activities being implemented, highlighting available evidence and gaps, and laying out recommendations to inform the NSP review process.

We would like to thank the partners who collaborated with us in the organization of this activity ([APYIN](#), [ANAYD](#), [NYNETHA](#), [PACT](#), [Strong Enough Girls](#), [SWAG](#), [Active Voices](#), [EVA](#)) and Partners/Stakeholders across the HIV/AIDS Sector ([UNAIDS](#), [NACA](#), [NEPWHAN](#), [Stop TB Partnership](#)).

KYRGYZSTAN

- **Participants:** 15 participants
- **Activity date:** 29th December 2022
- **Location:** Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- **Grantee:** Equal-to-equal Foundation



The Equal-to-equal Foundation, in cooperation with the Association of Harm Reduction Network, developed a workshop supporting the Young Initiative Group, which gathered young people who use drugs aged 18-30. The workshop highlighted the findings from the monitoring visits conducted throughout 2022.

Outcomes of the workshop:

1. As a follow-up activity from last year, monitoring visits to assess the youth-friendliness of Harm Reduction services were further expanded by sharing the results of the monitoring visits to the Young Initiative Group and key players.
2. The workshop session focused on raising the awareness of participants

on issues and challenges among young Key Populations in Kyrgyzstan.

3. Potential future leaders and stakeholders were identified during the workshop to expand the reach of results of monitoring visits to people who use drugs across Kyrgyzstan.
4. A safe space was created for active participation in the training for further effective development of the young initiative group, following a discussion on increasing meaningful engagement in the New Funding Model 4 (NFM4) and envisioning ways for youth participation at CCM dialogues.

We would like to thank the partners who collaborated with us in the organization of this activity: Association of Harm Reduction Network, Equal-equal foundation.

Funding Internship Opportunities in the Field of Drug Policy Advocacy and Harm Reduction

Over the past year, we have continued to prioritize funding internship opportunities in the field of drug policy advocacy and harm reduction. Our investment in these opportunities has helped to build the next generation of leaders in this critical field, providing young people with the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to advance evidence-based policies that promote public health and human rights. Through these internships, participants have gained hands-on experience in a range of areas, including policy analysis, community organizing, and advocacy, and have had the opportunity to work alongside leading experts and organizations in the field. We are proud to have supported these important efforts and remain committed to investing in the future of evidence-based drug policy reform and harm reduction.

Internship at the Washington Office on Latin America



Marialba Quesada, an Afro-Latina anthropologist, focuses on drug policy, harm reduction, and rural/coastal communities. She serves as the LatinX and The Caribbean Communications and Advocacy Officer for YouthRISE, while also supporting the Osa-Golfo Dulce Institutional Program (Pi-Osa) in Costa Rica. Marialba is driven by the belief in a world where information and knowledge are accessible to everyone.

Sponsored by the Robert Carr Fund, we provided the opportunity for our Latinx Comms Officer Marialba Quesada to partake in an internship at the Washington Office on Latin America at the Women and Incarceration and Drug Policy program, between June and July 2022. During the two-month internship with WOLA, Marialba worked as an assistant to Isabella Oliver for the Drug Policy, Women and Incarceration, and Cuba Program. One of the main products of her internship was the creation and development of the storyboard for the [animation piece](#) and commentary for RIMUF/ACIFAD, a network of 7 organizations in Latin America and Spain led by women who are family members of people deprived of liberty.

We would like to thank the partners who collaborated with us and who have contributed to a fruitful learning experience during this internship opportunity: [WOLA](#), [RIMUF/ACIFAD](#).



Meetings and Advocacy

The following annual report highlights Youth RISE's activities in meetings and advocacy in 2022. Despite the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Youth RISE was able to engage in critical discussions about drug policy and related issues through virtual meetings and online events. Youth RISE was also involved in several activities aimed at breaking the stigma surrounding drug use and advocating for the protection of the rights of young people who use drugs. The report highlights Youth RISE's involvement in the Elton John AIDS Foundation Campaign, the 65th Meeting of the Commission of Narcotic Drugs, and the Support Don't Punish 2022 campaign. Finally, Youth RISE was well represented in regional drug policy debates, with the majority of our LatinX International Working Group members from 2022 participating and attending the VII Confedrogas, held in Buenos Aires, Argentine, in August 2022. We would like to thank our partners who have collaborated with us throughout the year in achieving these goals.

Elton John AIDS Foundation Campaign – “End Stigma. End AIDS”

In early 2022, Youth RISE was invited to be involved as advisory partner for the Elton John AIDS Foundation's new media campaign titled "End Stigma. End AIDS". Our Executive Director and International Communications & Advocacy Officer, Ruby Lawlor, participated in several meetings with their creative team, together with Judy Chang, from the International Network of People Who Use Drugs, and Louise Vincent from Urban Survivors Union. The goal of the campaign was to create a short

video that highlights how labels affect people who use drugs, producing and enabling stigma. The advisory team provided guidance on the imagery and the wording of the campaign, contributing to the formulation of the final message.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated for the making of a successful campaign: [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#), [INPUD](#), [Urban Survivors Union](#).

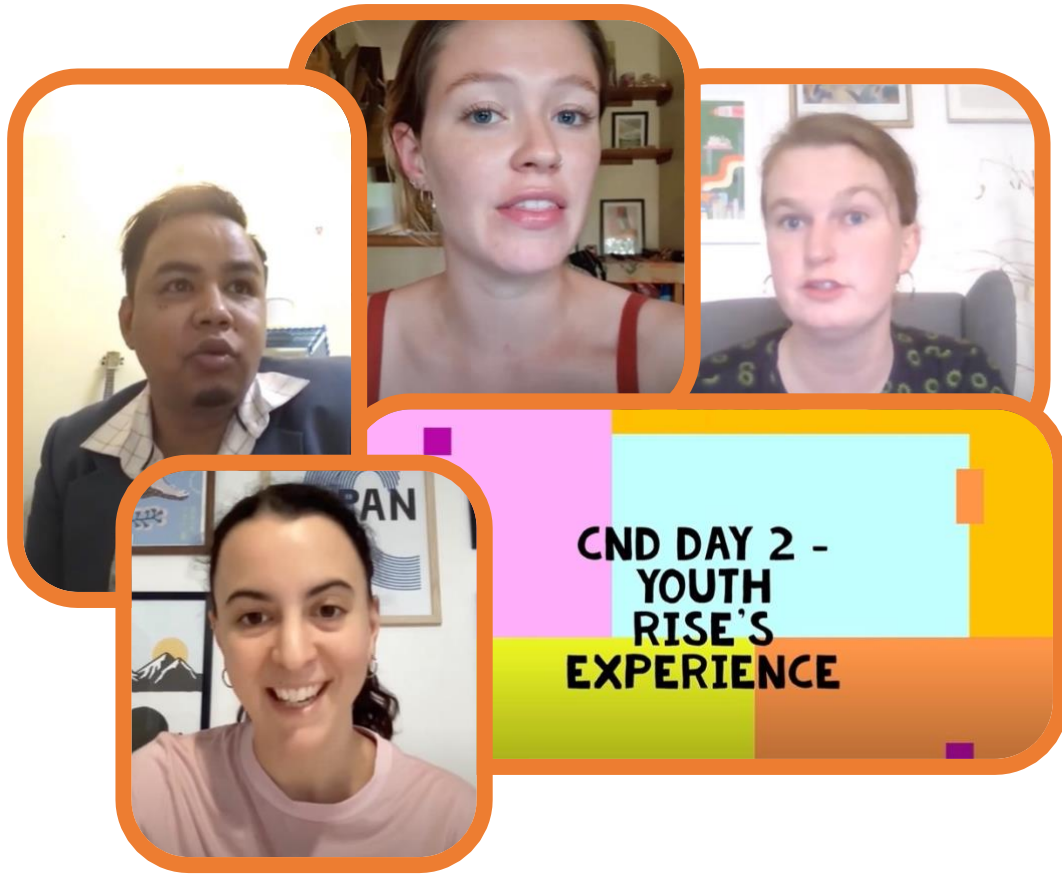


65th Meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs from the United Nations

The 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which took place on 14-18 March 2022, was held online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This virtual format provided a unique opportunity for participants from around the world to connect and engage in critical discussions about drug policy and related issues, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. While the online format presented some logistical challenges, it also allowed for greater accessibility and inclusion, with participants from diverse backgrounds and locations able to participate in the proceedings.

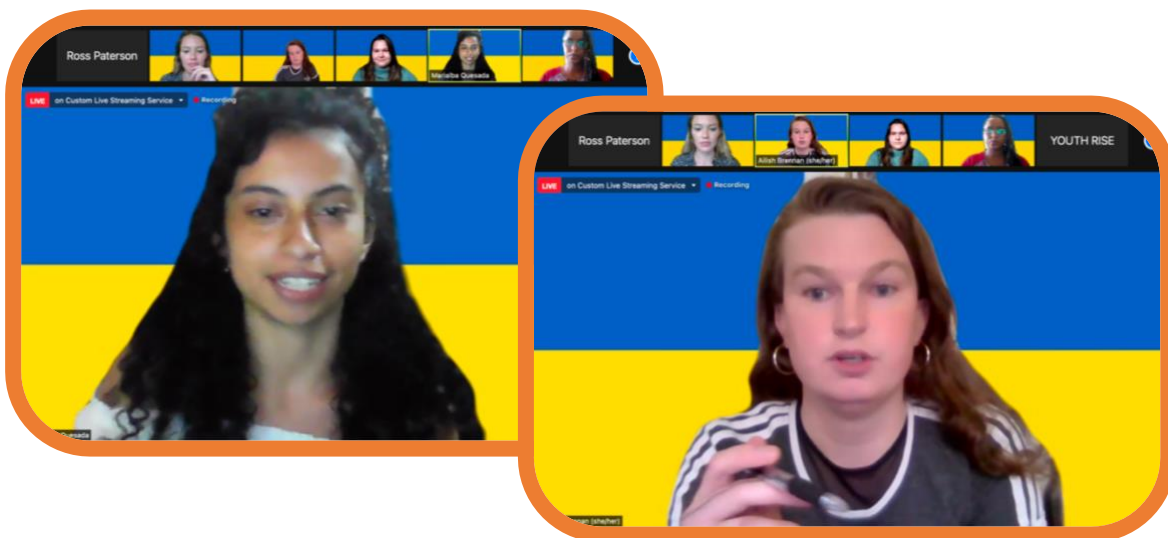
Youth RISE had a strong and influential presence, thanks in large part to the efforts

of our International Communications & Advocacy Officer, Ruby Lawlor. Through her tireless work coordinating our online presence, we were able to effectively communicate our message and highlight the critical importance of youth involvement in drug policy discussions. Each day, Ruby wrote insightful and engaging blogs mapping any mention of youth in country statements and discussions, providing our audience with valuable insights into the proceedings. In addition, our members attending the online events recorded video diaries of the side events they attended, giving viewers a firsthand look at the important work being done in this field.



During the 65th CND, many side events were organized by member states, UN entities, and civil society organizations. Youth RISE is proud to have organized one side event entitled “Young Women Who Use Drugs: Breaking the Silence”. We also participated as co-sponsors for two side events: “The Global Drug Policy Index

2021: A global tool for Evaluation and accountability”, organized by the International Drug Policy Consortium, and “Won’t Somebody Think of the Children? Youth Welfare in Drug Policy” organized by the Students for Sensible Drug Policy.



Our then Executive Director, Ailish Brennan, gave a statement given during the Plenary Session at the CND, calling on UN Agencies to work together to ensure adequate service provision for young people who use drugs and the inclusion of this population in policies and practices about them. Youth RISE was also present at the Thematic Intersessional Meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which took place in person, in Vienna, in September 2022. During the occasion, our International Working Group member Beatrix Vas gave a statement about the

challenges young people who use drugs face and the related and connected international laws and policies that affect them.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated with us during the 65th session of the CND: [SSDP International](#), [WHRIN](#), IDPC, and the [partners](#) from the [Harm Reduction Consortium](#) that contributed to the making of the 2021 Global Drug Policy Index.



Support Don't Punish 2022

The “Day of Action” which is held every 26th of June, stands for the decriminalization of drug use and possession. During these days several actions across the world are taken to stand for the rights of the people who use drugs and to stop the violence they commonly suffer, including the lack of access to health

and justice services. In 2022, Youth RISE supported the organization of the “Support. Don’t Punish” (SPD) campaign in two different locations: Nepal and Kenya.

In Nepal, the activities were in collaboration with Youth RISE Nepal from the 1st of July 2022 to the 31st of July 2022.

These included events with more than 40 young people who use drugs and attend local clubs. It also distributed messages regarding the protection of the rights of young people who use drugs through different points of the city (Lalitpur) and the organization of bike rallies to continue the distribution of these messages (Katmandu).

The main goal was to promote the engagement, empowerment, and mobilization of young people who use drugs and to encourage young people to talk about this issue. By creating a safe

space for developing these conversations, the discussion shed light on how prohibition and enforcement-led policies have impacted the lives of young people who use drugs, at times hindering their development and health. The activities raised awareness about the harmful effects that the current drug policies have on the young population. It also informed the general public, the media, and decision-makers, raising their attention to the need for designing better health services free of stigma and discrimination, based on promoting the human rights of people.



In Kenya, the activities were done in collaboration with WRADA (Women in Response to HIV/Aids and Drug Addiction) during the month of July. The focus was promoting community training for women who are sex workers and use drugs. The training was conducted and supported by paralegals, professionals who work in the legal field and provide administrative and supportive services to lawyers and other legal professionals. The sessions focused on providing women with information on mechanisms for accessing equal justice and legal services (including pro-bono lawyers offering legal and stigma-free services). The training also included legal registration for grassroots organizations, helping them to amplify their voices.

A safe space was developed for conducting focus groups with this key population. Participants reflected on their particular needs and discussed recommendations such as actions for no discrimination, visualization of the impact of stigma, the need to include this key population in harm

reduction interventions, increasing funding for women-led community organizations, activities for the protection and respect of sexual reproductive rights and ways to end violence on women who use drugs.

Another activity consisted of the promotion of better health-seeking behaviors and providing information on HIV prevention, testing, and care. Stigma-free providers of Oral Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) were highlighted, as well as healthcare facilities providing non-discriminatory care. Paralegals also emphasized the core principles of confidentiality, consent, and counselling in the work of healthcare providers.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated with us for the development of these activities. Youth RISE Nepal and [WRADA](#) (Women in Response to HIV/Aids and Drug Addiction).

Elimination of Violence Against Women who Use Drugs (EVAWUD)



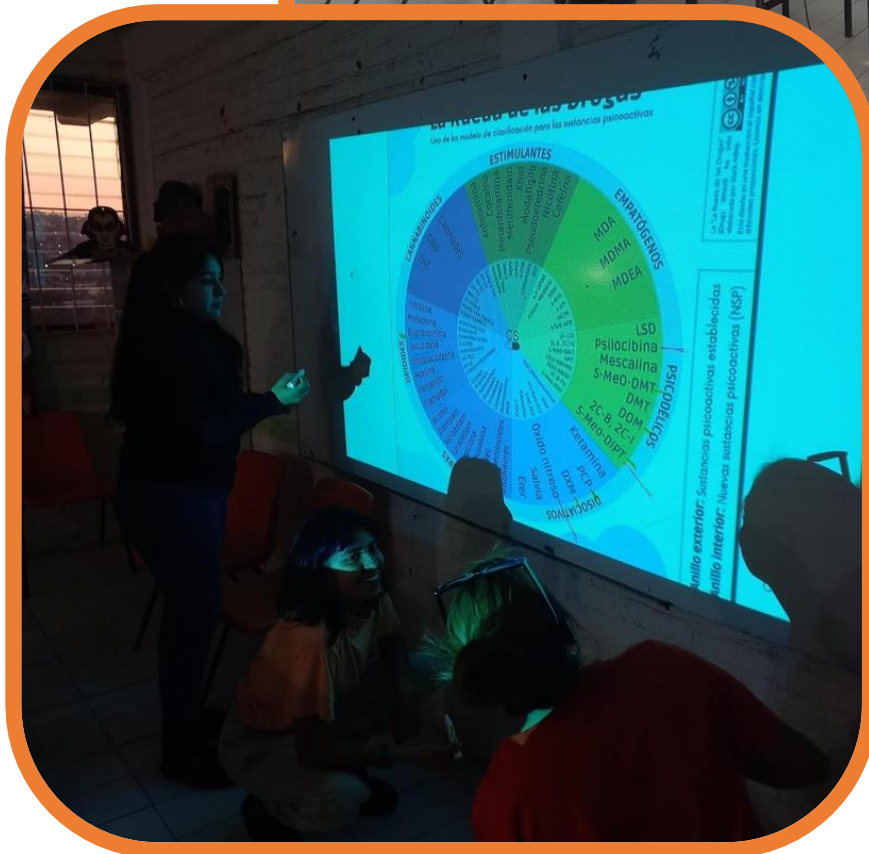
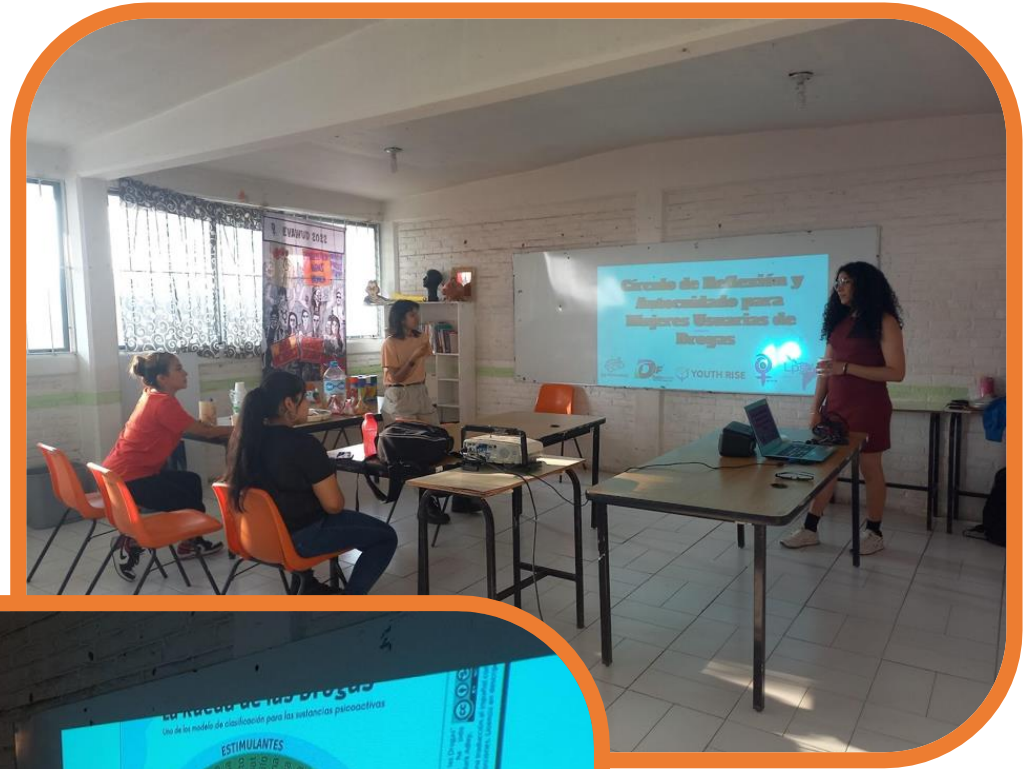
Rebeca Calzada, a graduate of Maastricht University, has been an activist in harm reduction and drug policy reform since 2014. She has contributed to various research projects and organizations, such as Mexican CSO 'Espolea', the Drug Policy Program at the Centre for Research and Teaching in Economics and the youth prevention and harm reduction project at the CSO 'México Unido Contra la Delincuencia'.

As part of the global effort to end violence against women, celebrated on November 25th, women who use drugs, including trans and gender non-conforming individuals, joined forces with allies to combat the systemic violence they face through a series of diverse actions. Advocacy strategies were executed in Mexico and Nigeria as part of these campaigns.

In Mexico, a series of workshops were held with young women who use drugs to develop harm-reduction strategies tailored to their context. These strategies aimed not only to minimize harm related to drug use

but also to protect them from the violence commonly experienced in their urban environment. The workshops covered topics such as gender-based violence, gender expression, and socio-cultural factors, the relationship between feminized bodies and urban space, oppression faced by young women who use drugs, and the challenges of urban mobility and safety.

The workshops were conducted over three sessions, with the first being in person on December 23rd and the second and third sessions held online on December 25th. These workshops were a key action towards developing a set of products on harm reduction strategies and human rights issues to be distributed on March 8th, 2023.



In Nigeria, civil society organizations collaborated with Youth RISE Nigeria, Global Care for Health Support Initiative, and Autamaimasa Health Foundation to engage the Ministry of Women and National Human Rights Commission in a discussion about including an agenda for women who use drugs, including young women. This resulted in the participation of the National Rights Commission and Civil Society Forum and the National Human Rights Awareness Road Walk in Nigeria, representing the community of women who use drugs. Additionally, the EVAWUD

campaign was carried out in different communities through sports activities to raise awareness about the vulnerabilities of women who use drugs to gender-based violence and to address the stigma and discrimination faced by this population. These advocacy actions took place from November 25th to December 10th, 2022.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated with us for the development of these activities: [Youth RISE Nigeria](#) and [Latinoamérica por una Política Sensata de Drogas \(LPSD\)](#).





Resources Focusing on Young Key Populations' Intersectionality

The focus on Young Key Populations (YKPs) and Intersectionality has been a crucial aspect of our work, and we are pleased to present the related activities we developed over the last year. YKPs are often marginalized and excluded from essential services and programs, making them particularly vulnerable to health risks, discrimination, and violence. As an organization, we have been committed to advancing the rights and health of YKPs by developing targeted interventions and advocacy strategies. In the past year, our work has focused on young women who use drugs and the LGBTQI+ community, with initiatives such as our position paper and webinar series. Through these efforts, we aim to improve access to healthcare, reduce stigma and discrimination, and promote the rights and well-being of YKPs.

Community organizations programs (Uganda)



The Uganda Harm Reduction Network collaborated with us to develop an advocacy strategy that focuses on supporting marginalized populations, including young people who use drugs and belong to different identities such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. The strategy aimed to prioritize intersectionality in drug policy and harm reduction, particularly for young people.

To achieve this, we produced a baseline study that documented the needs and

priorities of young LGBTQI+ people who use drugs in Uganda. The study involved focus group discussions and interviews with this population to gather information for evidence-based advocacy.

We shared the report with key stakeholders and also referred young people who use drugs to stigma-free harm-reduction services after conducting the focus groups. The activities were carried out between August and December 2022.



Lessons learned:

1. The use of Phenomenological research design helped our grantee to understand the everyday experiences of young LGBTQ+ PWUDs who use drugs, their needs and the daily challenges they experience.
2. Through the focus group discussions, UHRN has been able to receive young LGBTQ+ PWUDs referrals for Harm reduction services.
3. Through this research, our grantee learnt that there are many young LGBTQ+ PWUDs in their community with different needs and priorities and therefore targeted interventions and integration of needs and priorities need to be done through the key populations drop-in centres.
4. The research noted that many of the young LGBTQ+ PWUDs were not aware of harm reduction services.

There is a need to increase the knowledge of young LGBTQ+ PWUDs about harm reduction services.

Outcomes:

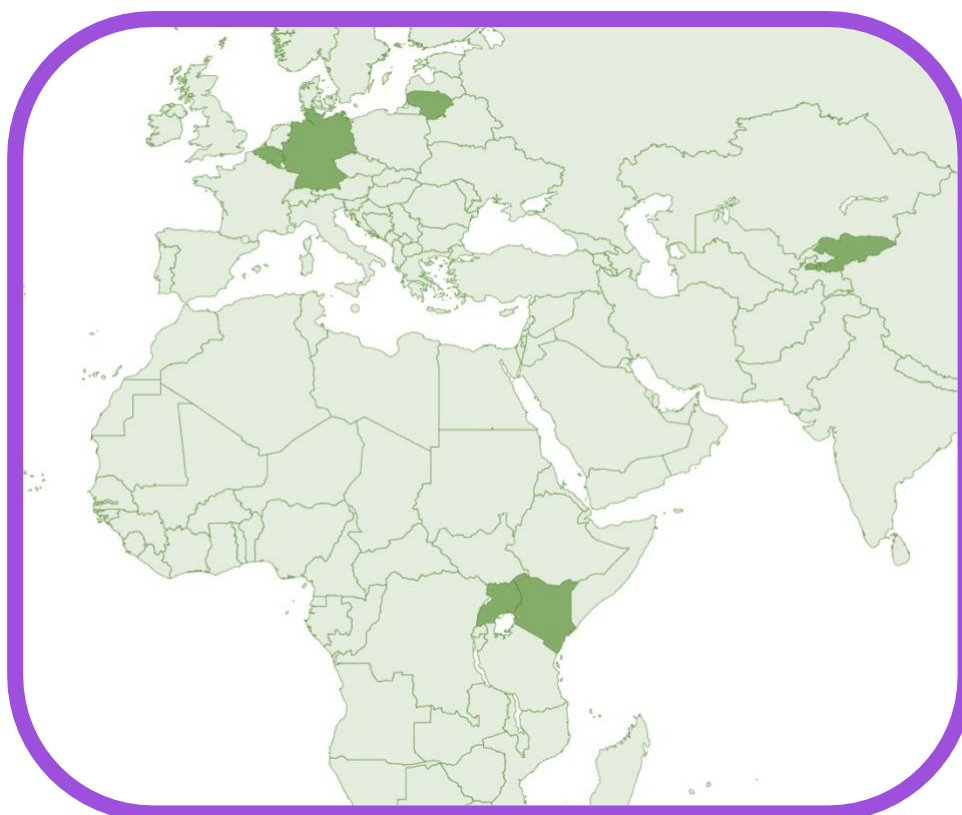
- ⇒ Feedback shared by stakeholders was incorporated into the baseline study report on the needs and priorities of young LGBTQ+ people who use drugs.
- ⇒ The study report was used as an advocacy tool, not only to the community of LGBTQ+ who use drugs but also to other likeminded CSOs and implementing partners in the key population human rights and HIV response.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated with us for the development of these activities: [Uganda Harm Reduction Network](#).

Young Sex Workers Who Use Drugs

Between October and December, in collaboration with five young sex workers who use drugs and two social workers, a research working group was formed to address the specific and unmet needs of this key population. The participants came from Eastern Europe, Central Asia, East Africa, and Central Europe, and engaged in several working sessions to gather evidence and discuss the common issues faced by young sex workers who use drugs. The group also included personal narratives regarding these issues. The outcome of this activity was a research analysis document that included a set of public policy recommendations. This document was published on Youth RISE's website to provide key resources addressing the unique needs of young sex workers who use drugs.

The document "[Young Sex Workers Who Use Drugs: Understanding the Intersection of Identities and Needs](#)" aimed to understand the experiences of young sex workers who use drugs and the unique challenges they face. The research sheds light on how young sex workers who use drugs often experience multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization, including stigma, violence, and criminalization. One of the main findings highlighted the significant barriers this key population faces to accessing healthcare, harm reduction services, and legal support. It also found that young sex workers who use drugs have unique needs related to their intersecting identities as sex workers, drug users, and young people. They require comprehensive support that recognizes and addresses the complex ways in which these identities intersect.



Countries represented by the participants in this working group: Belgium, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Kenya, and Uganda

The study emphasizes the need for a harm reduction approach that prioritizes the health and well-being of young sex workers who use drugs and calls for the decriminalization of sex work and drug use. Among the key policy recommendations that were outlined, the study highlights the importance of meaningful participation and

leadership of young people who use drugs in policy and program development.

We would like to thank the participants of this research group who collaborated with us for the development of this important study.

Adolescent and Young Key Populations (AYKP) Steering Committee

The AYKP [toolkit](#) was an initiative led by [UNICEF](#), connecting users to a global network committed to the health and well-being of young people. These tools were honed through results-based programming, innovative teamwork, and collaboration with the populations they were designed to serve.

Youth RISE contributed to the development of this toolkit, by collecting resources to help plan and scale up HIV prevention programs with adolescent and young key populations (AYKP)—people aged 10-24 who belong to one or more of the following cohorts:

- young sex workers (aged 18 and above)
- sexually exploited children (younger than age 18)
- adolescent boys and young men who have sex with men
- transgender or gender non-conforming individuals
- young people who inject drugs



A Steering Committee was formed and met bi-weekly and online throughout 2022. Youba and Sandeep Shahi, two of our IWGs, were part of the Young Champions for Equality group. The committee came up with and piloted the toolkit gathering information and recommendations from stakeholders from all around the world. The group continues with meetings in 2023, discussing the next steps for the resource and planned activities.

We would like to thank the partners who have collaborated with us for the development of these activities: [UNAIDS](#), [UNDP](#), [UNICEF](#), [UNFPA](#), [Y Peer](#) and [Youth LEAD](#).

Trip App



This project is being further developed through a Youth RISE project funded by the Robert Carr Fund. [TripApp](#) was created by a consortium of three non-governmental organizations: [Youth Organisations for Drug Action](#), [Help Not Harm](#), and [NEWNet](#).

Youth RISE has worked on the further development of TripApp, a mobile application designed to reduce the harms associated with the use of psychoactive substances. It consists of a variety of features that reduce the harms of using drugs, including:

- Submitting and accessing results of drug checking, either through colourimetric reagent tests that TripApp users have conducted on their own, so they can alert the people in their area about possible dangers, or through laboratory results that have been submitted;
- A “dose smart” feature which allows you to input your weight and see any identified ecstasy pills which may be particularly dangerous for your body weight;
- A safer use feature which contains information on how you can reduce the harms caused by the use of psychoactive substances;
- A legislation feature where you can find out the laws and policies in your country in relation to drugs;
- And finally, a service map, in which you can discover harm reduction services around the world depending on what service you require.

Youth RISE has especially supported the development of the map, by adding languages and including active harm reduction services outside of Europe. Adria Quesada, a hired technical consultant, worked with us to include four new countries and over 65 services in the

TripApp Harm Reduction map. It is important for us to ensure the map can be utilized by as many people as possible. In order to promote this tool, new functionalities to ensure accessibility were developed, adding the right-to-left language functionality for Urdu and Arabic speakers. The mapping of new harm reduction services was accomplished with the support of local independent consultants. In Ghana, national consultant Philip mapped nine active Harm reduction services and developed a database. In Nigeria, Henry identified ten active HR services on the TripApp services map and developed a database. In Kyrgyzstan, our national consultant Layla supported the mapping of twelve new harm reduction services. Finally, in Nepal, national consultant Sandeep from Youth RISE Nepal initiated and conducted the mapping of active Harm Reduction services.

We collaborated with Ishwor Maharjan, a consultant, to develop an evaluation form for assessing Harm Reduction (HR) services. The new evaluation form was designed to address the limitations of the former version, which only identified service categories and locations. The form aims to collect data on the types and quality of services and support and to provide an opportunity for PWUDs to express their opinions and recommendations on HR services offered in their countries. This helps amplify the voices of the key population and ensure that services meet their specific needs.

To pilot the new evaluation form, we selected participants from various countries. In Ghana, ten PWUDs shared their feedback and suggestions on HR services using the TripApp web map. Similarly, in Nigeria, ten participants conducted the piloting of the service evaluation form via TripApp to provide



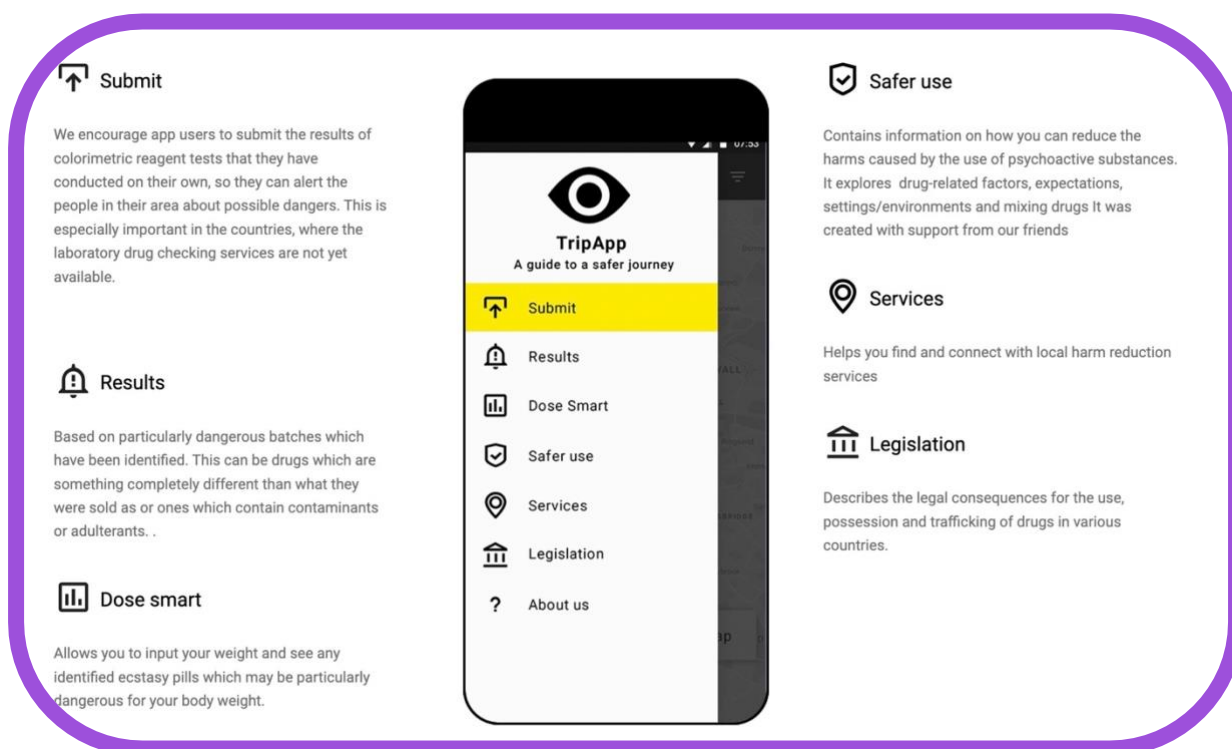
feedback and suggestions while maintaining anonymity. We also piloted the service evaluation form among ten participants in Kyrgyzstan and more than ten PWUDs in Nepal, who were selected from the key population group Recovering Nepal. The piloting of the Evaluation Form was conducted on the TripApp web map to evaluate services in Nepal and submit feedback while maintaining anonymity. NCASC and Save the Children also supported this activity.

Additionally, we have added new features to the TripApp mobile application, which now displays the operating hours of services and highlights those that provide mental health support. A new feature has been introduced allowing users to upload information about services that work

towards improving access to justice for young people who use drugs (YPWUD). This gadget was developed with the aim of improving the accessibility of legal support services for this vulnerable population.

The contents of TripApp were created with support from [TripSit](#), [Social Drug Policy Initiative](#), [Crew2000](#), and [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction](#). Gender-Based Violence services in nightlife are mapped through the [Sexism Free Night Project](#) co-funded by the Right Equality and Citizenship program of the [European Commission](#).

We would like to thank all partners and independent consultants that contributed with us to expand the services and functionalities of TripApp.



Trip App website.

Teaching and Learning

In the realm of teaching and learning, Youth RISE has been committed to empowering young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to effect change in their communities. In 2022, we conducted the Train the Trainer workshop project, focusing on the topics of access to justice and online harm reduction for young people and other inadequately served populations. This project consisted of regional training sessions in 4 regions and international online workshops on Harm Reduction. The goal was to equip our trained members so that they could pass on their knowledge and train their community peers on these topics. Additionally, the Erasmus+ EU Drug Policy Training & Strategy Series for Young People allowed us to equip young people with a deeper understanding of drug policies and advocacy strategies on a regional scale. In 2022, we also developed and published a comprehensive guide for young people to conduct drug policy reform and harm reduction advocacy with decision-makers. The publication was based on a training that Youth RISE developed online earlier in the year.

Access to Justice and Online Harm Reduction - “Train the Trainer” Workshops Project



Carolina manages the 3-year funding cycle for the 4Youth Consortium, including Youth RISE, Youth LEAD, Y+ Global, and Y PEER, funded by the Robert Carr Fund. She joined Youth RISE in 2020, representing Argentina and later became the Latin American Communications Officer. Carolina is also a coordinator of a harm reduction program focused on youth and nightlife at Intercambios AC. She holds a Sociology degree and has been working in Drug Policy and Harm Reduction since 2017.

The “Train the Trainer” workshop projects began with the hiring of Isaac Olushola (as our Online Harm Reduction Trainer) and Maria Plotko (as our Access to Justice trainer), to develop content on these topics, utilizing online resources from partners. The Online Harm Reduction training content was developed from our partner organization EHRA’s [Peer-to-Peer Counselor Manual for Online Consultations](#).

Why did we choose to develop this project on Online Harm Reduction? Young people who use drugs (YPUDs) and other inadequately served populations (ISPs) have a set of unique needs in terms of harm reduction and support services. As a result of the current pandemic, many of these needs have been emphasised, and a demand and need for the wider availability

of online and/or remote provision of such services has been identified. Youth RISE's project on online harm reduction services seeks to support bridging this gap by enabling and building the capacities of young people to lead in this effort.

Why did we choose to develop this project on Access To Justice? Young people who use drugs and other inadequately served populations due to stigma around drug use and repressive laws are more vulnerable to human rights violations, especially the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to be free from torture and the right for a fair trial, abuse by law enforcement agencies and limited access to legal services. The objective of the training is to train young advocates and young people engaged in harm reduction and drug policy, to train their peers in delivering legal services tailored to the specific needs of young people who use drugs and other inadequately served populations.


The [Online Harm Reduction Project](#) consisted of 3 components, the first was Virtual Train the Trainer Workshops, providing training to a group of young people to become trainers who are well-versed to assist their peers in setting up and delivering online harm reduction and support services tailored to the specific needs of YPUDs and other ISPs. The second was Regional training workshops (in-person), providing assistance to the newly trained trainers to organize and implement regional training sessions for other young people so they become equipped on how to provide adequate peer support online. The third component was the Peer support small grants, where we provided assistance to participants of the training and/or other youth-led partners to implement new online harm reduction services or improve existing service provision. The Online Harm Reduction Project was funded by the Harm Reduction Consortium Robert Carr Fund, from the Exceptional Opportunities Fund.

Today's Agenda

- 15m | Intro & Housekeeping
- 60m | Basic information about online peer counseling
- 60m | How to provide peer-to-peer support online
- 60m | How can peer consultants gain the trust of the client by working online?
- 20m | Resources needed for peer counselors online
- 10m | Interactive Q+A

Today's Goal ...

Give you the **tool**,
Share **key learnings**
Build an **attitude** for peer-to-peer consultations



How to conduct a training

1. Let the participants know about next steps and follow up opportunities

Before the training

1. Do a short survey to assess the needs of training participants ([Googleforms](#), Surveymonkey or 3-5 interviews with key informants)
2. Prepare the information accordingly, find possible partners, training opportunities and funding sources
3. Include real life examples

During the training

1. Start with the introductions
2. Share the outline of the training
3. Use prepared in advance polls, whiteboards, encourage questions and discussion ([mentimeter](#), [jamboard](#), [kahoot!](#), [Slido](#), Zoom, Google meet)
4. If there are more than 10 participants, divide them into smaller discussion groups
5. Sum up what you've learned and discussed



Materials used during the online harm reduction training sessions.

The Access to Justice Project took on the same format as the Online Harm Reduction project, with a Virtual 'Train the Trainer' workshop, providing training to a group of young people to become trainers who are well-versed to assist their peers in engaging in access to justice initiatives according to local and specific needs of YPUDs and other ISPs. The second component was regional training workshops (in-person): providing assistance to the newly trained trainers to organize and implement regional training sessions for other young people so they become equipped on how to increase community awareness in access to justice and legal responses. The third component was the peer support small grants: providing assistance to participants of the training and/or other youth-led partners to engage in regional piloting of access to justice initiatives according to local needs and to include legal services into the TripApp mapping platform. The Access to Justice Project was funded by the 4Youth Consortium Robert Carr Fund, from the Exceptional Opportunities Fund.



Regional training on access to justice in Buenos Aires.

The regional training sessions took place in Buenos Aires (representing the Latin American region), Morocco (representing MENA region), Vilnius (representing Europe), and Nigeria (representing Sub-Saharan Africa). Our IWGs and other members of youth-led organizations were trained in the virtual Train the Trainer workshops developed by Maria and Isaac, in Access to Justice and Online Harm Reduction for young people and other inadequately served populations. After this, the trainees could perform as trainers in regional training series held in person for their communities. For example, Humberto and Amine were responsible for training their peers in Access to Justice in Argentina and Morocco. **Almost 100 young people participated in the regional training sessions in all four regions.** These activities were funded by the Exceptional Opportunity Fund from Robert Carr Fund.

Some of the participants from the workshop in Buenos Aires for the Latin American region were panellists at 2 different sessions of the [Latin American Conference on Drug Policy](#). One session was about youth political engagement in terms of rights that is necessary to reduce social and generational gaps, to redefine new social realities and rebuild connections due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The second one was about "Voices from the civil society" and key populations" in which declarations from referents from community-based and youth-led organizations from the region were made.

Through the regional workshops, we were able to account for the failures and limitations of young key populations in accessing justice before the pandemic. The findings evidenced how the pandemic deepened and widened the inequality gap in many areas, especially those related to access to health, treatment and justice. We worked specifically with people who use drugs and focused on the consequences of the war on drugs. With the pandemic, civil organisations had to dedicate their time to alleviate the effects of covid, which left many of these people without protection and resources for basic hygiene, housing and food. Moreover, due to the isolation and quarantines, police control was intensified, leading to raids and forced imprisonment.



M&E Officer Humberto Rotondo during CONFEDROGAS.

Finally, this project allowed us to establish and strengthen connections with 4 organisations (Intercambios AC in Argentina, Youth RISE Nigeria in Nigeria, Young Wave in Lithuania and Association de lutte contre le sida in Morocco), one for each region of the world, which served as focal points to develop the activities of workshops on access to justice. With these organisations, we were able to map other organisations within each region, and, at the same time, we met new referents to establish connections and future articulated work. It is important to note that all of these organisations are organisations to which our IWGs belong. With their hard work and effective communication with

each other, we were able to achieve good results and level up their participation and commitment in our network.

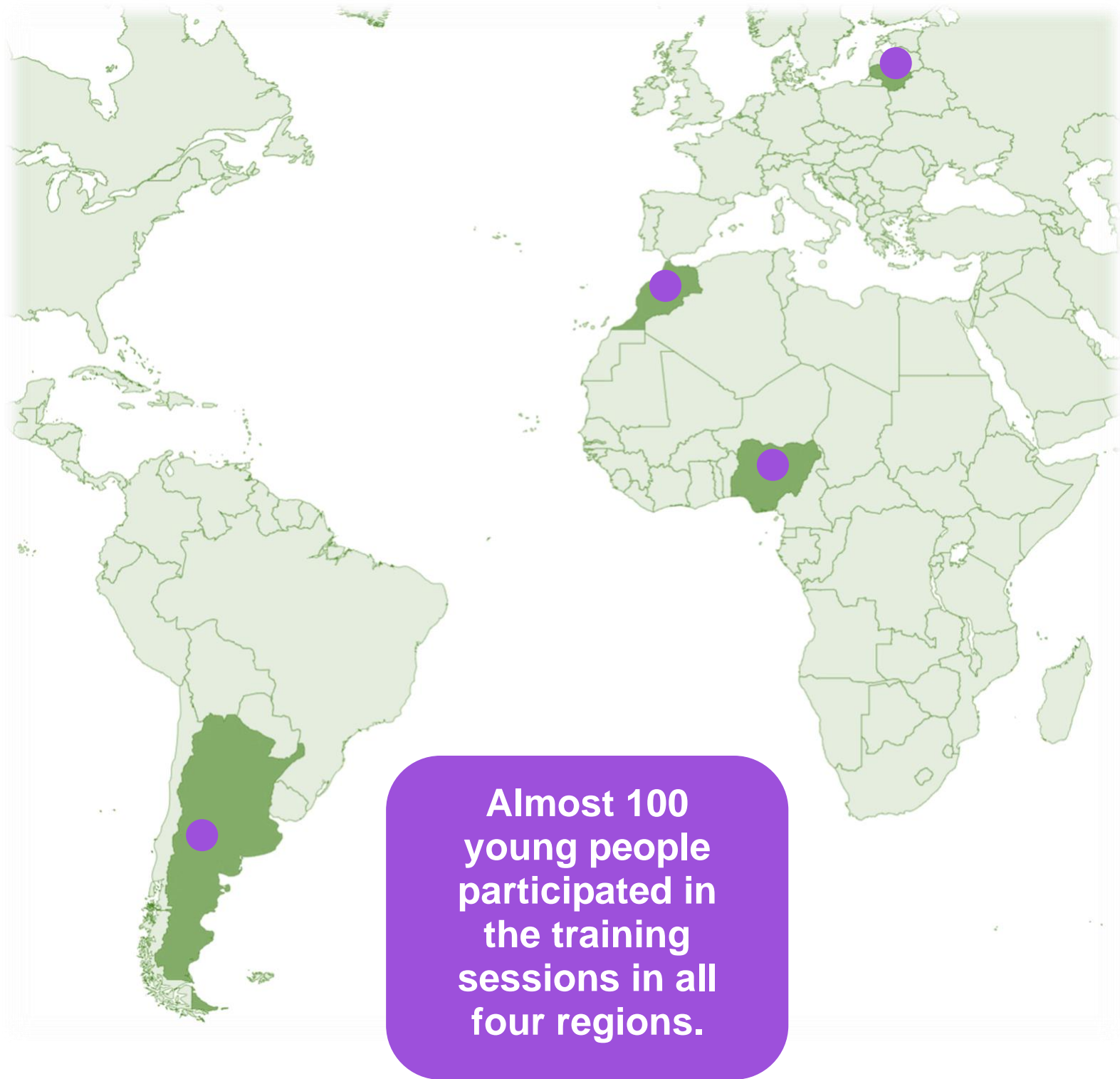
We would like to thank all partners and independent consultants that contributed

with us for organizing this highly successful training series: [Intercambios Asociacion Civil](#) (Argentina), Association de lutte contre le sida ([ALCS](#), Morocco), [Young Wave](#) (Lithuania) and [Youth RISE Nigeria](#) (Nigeria).



Workshops held in Nigeria, Morocco and Lithuania.

OUR IMPACT:



Erasmus+ EU Drug Policy Training & Strategy Series for Young People



Manuela, a youth advocate from Argentina residing in Spain, has been actively involved in harm reduction and drug policy reform, establishing and leading the SSDP Manchester chapter from 2019 to 2022. She is the Erasmus+ Project Coordinator at Youth RISE and is associated with the European Youth Drug Policy Consortium. Manuela also has a background in Psychedelic Neuroscience and conducts substance analyses at Energy Control Barcelona, a collective providing harm reduction services and free drug testing.

Since early 2022, [SSDP International](#) and Youth RISE have been working with young people passionate about drug policy reform from across Europe to develop the skills, knowledge, network and strategy for young people to engage with drug policy nationally and internationally. The Erasmus+ EU drug policy training and strategy series for young people engaged 24 participants who had previously been involved in grassroots advocacy efforts in drug policy and harm reduction.

The goal was to increase the capacity of youth-led organizations that engage in drug policy reform and young people to advocate at the European Union level. The training series equipped participants with the necessary knowledge, skills, connections, and strategy to engage with

the EU Drug Policy Creation process and create a youth-led dialogue around EU drug policies. The cohort's diversity meant that participants were exposed to a variety of expertise, lived experiences, and opinions, which enriched their learning process.

Besides online training and webinars, the project organized two in-person components with participants. The first in-person component in Dublin saw 18 participants attend in person, while the in-person component in Vienna gathered 22 participants.

The ability of participants to engage with EU Drug Policy has improved significantly as a result of the training. During the launch event, two of the participants shared their experiences and key takeaways:

→ *“I feel much more empowered to engage with drug policy at the local and EU level [...] I feel more confident about the different avenues to engage and people to cooperate with.”*

Judit Roca

→ *“I am more aware of the opportunities for civil society organizations to engage with the EU, and I better understand how the process is organized and structured.”*

Pijus Petn

As a result of the success of the training series, SSDP and Youth RISE have established a consortium of young people and youth organizations dedicated to building drug policies rooted in human rights and compassion. The *European*

Youth Drug Policy Consortium brings together the participants from the Erasmus+ training series. It will develop activities led by groups focusing on four target sectors, namely: Education, Community & Social, Legal & Political, Health & Accessibility.

The strategy for 2023 includes the development of the European *Youth Drug Policy Consortium* to coordinate actions and activities relevant to the milestones established for each target sector. Together, the consortium aims to advance its mission of advocating for a people-centred and compassionate approach to drugs and working towards uniting youth and harm reduction movements.

We are grateful to the policy stakeholders, civil society members, and youth advocates who have contributed to the development and organization of this training. The success of this project is also due to the hard work of our IWG [Beatrix Vas](#), who contributed as Project Manager to this initiative until September 2022. We also give our thanks to the participants for engaging with such commitment and passion in our sessions and for choosing to advance this work as part of a Consortium. Finally, we would like to express immense gratitude to [Erasmus+](#) for supporting the implementation of our project.

The first in-person component in Dublin was attended by 18 participants.



The second in-person component in Vienna gathered 22 participants.



Making Politics Work for Young People – Youth Advocacy Handbook

Capturing the attention of decision-makers can be a challenging task. With a busy and disputed schedule, government officials and members of parliament are hard-to-reach audiences. These stakeholders are exposed to a high number of matters daily, which means the attention they allocate to individual topics is often fragmented.

Young activists for harm reduction and drug policy reform may encounter additional challenges. Despite representation increasing in the last few years, there is still a generational gap between youth and government officials in most countries. Moreover, drug policy and harm reduction remain highly sensitive topics in many contexts due to stigma and lack of an open debate.

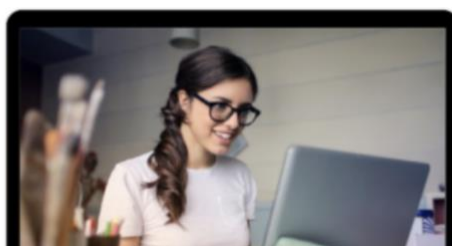
This handbook developed by Rebeca Marques Rocha, an external consultant,

provides a guide on how to conduct drug policy reform and harm reduction advocacy as a young person with decision-makers. The content of this handbook was also used in a webinar training developed by Youth RISE in early 2022.

The training took place on two different dates, February 14-15, and brought together 18 young activists in the field of harm reduction and drug policy reform to learn how to best reach decision-makers. It provided information on the best practices worldwide, using examples from within the group. Attendees left the training with a deeper understanding of the do's and don'ts of advocacy in terms of meeting with decision-makers and have gained valuable insights into how to take their individual advocacy/campaigns to the next level.

MAKING POLITICS WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Learn how to conduct drug policy reform & harm reduction advocacy with decision-makers in your country



Communications and Publications

The Communications and Publications section of the Youth RISE 2022 Annual Report showcases the incredible work done by our team to amplify the voices of young people who use drugs around the world. Our communication efforts have been focused on building meaningful relationships with our community, promoting evidence-based drug policies, and highlighting the realities of the war on drugs. We have achieved this through various mediums, including our social media channels, newsletters, and publications. The success of our communication and publication efforts is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team and the ongoing support of our partners and supporters.

Youth RISE Podcast

In 2022, Youth RISE launched its podcast "The Trip/El Viaje", with episodes available in both Spanish, hosted by Latin America Communications & Advocacy Officer Marialba Quesada, and English, hosted by Executive Director Ruby Lawlor. The podcast features interviews with individuals from different parts of the world, including drug policy reform activists, people who use drugs, and healthcare professionals, putting special emphasis on showcasing the work of young people in the field.

The podcast explores eight topics related to drug use, drug policy, and harm reduction. Listeners can expect to hear personal stories and experiences from the guests, as well as discussions on the latest developments in drug policy and harm reduction efforts around the world, the role young people have in local responses, and the impact policies have on them. The podcast aims to raise awareness and



promote understanding of drug use and the need for evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction approaches that include young people in their design.

Overall, "The Trip/El Viaje" is an informative and thought-provoking podcast that offers insights into the complexities of drug use, drug policy and harm reduction.

It aims to amplify the voices of young people in the field, providing a platform for individuals to share their experiences and perspectives and encouraging listeners to consider alternative approaches to drug policy and harm reduction.

The first episode of the podcast was published in December 2022, bringing

interviews in English and Spanish with international working group members. The series continues in 2023.

We want to thank all of the interviewees who shared their stories and insights with us, contributing to our podcast. We would also like to thank the [Robert Carr Fund](#), whose funding makes this project possible.

Support Don't Punish Advocacy Video

In the position of International Communications & Advocacy Officer, Ruby Lawlor created an advocacy video as part of our campaign for Support Don't Punish. The video was shared on our social media channels on the Global Day of Action (June 26). It featured young harm reduction advocates and activists from all over the world - including Lebanon, Peru, Nepal, and Costa Rica - sharing what Support Don't Punish means to them. The video received 280 views on Instagram and added to the global movement demanding policy change and protection of the rights of people who use drugs.

We want to thank all the young harm reduction advocates and activists who shared their stories and insights with us, agreeing to be part of this campaign.



Frames from Support Don't Punish Promotional Video

CND Communications

During the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, taking place virtually, International Communications & Advocacy Officer Ruby Lawlor coordinated our online presence by writing daily blogs about any mention of youth in countries statements and discussions. Youth RISE members also recorded and published video diaries, commenting on their attendance at the

many sessions in the program and the side events.

We thank the tireless effort of our amazing team, who engaged so actively during the 65th session of the CND and shared their insights with public, contributing to making the politics of the event more accessible to young people all over the world.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs 2022
Youth RISE
7 videos 28 views Last updated on 23 Sept 2022

Play all Shuffle

- The Youth Perspective on CND Day 2**
Youth RISE • 35 views • 1 year ago
25:57
- The Youth Perspective on CND Day 1 2022**
Youth RISE • 37 views • 1 year ago
23:08
- The Youth Perspective on CND Day 3**
Youth RISE • 19 views • 1 year ago
34:49
- Young Women Who Use Drugs Breaking the Silence**
Youth RISE • 74 views • 1 year ago
51:16
- The Youth Perspective on CND Day 4**
Youth RISE • 19 views • 1 year ago
37:26
- The Youth Perspective on CND Day 5**
Youth RISE • 47 views • 1 year ago
12:34
- The Youth Statement at the CND Thematic Intersessionals**
Youth RISE • 23 views • 8 months ago
5:12

Videos developed as part of our CND communications strategy and available on our YouTube Channel.

Blog Coordination

In her capacity as International Communications & Advocacy Officer, Ruby Lawlor coordinated a number of blogs covering a diverse range of topics, such as [Drug Use and Pleasure](#) (written by Ross Paterson), Small Grants Call, the [Global Drug Policy Index promotion](#) (written by Beatrix Vas), and Ailish's Brennan's story

on [Transgender Violence](#). In total, **22 blog pieces were written and published in 2022**, providing timely insights on topical developments, amplifying the voices of young people in the field and increasing the accessibility of the latest harm reduction and drug policy news to our global audience.



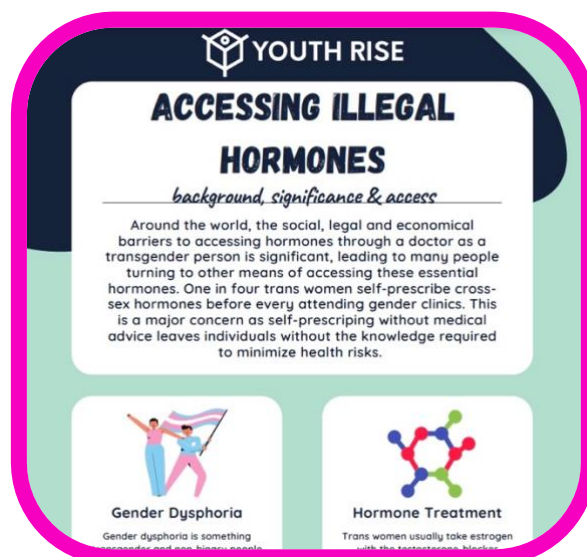
Blog posts published in 2022.

Publications

In 2022, Youth RISE developed several publications that aim to raise awareness and promote evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction approaches. Overall, the publications developed by Youth RISE in 2022 provide valuable insights and practical guidance on a range of issues related to drug use, harm reduction, and drug policy. They offer evidence-based recommendations for harm reduction service providers, people who use drugs, and policymakers, and contribute to the ongoing conversation around drug policy reform and harm reduction efforts. The following is a summary of the publications released by Youth RISE in 2022:

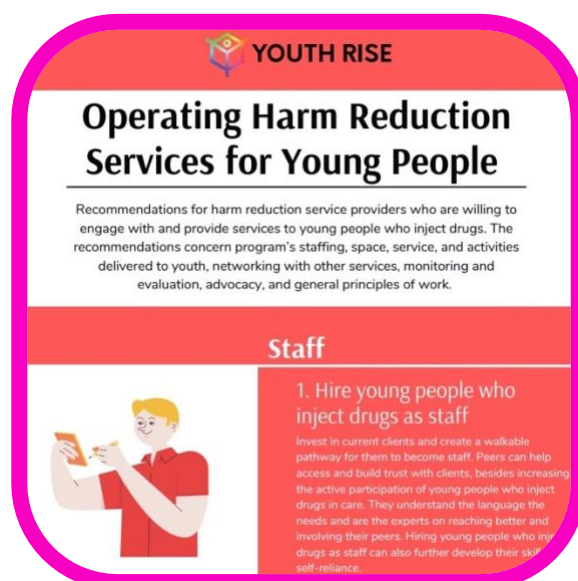
- **Accessing Illegal Hormones**

This [publication](#) provides information and guidance for transgender and gender-diverse people who are accessing illegal hormone therapy. It offers practical advice on how to access safe and affordable hormone therapy, as well as how to reduce the risks associated with illegal hormone use.



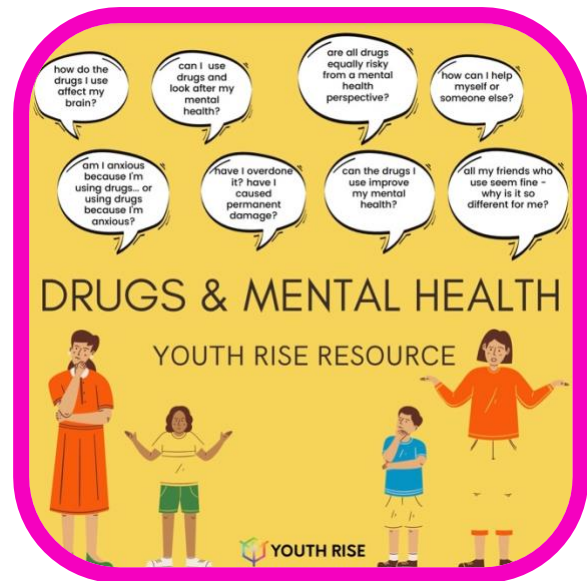
- **Harm Reduction Services for Young People**

This [publication](#) provides recommendations for harm reduction service providers who are willing to engage with and provide services to young people who inject drugs. It offers practical guidance on how to develop harm reduction services that are tailored to the needs of young people, including the provision of needle and syringe programs, overdose prevention, and drug treatment services.



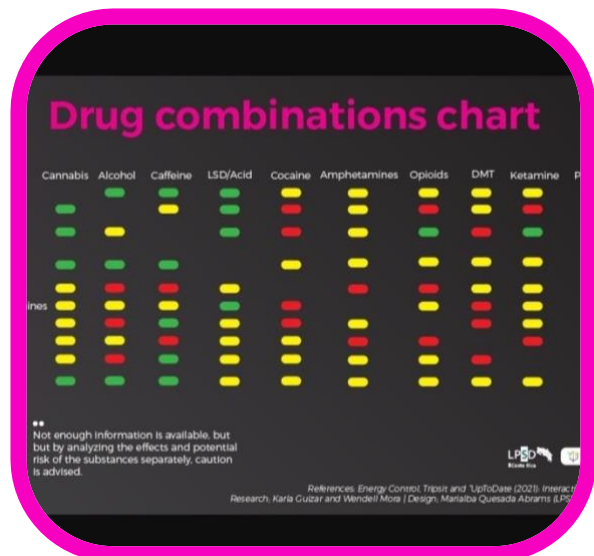
• **Drugs and Mental Health**

This [publication](#) explores the relationship between drug use and mental health. It provides an overview of the common mental health issues that are associated with drug use, as well as practical advice on how to manage these issues. It also explores the ways in which drug policies can impact mental health outcomes for people who use drugs.



• **Drug Combinations Chart**

This [publication](#) provides a visual representation of the most common drug combinations that are used by people who use drugs. It offers information on the potential risks and harms associated with these combinations, as well as practical advice on how to reduce these risks.



Social Media Analytics

Youth RISE maintains an active online presence across several social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter. Overall, maintaining a social media presence is essential for Youth RISE to achieve its mission of promoting evidence-based drug policies and harm reduction approaches. It allows us to reach a larger audience with a diverse age range, engage with its community and followers and advocate for policy change. This section provides a summary of our main social media analytics for the year 2022. The analytics here evidence how the content we produce and publish resonated with our followers, contributing to ongoing discussions around drug policy reform and harm reduction efforts.

Youth RISE International

INSTAGRAM

- **Followers:** 1.203 (an increase of 22% compared to 2021)
- **Reached audience:** 4425 people (an increase of 40,1% compared to 2021)

Youth RISE's Instagram account features images and graphics related to drug policy reform and harm reduction, as well as information on events and campaigns.

In 2022, we posted:

- ⇒ 40 posts
- ⇒ 171 stories
- ⇒ 10 videos

FACEBOOK

- **Followers:** 4485

Youth RISE's Facebook page features updates on the organization's activities and events, as well as links to relevant news articles and resources related to drug policy reform and harm reduction.

In 2022, we got 126 new followers and reached 7,408 people, representing an increase of 99.8% compared to 2021.

TWITTER

- **Followers:** 4839

Youth RISE's Twitter account features updates on the latest news and developments related to drug policy reform and harm reduction, as well as information on the organization's activities and events.

In 2022, we posted 137 tweets, which generated:

- ⇒ 74,147 impressions
- ⇒ 15,430 profile visits
- ⇒ 288 mentions
- ⇒ 194 new followers

Youth RISE LatinX

INSTAGRAM

- **Followers:** 590 (an increase of 23% compared to 2021)

Youth RISE's LatinX Instagram account features images and graphics related to drug policy reform and harm reduction with a special focus on the Latin American and the Caribbean regions. The main goal is to share information about evidence-based policies, events, and campaign in Spanish, to ensure our main message reaches a bigger audience.

In 2022, we posted:

- ⇒ 13 posts
- ⇒ 28 stories
- ⇒ 2 videos



Website Instagram

Facebook Twitter

