

Concept Note

Awareness raising workshop to Women Who Use Drugs in Egypt

General Outline:

Title of the Grant	GNP+ Love Alliance Project
Donor	GNP+
Activity Title	Awareness raising workshop targeting Women Who Use Drugs in Egypt.
Activities	Four-days awareness raising workshop targeting Women Who Use Drugs in Egypt. Number of attendees: 15 women
Estimated Implementation Date:	June 2024 – October 2024

Introduction:

MENA Rosa is a pioneer regional network of women living with HIV in the MENA region. We aim to support and empower women and girls in their diversity, those living with HIV, those at risk of infection, and their families and partners through advocacy, research, awareness raising, and capacity building.

MENA Rosa was founded in 2010 as the first regional network of Women Living with HIV (WLHIV) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) securing an independent niche for Women in Their Diversity (WiTD). Its main objective is to advocate for the rights of WiTD and improve their lives. MENA Rosa focuses on supporting and empowering women and girls living with or at risk of HIV, as well as their families and partners, through developing their leadership skills and promoting effective participation in raising awareness, advocacy, and networking.

MENA Rosa is currently based in Lebanon and has focal points in 11 countries in the MENA region, including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen.

Project Overview:

Women in the MENA Region face multiple challenges: they live in a patriarchal society where traditional gender roles are prevalent and clearly defined. Women from Key Populations, in

particular Women Who Use Drugs (WWUD), encounter additional challenges: they face Stigma and Discrimination, less social support than their male counterparts and are usually rejected by their family. They are more likely to suffer violence from intimate partners, dealers or family members.

In Egypt, there has been a significant increase in the prevalence of drug use, with an estimated 9 million¹ individuals using drugs in 2018.

There is limited research addressing the gender dimension of drug use, understanding the needs and documenting the profiles of WWUD and Women Who Inject Drugs (WWID) in Egypt.

The conservative nature of Egyptian society, influenced by cultural norms and values, exacerbates the stigma surrounding drug use among women. This leads to experiences of discrimination, isolation, marginalization and hinders their attempts to enter treatment and receive support. During the initial half of 2022, women represented only 2% of the treated population².

Women's drug use is often driven by underlying factors such as trauma, particularly gender-based and intimate partner violence, as well as experiences of bereavement. Marital discord, concerns about divorce, and the potential loss of child custody contribute significantly to stress and isolation. Additionally, women's involvement with drugs is frequently initiated and facilitated by men, including siblings, partners, and sex work clients.

Accordingly, under the GNP+ Love Alliance Project, MENA Rosa and through the Focal Points, wishes to organize a four-day awareness raising workshop targeting WWUD in Cairo - Egypt, to improve their knowledge about their health to make informed decisions and adopt non risky behaviors.

Description of the Activity:

MENA Rosa wishes to increase the knowledge and awareness of WWUD in Egypt regarding their health, harm reduction principles, thus empower them to make informed decisions and adopt non-risky behaviors.

This activity will be implemented in partnership with Freedom Association, and with the technical support of UNAIDS Country Office and National AIDS Program in Egypt.

A four-days awareness raising workshop targeting 15 women who use drugs, will be conducted in Cairo-Egypt. This workshop will include topics such as HIV, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C (prevention, transmission, treatment), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Harm Reduction, Violence Against Women, referral to legal and

¹ https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/2023/HIVDoc/Digital_Report-UNODC-Rapid_Situation_Assessment_Of_Women_Who_Use_Drugs_In_Egypt-Final.pdf

² National Drug Observatory Annual Report (2021). National Drug Observatory Egypt

medical services, etc. One day of the workshop will be entirely dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.

Timeline:

Preparation for the awareness raising workshop will start in June, and the estimated implementation date is in August 2024.

Project's Objectives:

The awareness raising workshop will empower WWUD on their health and harm reduction principles, enabling them to make informed decisions and adopt non risky behaviors.

- Increase knowledge of WWUD on SRH, STIs, Blood-borne pathogens (prevention, transmission, treatment), Harm Reduction, access to legal and medical services. etc.
- Improve the mental health and wellbeing of WWUD; and
- Empower WWUD to become positive agents of change.

Project's Outcomes:

- Knowledge of WWUD increased on topics related to their health
- Awareness of WWUD raised regarding their mental health and well-being; and
- Contribute to building the movement of WWUD, peer educators.

Target Stakeholders:

This workshop targets: Women Who Use Drugs.