

Pompidou Group 2014 Executive Training on Drug Policy on: Drug policy implementation under budgetary constraints and austerity measures

Training course outline

Dates: 21 - 23 May 2014, needs assessment seminar (1st module)
15 - 19 September 2014, qualifying seminar (2nd module)

Place: - *to be determined* -

Scope and purpose of the Training Programme

Political scope

A matter of urgency for the Pompidou Group: The Permanent Correspondents appeal in their Athens Declaration adopted on 25 November 2013 to all actors in drug policy to initiate and support immediate political action to mitigate the impact of economic crises, particularly on the most vulnerable, and to guarantee broad coverage, accessibility and quality of essential services, despite budgetary constraints.

A priority human rights issue for the Council of Europe: The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, stated on 3 December 2013: "Many governments in Europe imposing austerity measures have forgotten about their human rights obligations, especially the social and economic rights of the most vulnerable, the need to ensure access to justice, and the right to equal treatment. Regrettably, international leaders have also neglected to incorporate human rights considerations into many of their assistance programmes"

Training needs

In some countries there is evidence that drug policy implementation has been seriously affected by budgetary constraints. Additionally, in a number of European countries severe economic constraints have undermined efforts to sustainably increase the coverage of services provided to people who use drugs.

The economic crisis is linked with a social and political crisis. However the impact of the economic crises is asymmetric, as it often doesn't affect the whole country or all population groups, but only some regions, towns or sub-populations, even if the most vulnerable.

Effective responses to such emerging challenges require targeted and customized policy responses and adjustments of services and must take into account the affected populations and regional specificities. In order to develop such responses, capacities must be developed that can

identify specific feasible measures and the scale of investment required to rapidly respond. Rapid assessment and prioritising skills are as important to learn as it is necessary to look for new synergies and economies to be able to ensure what has been identified as essential services.

Competences need to be developed to effectively build up concerted action by cooperation and joint action, not only between government agencies but also with civil society. Successful concerted action will not only provide new insights and data from the field but will also help to optimise investment and the use of resources, as well as allow for making good use of synergy effects.

Objectives

- Providing capacity building development and implementation of drug policy under budgetary constraints and austerity measures.
- Developing and making use of specific instruments to assess possible impact of budgetary cuts on drug consumption and service provision.
- Assessing existing innovative solutions to optimize outcomes of service provision thus ensuring cost-effectiveness.
- Building capacities to respond to new challenges, such as new psychoactive substances, misuse of prescription medicines, 'legal highs' and increasing poly-drug use, under circumstances of limited or reduced budget allocations.

Benefits

- More effective and efficient cooperation and partnerships with civil society ensuring an optimization of investment, better use of resources and creation of synergies.
- Capacity building in development of instruments to define specific problems caused through substance misuse and provision of a decision making matrix ensuring human rights for all individuals.
- Participants will learn how to adapt existing standards according to the present economic situation by ensuring access to treatment and care for drug using individuals, especially vulnerable groups
- Ability to prioritize of a minimum set of services that have to be ensured regardless of the specific economic situation

Participation

The Programme targets managers from governmental institutions that are responsible for developing and/or implementing drug policies and/or coordinating related programme implementation, service delivery and cooperation with stakeholders. To ensure a highly participatory learning process the training is limited to a maximum of 35 participants (from Council of Europe member States and non-member States). High-profile facilitators will be identified and engaged on the basis of the elaborated topics.

Working methods

The Executive Training consists of a preparation phase and 2 seminar modules. The work is conducted in plenary sessions and working groups in a highly participatory format. The activities are planned and organised by a group of experts. Participants are required to commit themselves to participate in and prepare for both modules.

Languages: To ensure a highly inter-active training and to allow for direct communication between all participants at all times the main working language will be English. Based on need and feasibility certain working groups can be organised in other languages (e.g. Russian or French) on an ad hoc basis during the seminars.

Preparation: A detailed participation form filled in by participants together with their CVs will help the group of experts to get an overview over the individual profiles of participants and serve as a basis to prepare the programme for the first seminar that will focus on needs assessment (1st module).

Module I: Needs Assessment Seminar

During this seminar participants will explore the issues and aspects of their work related to policy implementation under budgetary constraints and austerity measures. They will identify factors and competences that are needed to manage budget constraints resulting from austerity measures. At the end of the seminar participants will prepare a list of proposals as to what they see as needed to support them to overcome the obstacles and barriers in their work.

Following the needs assessment seminar the group of experts will assess the process and the outcomes in order to prepare a list of topics which are feasible for the qualifying seminar (2nd module) and identify relevant experts as facilitators.

Module II: Qualifying Seminar

The qualifying seminar will be a training activity based on the identified needs by the participants and their suggestions for supportive action that can be achieved in a training context. The activity will consist of two parts. Part I will provide input sessions and reflection sessions in which the relevance of the topics to the individual work context of participants is discussed. During part II on-site visits to selected projects and institutions will be facilitated. Following the training, participants will have further built their capacities and competences that are directly relevant to their day-to-day work.

Additional value

In addition to the capacity building effect of the training activity, the seminars will produce information of interest to policy makers. In particular knowledge on ways how to overcome barriers and obstacles in policy implementation, as well as ways to improve the quality of work, is a valuable source of information for the decision making level.

Follow-up

The Executive Training will also serve as a starting point for continued networking between participants thus setting an impulse that will be prone to deliver further beneficial insights and understanding on all relevant aspects. The Secretariat of the Pompidou Group will assist in facilitating this process.

Contact and further information

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