

MORE WEATHRON DRUGS

Strategy Document

By Jared Patterson

Introduction

More than Drugs is a new NGO that has started up in Australia. Their purpose is to campaign for drug policy reform in Australia and further.

Their point of difference from similar NGO's is that they recognise the empowerment of criminals through the drug trade and the repercussions of this, as the most important flaw in the War on Drugs.

They have a partnership with UK organisation Transform, and are working in tandem with their campaign - Count the Costs.

Background

Illicit drug policy is a contentious topic at the current time, with different levels of activity occurring at a governmental level around the globe. For example, recently policy reform for marijuana has happened in some American states, suggesting a beginning of the end of prohibition. In the grand scheme of things these changes are a small drop in the ocean, and Western societies in particular still hold a conservative stance on drug use. Part of the reason for this is a widespread misunderstanding of both drug use and the repercussions of drug policy reform, as well as media and governmental propagation that drugs are morally wrong.

The stigma fuelled by the media's representation of drugs and drug users, falls in line with the current and past 'normalised' and accepted agenda of the War on Drugs.

The War on Drugs began as a political tactic by the Nixon government, with a hidden agenda to persecute the members of society who had opposing political views. Those were the anti-war left, who could be stereotyped as 'Hippies', and

the Black population. The two groups had well known involvement in using marijuana and heroin respectively. The War on Drugs gave Nixon the power to disrupt these communities and create negative stigma towards them, and their values, though anti-drug association and propagation. The War on Drugs was essentially built on a lie, which makes it unsurprising why it has become a complete and utter failure. It spiralled out of control by unintentionally creating a lucrative drug trade to empower criminals, which increases the size of the drug trade, which has demanded more hard-line responses, and so on, and on. The disastrous impact of the War on Drugs on the recent history of the world, and current global human issues is undeniable. Yet this is not common knowledge. It is not widely understood that many global issues are a product of drug prohibition.

Background

As far as drug policy reform goes there are three main avenues for a government to pursue. These are drug Depenalisation, Decriminalisation, and Legalisation. The first two are more popular in terms of support, media discussion and the number of social campaigns in favour. Despite this these two policy reforms do nothing to extinguish the drug trade, and only tackle issues in our backyard, with the end users of the drugs. Some of these approaches ignore the wider global issues involved, perhaps appealing to the Western lack of empathy for those in other countries, in less fortunate situations. Their intention is honest and they mean well. Any drug policy reform would indeed be a success, however in terms of the bigger picture Depenalisation and Decriminalisation only scratches the surface.

At first glance, Drug Legalisation seems extreme, yet the main difference with Decriminalisation is that it actually works to shut down the illegal drug trade. By creating a legal market, with substances controlled by the government, there is no reason for the illegal drug trade to exist. This means that

the billions of dollars that makes its way into the hands of criminals is stopped. Without this funding, criminal organisations will lose power, and all associated atrocities will decline. Drug legalisation has the potential to release the criminal stranglehold on developing countries.

Evaluation

Drug Policy Alliance

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/>

The Drug Policy Alliance (DPA) are a group in the United States focused on reducing the harms of drug use and drug prohibition. Members of the DPA are involved in the legislative process, working behind the scenes to achieve their goals. They also encourage communication between supporters and legislators to support their stance on the issue.

The communication of the DPA is mainly through their website, which is rich in content, reasoning and facts that support their argument. To benefit from the content a user would have to spend a considerable amount of time and effort navigating through the site, which has over 50 insightful pages addressing different aspects and issues of the war on drugs and drug policy reform. The amount of content and information is great for having a coherent backing and evidence for their arguments. It is also arranged neatly and logically, which is effective in terms of educating their audience. However the downfall is that all the content is

unlikely to either be read, or fully processed by their audience.

There seems to be no overriding communication design strategy. The DPA use social media to engage with their audience, this is mainly through the posting of topical articles, blog links or links to donate. There is a weak call for people to view the website. The wealth of information they have acquired is unused in their social media, which should be their main source of content. The response rate and involvement of their social media content is also proportionally low, meaning that they have many disengaged supporters. For example the average likes of their last 10 Facebook post's is around 700. The total of engaged 'likers' is just over 150,000. That means they having less than 0.5% active engagement with their Facebook posts.

Part of the reason for this is that they post content that appeals mainly to people that already support their cause, rather than content that seeks to actively expand and grow their cause. They have enormous amounts of content, but it is too unrefined to be effective as 'advertisement.' Their website also requires the audience to be committed to learning comprehensively about the different aspects of the issue, rather than entice their knowledge.

Evaluation

Stop the Harm

<https://stoptheharm.org/>

Stop the Harm has quite an engaging visual language, which represents the campaign tone, epitomised by their tagline of “Demand Drug Policy Reform. The campaign is backed by a number of organisations that are seeking drug policy reform. Stop the Harm’s websites main goal is to give people the opportunity to take action through various initiatives. Like the DPA they have their information broken up into different pages referring to the ‘issues’ of the drug trade and prohibition.

This website and organisation does not have a great ability to educate or convince new people to follow their cause, it is more tailored for those who already support the topic.

Their social media pages are set up in a similar way to the DPA, however have significantly less followers. The intention of these pages seem to be more so about maintaining and supporting the online community of existing followers, rather than actively seek to engage new ones.

Evaluation

Transform

<http://www.tdpf.org.uk/campaigns>

Transform is an organisation that has various campaigns against drug prohibition and the drug trade that focus on different parties / groups of people. Count the Costs is the most relevant campaign shares similarities with both the DPA and Stop the Harm. Count the cost's has divided the issues surrounding drug prohibition into 8 topics. These are summarised on the website through 8 individual pages, each with an in depth and comprehensive PDF document. In terms of education, Transform have offered the best format, yet still have the same issues as the DPA with the amount of content, and connecting the issues together. By breaking the issues apart, it is easier to focus on the specific information, however the scale and relationships become distant from their one key goal, of achieving drug policy reform. Transform's social media presence is similar to that of Stop the Harm.

Problem

More than Drugs needs a way to effectively communicate and educate their audience about the global implications of the War on Drugs. The problem with existing campaigns is that they are not effectively engaging with the public, and growing strongly enough to be relevant for global action. Part of the reason for this is their social media strategy, which is flawed by a failure of communication pieces. The current information that they offer is mainly through the form of extensive web pages or PDF documents. The issue that they struggle with is processing the massive amounts of relevant information into a concise argument that supports the end of drug prohibition. The fact of the matter is that the problems with the War on Drugs, is massive. It has extended into and influenced so many people and events in recent history, and this information cannot be ignored. Additionally displaying or conveying the overwhelming amount of information, is beneficial in the education of the audience, because it is an overwhelming issue. This illustrates the scale of the issue, and the importance of attempting to fix it.

Strategy

Audience

Because this is a global issue the audience is wide ranging in terms of spatial location. The countries where policy reform would most have the most impact is in the developed world, for those countries are the ones fuelling the war on drugs. Therefore the audience could include people living North America, UK, developed Europe, Australia/ NZ. Whilst applicable for a large scale initiative, this initial campaign will only target Australians.

The type of people targeted are those who have left, sympathetic to the left, or balanced political ideals. People from the lower and middle class will be targeted, because they are more likely to sympathise with the effects of the war on drugs, than the upper class. There is also more people in terms of the population breakdown in the lower and middle class, which is important as we are trying to achieve policy reform in democratic countries.

As outlined in the excerpt to the right, Australians are informed and support some forms of drug policy reform, but not legalisation. This could be attributed to stigma and the fact that they are uninformed about legalisation.

'Most Australians support some form of decriminalisation (caution, civil penalty or diversion) for all drugs. Only 5% of Australians support a prison sentence for cannabis possession, with support for prison for ecstasy (14%), methamphetamine (21%) and heroin (24%) also relatively low.

One in four Australians (26%) believe that personal use of cannabis should be legal and 69% support a change in legislation to allow the use of cannabis for medical purposes. Some 42% believe that a caution, warning or no action would be appropriate for possession of small amounts of cannabis. Between 5% and 7% of Australians support legalisation of other drugs.

It's becoming increasingly clear that the illegal status of drugs causes significant harms to users and the community. There is increasing recognition that a new approach is needed.'

Lee, N., Ritter, A. (2016). Australia's recreational drug policies aren't working, so what are the options for reform? The Conversation. Retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/australias-recreational-drug-policies-arent-working-so-what-are-the-options-for-reform-55493>

Strategy

The method of communication that will be used is a power map variation / information pamphlet. The map will illustrate and educate the audience on the issue in one condensed document. The benefit of the map is that it can convey different levels of meaning. The audience can gain a general understanding of the topic quickly, but are also able to read and process information with more detail at their discretion.

Supporting media will be an online webpage that allows the audience to sign petitions directed at their respective politicians.

The map will be available to view online, with links through to a website from social media pages.

The map is only the document that the campaign will use to educate and inform the audience, the map is not the entire campaign.

Spokespeople will initially promote the campaign through Australian television news and current affairs programs, such as Q + A and the Project.

Stage 1 - Australian Focus

Printed map handouts at targeted locations.

Television promotion of campaign through existing news and current affairs programs.

Radio promotion through existing news and current affairs programs.

Press promotion through existing online and print media outlets.

Online globally access through social media, however no promotional focus.

Stage 2 - International Expansion

See stage one but tailored for countries in North America, UK and developed Europe.

Strategy

There are various campaign goals that would account to different measures of success.

- 1-Reduce the status quo around drug use and the drug trade.
- 2-Reduce the status quo around drug policy reform.
- 3-Recognise the drug trade as a global humanitarian crisis.
- 4-Promote discussion and support in favour of drug legalisation.

The overall aim is to contribute to drug legalisation in Australia, and other countries.

A scenario that depicts this happening is as follows.

Scenario

A member of the community will be informed about the More than Drugs organisation in one of the following ways - Television, Radio, Media, Physical interaction / handout. They will be informed that more information and petitions are available online through the website or social media pages. If they were not given a map as a physical handout they

will be able to access it online. The person will be educated by the and motivated to sign the petition to their politicians. With enough signatures the politicians will recognise the campaign and issue as relevant, and will be obliged to discuss drug legalisation. Will enough public demand, politicians will support drug policy reform. Drugs will be legalised in Australia. Drug legalisation will be recognised internationally as a necessary policy reform. International support for Drug legalisation will grow, using Australia as an example, More than Drugs will continue to campaign internationally through this period. Drug Legalisation will occur in enough countries to see a significant decrease in the Drug trade and associated criminal activities. The drug trade will be abolished. Countries previously maligned by the drug trade will begin to rebuild under stable governments. The overall aim is to contribute to drug legalisation in Australia, and other countries.

MORE THAN DRUGS

Mapping the war on drugs

Globally >\$100b spent on drug law enforcement p.a.

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

MEDIA

Propaganda Promotes Stigma

Popular conservative media presents drug abuse as a moral issue, rather than a health issue. They promote stigma and discrimination towards drug users to their audience, who are likely to adopt the media's stance. Powerful media voices can create a reality where people feel uncomfortable breaking a status-quo for the risk of vilification. This helps to support the current prohibition by suppressing balanced discussion on drug policy.



BEGINNING

Public enemy #1

US president Richard Nixon announced the War on Drugs in 1971. It began with a hidden agenda to criminalise his opponents. The antiwar left were also sympathetic to Marijuana policy reform. Black people had a well known issue with Heroin abuse in their communities. The War on Drugs allowed the government to incarcerate and squander these groups, disrupting their communities and power. It also promoted stigma in wider society by associating these groups with drug use. Since 1971 The US Government has wasted \$440b. Drug use has increased, and drug value has fallen.

NON-DRUG USERS

Majority of population

tax payers voters

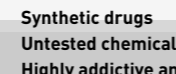
War on Terror

2001 US-Afghanistan intervention cost \$557b partly to stop the Opium trade. In 2002 US President Bush announced the War on Terror, following the 9/11 attacks. The War on Drugs and the War on Terror had shared objectives and reasons to invade the Middle East. It is ironic that the War on Drugs created a situation that funded the Terrorist groups.



Violation avoidance

Synthetic drugs are constantly changed to stay ahead of the law. They are often not 'sold' for human consumption, but are used as a cheaper and non criminal alternative drug despite the consequences on the users health.



Dangerous drug taking Pre-loading Injunct to divest

Demand

Law enforcement inflates drug value because of the increased risk. This makes the drug trade more lucrative for criminals.

Money to purchase drugs.

DRUG USERS

Public health Access to harm minimisation services? Access to needle exchanges? HIV

Marginalisation

Social exclusion Emotional issues Employment difficulty Cost of addiction

Generational influence

>900,000 gang members in US. 1/3 of which are juveniles.

1/100 Americans are currently in jail.

>50% of inmates in US federal prisons are there for drug charges.

GOVERNMENT

controls Policy dictates Justice system creates

Incentivised law enforcement

In the United States, law enforcement has been incentivised in an ineffective attempt to promote convictions and control the drug trade. Drug busts and associated acquisitions are quite lucrative, therefore it is in the police forces interest to make as many drug related arrests as possible. This has resulted in a mass incarceration issue for people with non-violent drug charges. All of this work is funded by tax payers, and the only beneficiaries are those in the Law and Prison industries.

Police militarisation

Police militarisation which has occurred partly as a result of incentivised law enforcement creates it's own problems. Recently as a result of various killings by police of black people in America, large protests and riots have occurred. Oppression of certain groups by the state creates a social environment where members of that group do not trust, nor want to participate with that government.

Mass surveillance

The War on Drugs has been used to justify spying on citizens. Following 9/11, the War on Terror has been the excuse to maintain surveillance. This has taken the place in the collection of metadata, as well as active phone tapping and bugging. It presents questions over the individuals right to privacy and trust in the governments ability to not abuse private information, and keep it safe.

Drug Violation can result in

Civil penalties Fines Criminalisation Incarceration Mass Incarceration

1/100 Americans are currently in jail.

>50% of inmates in US federal prisons are there for drug charges.

Current drug policy in most developed countries - in particularly the exacerbated situation in the US - seeks to criminalise the user and immediate suppliers. This approach has never worked, yet is still implemented. Some progressive policy seeks to decriminalise the use of drugs or legalise certain drugs. These approaches have no impact on the wider drug trade which empowers criminals on a global scale.

Legalisation of all illicit drugs is the only way to end the drug trade. To achieve policy reform we must inform our politicians. You can sign a petition to Legalise drugs in your country at morehandrugs.com/petition

COUNT THE COSTS
50 YEARS OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

Globally >\$330b made from the black market drug trade p.a.

The Taliban annually make \$90-160M from the Opium trade.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

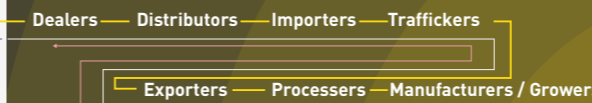
TERRORIST GROUPS

BOKO HARAM Since 2008 20,000 killed, 2.3M displaced.	FARC Since 1958 >220,000 killed	ISIS 2014/5 18,800 killed in Iraq	AL QAEDA 9-11 3,000 killed	TALIBAN Afghan war since '07 32,000 killed
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Supply

Black Market responds to law enforcement by increasing efficiency and changing trade routes which can then decrease drug value.



Price Inflation

Quality control

Drugs can be cut with contaminants Can be highly potent to aid trafficking This contributes to a higher risk of overdose

CRIMINAL FUNDING

Criminal organisations Gangs Cartels Rebels Militias

GOVERNMENT

Civil Wars Major civil wars have most notably taken place in Latin America, West Africa and Central Asia. These three areas account for 95% of the worlds drug production. These wars can be fought by groups who are actively involved in the drug trade, or are funded by groups who are.

Latin America + West Africa + Central Asia = 95% of world drug production.

Environmental destruction

Deforestation Unregulated for drug crop growth

Pollution

Chemicals from drug processing 370,000 tons of chemicals dumped per year in Columbia
Herbicide to kill drug crops
Water and air contamination
Wildlife loss of habitat.
Human health impacted

In Columbia for every hectare of coca eradicated from herbicide, 22 hectares of land are decimated.

Government Crimes

In the treatment and law enforcement of citizens for drug offences
Violation of human rights
Unfair trials that are below internationally recognised standard of due process.
Presumption of guilt
Arbitrary detention
Detention without trial
12 countries have corporal punishment for drug offences
Cruel and unusual punishment
Assassination Execution
Forced labor
Starvation
Isolation
Beatings
Torture
Rape

Internationally there are approximately 1000 state drug executions per year.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

There are various reason that the War on Drugs contributes to Refugee and Asylum Seeker crisis. The drug trade enriches and empowers criminals who may have radical ideology or religious ties that demand the persecution of some groups of people. Unstable corrupt governments are vulnerable to such forces and cannot adequately defend their citizens.



Since 2006 >100,000 drug related deaths in Mexico

More than 6 billion people live in countries with a serious corruption problem.

DRUGS = MONEY = POWER

AN ALTERNATE PAST

One of the most profound, long term impacts of the War on Drugs has been the destabilisation of developing countries. Civil wars and corruption funded by the drug trade have squandered the epidemiologic transition, particularly in African, Latin American and Central Asian countries.

Simply, the development of a country comes from a stable government and economy, that feeds money into public services such as health and education. Better health care increases life expectancy and decreases infant and child mortality rates. Education allows people to generate a better income and live a higher quality of life. A stable government allows this process to continue through generations and grow.

It is plausible that without drug prohibition the governments in African, Latin American and Central Asian countries would not have been infiltrated by enriched criminals, through corruption and war. That is to say these countries would have developed at a rate that has been experienced in the West. Moreover these countries that traditionally grow prohibited drugs would have thrived from the drug industry and associated taxation, boosting their economy.

AN ALTERNATE PAST

POLICY REFORM SIGN THE PETITION

The scale of the drug trade is enormous. It has become well established since the mid 20th century. The resulting criminal empowerment has caused sorrow and turmoil, and undoubtedly shaped the world for the worse.

As with many global issues, individual action can seem hopeless. Fortunately ending the war on drugs is fundamentally simple, and your role is integral. All we have to do is help shift the status quo by supporting drug legalisation. We need to spread the word by informing our friends and family. Our leaders need the public's backing to commit to policy change.

So what can you do? Sign the petition for your politicians online at morehandrugs.com/petition

NO WAR ON DRUGS?

THINK ABOUT EVERY GLOBAL ISSUE THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS.

THINK ABOUT EVERY SHOCKING HUMAN EVENT THAT HAS OCCURED SINCE THE MID 20TH CENTURY.

THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO CAUSED THE PROBLEMS.

THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED.

THINK ABOUT THE CRIMINALS ENRICHED BY THE DRUG TRADE.

THINK ABOUT THE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES.

NOW THINK ABOUT WHAT THE WORLD WOULD LOOK LIKE IF ALL THIS NEVER HAPPENED.



AN ALTERNATE FUTURE

MORE THAN DRUGS

Mapping the war on drugs

COUNT THE COSTS
50 YEARS OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

PLEASURE
PAIN
ESCAPE
SUFFER
ENJOY
DESPAIR
DRUGS
LIFE

AN ALTERNATE FUTURE

Legalisation of drugs is an uncommon concept in everyday society, such as the War on Drugs been so engrained in our lives. The simplicity of the system is profound, especially when compared to what is currently in place.

Legalised drug system

