

## ReACT launch Tanzania, June 2014

New independent peer led drug user network in Tanzania 'ReACT' - Real Activist Community, Tanzania.



### Vision

To live in a nation that respects the rights of people who use drugs.

### Mission

To ensure equitable access to healthcare, employment, and the human rights of people who use drugs.

To involve people who use drugs in all decisions that affect their lives.

## Background

Following the Tanzanian Network of People who Use Drugs (TaNPUD) decision to describe themselves as “a group completely recovered from addiction” despite INPUD desperately trying to offer advice and guidance to the group that this is not within the values of INPUD, nor within their agreed aims of the original TaNPUD group. INPUD had to travel to Tanzania and has returned having set up an autonomous and independent network funded entirely by INPUD. We have to respect the decisions made by TaNPUD, and wish them every success as a recovery group affiliated with Médecins du Monde.

The new network Real Activist Community. Tanzania (ReACT) is a vibrant, highly energetic network with members from all of the maskani from the 3 districts of Dar Es Salaam, and is in the process of becoming and registered national organisation. Adam Laputo, being supported by INPUD and a strong and experienced chairwoman called Aminah, is coordinating the 35 core members.

The workshop started with an intense study of the Vancouver Declaration. The members who can read and translate English surrounded themselves with other members to explain the document, enabling a solid foundation and understanding of what we stand for, and in turn establishing the direction for the group to develop their mission statement, vision, aims and objectives.

Advocacy priorities were identified along with the strategic plan to enable the initiation of the work.

Key priorities included: Human rights abuses in rehabilitation centres in Dar Es Salaam, Mob Justice, and Tanzanian Drug Law Reform.



The final day of the workshop UNAIDS, TACOSODE, and the Drug Control Commission (DCC) arrived to offer support to the network. This was followed by a large press conference with 5 national TV stations. The ReACT leaders gave powerful interviews about human rights, the need for mob justice to be stopped. They spoke about their mission and vision. Already UNAIDS have invited members to strategic meetings and we are hoping that 2-3 members can travel to meet the Deputy Minister on 23-26th June.



The Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE) are supporting the new network in helping them manage their finances and have agreed to speak to the community leaders when the ReACT members have found their room to hold Board meetings. We have agreed to fund a room, which will serve as the ReACT office and sleeping area for one member to act as care taker. This room is situated near the Kigamboni maskani in central Dar Es Salaam and will act as an emergency room for maskani members who have serious health issues and need medical attention. The medical professionals are reluctant to venture into the maskani so this room offers safe place for both the most vulnerable members, and for medical staff to visit.

Hamisi Kitwana, a senior officer in the Tanzania Home Affairs Department has offered his time in supporting the networks formal registration as a Tanzanian NGO

This network is the first truly independent network of people who use drugs in Tanzania. They will be visited by the Kenya Network who will hold capacity building workshops, supported by INPUD, and further visits and workshops by INPUD towards the end of the year.

Big congratulations to all who took part, and much appreciation to Susan Masanja, who spent many weeks doing the essential groundwork to enable this to take place.

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