



**Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the potential for
a grassroots youth and student drug policy reform movement
in Europe.**

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Partner Members:

**Dipendenza Alternativa
Narkotikapolitisk Ungdom
Studencka Inicjatywa Narkopolityki
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1. Youth Organizations for Drug Action in Europe

In March 2011, Students for Sensible Drug Policy UK hosted the 1st European Youth and Student Drug Policy Reform Conference in Manchester. Since this conference, a working group of individuals from a number of current and nascent national youth and student drug policy reform organizations have been meeting via Skype on a regular basis.

As a result of these discussions, Youth Organisations for Drug Action (YODA) in Europe was launched in December 2011. Release currently facilitates and supports the work of YODA.

YODA is an umbrella organization for youth and student drug policy reform networks in Europe. It actively participates in the development of independent member organizations and will coordinate activities among member organizations within the region. The network's purpose is to be a forum for mutual cooperation, support, development and exchange. It seeks to represent the interests of its member organizations and ambassadors (see Appendix 2) on an international arena. Member organizations and individuals (ambassadors) who join the network as members will be able to feed into any policy or strategy development processes.

Membership

It is envisioned that the network will consist of partner member organizations, which help manage and are supported by the network. Associate member organizations may also be able to join the network; these may not be drug policy reform or harm reduction specific but have relevant contributions for the network and are youth-led. Where there is no appropriate organization to join in their country, individuals will also be able to join the network as ambassadors.

The founding partner member organizations and their countries include; Dipendenza Alternativa (Italy), Narkotikapolitisk Ungdom (Denmark), Studencka Inicjatywa Narkopolityki (Poland), Students for Sensible Drug Policy Ireland and Students for Sensible Drug Policy UK.

We hope to compile a list of supporting organizations, which may not be drug policy reform specific or youth-led, but endorse our network and regularly promote YODA within their own networks.

YODA now has ambassadors with whom we are discussing the possibility of launching new national organizations in the Netherlands, France and Germany. Close relations are also currently being built with a number of organizations, which hope to assist with launching youth movements in their countries; these include Aksion Plus in Albania, the Romanian Harm

Reduction Network, APDES in Portugal, Juventas and NGO4Life in Montenegro, Akzept in Germany and the Swedish Drug Users' Union. All of which have expressed an interest to see youth and student drug policy networks take off in their countries.

Network Activities

In December 2011, shortly after launching the network, a simple website describing its remit and aims was launched. YODA also has a presence on Facebook.

YODA currently has an active working group consisting of a representative from each partner organization. The working group acts as a forum for mutual support and encouragement in the development of the network.

The working group now meets regularly to share ideas and expertise between current and emerging organizations. There are also already discussions under way to develop democratic structures and additional forums for mutual support. It is currently envisioned that all members of partner organisations and ambassadors will eventually be able to stand in the democratic processes of the YODA network. We are also reviewing the possibility of establishing a number of additional smaller local working groups to deal with different areas of the network's evolution.

Initially there were only functioning networks in Poland and the United Kingdom. There are now youth organizations being launched in Denmark (Narkotikapolitisk Ungdom) and Italy (Dipendenza Alternativa). Both have recently launched websites and have points of contact on social media. They are now actively in the process of recruiting members and discussing a framework for organizing in their countries.

YODA has already teamed up with SSDP International and Youth RISE to produce a video montage about how young people all over the world are affected by global drugs policy. This video alongside a document with reports from each country will be shown at the 55th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna.

YODA is very enthusiastic about working with other organizations and is already looking into the possibility of launching party drug harm reduction resources in partnership with Youth RISE. YODA will be responsible for the dissemination and local marketing of the materials.

2. The Mapping Exercise

In December 2011, Release received a grant to map youth and student drug policy reform activity across Europe. This report shows the findings of the Mapping Exercise up until this point. We are half way through the project and the exercise should be complete by April 2012.

Aims of Mapping Exercise

The purpose of this exercise was to:

1. Determine the viability of a grassroots youth and student drug policy reform movement in Europe.
2. Build necessary contacts to recruit activists and support those activists in their respective countries and regions.
3. Assist contacts with establishing the framework to start a national or local network.

Mapping Methodology

The first step in the Mapping Exercise was to find out what other organizations were engaged in drug policy reform and harm reduction advocacy in each country and to make first contact.

After this process was initiated, we started contacting youth and student organizations, which would typically be more open to drug policy reform. This especially applied to the youth wings of those political parties, which already held policy positions in line with the aims and objectives of YODA. Conversations about youth and student engagement in drug policy reform and harm reduction were subsequently requested with relevant individuals.

After putting up a simple website as a point of contact, we utilized our close connections with IDPC to make an announcement about the network as soon as it was launched. We then proceeded with contacting relevant member organizations of the IDPC network, as this gave us credibility. Once this list was exhausted, other drug policy and harm reduction organizations were subsequently contacted. The organizations were selected on the basis that they supported some form of decriminalization and or harm reduction.

During these conversations we sought to find out as much relevant information about drug policy reform advocacy and general youth participation in the political process. The extent to which they were able to support a youth movement or whether they knew of any relevant individuals interested in the issue was also established. In many cases organizations were happy to help out as far as their resources allowed and some were willing to mentor any individuals wishing to set up a national youth movement.

A number of organizations will also be doing regular callouts for members in their countries.

Youth and student organizations were selected for their importance within their countries, and the extent to which they held values, consistent with our aims and objectives. Indeed a large number of liberal, libertarian, green and socialist parties across Europe support a policy shift in this area.

Where we were confident that there would be supportive individuals, we would try and contact a few individuals until we found someone who would engage in a conversation with us. We chose to contact the international officers, communications officers and policy officers all of whom are generally mandated to have these kinds of dialogues as part of their remit.

Contact Mapping is very much an ongoing process. In the short space of time we have been carrying out this activity we have found that there are many organizations and individuals interested in supporting a national movement in their country.

Please see Appendix 1 for information about our progress communicating with individuals in a broad number of countries and administrative regions across Europe. This appendix outlines the interim results of the mapping exercise. We chose to take an inclusive view of the European region as possible.

Supranational Networks

To assist with the mapping of youth and student drug policy advocacy and to generate ideas for the network, we have been building relations with a number of transnational networks. This is an ongoing process but up until this point, conversations have begun with the European Harm Reduction Network, AIDS Foundation East/West, the European Youth Forum and IGLYO (International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organization).

The individuals, whom we have spoken to are supportive of the aims and objectives of YODA and are in favor of collaboration between our respective networks. In addition a broad range of advice has been given on what makes a transnational network successful and other insights, which can help make local member organizations sustainable.

Recurring themes, which were recommended, include ensuring that as broad a range of members can contribute to the work program as possible and that any new organizations should be strongly supported by the movement on the ground.

Actions:

- To continue dialogue with supranational bodies and get more of these entities to send out alerts about the network to member organizations.
- To continue the engagement process with the European Youth Forum with a view to eventually joining the network.
- To continue dialogue with IGLYO and attempt to feed into the work of their Health Working Group.
- To continue to work with the European Harm Reduction Network and their connections.

3. Future Plans

The Mapping Exercise is still ongoing and will be completed in the next couple of months. The number of contacts enthusiastic about YODA and interested in helping to launch national youth and student drug policy reform movements demonstrates a high demand for such a network.

Currently there are two strongly established European youth networks, in Poland and the UK. The other members of YODA are at much early stages of development. We would like YODA to:

- Support the existing networks in Poland and the UK
- Mentor the new networks in Denmark, Ireland and Italy
- Capitalize on the contacts made during the mapping exercise to encourage the creation of new organizations in other European countries and encourage existing organizations to get involved.

The support and mentoring of existing organizations takes the form of an exchange of knowledge, contacts, skills and experience amongst peers.

Each country has different political conditions, cultures of youth activism and potential for support from existing drug policy reform. YODA recognizes that it

is essential that the country organizations are independent of each other but we want to see organizations come into being where there are none.

The experience of starting the first two networks has provided a model for creating new networks in other countries. This 'Ambassador' development model is described in Appendix 2. The mapping exercise has been an excellent opportunity to find the 'Ambassadors'. Currently as mentioned in Section 1, we are beginning to work in this way in a number of countries.

We want to explore the role that YODA can play at lobbying at a European Union level. A pan European youth voice on these issues is likely to have a good impact in terms of media exposure in this arena.

As mentioned in section 1 we wish work with Youth RISE to develop party drug harm reduction outreach resources. Youth RISE are keen on developing a joint bid for European Commission funding for this project. The outreach work will provide a platform to build membership and awareness for national organizations. SIN are already involved in a harm reduction outreach project, which will take place during the European Football Championship this summer. This should fit well with the short and medium term goals which we believe should be based on building membership and hence capacity to campaign across Europe.

Finally we wish to solicit organizations to support YODA, these may not be drug policy reform specific or youth-led, but endorse our network and regularly promote YODA within their own networks. Encouraging a raised profile for drug policy issues in the political debate across Europe and contributing to building a broader coalition to support drug policy reform.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Interim Country Reports (1st March 2012)

Countries	Organisations Mapped	Actions
Albania	In communication with Aksion Plus.	Continue discussions about finding young people to get involved in YODA.
Andorra	None replied.	Review approach for initiating communication.
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In liaison with Austrian Pirate Party drug policy working group. • Young Greens support cannabis legalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep discussing possibility of collaboration with APP to find youth activists. • To follow up with Young Greens.
Armenia	Contacted Antidrugs Civil Union and awaiting a reply.	Utilize connections with harm reduction networks to find more contacts.
Azerbaijan	Contacted national youth and student organizations' umbrella group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up communication. • Utilize connections with harm reduction networks to find more contacts.
Belarus	Seeking contacts for communication.	Utilize connections with harm reduction networks to find more contacts.
Belgium	A number of organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Review approach for initiating communication.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	A number of organisations involved in drug prevention were contacted. We are currently communicating with Margina.	Follow up communication.

Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously met with the Initiative for Health and Promena (cannabis law reform association). • Conversation started with Young Greens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To request alerts about YODA be sent by the main drug policy groups. • Continue conversation with Young Greens.
Croatia	A number of organisations involved in drug policy were contacted. We are currently awaiting a response.	Follow up communication.
Cyprus (North)	There were limited organisations available to contact in Northern Cyprus. We are trying to find a contact for the youth wing of the main liberal democrat party.	Contact CTP Youth
Czech Republic	A number of drug policy reform organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up communication.
Denmark	Narkotikapolitisk Ungdom (Partner organisation) is being launched. They are taking over the mapping of Denmark and now have a website up and running.	Continue to work with YODA to develop local sustainability.
Estonia	A number of youth and student organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Review strategy for seeking organisations for collaboration.
Finland	In discussion with the Humane Drug Policy society.	The Humane Drug Policy society has circulated information about YODA to members.
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In liaison with some French students who visited the Release offices. • In communication with ASUD and Jeunes Radicaux de Gauche. 	In discussion with a member of ASUD about starting a French organisation.

Georgia	The harm reduction NGO, Alternative Georgia was contacted. We are currently waiting for a response.	Review approaching for initiating communication.
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akzept has offered to support any ambassadors. • YODA coordinator addressed the conference of the Young Pirates via Skype. • In dialogue with FDP Youth, Young Greens, Young Pirates, Young socialists of the SPD and SSWUngdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage German organisations. • In discussion with a Young Pirate member in Hamburg about starting a German organisation.
Gibraltar	A few organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Follow up communication.
Greece	The mapping of Greece is an on going project. None of those contacted have replied to us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue mapping. • Follow up communication.
Hungary	We have been working with an individual nominated by the HCLU. Unfortunately this individual has not been very communicative.	Contact HCLU to discuss situation and potentially nominate a new contact.
Iceland	A few organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Follow up communication.
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students for Sensible Drug Policy Ireland (Partner Organisation) are in the process of registering as an association. 	To assist with mapping Ireland once their website is launched.
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dipendenza Alternativa (Partner organisation) is being launched. • They are already in communication with a number of Italian organisations such as LILA and the IDM Institute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To launch website and continue mapping Italy. • To organize seminar at University of Trento.

Kosovo	We were unable to find any organisations that we could consider contacting.	Liaise with Albanian organisations for possible contacts in Kosovo.
Latvia	A number of youth and student organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Review strategy for seeking organisations for collaboration.
Lichtenstein	A number of youth and student organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Review strategy for seeking organisations for collaboration.
Lithuania	The Eurasian Harm Reduction Network and a number of youth and student organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Follow up communication and review strategy for seeking organisations for collaboration.
Luxembourg	In dialogue with the National Union of Students in Luxembourg about the possibility of the union becoming an associate member of YODA.	Continue dialogue with Luxembourg's National Union of Students.
Macedonia	A number of drug policy reform organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Follow up communication.
Malta	A number of organisations were contacted. None have replied so far.	Follow up communication.
Montenegro	NGO4 Life and Juventas (both organisations involved with young people and drug issues) have replied to our requests for communication.	Continue liaising with these organisations to formalize the participation of their youth members within YODA.
The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a number of drug policy and harm reduction campaigns involving young people. • We are in communication with Unity (a peer-led harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In liaison with a former SSDP UK member about the possibility of starting a Dutch student organisation. • To organize a stand

	<p>reduction project) and Stichting Open (University of Amsterdam based foundation promoting research into psychedelics).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDHG (a drug users' union) has offered their support for the formation of any youth and student drug policy reform network in the Netherlands. 	<p>and workshop at Stichting Open's next conference.</p>
Norway	<p>All the main drug policy reform organisations and a number of student unions were contacted. Youth for Humane Drug Policy was launched in 2010 but dissolved very quickly. Some of their members are still part of FHN.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with young FHN members. • To talk to Bergen University Student Union about organising a debate on drug policy.
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Drug Policy Initiative/Studencka Inicjatywa Narkopolityki (Partner Organisation) continues to develop and gain new members. • Supported by the Polish Drug Policy Network. • Starting to have new groups start in other cities. 	<p>To continue to develop and grow the organisation while collaborating with the Polish Drug Policy Network, Social AIDS Committee, OSF Poland and other organisations.</p>
Portugal	<p>In communication with APDES (who have offered to be a supporting organisation) and a youth drug policy activist with the Bloco de Esquerda party.</p>	<p>APDES to do a call out for ambassadors among their party outreach team.</p>
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In communication with the Romanian Harm Reduction Network. • One of their youth members has joined the working group of YODA and is participating in the international video project for the UN CND Meeting in Vienna this year. 	<p>Continue to develop relations with the Romanian Harm Reduction Network.</p>

Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of organisations involved in drug policy were contacted. • In liaison with the AIDS Foundation East/West who have promised to connect us with young drug policy reform activists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up communications. • Liaise with the AIDS Foundation East/West to make contact with Russian youth activists.
Serbia	A number of organisations involved in drug policy were contacted. We are currently waiting for a response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up communication. • Expand list of youth organisations for communication.
Slovakia	A number of organisations involved in drug policy were contacted. We are currently waiting for a response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up communication. • Expand list of youth organisations for communication.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of organisations were contacted. • We have received replies from a couple of cannabis clubs but are in the process of following up with communication with other groups. • Young Greens responded saying they cannot contribute but sent a call out about YODA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with the Cannabis Social Clubs. • Follow up previous contacts.
Sweden	We are currently in liaison with the Swedish Drug Users' Association and RFHL Youth. Both work with drug users and have young members.	Discuss with both groups the possibility of collaboration with YODA.
Switzerland	We are currently in liaison with Eve and Rave and the Young Greens.	Continue discussions.

Turkey	A number of socially liberal organisations were contacted including a cannabis consumers' forum. The libertarian youth 3H movement has said that they will help publicise the network in Turkey.	To work with the 3H movement to produce a Turkish language article inviting people to get involved with YODA.
Ukraine	A number of youth and student organisations have been contacted. We plan on utilizing our connections with the AIDS Foundation East/West to find contacts in the Ukraine.	Follow up communication.
United Kingdom	Students for Sensible Drug Policy UK (Partner Organisation) is continuing to develop its infrastructure and build capacity. The organisation is currently coming to its 4 th year and is now moving towards incorporation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote participation within YODA through extensive international student contacts at UK universities. • To continue the expansion and development of this network.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2: The "Ambassador" development model for youth drug policy reform organisation

As a result of sharing experiences within YODA and discussing the successes and drawbacks of launching youth and student drug policy reform networks in various European countries, we have developed a simple model for enabling contacts made during the Mapping Exercise to be able to form their own national organisations.

The model provides a short description of how one individual can start a national youth and student drug policy reform organisation in a country, where such a network does not currently exist.

This model is a short descriptive history of current experiences and is by no means intended to be limiting.

Recruitment via Contact Mapping

Everything stems from finding someone who is already interested in drug policy. This might be as a result of the individual's studies, work, drug use, social involvement and/or for other reasons. Ideally, the individual already supports national or global drug policy reform and has some knowledge about related issues. The mapping exercise has been crucial to developing these contacts.

Leadership Education and Networking

To enable an ambassador to acquire the skills necessary to effectively lead or coordinate a new national network, they require some "coaching" or "mentoring". In the case of Jan Stola, it was his internship at Release. For Levent Akbulut, this was his time spent volunteering at Release after graduation. Bjarke Jørgensen has worked with the Gadejuristen - The Danish Street Lawyers.

These experiences subsequently allow an individual to learn more about drug policy, non-profit coordination and campaign strategies. Participation within these types of organisations, presents these individuals with the possibility to network with other similarly placed individuals involved in the movement all over the world. Such experiences and connections enable individuals, who often find themselves working with very small groups of people, to feel part of something larger and more significant.

While an internship with a well known local drug policy organisation would give an ambassador the best chance to develop as an organiser; attending conferences and seminars for networking and educational purposes would also be helpful. Providing a young person with the opportunity to make these

contacts, to learn more about drug policy and non-profit organising all increase the chances of this individual taking on an effective leadership role in their country's youth drug policy reform movement and consequently launching a national organisation.

Building a Movement from Scratch

Typically the first step involved in launching a national youth movement is for the ambassador to talk with friends or student colleagues who are interested in drug policy as well as any other young drug policy activists in their country. The initial conversations will simply be about creating a youth and student organisation. For Jan Stola, this was a crucial turning point in the potential for the formation of a Polish organisation as he found a number of his friends were interested in helping build the movement and they are still very much involved in the network.

The second step involves expanding this circle to include a wider network of individuals with different talents and perspectives. In Poland, this was done by activists searching through their Facebook friends' lists and messaging those most likely to be interested; in the UK similarly a Facebook group was launched. The following categories of individuals were engaged:

- Third sector employees.
- Individuals interested in social issues.
- People who use drugs.
- Active political supporters in the left/liberal/green and libertarian movements.
- Students of subjects related to drug policy.

Interested individuals were invited to initial meetings. During these meetings, ideas for the organisation (such as the name) and drug policy were discussed. Through this process of open participation, people were more likely to want to participate in the network as they were given the opportunity to contribute and subsequently felt closer to the idea and formation of the movement.

Organizational Development

After the founding members were recruited and actively engaged in the development of the organisation, the next steps were to find supporting organisations and more members. In each country this approach will be dependent on the capacity of the local drug policy reform movement to support the youth movement and the medium for social networking in the country.

For example, Facebook is the most popular social networking site for students and young people in a number of countries across Europe. Launching and promoting a group or fan page for the organisation, sharing news and data

about drug policy nationally and globally all create interest and awareness in these issues amongst fans or members. As the number of fans or members grows, the number of potential active members for the organisation also increases. Every so often, a message with a call out for members was sent out and people would often then respond with interest. Alternatively one could message those members who are most active in participating in these forums. Members can also be recruited around universities, colleges and youth clubs etc.

Within educational establishments, activists should talk to those involved in other clubs with an interest in drug policy and related areas. Some instructors may also be helpful and allow the activist to present the organisation to their students at some point during a class.

Within the coming months, YODA hopes to have relations with established drug policy reform organisations in each European country. We then hope to utilize these relations to support individual ambassadors of YODA to start their own youth organisations. In the event there is no appropriate supporting organisation to help an ambassador, we would propose these individuals be sent to local or regional drug policy reform events (such as conferences) to network and learn more about the movement. These events give ambassadors the opportunity to meet other organisations, which they may be able to collaborate with and whether support, financial or other is possible.

It is absolutely imperative that each youth organisation establish some form of a basic website with associated email addresses as soon as possible. This is very achievable through Wordpress and TalkingDrugs has thus far been providing embryonic organisations with this facility. Achieving formal registration as an association is an added bonus for demonstrating credibility for funding purposes.

Organizational Sustainability

Organisational sustainability is by its very nature an ongoing process, which requires passionate individuals and the support of those with expertise in a range of relevant areas.

Once an organisation has at least a few active members, it can start its first actions/projects. In the early days when resources are limited it is best for them to sign up to the wider campaign organised by another drug policy reform organisation, this might be a transnational YODA campaign or that of a local network. Small groups can also choose to carry out lower level activities such as running a stall at an event, talking to people about drug policy or even organising a debate.

The support of local more established organisations is crucial for guaranteeing the sustainability of any new youth organisation. When Students for Sensible Drug Policy UK was launched, the network received seed money,

campaign materials and resources from Release and Transform. This helped the organisation develop and gain credibility when recruiting new members and reaching out to others involved in drug policy. Equally, the Polish Drug Policy Network has also played an invaluable role supporting the work of the Polish Student Drug Policy Initiative and by providing them with resources and established campaigns to support they have been given the opportunity to grow and gain credibility.