

Northern Drug Policy Network Partnership

Report
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Background

Since March 2008 when NordAN filed an application for a major drug policy project to support development of a "comprehensive, sustainable and cohesive drug policy" throughout the northern area - **Northern Drug Policy Dialogue** - we have been in constant dialogue with the Council of Ministers Secretariat and administrators of the NGO support programs. The main application from 23.3.2008 was followed by a pilot project application to this program and in the early spring 2009 NordAN was granted a small amount for a pilot project: **Northern Drug Policy Network Partnership**.

Change of plans

This pilot project was prepared in very close contact with its sponsors and was originally send in 31.3.2009 and after the first contact meeting in Oslo with representatives the Baltic NGO Network against Drugs the original timetable and plans was somehow altered (19.4.2009) as was the final third application (16.6.2006) – done as the project was already on its way. During the spring 2009 we had a number of contacts on mail and telephone and agreed that the two originally planned network meetings in June and September could instead be replaced by NordAN representatives taking part in project meetings and seminars in Russia set up by the relevant networks and projects that we were planning to invite to theses meetings. Participation in these project meetings and seminars meant that we would still be able to pursuit the main goals of the Northern Drug Policy Network Partnership project and even save money.

Improving the knowledgebase

As part of the preparation and in order to improve the knowledge base of the project the NordAN secretary general took part in a scientist thematic meeting Hard Drug Use in the Nordic Countries – what do we know? - organized by NAD /NVC 19.-20. March in Helsinki. Input reflecting the social dimension of the drug problems and especially understanding in depth the self constructed narratives (motives and reasons) of users and dealers of drugs led to the project invitation of two Swedish social scientists to act as advisors and to speak on these matters in a special drug policy workshop at the annual NordAN Conference in Helsinki based on the same main theme: Symbolism of Alcohol and Drugs

NordAN Drug Policy Platform

The grant from NCM made it possible to establish a NordAN Drug Policy Committee, to produce proposal for new and updated NordAN Drug Policy Platform, which was to be adopted at the annual assembly of representatives in Helsinki in October 2009.

The members of the NordAN Drug Policy Committee; Anders Ulstein, Norway, Ritva Varamäki, Finland, Johan Damgaard Jensen, Denmark, Árni Einarsson, Iceland and Jakob Lindberg, Sweden and the Secretary General Hasse Schneidermann only had to meet once in Stockholm in June. After that they took part in an e-discussion before they were able to draft a report and proposal to the extended NordAN board meeting in September, agreeing on the proposal, preparing the annual political conference in Helsinki, the special drug workshops and the assembly of representatives.

After this meeting all NordAN members was invited to discuss the proposal from the board and late changes was actually made at a late night meeting the day before the annual assembly of representatives which did indeed adopt a new and updated NordAN Drug Policy Platform.

Memorandum of Understanding

The grant also meant that NordAN representatives was able to attend and speak on the recent EU and UN drug policy developments at the international seminar in St. Petersburg 25th June organized by the Baltic NGO Network Against Drugs where also the two networks and audience had the opportunity to discuss and adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two networks prepared and presented at the seminar by NordAN secretary general.

Broader NGO basis

NordAN representatives also participated as speakers in the international project kick-off seminar in Arkhangelsk 6th – 9th October 2009 organized by the project Social Partnership against Drug Addiction - Preventing HIV / AIDS in North-West Russia. This project was initiated by the Government of Arkhangelsk Region in collaboration with the NGO "Rassvet" which was the NordAN primary planning contact during summer and autumn 2009.

On the basis of the ongoing discussions in the NordAN Drug Policy committee and the agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NordAN and Baltic NGO Network Against Drugs, member of NordAN drug policy committee, Anders Ulstein (Actis), spoke on the recent EU and UN drug policy developments and on the social dimension of the drug problems while the NordAN secretary general spoke on ideas of how to build and improve NGO network capacity within drug policy in the region.

At meetings in Archangelsk it was also discussed how NordAN could play a role both as a Nordic project partner in connection to the planned study visits to the Nordic countries of the Social Partnership project and how the Archangelsk project base could function as one of the Russian focal point in the NordAN initiated project-idea

A joint charter: New NordAN project idea

In March 2009 the United Nations adopted, a new ten-year strategy for combating drug problems in the world. Both the adoption of the NordAN Drug Policy Platform and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Baltic NGO Network against Drugs is based on a support to the implementation of this positive development.

As we no longer think that there is a need for a project to discuss and develop regional "comprehensive, sustainable and cohesive drug policy" like the one we filed in March 2008 we changed our original application and asked NCM to support a project creating a strong regional NGO network support for the implementation of such instead. This new project should be seen as both the continuation of our application from 2008, results and experiences from the completed the pilot project and the very positive developments in the United Nations.

As some NordAN member organizations have been very active in the formation of both European and global networks against drugs. Particular through the exchange of experience and corporation with Europe against Drugs (EURAD) and the World Federation Against Drugs (WFAD) we believe that the new NordAN project idea - **Northern Dimension Drug Dialogue** - would be able to participate in the promotion and implementation of knowledge based and effective regional drug policy.