



Ganna Dovbakh

Eurasian harm reduction association (EHRA)
VNGOC member organisation since 2013

Supported by:

AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW)

Candidate for:

Chairperson

I am currently the Executive Director of the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA) – a diverse and highly-engaged network of NGOs from across the region. I have decades of experience in this sector from a wide range of different perspectives – my activism started in the mid-1990s in the youth drug-free clubs supported by partners from the temperance movement (Swedish IOGT-NTO and European youth temperance federation EGTYPF), where I was happy to learn a lot about community engagement and youth activism. Then, from 2004-2014 I was organizing and conducted capacity building for LGBTQI+, people living with HIV and people who use drugs in Ukraine and across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, focusing on community-based advocacy.

I am a trainer, researcher, supervisor, technical support provider, experienced network coordinator, and author of numerous publications on community engagement and self-organization. My work experience has offered me a chance to work in varied multi-cultural environments with people from all backgrounds, and has helped me to develop confidence in my ability to communicate effectively and maintain collaborative work and professional integrity in relationships with others. Being originally from Ukraine, one of my main focuses is to help overcome the dominant, colonial views on people who use drugs and social care systems across Eurasia.

EHRA has been an active member of VNGOC for the past four years, participating in Annual General Meetings, webinars, CND meetings and inter-sessionals, and consultations. I was also part of the VNGOC working group on nomination procedures in 2021. I have been participating at the CND and related spaces for many years, organizing several side events and meetings with governments and UN partners.

I am LGBTQI+ and a human rights activist, feminist, and mother of a young person.

On the VNGOC Board, I would see my mission as supporting and developing NGO capacity in engaging with UN bodies and UN member states, continuing to secure the meaningful involvement of the full breadth of NGOs in the international drug policy decision-making process, and ensuring transparent and accountable governance of the Committee itself.



Matej Košir

Institute for Research and Development "Utrip"
VNGOC member organisation since 2018

Supported by:

Movendi International

Candidate for:

Chairperson (*recommended by the Nominations Committee*)

I, Matej Košir, am excited to be a candidate for the Chairperson of the VNGOC Board. As the Director of UTRIP and the current Deputy Chairperson of the VNGOC Board, I have a proven track record of success in the field of drug demand reduction (especially in prevention and public health advocacy) and a deep understanding of the present and future challenges facing civil society in the field of drug policy at global level. I have been involved in CND work since 2002 with minor pauses, initially as a member of a national delegation as an employee at the Government Office for Drugs and later as a representative of civil society. I am committed to leading with a collaborative, inclusive and results-driven approach. I am confident that my experience, expertise and passion will take the VNGOC to new heights of success. I would be honoured to have your support in this endeavour.



Alexandre Kieslich da Silva

Conectados pela Vida
*VNGOC member organisation since
2021*

Supported by:
Turkish Green Crescent

Candidate for:
Deputy Treasurer

Hello! My name is Alexandre Kieslich da Silva. Since 2016 I work as an addiction psychiatrist in Porto Alegre, south Brazil.

Currently, I am working at my private office and I am teaching at the medical school at the University of Taquari Valley

I've also been working at an NGO named Connected for Life, we have already developed 3 projects

Project 1: "Psychiatry and the School"

In a partnership with the Secretary of Education of the State of Rio Grande do Sul and the Psychiatry Association of Rio Grande do Sul, the NGO Conectados pela Vida financed the enrollment of 100 teachers from the public school system of Rio Grande do Sul in the online course "Psychiatry and the School", which addresses the main mental disorders affecting children and adolescents. The goal was to train teachers to identify and guide students and their families, improving mental health and decreasing the risk of substance use and abuse.

Project 2: "Pedagogy of Love"

All the students from the Langendonck Elementary School, from low-income backgrounds in Porto Alegre, were attended. The goal is to reinforce the importance of physical health, in the treatment and care of your personal space (body) of caring for the body of the other, and through yoga techniques to help calm the mind, control anxiety and deal better in situations of conflict through listening and non-violent communication. The circus techniques worked in the workshops help in collaboration, and team spirit and encourage them to challenge themselves and get out of their comfort zone. Playful exercises using materials such as juggling and also developing one's creativity.

Project 3: "Connect Yourself"

This project has the participation of all the students of the Professora Marta Tavares Elementary School, in the city of Rio Negrinho (SC, Brazil). The project aims to strengthen the bonds and coexistence among peers and in the family, promote the prevention of drug

and alcohol use, risky sexual behavior and its consequences (early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases), co-optation by crime, bullying in the school context, self-mutilation, and suicide prevention.

As psychiatrist I am interested in finding new ways to improve the sustainability of the wellbeing of the community especially for the new generations.

In the board I don't see anybody from our South America in last terms. I think regional balance is crucial, because we have various public policy issues in South America, especially in drug policies and these policies are open to improvement in a perspective that values sustainable development goals. Moreover, I'll be in collaboration with my regional cso contacts to increase the number of members in South America. I have connections across the countries in South/Latin America, and also know people from different NGO's and could help to spread of more in my region the activities carried out by the VNGOC.



Arumugam Sankar

Conectados pela Vida

VNGOC member organisation since 2021

Supported by:

South Asian Drugs and Addictions Research Council (SA-DARC)

Candidate for:

Deputy Treasurer

Deputy Secretary

Mr.Arumugam Sankar is a Social Activist with legal background and Post Graduate in Economics representing India, a country with diverse Socio - Cultural ethnic background. He is the Founder and Executive Director of EMPOWER , INDIA - Civil Society Organisation which has been working with grassroots communities for the past 31 years. He is the Chairperson of South Indian Harm Reduction Network (SIHRN) covering five Indian Provinces .He also represents one of the Vice presidents of the Executive Board of the Indian Harm Reduction Network (IHRN) and the Adviser for South Indian Drug Users Forum. He traveled all over the world and attended High Level meetings in UNHQ too. The participation in the VNGOC board will help Mr.Sankar to get international exposure in dealing with Drugs in developing countries and learn new methodologies . He is also moderator of E-forums in developmental issues and can disseminate information through such forums and also Facebook. Mr. Arumugam Sankar is also good in working with departments in the government and strong advocacy skills and is represented in various committees to monitor the drug related governmental schemes .Our Organisation,Empower is having Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic Social Council (UN ECOSOC) and accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP & United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification - UNCCD too.



Augusto Paulo Valenta Nogueira

*VNGOC member organisation
since 2013*

Supported by:
Harm Reduction Australia

Candidate for:
Deputy Treasurer

I am the President of ARTM (Association of Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers of Macau). For the last 20 years, I have been consistently working to improve the conditions of the people that use drugs to access the treatment and in the Harm Reduction advocacy.

ARTM currently runs a Needle Syringe Programs for 15 years, for 6 consecutive years there's zero new infection among the people that inject drugs, we are the only official program support by the government in the southeast Asia, we also run an after care services for people that finish the alcohol & Drug rehab program, or are under court probation, on the Methadone Maintenance program, or have been release from the prison due to drug related charges, we also run a Therapeutic Community, plus a prevention department call be cool focus in the community and in the schools, universities.

Last to support the recovery and the social reintegration, teaching vocational skills, we transform an old heritage leprosarium into a tourist area, creating a café, an Art Gallery, DIY and a Life Library, we called the Hold on to Hope Project.

In 2015 I was awarded with the Medal of Merit by the Portuguese Government, in 2017 awarded with the Medal of Communities Services by the Macau SAR and in 2023 award by the Sino-Phil International Peace Award Foundation.

I have been an active member of the VNGOC, mainly at the ad hoc Asia Working Group of the VNGOC, where I was one of the initial members of the working group and contribute to the Asia-Pacific Common Position. Previously I also made part of the CSTF. I have been engaged for many years at the CND, hosting side events, statements, etc.



Balqis Binti Muhamad Kasim

Persatuan Bulan Sabit Hijau Malaysia (Green Crescent)

VNGOC member organisation since 2019

Supported by:

Community Alliances for Drug Free Youth (CADFY)

Candidate for:

Deputy Treasurer
Deputy Secretary

I'm working as a Psychiatry medical officer and have been professionally affiliated with Persatuan Bulan Sabit Hijau Malaysia since its establishment in Malaysia in 2016 as part of the high committee members. Since 2020 till present, I'm currently holding the position as the Secretary.

As Persatuan Bulan Sabit Hijau Malaysia we put emphasis on international area, we are a member of VNGOC since 2019. In 2021 and in 2022, we organized side event during 64th CND and 65th CND. We will also organize a side event in 66th CND this year.

In our organization, our activities mostly hold the aim towards building resilience, instilling good coping mechanism as well as problem solving skill especially in youth, universities, and school students in nationwide Malaysia; regionally in South East Asia and Oceania . In this way, we hope that we can tackle this issue in different yet a holistic approach in dealing with drug addiction issues, especially in recovery and treatment areas.



Barbara Hastie

Walther Global Palliative Care & Supportive
Oncology at Indiana University
VNGOC member organisation since 2020

Supported by:

Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network
(APHN)

Candidate for:

Deputy Treasurer
Deputy Secretary

For more than two decades, my work has been devoted to addressing Health Disparities, focusing on Access & Availability to Essential Controlled Medicines for Pain Management & Palliative Care, arguably among the most egregious of inequities. A motivating statement-for-action comes from Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhuman." This describes ravages we witness as a result of issues related to drug policies.

Experience with CND goes back many years and has grown significantly since 2019. Besides leading Side Event(s), it entails building/cultivating collaborations with Member States & NGOs. In addition, a solid working relationship and joint projects continue with former CND Chair Ambassador D'hoop. As my work with/at CND has been growing exponentially, so has my desire to be more actively involved in VNGOC, thus a main motivation for this nomination.



Heloisa Broggiato Matter

International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC)
VNGOC member organisation since 2013

Supported by:

Dianova

Candidate for:

Deputy Treasurer

Heloísa Broggiato Matter - Brazil

I am applying for the position of deputy treasurer of the Vienna NGO Committee, representing the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC). My objective is to represent the views and interests of practitioners and patients who need access to the substances listed in the schedules of the international drug control conventions for essential palliative care and other medical purposes.

As a VNGOC Board member, I am currently one of the coordinators of the Latin American working group, with views to increase the participation of NGOs from this region in international fora and connect them with the Commission of Narcotic Drugs (CND), the International Narcotics Control Board and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). This work strongly motivates me to run for this position on the Board this year in addition to my genuine interest on drug policy.

I am a research associate at the Global Drug Policy Observatory at Swansea University (UK) and hold a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the same university. I have been researching access to internationally controlled medicines in Brazil and the changes and tensions in international regimes. My research shows the reasons behind Brazil's inadequate access to opioids for pain treatment today. It also analyzes the history of the international drug control regime under the perspective of access to medicines and how this issue gained traction between 2009 and 2019.

Since 2018 I have been representing the International Association of Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC) at CND, WHO, Human Rights Council meetings, in the VNGOC's Civil Society Task Force, and took part in expert meetings on opioids in Vienna and Geneva.

I previously worked at UNODC's Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section, in Vienna, supporting research on access to pain medicines. I hold a MA in International Politics and Security Studies from the University of Bradford, UK, a BA in Journalism from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC) and a BA in Social Sciences by the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil.



Memory Usaman

Rwanda Youth Impact
VNGOC member organisation since 2021

Supported by:
Stardom Association

Candidate for:
Deputy Treasurer
Deputy Secretary

I have been the Rwanda Youth Impact President since February 2020, as a local NGO that promotes health and well-being by raising awareness in drugs, tobacco, alcohol, gaming and gambling, specifically we work on addiction prevention, drug policy, and social reintegration. We pay attention on international area and diversification. For this reason, we are a member of VNGOC since 2021 and participated Africa focused two side events in CND as co-sponsor in 2021 and 2022, also this year we co-sponsor another side event.

Over the years, I gained vast experience healthcare projects and business conferences, wholesaling of pharmaceutical drugs, surgical sundries and distribution of medical equipment following international and regional training received in Germany, India, Japan, UAE, South Africa and Botswana.

We have an MoU and work closely with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Youth and generate funds for youth to open their small business for social reintegration.



Raquel P. Tolentino

Association of Anti-Drug Abuse Coalitions of the Philippines Inc.
(AADAC Philippines)

VNGOC member organisation since 2022

Supported by:

Community Anti Drug Coalition of America (CADCA)

Candidate for:

Deputy Treasurer

Deputy Secretary

With more than 15 years in the anti-drug advocacy, I have been given the opportunity to give my humble contributions to the development of local and national policies in the country. From being the Department Head of the Anti Drug Office of the City of Muntinlupa, to becoming CADCA's In-country Coordinator to the Philippines. I have also served 2 terms as President of the Association of Anti Drug Abuse Coalitions of the Philippines, Inc. before becoming the organization's Chairman emeritus and CEO.

I was also given the opportunity to attend the CND 61st Session last March 2018 with the Community Anti Drug Coalition of America and presented the Coalition Building in the Philippines in one of the luncheon meetings sponsored by CADCA. I've also attended and observed in the NGO Informal Dialogue with the UNODC Executive Director during same event, thus, giving me the opportunity to witness firsthand, the important role of CSOs in the development of global policies and strategies to address this global menace: illegal substance.

Penny Hill



Harm Reduction Australia
VNGOC member organisation since 2017

Supported by:
Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Candidate for:
Deputy Secretary

Dr Penny Hill is the current Deputy Secretary of the VNGOC having served in the position since 2019. She has been an active member of the VNGOC, and actively engaged with CND each year since 2016.

Penny has held professional roles that have developed the necessary skills to contribute to the work of the VNGOC Board, and holds postgraduate degrees in Public Health, International Development, and a recent PhD investigating the impact of health service utilisation on opioid overdose. She is currently working to develop a national health-led early warning system for new and emerging drugs in Australia.

Her motivations to continue with the Board include continuing to support the VNGOC Asia-Pacific ad-hoc Working Group and continuing to advocate for the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Common Position. She will continue to strive to ensure meaningful participation of civil society globally in drug-related UN sessions; and continue to work with all current VNGOC members to find common ground and support the work of civil society globally.