PUNITIVE LAWS ARE NOT THE SOLUTION

STATEMENTS 2016
"Most of problems and tragedies we have faced as drug users in fact is due to legal and social criminalization of drugs not because of it..."

Those simple and very correct words revealed by a friend changed the depth of my philosophy of life.

This friend told me how circumstances ended with him as what it is now; He was released from prison for a whole year because of drug use.

To become in street with many others who lost their jobs due same reason. And because of that his family abandoned him.

Tired, miserable he came out holding inside himself all misery of the world, along with HIV and HCV viruses.

No family, no job, weak health and no place harboring him.

He was not imprisoned due to drug but because of the law.

He did not lose his job and family because he used drug, but because of prison and social perception of him.

Drug use does not cause HIV and HCV but sharing syringes is the main cause. Not being able to buy syringes from pharmacies, this forced us to share it or to take them from hospitals waste; in addition to the fact that we cannot keep them in safe place because of fear to be caught as it will be perceived as evidence of crime.

If there was no criminalization, many of us might not have to leave their friends when they get overdose, which might lead them to die, all of this because of fear of arrest if they take them to hospital.

It was that war which crushed him but not ended drugs problem.. "WAR ON DRUGS"
I am an Egyptian young man. I was living a normal life like any one else. I was happy and have a promising future. I have many friends and used to go out with them for enjoyment. That was before I know drugs and used it motivated by curiosity as young, the first time I used drug was when we were on a trip in public park. And while we were using drug we surprised by policemen who surrounding us. They confiscated what we have of hashish, then took us to police station and opened official record. We begged the officer, telling him that we are student in universities and soon will perform our exams, and asked him not to issue a case against us, but he insisted and that what happened. We were taken to court and sentenced for three years for each of us.

That was my first time using drug, and my first problem with judiciary.

I spent three years of my life in jail with criminals and drug dealers, and came out without hope. I lost my future, dreams and whole of my life only because of misunderstanding and not applying the spirit of the law.
I am a young woman living in Lebanon and struggling as thousands of others, with daily stigmatization and criminalization. I would like to share part of my story so you can be in my shoes for a minute and try to have an objective point of view on my way of life without judging me negatively.

Why am I stigmatized, criminalized and punished by society? Because I do drugs? Yes, because of Heroin, Cocaine, Amphetamine or basically anything that finishes with "ine" and/or any illicit substance that puts me into a state of mind where I do not care anymore about my country’s politics, economics and social problems.

In other words, I take any substance that may fill with joy my long workless and useless days. A substance that blurs my vision, and makes me see hope where nothing awaits for me.

However, I was spending a lot of energy to hide this habit from others. On a first hand, because our legal system forbids strongly the use of any illicit substance and I can be punished just for consuming. On the other hand, society will judge me by stigmatizing me and treating me differently just because I am using these substances.

For example, a lot of men will think that I am an easy woman just because I do drugs and will try to use my addiction as a bait to their pleasure.

Even police can use this argument as a threat: "If you don’t agree to do that or this, you will be thrown in jail."

The healthcare providers have the same sorry look when I say that I use substances or that I am on OST (Opiate substitution treatment), as if I was hit by a terrible incurable disease that makes me less of a human.

Why do most of people in our Middle Eastern society think that a woman who uses drugs has little moral values? I never did harm to anybody to feed my habit and my moral value is exactly what I am fighting for now by this testimonial, because I strongly believe in Human Rights.

I am sharing my story so you can try to see me as a citizen first of all, a person who has rights as a human and not just a "junkie"...
"The use of illegal drugs is considered a criminal act in most countries around the world. People who use drugs are thrown in jail, and as statistics show, new addictions actually grow while in prison. The war on drugs has had devastating consequences, from increased public health issues to violence and overall corruption. Let’s face it, incarceration does not work! Support don’t punish, a global advocacy campaign, aims to change that. Drug use must be decriminalized, and work must be aimed towards harm reduction instead, especially in matters pertaining to HIV. From art to protests and pressure groups, this campaign hopes to change the public and governmental eloquence on drugs."

"يعتبر استخدام المخدرات غير المشروعة عملا إجراميا في معظم البلدان في جميع أنحاء العالم. يتم طرح مستخدمي المخدرات في السجن، وكما تشير الإحصاءات الجديدة أن أنواع جديدة من الإدمان متواجدة في السجون. إن الحرب على المخدرات كانت ناتجة عن عواقب وخيمة من زيادة فضائح الصحة العامة للعنف والفساد العام. دعونا نواجه الأمر. إن السجن ليس الحل! إن حلولنا لا تعاقب هي حلول دعوة عالمية، ودعاها إلى تغيير هذا الاتجاه في العالم. ومع هذا الموضوع لا يجب تجريم استخدام المخدرات. يجب أن يهدف العمل الحذر من المخاطر بدلا من ذلك، مخصصة في المشاكل المتعلقة بفيروس نقص المناعة البشرية، النظرا من الفن إلى الاحتجاجات وجماعات الضغط. وتأمل هذه الحملة لتغيير النشأة العامة والحكومية حول موضوع المخدرات."

LEBANON – MENANPUD – 2016 – 2
I never thought that I will stop injecting drugs even for one day of my life, that because of my personal circumstances in addition to that, I am living in an area that where getting drugs more easier than getting food, but when I met with specialist association in drugs, and knew about harms caused by injecting drugs I decided to stop, and actually I do that, but our society don’t have any mercy neither support. The society is full of punishment, stigma and discrimination, especially against me because of my sexual orientation, I am gay and that puts me under multiple suffers, one of that: policemen that looks to drug users as criminals who deserves punishment while they neglect everything about human rights and personal rights that are universally recognized.

Second one; our society is rigid, it is a society who says a thing and does other thing.

In this occasion of this global day of action and “International day against abuse and illicit trafficking”, I am asking the society and policy makers to support and help, we are humans exactly like you, do not criminalize and punish me, I am open about my life, I am clear and I do not like to live in the dark, be a believer of personal freedoms and choices, and let us say together “Support don’t Punish”
Pakistani people who inject drugs (PWIDs) are living under dark clouds of violation of human rights. They are facing multiple problems related to the lack of access to Harm reduction services, including the naloxone; the overdose prevention treatment. Thousands of PWIDs had lost their valuable lives due to overdose. In Pakistan almost half of people who use drugs (PWUDs) want to quit drugs or to benefit of Opioid Substitution Therapy such as buprenorphine and methadone but they could not because OST is not yet allowed or legalized in Pakistan. “No access to drug treatment causes death... Many of PWIDs live with HIV but lack of adherence to it for many environmental reasons. So many people died due to AIDS but still no appropriate response from stakeholders.

PWUDs in Pakistan have been subjected to violence from many people and they steal to buy food and drugs, but they are trying to survive in this hard time. Our Pakistani PWUDs request a full access to harm reduction services including Naloxone service similarly to some developed countries.

Our PWUDs are actively standing with Support Don’t Punish, as through this campaign, they will hope to be heard and to have access to better health and comprehensive harm reduction services which will save their lives. Harm reductions save lives and we surely need it.
القوانين العقابية ليست الحل

تصريحات ٢٠١٦

MENANPUD

Support. don't punish.

ندعم ولا نعتق! MENAHRA