

Attachment 4

*Broken Drug Policies: Inter-Municipal
Strategic Action Committee Project
Overview*

Canadian Drug Policy Coalition

Broken Drug Policies: Inter-Municipal Strategic Action Committee

Project Overview

Working Document (subject to change)

Background

British Columbia is several years into a drug poisoning crisis. This crisis is driven by outdated policies that support a toxic illegal drug market, compromise harm reduction efforts, and exacerbate violence toward marginalized people who consume drugs. Its impacts have been devastating. Not only has our policy landscape claimed thousands of lives, penalties for drug use have cascading consequences that can, paradoxically, lead to further drug use. For example, mandatory addiction treatment, housing segregation based on government-assigned mental health status, and exclusion from the formal economy and education system due to drug-related offenses are demonstrably linked to isolation, increased rates of traumatic stress, and, because of this, accidental overdose.

Presently, neither criminal nor medical approaches to these problems promote enduring progress. While the latter is preferable, not all people who use drugs experience addiction, and those who do may be responding to structural inequalities on the bases of class, race, culture, ability, gender, and sexuality. All deserve to be treated through a lens of public health and human rights. Access to a legal, regulated supply of currently illegal drugs would be the cornerstone of this systemic change.

Implementing a legal regulatory framework would have profound implications. First, it would enable people to make informed choices about whether to acquire drugs, and - if so - to know what they are getting. This could decrease rates of unintentional overdose, mitigate stigma, allow for factual education about drug use, and empower people to seek consensual treatment where appropriate. Next, legal regulation could lessen crime, social disorder, and the taxpayer burden of disease by providing a system of oversight and quality control throughout the supply chain for drugs. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a radical shift is clear. Academics, government officials, and healthcare professionals have joined people with lived and living experience of drug use to demand an end to prohibition.

Project Overview

Developing a post-prohibition strategy for drug management will be a complex endeavour requiring endorsement from all levels of government. However, municipalities are uniquely positioned to lead. They benefit from direct access to community feedback, the presence of motivated actors who may be personally invested in reform, and opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring jurisdictions. Together, they have the power to mobilize from the bottom up.

Participants will thus form an interjurisdictional strategic action committee to engage with key stakeholders, especially people most impacted by drug policies, discuss the variables that shape consumer experience, consider the benefits and drawbacks of different regulatory models, and explore the practical details of legal regulation such as production and outcome evaluation. Through a combination of education and advocacy, participants will make a concrete contribution to ending the failed war on drugs. Upon conclusion they

will have been connected to a network of peers with similar objectives and will be well situated to present their proposal(s) to constituents and higher levels of government.

Group Composition and Schedule

The strategic action committee will consist of municipal actors whose roles may include Mayor, city councillor, or social or community planner. Each will be generally familiar with the effects of prohibition and will have practical experience implementing and evaluating policy. Participants have thus far been identified through targeted recruitment based on previously stated interest in alternative drug management models as well as through network connections and by word of mouth.

The committee will meet for bi-weekly seminars, dialogues, and guest webinars over the course of six months. Each meeting will last approximately two hours. Participants will be asked to do one-two hours of preparation before each meeting that may include reading, completing semi-structured surveys, or seeking out answers to geographically specific questions. All content, including reports and suggested documents, will be provided.

Meeting Outlines and Descriptions

**Schedule is subject to change

1. Introductions and Orientation

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build rapport • Establish group agreements • Stimulate critical reflection on what constitutes a "drug," who uses drugs, and for what reasons
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Shared principles • Definitional discussion • Personal and group objectives
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 17, 2017. Hart, C. L. "Viewing Addiction As A Brain Disease Promotes Social Injustice." Nature Human Behaviour. URL: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0055 • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 20, 2015. Valentish, J. "Why Addiction Isn't A Disease But Instead the Result of 'Deep Learning.'" The Age. URL: https://www.theage.com.au/national/why-addiction-isnt-a-disease-marc-lewis-seo-here-20150810-qivho9.html

2. Naming the Problems

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the origins of the "war on drugs" • Link prohibition to drug toxicity and rates of accidental overdose • Articulate the uneven consequences of prohibition for multiply marginalized communities
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief history of prohibition • Distinctions between transnational organized crime and localized "drug dealing" • Drug toxicity under prohibition • The burden of prohibition on poor and racialized communities
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.D. Boyd, S. "History of Drug Policy In Canada". Excerpt from Busted: An Illustrated History of Drug Prohibition in Canada. URL: https://drugpolicy.ca/about/history/ • Dec. 2020. Gullapali, V. "Seeing The Humanity Of People Who Sell Drugs." In: The Appeal. URL: https://theappeal.org/seeing-the-humanity-of-people-who-sell-drugs/ • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection questions
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020. "Enforcement Of Drug Laws: Refocusing On Organized Crime Elites." Global Commission On Drug Policy. URL: https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FINAL-EN_2020report_web.pdf • June 2021. "Overdose Response Indicator Report." BC Centre for Disease Control. URL: http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Statistics%20and%20Research/Statistics%20and%20Reports/Overdose/Overdose%20Response%20Indicator%20Report.pdf • Summer 2020. Maynard, R. "When it Comes to the War on Drugs, Abolition in the Only Option: Ending the War on Black Communities". URL: https://drugpolicy.ca/about/racism/ • March 19, 2019. "Indigenous Harm Reduction = Healing the Harms of Colonialism." Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development. URL: http://www.icad-cisd.com/pdf/Publications/Indigenous-Harm-Reduction-Policy-Brief.pdf

3. Mapping the Policy Landscape

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate preliminary understanding of the Federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) • Describe the delivery of “safe supply” models in BC • Broadly articulate the interplay of federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdiction over drug policy
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution and infrastructure of the CDSA • Interactions between provincial and federal actors for implementing policy change • How "safe supply" is defined, regulated, and delivered in BC • Safe supply expansions under Covid and their limitations • Municipal powers under the CDSA
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 2013. “Bill C-65: An Act to Amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.” (P. 1 - 12). Legal and Social Affairs Division, Parliamentary Information and Research Services. URL: https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/LegislativeSummaries/411C65E • April 2019. “Stopping the Harm: Decriminalization of People who Use Drugs in BC.” (P. 34 - 39). Provincial Health Officer. URL: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/special-reports/stopping-the-harm-report.pdf • July 15, 2021. Bernard, R., & Steacy, L. “Drug User Advocates Say B.C.’s Safe Supply Program Still Inaccessible, Inadequate.” CityNews11:30. URL: https://www.citynews1130.com/2021/07/15/bc-safe-supply-drug-user-reaction/ • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aug. 2021. “Civil Society Platform: Decriminalizing Drugs.” Strategy Group on Drug Decriminalization. EMBARGOED. • Feb. 2019. “Safe Supply Concept Document.” Canadian Association of People who Use Drugs (CAPUD). URL: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ef3cdaf47af2060a1cc594e/t/608c29e8d9137244ec7da81f/1619798507472/CAPUD+safe+supply+English+March+3+2019.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2020. “Subsection 56(1) Class Exemptions for Patients, Practitioners, and Pharmacists Prescribing and Providing Controlled Substances in Canada.” Health Canada. URL: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns/controlled-substances-precursor-chemicals/policy-regulations/policy-documents/section-56-1-class-exemption-patients-pharmacists-practitioners-controlled-substances-covid-19-pandemic.html • N.D. “Application Form: Section 56.1 Exemption for Medical Purposes under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for Activities at a Supervised Consumption Site” Health Canada. URL: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/substance-abuse/supervised-consumption-sites/apply/how-to-apply.pdf • April 4, 2020. Mullins, G. (Host). Apocalypse Prescribing. Ep. 15 [Audio podcast episode]. Crackdown. Cited Media Productions LTD. URL: https://crackdownpod.com/podcast/episode-15-apocalypse-prescribing/
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4. Evaluating Decriminalization

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define decriminalization • Describe the public health and safety benefits of decriminalization • Articulate the shortcomings of decriminalization
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study: Vancouver’s legislative pathway to decriminalization • Responses to the “Vancouver Model” • Enforcement in theory and practice under decriminalization
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 12, 2021. Larsen, K. “Vancouver Model’ of Drug Decriminalization Deeply Flawed, Says Coalition.” CBC News. URL: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-decriminalization-model-flawed-national-coalition-says-1.6022310 • Sept. 15, 2020. “Act Now! Decriminalizing Drugs in Vancouver.” Shane, C. Pivot Legal Society: Technical Brief and Recommendation. URL: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/pivotlegal/pages/3494/attachments/original/1600280708/Decriminalization_Report_Final.pdf?1600280708
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of VANDU (TBD)

Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2021 (Submitted May 2021). “Preliminary Submission to Health Canada: Exemption Request.” City of Vancouver. URL: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/cdsa-preliminary-exemption-request.pdf • Aug. 13, 2021. Greeg, A. et al. “How To Decriminalize Drugs: The Design Features Of A Non-Criminal Response To The Personal Possession Of Drugs.” International Journal of Drug Policy. URL: https://www.crimrxiv.com/pub/8qgki9ur/release/1 • Sept. 2018. “Is Decriminalization Enough? Drug User Community Voices from Portugal.” (Pp. 4 - 22). International Network of People who Use Drugs. URL: https://www.inpud.net/sites/default/files/Portugal_decriminalisation_final_online%20version%20-%20RevisedDec2018.pdf • July 2020. “Decriminalization for Simple Possession of Illicit Drugs: Exploring Impacts on Public Safety and Policing.” Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, Special Purpose Committee on the Decriminalization of Illicit Drugs. URL: https://www.cacp.ca/index.html?asst_id=2189 • Aug. 17, 2020. “5.13 Prosecution of Possession of Controlled Substances Contrary to s. 4(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.” Public Prosecution Service of Canada. URL: https://www.ppsc-sppc.gc.ca/eng/pub/fpsd-sfpg/fps-sfp/tpd/p5/ch13.html
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5. Introducing Legal Regulation

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrogate common myths about legal regulation • Articulate the meaning of a “public health and human rights” oriented drug strategy
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key distinctions between decriminalization and legal regulation • Guiding principles of legal regulation
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2009. “After the War on Drugs: Blueprint for Legal Regulation.” Transform Drug Policy Foundation. (P. 1- 11). URL: https://transformdrugs.org/assets/files/PDFs/blueprint-for-regulation-fulltext-2009.pdf • Sept. 12, 2017. Lopez, G. “I Used to Support Legalizing All Drugs. Then The Opioid Epidemic Happened.” Vox. URL: https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/4/20/15328384/opioid-epidemic-drug-legalization • Activities:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection questions
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018. "Regulation: The Responsible Control of Drugs." Global Commission on Drug Policy. URL: http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ENG-2018_Regulation_Report_WEB-FINAL.pdf

6. Possible Models of Legal Regulation

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the levers that would shape consumer experience under legal regulation • Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of different regulatory models • Debate the mechanics of a regulatory framework that best prioritizes public health and human rights
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The five key regulatory levers • Drug-specific considerations • Honouring "the dignity of risk"
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2009. "After the War on Drugs: Blueprint for Legal Regulation." Transform Drug Policy Foundation. (P. 31 - 52). URL: https://transformdrugs.org/assets/files/PDFs/blueprint-for-regulation-fulltext-2009.pdf • Oct. 2020. Bernstein, S. E., Amirkhani, E., Werb, D., & MacPherson, D. The regulation project: Tools for engaging the public in the legal regulation of drugs. (Excerpt Provided). International Journal of Drug Policy, 86, 102949. DOI:10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102949 • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision mapping
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2020. "How To Regulate Stimulants." Transform Drug Policy Foundation. URL: https://transformdrugs.org/assets/files/PDFs/how-to-regulate-stimulants-full-text-hires-2020.pdf • 1980. Wolpert, D. "The Dignity Of Risk." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 5(4), 391 - 401. DOI: 10.2307/622018

7. Cannabis: A Canadian Case Study

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically assess the impact of implementing legal, regulated cannabis for all Canadians • Interrogate the extent to which Canada’s “Cannabis Act” promotes public health and human rights • Identify potential areas of improvement for future legalization and regulation of other drugs
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannabis: What has gone right since 2018 • Unintended consequences of the Cannabis Act • Uneven access to cannabis based on socioeconomic status
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 21, 2018. “Cannabis Act.” Government of Canada. URL: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-24.5/page-1.html • N.D. Maghsoudi, N. Et Al. “How Diverse Is Canada’s Legal Cannabis Industry? Examining Race And Gender Of Its Executive Directors.” Policy Brief. Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation and Department of Sociology, University of Toronto. URL: https://cdpe.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2020/10/How-Diverse-is-Canada%E2%80%99s-Legal-Cannabis-Industry_CDPE-UofT-Policy-Brief_Final.pdf • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical evaluation of the “Cannabis Act”
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neil Magnuson, The Healing Wave (TBD)
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 28, 2020. Grochowski, S. “Non-Profit Evicted For Providing DTES Residents Cannabis As Harm Reduction Means.” Vancouver Is Awesome. URL: https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/local-news/non-profit-dtes-residents-cannabis-to-opioids-evicted-bc-vancouver-harm-reduction-2831816

8. Pathways to Legal Regulation

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate how the federal government could amend the CDSA to legalize and regulate drugs • Discuss powers delegated to provincial government under different federal drug policy regimes • Identify areas of municipal intervention
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Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits and pragmatism of federal intervention • Likely outcomes of implementing de facto legalization at the provincial level • Incentivizing provincial action - what municipalities can do • Grey areas of the law: Compassion clubs and dispensaries • Producing drugs legally: challenges, possibilities, and responsibilities
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 11, 2021. "Report #2: Recommendations on the Federal Government's Drug Policy As Articulated in a Draft Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy." Health Canada Expert Task Force on Substance Use. URL: https://www.drugpolicy.ca/about/publication/recommendations-on-the-federal-governments-drug-policy-as-articulated-in-a-draft-canadian-drugs-and-substances-strategy-cdss/ • Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caitlin Shane, Pivot Legal Society
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec. 2, 2019. Crompton, N. "VANDU: As VPD Budget Spirals Out Of Control, Defunding Police Is Our Community Alternative To The Drug War." The Georgia Straight. URL: https://www.straight.com/news/1332066/nathan-crompton-vpd-budget-spirals-out-control-defunding-police-our-community • Feb. 2019. "Heroin Compassion Clubs: A Cooperative Model To Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths & Disrupt Organized Crime's Role In Fentanyl, Money Laundering & Housing Unaffordability. British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU). URL: https://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Report-Heroin-Compassion-Clubs.pdf • Nov. 12, 2020. "Decriminalizing People Who Use Drugs: A Primer For Municipal And Provincial Governments." HIV Legal Network. URL: https://www.hivlegalnetwork.ca/site/decriminalizing-people-who-use-drugs-a-primer-for-municipal-and-provincial-governments/?lang=en

9. Strategic Planning

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize and reflect on information covered thus far • Evaluate potential courses of action • Determine strategic action plan
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility of suggested courses of action

Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

10. Meaningful Consultation with People with Lived/Living Experience of Illegal Drug Use

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate importance of relinquishing power when collaborating with PWUD • Understand norms for engaging with PWUD • Initiate or reinforce network connections within community • Begin conceptualizing presentation to community based on course of action
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying relevant community actors • Interrogating personal biases to create safe(r) spaces • “Nothing about us without us”: Ethical considerations when collaborating with PWUD
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.D. “VANDU Manifesto For A Drug User Liberation Movement.” Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users. URL: https://vandreplace.wordpress.com/research/vandu-manifesto/ • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community building activity
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2015. “Peerology: A Guide By And For People Who Use Drugs On How To Get Involved.” Canadian Aids Society and Module Development Team, Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD). URL: http://librarypdf.catie.ca/ATI-20000s/26521E.pdf

11. Public Relations Strategies in Government and Beyond

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine communication strategies for discussing drug policy with colleagues, media, and the public • Reflect on past challenges to anticipate ones in future • Identify accomplices in government, media, and beyond
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Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to support government efforts to educate the public on the potential benefits of regulation • The benefits and drawbacks of specific public engagement tools • Targeted messaging when engaging with media • Collective problem solving (see activity)
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document specific, individual challenge
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N.D. “#CannabisClaims Campaign.” Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation. URL: https://cdpe.org/project/cannabisclaims/

12. Conclusion: Review, Personal and Group Commitments

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on process • Evaluate capacity for ongoing engagement • Share personal and group commitments for attaining established course of action
Discussion Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of the process • Motivation for sustained advocacy • Strategies for maintaining network connections • What comes next
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A • Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection questions
Guest Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Supplemental Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A