

World Federation Against Drugs - Life unchained

The World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) is dedicated to identifying and promoting effective and affordable laws, policies and programs consistent with modern culture and values that limit illegal drug use and illegal drug trafficking. These initiatives build on a century of international efforts to limit the use of illegal drugs, incorporated into three major treaties accepted by virtually every country in the world and managed by the United Nations. The treaties require coordinated international efforts that reject the use of drugs outside of tightly controlled medical practice.

The last half of the 20th Century saw the emergence of the modern drug abuse epidemic, characterized by exposure of entire populations to a wide variety of drugs of abuse used by potent routes of administration, especially smoking, shooting and snorting. The drug epidemic is global. A critical challenge for the 21st Century is to find more effective ways to reduce illegal drug use and the illegal drug trafficking that fuels the epidemic. This challenge is great because the drugs of abuse effectively hijack the human brain's reward centers subverting the essential values and behaviors that are necessary for the survival of individuals, families, communities and nations. All humans are vulnerable to this biological threat but the most vulnerable groups are youth and the disadvantaged.

At the heart of the WFAD approach is the commitment to a balance of efforts in law enforcement and efforts in prevention and treatment. These efforts are inspired and improved by a dedication to research into the nature and consequences of illegal drug use and into the efforts to reduce illegal drug use. WFAD works to find better ways to link the systems of criminal justice and treatment and prevention system to reduce illegal drug use more than either can achieve alone.

WFAD is rooted in the Swedish drug policy experience, which grew out of the Swedish drug abuse epidemic. From this experience Sweden developed a balanced and restrictive drug policy that enjoys broad support across the political spectrum in Sweden. The hallmarks of this policy are a commitment to the drug-free standard, in contrast to a "responsible use" standard for illegal drugs, and the use of the criminal justice system to enforce the no-use standard and to serve as an engine of recovery for drug users. This strong no-use policy has produced one of the lowest rates of illegal drug use in the developed world.

The goal of WFAD is to harness the awesome power of the world's NGOs to reverse the drug abuse epidemic by supporting the drug-free goal and the drug abuse prevention treaties of the United Nations. WFAD focuses especially on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes the obligation of all nations to protect children from both drug use and drug sales.

WFAD is the unified voice for civil society organizations working for a drug free vision

Action plan 2019 – 2020

7th World Forum Against Drugs

The 1st World Forum Against Drugs was organized in 2008. The most important outcome of the Forum was the creation of the organization World Federation Against Drugs in June 2009. As one of the first tasks as a new organization, WFAD organized the 2nd World Forum Against Drugs in May 2010. The 3rd Forum was held in May 2012 and the 4th in May 2014. The 5th Forum was held in Vienna, Austria on the 12-13 of March, 2016.

The World Forum is an important meeting point for researchers, politicians, civil servants, people active in treatment and prevention and the civil society, all of whom strive for a balanced and restrictive drug policy. The Forum provides an arena for exchanging knowledge and experience, to describe new research and inspire to new methods of prevention plus vast opportunities for networking for NGOs from around the world.

The 6th World Forum Against Drugs will be held in May 14-15, 2018 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The 6th Forum will be focusing on providing input to the development of the Global Action plan on Drugs 2019 – 2029. The 6th Forum will have three focus areas; Prevention, Recovery and Control.

The 7th Forum is scheduled to be held in 2020.

Aim

The main aim of the Forum is to gather support for a restrictive and balanced drug policy. More specifically, the aims of the Forum include:

- To spread new methods of prevention and recovery oriented treatment and share best practices;
- To attract new WFAD member organizations;
- To increase the understanding of the UN Drug Control Conventions;
- To examine the Rights of the Child in order to develop better methods to protect children from illegal drugs and trafficking;
- To share ideas about lobbying and advocating against legalization and normalization of drugs; and,
- To learn new strategies for implementation of effective programs.

Regional networks and meetings

WFAD is a global organization with headquarter in Sweden and over 200 member organizations around the world. In some areas of the world we have cluster of member organizations, for example in Pakistan and in Southeast Africa. Africa is the continent where WFAD has most members, over 100 member organizations origins form the African continent.

The Board member of North America, Robert L. DuPont, has started a regional network in the Americas with by-monthly Skype meetings to discuss actions and drug policy in the region. This is a model that should be developed in other areas of the world as well. With the assistance of the secretariat of WFAD the regional networks can develop actions and plan meetings needed in the specific area.

To be able to build the network and the capacity of the regional network WFAD plan to host regional meetings. The aim of regional WFAD meetings is to support and work with governments, community leaders and NGOs to strengthen, support and encourage the UN Drug Control Conventions in order to have a balanced drug policy of prevention, treatment and law enforcement.

During 2016 WFAD did not carry out regional meetings due to the amount of time and efforts directed to the UNGASS process and the follow up of the outcome document. In 2017 two regional regional Forums were held, in Kenya and Lebanon. The regional conferences are a way to promote and influence the national drug policy debate since it puts the drug problem higher on the agenda.

WFAD's ambition is to host two regional meetings yearly to connect with the regional context and build a regional network of NGOs in various parts of the world.

Aim:

The general objectives of the regional meetings and networks are:

- To strengthen the network of WFAD members in that region;
- To analyze the drug abuse situation in the region;
- To examine the Rights of the Child in order to develop better methods to protect children;
- To exchange ideas about lobbying and advocating against legalization of drugs;
- To increase the understanding of the UN Drug Control Conventions;
- To share the best practices in prevention, treatment and recovery;
- To learn new strategies for implementation of prevention and treatment programs.

Participation in the global debate on drug policy

Since the foundation of WFAD the organization has taken an active role in the global debate on drug policy. WFAD has been present at the yearly CND meeting, arranged side events and have taken active part in the debate at the CND. All in line with the mission of WFAD to be the unified voice of civil societies around the world working with the vision of a drug free world.

The development internationally is worrying with some countries taking steps to legalize cannabis which will challenge the three international drug conventions which WFAD sees as the cornerstones of international cooperation around the world drug problem.

The UNGASS meeting took place in 2016. The member states adopted the outcome document in consensus clearly stating that the three International drug conventions are the cornerstones in the international cooperation around drugs. However, the board of WFAD is still concerned by the international development and the drift towards legalization of drugs and still assess our participation in the global debate on drug policy to be vital.

In 2019 a High Level Meeting is planned to be held in connection to the CND meeting. A new action plan will be developed for the period of 2019-2029. WFAD is needed to ensure that words are being developed into reality, we need to work on implementation and show that prevention and recovery works. We do the assessment that the the international drug debate will continue, and the voices of WFAD's members are needed in the international debate.

Aim:

- Promote and encourage participation of WFAD members in the international debate;
- Build and strengthen the capacity of members to take part in the international debate;
- Spread knowledge and experience between members, focusing on the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document;
- Continue to work for good representation of WFAD and its members in global networks of Civil Society, like the Civil Society Task Force;
- Put special focus on informing and actively work against the current trend of legalization of cannabis;
- Continue our engagement in the network Drug Policy Futures.

Develop and carry out projects together with our members

In 2015 WFAD applied and got funds together with four of our member organizations in the Balkans. The aim of the project was to map the activities done both by the civil society and the government to do a needs assessment in the area of recovery in the region. Another aim was also to identify if there was need for capacity building within the member organizations involved in the project. This led to a three year project together with our members in the region to work in accordance with the findings in the mapping.

In 2017 WFAD also started a cooperation project with a member organization in Belarus, also focusing on building the capacity of the member organization and the cooperation between state and non-state actors.

The lack of resources is a common problem for many of WFAD members, many organizations are doing a lot of work with very limited resources. We see a great potential to develop the work and find synergies by coordinating our efforts. Further many of the member organizations of WFAD are relatively new organizations and have asked for assistance in developing the organizational capacity.

The main aim of the is therefore to develop methods to identify how we can cooperate better on an operational level and also to be able to assist in the capacity building of the members. WFAD wants to assist members to be more sustainable and better suited to apply funds to secure their financial sustainability and being able to influence on a national level.

Aim:

- Use the existing knowledge and experience to strengthen the organizational capacity of member organizations;
- Promote cooperation between organizations active in the same area or in the same field of work;
- Develop projects together with you members.

Sustainability of the organization

WFAD was founded in 2009 as a result of the 1st World Forum Against Drugs. During the planning phase of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Forum a project manager and administrative staff were hired. The website of WFAD was constructed during the planning for the 2nd Forum. The site is administered by a webmaster who is employed on a part time basis. From 2009 to 2014 the administration was handled by the Swedish National Association for a Drug-free Society, one of the founders of WFAD. In 2014 a General Secretary was hired to handle the administration and develop the organization.

WFAD has in the meantime grown and has over 200 member organizations all over the world. WFAD has members in all six continents of the world and thus has a strong foothold for recruitment and expanded growth. The member organizations are also crucial for spreading the message of WFAD globally to its target group. To be able to influence the international drug policy debate WFAD needs to show that the public opinion around the world is not in favor of a legalization of drugs.

To boost the power of the world's NGOs, WFAD needs to be a powerful organization, both in quality and in quantity of its members, and WFAD also needs to have a secretariat to be able to coordinate the work of member organizations and board members around the world. As WFAD grows in members there is also a need to coordinate on regional level to better be able to capture regional aspects and challenges.

One of the main obstacles for WFAD to develop has been the lack of sustainability in the organization, primarily in financial means. WFAD core funding is today consisting of a few Swedish member organizations. However, the funding is not sufficient and it is not possible to fund the organization on a continued low level. Other alternatives need to be developed in order to secure that an office of WFAD can be functioning.

Aim:

- Secure core funding for WFAD;
- Build the organizational capacity of WFAD secretariat in Sweden;
- Build regional capacity and coordination of the six continents;
- Develop a long term strategy for the development of WFAD.