



Harm reduction for local drug policies

Fragmented versus integrated
approaches

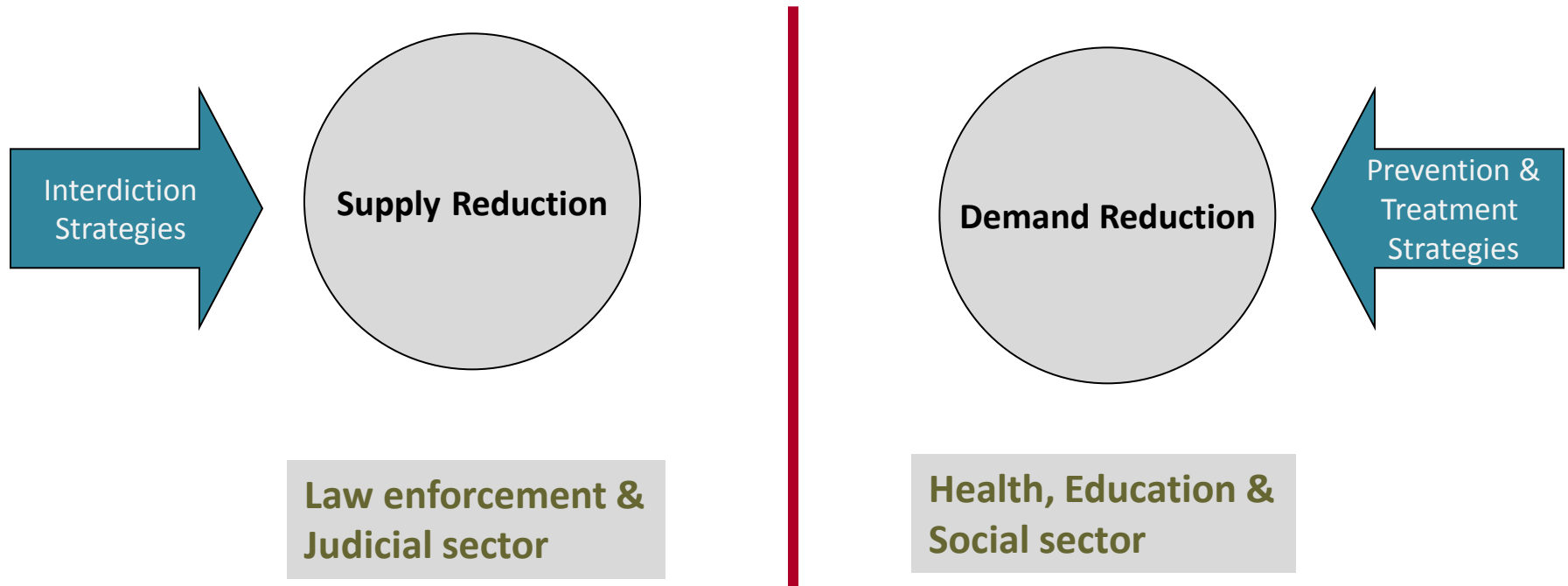
Why focus on a local approach?

- Half of the world's population lives in cities
- **By 2025 two thirds of the world's population will be living in cities**
- Cities are centres of illegal trade and drug trafficking
- Social phenomena and tensions are experienced more intensively
- More and more city governments are looking for local responses to the global drugs problem



Even where cities have little administrative or political autonomy there is always need - and space – for individual solutions that are well tailored to the local situation

The “Traditional” Approach



The Traditional Approach is largely a fragmented approach:

- The actors involved do not speak to each other – only about each other.
- Although both demand reduction and supply reduction strategies are in place, they are often not harmonized.

Weaknesses of the “Traditional” Approach

- A major barrier to success are the preconceptions that agencies and policy makers have about the other actors involved.
- Such biases about the skills, know-how and agendas of the other actors limits the amount of knowledge and experience available in the community as a whole.
- It may even lead to situations where agencies work against each other rather than with each other and yet complain about a lack of effectiveness of drug policy and helping measures they have themselves contributed to.
- A fragmented approach often drives drug users away from help

All agencies experience an extreme burden and are forced to perform tasks that do not fall within their original portfolio and expertise

Consequences of a “Fragmented” Approach

- Driving the problem underground
- Creating expanded illegal drug markets
- Dehumanising and marginalising PWUD
- Increasing risk behaviour of PWUD
- Creating incubators for HIV/AIDS – especially in prisons
- Impeding health approaches
- Lack of prioritisation, communication and co-operation



Response mechanisms are inadequately thought out and therefore seldom put into action in an effective and sustainable way.

Strengths of an Integrated Approach

- Build a well targeted, evidence-based response
- Clear strategy and long-term action plans
- Build synergies and bilateral partnerships
- Make use of the diverse competencies and resources
- Clear definition and allocation of responsibilities
- Interactive, flexible and pragmatic processes
- Tackle overlapping issues, such as HIV prevention, public security, crime prevention etc.
- Speak with one voice towards higher policy making levels
- Achieve greater community acceptance and support

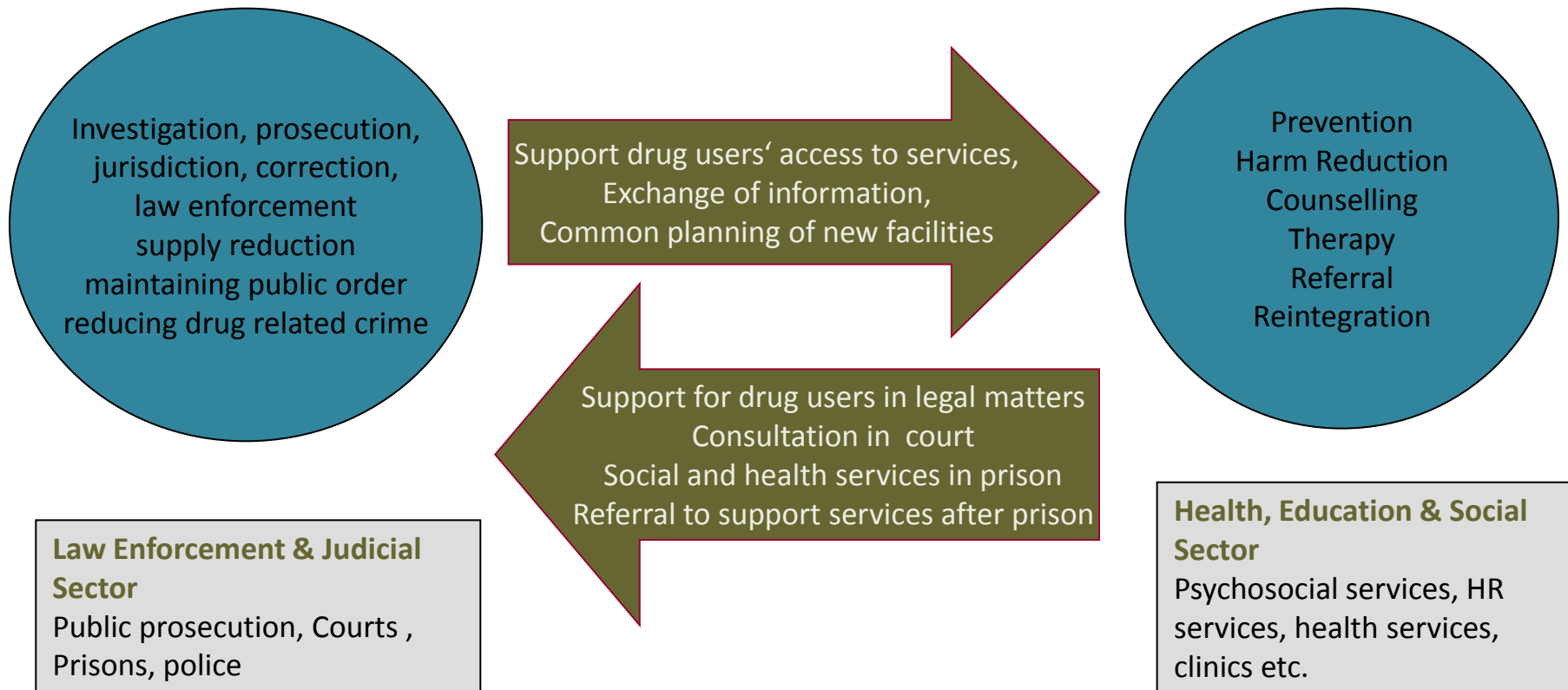


Objectives of an Integrated Approach

- Put pragmatism over punishment to reduce individual and societal harms
- Be sensitive to the needs and capacities of PWUD
- Break the vicious cycle of HIV and problematic drug use
- Build supportive relationships between PWUD, health authorities, civil society organizations, and law enforcement
- Seek alternatives to custodial sentences and imprisonment
- Combine the implementation of harm reduction with policing and the administration of justice

The Integrated Approach to Drug Control – an Example

Consensus on common goals and different roles



Example adapted from the drug policy organisation chart of the city of Stuttgart, Germany

Experience Sharing

What approaches exist in
your country?

How are they coordinated?

Is there a difference between the national and the local
level?