

Imperial Queen's Park Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

April 20-22

DRUGS and
HARM REDUCTION
film FESTIVAL



HARM REDUCTION 2009



Thailand

Film Festival Programme



Table of Contents

Monday 20th	1
13:00–14:00 Lunch	1
13:00 Facing The Dragon (UK/Thailand)	1
14:00–15:30 Symposium	1
14:15 Exchange Supplies – 4 short films (UK)	1
14:30 Duggy’s Crew (Australia)	1
15:00 Territory of Loneliness (Russia)	1
16:00–17:30 Lounge	2
16:00 A Fundamental Service (USA)	2
16:15 Yunnan Outreach Training Materials (China)	2
16:30 A Cleaner Fix (Indonesia)	2
16:50 Mobile Milan (Italy/Poland)	2
17:05 Why Russia Says No To Methadone (Russia/Hungary)	2
17:15 Reducing Harm From Solvent Use (Cambodia)	3
18:00–19:30 Evening Session	3
18:00 The US Versus Tommy Chong (USA)	3
Tuesday 21st	3
13:00–14:00 Lunch	3
13:00 Left Them Behind (Macau)	3
14:00–15:30 Symposium	3
14:00 Two Sunflowers (excerpts) (Vietnam)	4
14:30 Using Film As A Tool For Research (USA)	4
15:00 Complex Problems, Simple Solutions (Caribbean)	4
16:00–17:30 Lounge	4
16:00 Mum Loves Drugs Not Me (UK)	4
16:50 Looking For An Alternative (Georgia/Hungary)	5
17:05 Breaking The Ice (Pacific Islands)	5
17:30 Hidden In Dust (Iran/Canada)	5
18:30 Evening Session	5
18:30 Grass (Canada)	5
Wednesday 22nd	6
13:00–14:00 Lunch	6
13:00 International Animation Compilation (Finland/Canada/Australia)	6
Ainemaatio – Animation Contest (Finland)	6
Don’t Be Buntha: Hep C Don’t Let It Be (Australia)	6
Aboriginal Next Steps (Canada)	6
Play Now Act Now (Australia)	6
13:30 Know Your Mushrooms (excerpt) (Canada/USA)	7
13:40 Magic Mint: Menace Or Medicine (USA/Australia)	7
14:00–15:30 Symposium	7
14:00 Bewildered (New Zealand)	7
14:35 Cops Say Legalise Drugs (USA/Hungary)	7
14:50 Keep Walking (UK)	7
16:00–17:30 Lounge	8
16:00 Kava Culture (Australia/Vanuatu)	8
16:10 Thailand’s Drug Habit (Thailand/Australia)	8
16:55 Mexico’s Narco Wars (Mexico/Australia)	8
17:20 Bittersweet Harvest (Afghanistan/UK)	8

Monday 20th
13:00–14:00 Lunch

13:00

Facing The Dragon (UK/Thailand)

Director: Richard Higson
Producer: Richard Higson/Chris Armstrong
Organisation: www.strongfilms.com
Country focus: Thailand/UK

Abstract: *Cassie and Sarah are two long term heroin and crack users from England. They have tried all kinds of treatments over the years, but all have failed. With the East West Detox organisation, the two women travel to Tham Krabok monastery in Thailand to undergo a holistic, spiritually based detox that may be their last hope of getting clean. This film explores the very special kind of treatment at the monastery, and follows Cassie and Sarah as they attempt to free their minds and bodies from addiction.*

Email contact: richardhigson@hotmail.com

14:00–15:30 Symposium

14:00

Exchange Supplies – 4 short films (UK)

Presenter: Andrew Preston
Director: Michael Linnell
Producer: Jon Derricott/Andrew Preston
Organisation: Exchange Supplies
Country Focus: United Kingdom

Abstract: *Although film is an expensive and complex medium, it is a very effective way of communicating information. We have included one or two DVDs in our work programme every year for the last few years – the result is a growing library of unique resources for drug workers and drug users. We have used film to give drug users a voice that can easily be heard, and to educate drug workers and drug users about important issues. Included will be an animation short that graphically illustrates how small the hepatitis C virus is, and a short documentary featuring an interview with Professor Robery Heimer describing his work examining the effectiveness of bleach and other agents in cleaning syringes. In the light of the work presented in our other submission "IV and HCV survival in syringes," this work has important implications for the harm reduction field. Finally, we present a short, clear instructional video demonstrating effective syringe cleaning.*

Email contact: andrew@exchangesupplies.org

14:30

Duggy's Crew (Australia)

Presenters: Julie Bowen & Adrian Papworth
Director: Adrian Papworth
Producer: Julie Bowen
Organisation: Moreland Hall
Country focus: Australia

Abstract: *"Duggy's Crew" is a series of short animations which parody sitcoms and teen soap-operas. The animations target 16–19 year olds who are learning to drive or have recently passed their test. They (together with the support materials) are designed to raise awareness of drug driving laws in Australia and to stimulate discussion about the possible risks and consequences of using drugs while driving.*

Email contact: jbowen@morelandhall.org

15:00

Territory of Loneliness (Russia)

Presenter: Timur Islamov
Director: Timur Islamov
Producer: Timur Ismalov
Organisation: Timur Ismalov Foundation
Country focus: Russia (Tatarstan)

Abstract: *This film is about a harm reduction project in Tatarstan, a region of Russia. It describes new approaches to services, clients, partners, government officials and project staff. The film illustrates the problems and prospects for harm reduction in Russia.*

Email contact: timur.islamov@gmail.com

16:00–17:30 Lounge

16:00

A Fundamental Service (USA)

Director: Gretchen Hildebran
Producer: Gretchen Hildebran
Organisation: California AIDS Clearing House
Country focus: USA

Abstract: Although pharmacy syringe sales became legal in California in 2004, many communities and individual pharmacists still have not approved of or enrolled in the programme. This short documentary focuses on the role of pharmacists in public health, as participating pharmacists and public health officials explain how to enrol in the programme, while addressing concerns that many pharmacists may have about offering this service to their clientele.

Email contact: Gretchen.hildebran@gmail.com

16:15

Yunnan Outreach Training Materials (China)

Director: Duo Lin
Producer: Duo Lin
Organisation: HIV/AIDS Asia Regional programme (HAARP)
Country focus: China

Abstract: The film provides a practical guide, relevant knowledge and skills training to outreach workers. The film covers needle and syringe exchange programmes and services, and information such as safe injection, overdose, safe sexual behaviour and methadone substitution therapy. This training DVD has been widely used and is regarded as the most popular training material among outreach workers.

Email contact: xinruzhaoyahoo.com.cn

16:30

A Cleaner Fix (Indonesia)

Director: David Gough
Producer: Pierre-Julien Quiers
Organisation: IRIN
Country focus: Indonesia

Abstract: Indonesia is home to an estimated half a million injecting drug users. As many as 70% of them are HIV positive. Seen through the eyes of two ex-addicts who have dedicated themselves to informing their communities about the risks of sharing needles, "A Cleaner Fix" takes you into the world of the drug user and those who try to help them.

Email contact: gough@irinnews.org

16:50

Mobile Milan (Italy/Poland)

Director: Mateusz Mularski
Producer: Independent
Organisation: Independent
Country focus: Italy

Abstract: This film is about a harm reduction mobile unit in Milan, Italy. It includes interviews with the staff of the unit and the clients and professionals in the field of harm reduction in Milan. The film also touches on some general issues of harm reduction in Italy, showing how harm reduction practices work in real life.

Email contact: mattm0704@yahoo.com

17:05

Why Russia Says No To Methadone (Russia/Hungary)

Director: Istvan Gabor Tokacs and Kata Sos
Producer: Balazs Denes
Organisation: Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Country focus: Russia

Abstract: The HCLU video advocacy team attended the Second Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference (EECAAC) in Moscow, 3–5 May, 2008. Our main priority was to interview narcologists (addiction specialist doctors) and to create a short advocacy movie on the lack of methadone substitution treatment in Russia. We believe that it is one of the biggest scandals of the world of drug treatment that substitution treatment is banned in a country with 1.5 million people living with HIV – the majority of them infected through the sharing of injecting equipment. Methadone substitution treatment is one of the best available tools of HIV prevention among injecting drug users according to all relevant international organisations (such as WHO, UNODC and UNAIDS). The scientific literature proving its positive impacts on public health and security can fill a whole library: it improves the health and social well-being of users, it prevents them from committing crimes, it decreases illicit drug use and needle and syringe sharing among them. Together with the majority of drug treatment specialists from all over the world we are confident that the lack of access to methadone maintenance treatment in Russia is a basic violation of the human rights of people who use drugs.

Email contact: takacsistvan@tasz.hu

17:15

Reducing Harm From Solvent Use (Cambodia)

Director: David Eberhardt
Producer: Black River Films
Organisation: Korsang
Country focus: Cambodia

Abstract: This video is targeted specifically at current users of solvents and inhalants, especially glue. It stresses the short, medium and long-term harms caused by a range of chemicals that are "huffed" and also points out the negative reaction of Cambodian society towards such substance use. The education video then stresses methods by which "huffing" can be undertaken more safely. The focus is on children and youth as these are the most prevalent inhalant and solvent users in Cambodia based on a range of surveys over recent years.

Email: Java1shot@hotmail.com

18:00–19:30 Evening Session

18:00

The US Versus Tommy Chong (USA)

Director: Josh Gilbert
Producer: Josh Gilbert
Organisation: Blue Chief Entertainment
Country focus: USA

Abstract: The "United States Government vs. Thomas B. Kin Chong" (aka Tommy Chong), chronicles the entrapment and incarceration of comedy icon Tommy Chong (from "Cheech and Chong"). Josh Gilbert takes on this Federal offence in his documentary, and offers a sometimes frightening, often hilarious account of Operation Pipe Dreams – a nationwide drug paraphernalia sting spearheaded by a rabidly political federal prosecutor Mary Beth Buchanan (who was appointed by George Bush three short days after the attacks of 9/11). After fully-armed SWAT teams raided the comedian's home and his business, Chong Glass, Chong was sentenced to nine months in Federal prison for "conspiracy to manufacture and distribute drug paraphernalia through his family business," specialising in handmade glass water pipes or "bongs." Of the 55 defendants prosecuted, Chong was the only defendant with no prior convictions to receive prison time. As Roger Ebert said after viewing the film, "You do not have to approve of drugs to be offended." The film provides a charming portrait of a martyred, counter-culture icon set against the backdrop of a "war on drugs" gone horribly awry.

Email contact: akajoshgilbert@gmail.com

Tuesday 21st

13:00–14:00 Lunch (with presentation)

13:00

Left Them Behind (Macau)

Presenter: Cecilia, Wing-yin Ho
Director: Cecilia, Wing-yin Ho
Producer: Tsz-kwong Yung
Organisation: Macao Live Net Association
Country focus: Macao

Abstract: Macao is a Special Administration Region since China resumed its sovereignty from the Portuguese Government on December 20th 1999. This "Monte Carlo of the Orient" has been handed over to China for eight years. The booming economy following the liberalisation of Macao's gaming industry in 2002, but has left the underprivileged (such as injecting drugs users) behind. This documentary film allows the viewers to witness how the injecting process happens, why people choose taking methadone but still injecting drugs for whatever reasons, and outlines how much is known about the issue in a Chinese society. This is interspersed with interviews with two Macao Chinese drug users sharing their fears and regrets while reflecting on what they have done in the past – how they present their mixed feeling of accepting their own identities of "drug addicts," and how they mingle injecting heroin which they find pleasurable and at the same time immoral in a fast-changing and conservative Macao community.

Email contact: ceciliaho@ipm.edu.mo/ceciliaho@macaolivenet.org

14:00–15:30 Symposium

This special session will look at the use of film from two different perspectives – one where film can be used as a tool for health service programme development, and the second demonstrates film as a part of the research process. Excerpts from each presenters' films will be screened along with an interactive discussion.

14:00

Two Sunflowers (excerpts) (Vietnam)

Presenter: Pauline Oosterhoff

Director: Tran Phuong Thao

Producer: Pauline Oosterhoff, Nguyen Thi Thu

Organisation: Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam Macao Live Net Association

Country focus: Vietnam

Abstract: *Hoa and Linh (a Hanoi couple) found out they were HIV positive eight years ago when Hoa was pregnant with their first child, a daughter.*

The daughter is not infected but lives with the stigma of her mother's disease. Hoa takes action to organise other HIV positive women and tries to give her child a normal childhood. Thuong moved in with Tham (an HIV-infected AIDS widow with a young daughter) in a village in a remote mountain area near China in Northern Viet Nam.

Thuong is HIV negative but is happy to have found true love and is proud to be a "mountain man" (in his own words) who can think and act for himself.

Email contact: Pauline_Oosterhoff@yahoo.com

14:30

Using Film As A Tool For Research (USA)

Presenter: Greg Scott

Organisation: Sawbuck productions

Country focus: USA

Abstract: *This film chronicles a matriarchal "family" system comprised of dispossessed, marginalised, drug addicted people who struggle daily to achieve balance between their individualistic pursuits and the need to rely on each other for survival. Owing to the pressures of ostracism and police suppression, the members of this "outlaw community" have been forced to elucidate their own normative systems, their own standards, their own guidelines and mechanisms for creating and maintaining social control and order. We meet "Cat," the self-designated "ruler" or "chief" of the family, and Laura, who struggles in her attempt to "follow the rules." Mediating the conflict is heroin- and crack-addicted Jamie. And "Mike" leads us through the continual battles of the family life. This is a portrait of an American family.*

Email contact: greg@sawbuckproductions.org

15:00

Complex Problems, Simple Solutions (Caribbean)

Presenter: Marcus Day

Producer: Kelly Magnus

Director: Kelly Magnus

Organisation: Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition

Country focus: Caribbean

Abstract: *The Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition launched a newly produced video highlighting the vulnerability of homeless female crack cocaine users to HIV infection. Produced by Kelly Magnus of CARIMAC with funding from the Caribbean Treatment Action Group (CTAG), the video was shot on location in Kingston, Jamaica, Port of Spain and Port Fortin, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia.*

Email contact: marcus.p.day@gmail.com

16:00–17:30 Lounge

16:00

Mum Loves Drugs Not Me (UK)

Director: Kate Blewett

Producer: Kate Blewett, Deborah Shipley, Exec Producer – Brian Woods

Organisation: True Vision Productions

Country focus: United Kingdom

Abstract: *This film is a heart-breaking portrait of the devastating impact of illegal drugs, not on those who use them – but on the 350,000 children of parents with a serious drug problem. All too often these children are condemned to find their own way through the chaos and tragedy of their parents drug use.*

Billions are spent on treating drug users but there are almost no services focussed on helping the innocent victims of their addiction, and the grandparents who pick up the pieces.

Email contact: verity@truevisiontv.com

16:50

Looking For An Alternative (Georgia/Hungary)

Director: Istavan Gabor Takacs and Kata Sos
Producer: Balazs Denes
Organisation: Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Country focus: Russia

Abstract: In Georgia, the police have the right to take anybody off the street for drug testing without any suspicion or evidence of possession. In 2007 there were 57,000 people stopped on the streets by police detained and brought for drug testing. In 2007 the officials collected US\$21,429,000 from the drug fines while at the same time the state has invested US\$178,000 in the drug field. Many people are unable to pay the high fines and go to prison for drug use while there are not enough drug treatment places in the county. The film introduces the story of an Abkhazian refugee whose son has been imprisoned for drug use, as well as various experts to talk about the acute situation of the harsh drug policy in Georgia. The film is a collaboration between the Georgian NGO "Union Alternative Georgia" and the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union.

Email contact: takacsistavan@tasz.hu

17:05

Breaking The Ice (Pacific Islands)

Director: Francis X. Hezel, SJ
Producer: Blanca Amado
Organisation: Micronesia Seminar
Country focus: Pacific

Abstract: Over the past decade, the people in the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas have been silent witnesses to a raging storm. This storm, which has swept over other parts of the Pacific, is a killer – claiming lives and destroying communities. It is man-made and known by many names: shabu, glass, or ice; crystal methamphetamine. This video documents the destroyed lives and devastation that the "ice" epidemic in the Northern Marianas has wrought. Small school children offer prayers that their daddies may stop using drugs and wives tell of the toll drugs have taken in their families. We see abundant examples of the social impact of "ice" use and hear community leaders telling about how they propose to conduct the war against this drug. Drug users testify to the destructive power of the drug in their lives, but there are also stories by persons who have broken themselves free from the habit and reclaimed their lives.

Email contact: fxhezel@micsem.org

17:30

Hidden In Dust (Iran/Canada)

Director: Mahboubeh Honarian
Producer: Mahboubeh Honarian
Organisation: Veramedia International
Country focus: Iran

Abstract: This is a documentary about drug addiction. Today in any society the young generation is at risk of drug use. In this film young men and women explain their situation, their lives, how they started using and the rise of drug use in Iran.

Email contact: honarian@veramediaapro.com

18:30 Evening Session

18:30

Grass (Canada)

Director: Ron Mann
Producer: Ron Mann
Organisation: Sphinx Productions
Country focus: USA

Abstract: Award-winning director Ron Mann hooks up with actor/activist Woody Harrelson to deal you Grass, a highly spirited and innovative look into one of America's most deeply rooted cultural myths: the evils of marijuana. Utilising hilarious footage from US government propaganda films, and eye-popping animation from underground artist Paul Mavrides, Grass blows the lid off the war on marijuana.

Email contact: mann@sphinxproductions.com

Wednesday 22nd
13:00–14:00 Lunch

13:00 International Animation Compilation (Finland/Canada/Australia)

This session will feature a selection of animated and claymation films from Finland, Australia and Canada. Some have been developed as educational or communication tools by young people about alcohol and drugs or sexual health, others were developed by community organisations as a targeted educational DVD.

Ainemaatio – Animation Contest (Finland)

Organisation: Elämä On Parasta Huumetta ry (EOPH)

Abstract: *Ainemaatio – Animation Contest is an annual animated film competition open to youngsters and young adults. The animations deal with substance abuse and related phenomena in Finland. The basic idea of the Ainemaatio is for young people to reach out to each other and discuss matters such as drug and alcohol abuse via animation. At their best the films challenge other young people to discuss substance abuse and find new, fresh angles to deal with the matter. They vary in views and techniques in ways that challenge the viewer and allows him or her to relate to the problem. The organisers of the contest include Elämä on parasta huumetta ry (EOPH; an organisation in preventing substance abuse), Preventiimi (a network for preventing substance abuse), and MTV3 (a TV company). EOPH uses these animations as one part of its substance abuse prevention programme. Preventiimi has published two DVD's using some of the competing films in the Ainemaatio – Animation Contest as a substantial part of its alcohol abuse and tobacco usage prevention material.*

Email contact: timo.mulari@eoph.fi

Don't Be Buntha: Hep C Don't Let It Be (Australia)

Producer: Lawrence Wilkes and Ashley Starkey

Organisation: Hepatitis C Council South Australia Inc

Abstract: *"Don't Be Buntha" is the result of a collaboration between the Hepatitis C Council of South Australia, the Gawler Health Service Kalteeya Aboriginal Health Service, Centacare Wodlittinattoi Project, and community artists to develop and produce claymation characters in a conversation about hepatitis C. The DVD contains key messages about hepatitis C prevention and health promotion targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.*

Email contact: john@hepcouncilsa.asn.au

Aboriginal Next Steps (Canada)

Director: Sherry Simon

Producer: Mark Vonech

Organisation: McCreary Centre Society

Abstract: *The McCreary Centre Society's Aboriginal Next Steps (ANS) project is supporting innovative Aboriginal youth-led (aged 13–19) community projects that are related to youth health and the development of protective factors and reduction of risk factors. Youth in ten Aboriginal communities across British Columbia (BC) created these films during the first part of the project, which also included research on adolescent health in BC, leadership skills, and the opportunity to create plans for community action. The stop-motion animation films raise awareness about issues of substance use and promote harm reduction, whether that is a shared dream, sexual health education that emphasises the use of condoms, or providing more options for youth. Since the films have been made, youth have been using them to promote community dialogues, changes in policy, and to engage youth and adults on issues involving sexual health, drug use, marginalised and street-involved youth, and emotional and physical wellness.*

Email contact: sherry@mcs.bc.ca

Play Now Act Now (Australia)

Organisation: Play Now Act Now supported by Metro Screen and NSW Health

Abstract: *"Play Now Act Now" is a film, graphic design and writing competition for young people aged 16 to 25 in New South Wales, Australia. "Play Now Act Now" recognises that young people do and will use drugs and drink alcohol, and sets out to minimise the harms associated with this. "Play Now Act Now" is a health education initiative that invites young people to produce creative resources focussing on issues associated with the usage of alcohol and other drugs e.g. health, social, political, moral or ethical issues.*

Web: www.pnan.net.au

Email contact: festivaldirector@pnan.com.au

13:30

Know Your Mushrooms (excerpt) (Canada/USA)

Director: Ron Mann
Producer: Ron Mann
Organisation: Sphinx Productions
Country focus: USA

Abstract: *Inspired by a chance conversation with fellow filmmaker and mushroom buff Jim Jarmusch, Mann set off to the annual Telluride Mushroom Festival in Colorado. It was there he encountered the unique sub-sub-subculture surrounding fungi that includes an unlikely assortment of nerds, nuts, hipsters, trippers, artists, chefs, musicians, foodies, foragers, and seekers all paying homage to the mighty mushroom. Combining material filmed at the Telluride Mushroom Fest with animation and archival footage along with a neo-psychedelic soundtrack by the Flaming Lips, KNOW YOUR MUSHROOMS opens the doors to perception, takes the audience on a longer, stranger trip and delivers them to a brave new world where the fungi might well guide humanity to a saner, safer place... with extra cheese.*

Email contact: mann@sphinxproductions.com

13:40

Magic Mint: Menace Or Medicine (USA/Australia)

Producer: Ginny Stein
Organisation: Sphinx Productions
Country focus: USA

Abstract: *Salvia, also known as "magic mint," sends users on a short but intense high. The active compound in Salvia is unique, because it stimulates a single receptor in the human brain. Scientists fear that the "YouTube" videos are creating unnecessary hysteria, making a Federal ban more likely, which in turn would curtail their research. While some politicians are pushing for a ban, others are urging caution. "Is this really a menace?," asks Democrat MP Ellie Kinnaird, "or is this something that is probably very limited in scope and... not the most fun, and therefore will not continue?." Little is known about the long-term effects of smoking Salvia. There have been rare claims of Salvia-related deaths in the USA, but nothing has been proven. However, Professor Roth admits there are dangers: "At the height of it he [a salvia user] didn't really know where he was, so obviously the concern would be if he was alone...that could potentially be a bad thing." In 2002, Australia became the first country to ban Salvia, citing a high potential for abuse and potential risk to public health and safety. Since then, a handful of other countries have followed suit.*

Email contact: ginnys@sbs.com.au

14:00–15:30 Symposium

14:00

Bewildered (New Zealand)

Presenter: Michael Bird
Director: Michael Bird/Davorin Fahn
Producer: Michael Bird
Organisation: Birdseye Productions
Country focus: New Zealand

Abstract: *A film created to help parents of teenagers with drug and alcohol problems come to terms with the issues they are facing through hearing (and seeing) how other parents (and a couple of teenagers) in similar circumstances found ways through the issues they confronted.*

Email contact: michaelbird@ihug.co.nz

14:35

Cops Say Legalise Drugs (USA/Hungary)

Director: Balazs Denes
Producer: Balazs Denes and Peter Kotschy
Organisation: Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
Country focus: USA

Abstract: *A film on the veterans of the war on drugs, ex-law enforcement officials who are now the speakers for LEAP (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition). They say the solution for the worlds drug problem is to legalise them all.*

Email contact: takacsistavan@tasz.hu

14:55

Keep Walking (UK)

Director: Jon Derricott
Producer: Jon Derricott/Andrew Preston
Organisation: Exchange Supplies
Country Focus: United Kingdom

Abstract: *A documentary that follows femoral injectors through an ultrasound scan of their femoral vein and a consultation with a vascular surgeon. Aimed at groin injectors, keep walking is a unique resource designed to inform and change high risk injecting behaviour.*

Email contact: Jon@exchangesupplies.org

16:00–17:30 The Lounge

16:00

Kava Culture (Australia/Vanuatu)

Producer: Mark Corcoran
Organisation: SBS Dateline
Country Focus: Vanuatu

Abstract: Tribal custodians, scientists and even Vanuatu's politicians help Mark Corcoran inquire into the pleasures and pitfalls of Vanuatu's intoxicating kava culture. In a traditional hut Corcoran sips kava, freshly squeezed from the kava root. His mouth goes numb but fortunately, he says, there's no hangover. Then he goes hunting for the valuable plant with French scientist Dr. Vincent Lebot who has spent thirty years studying and drinking kava. Lebot says kava isn't addictive. It's used in traditional medicine as an effective antiseptic and anaesthetic. In Europe however deaths have been attributed to kava-based health tablets. As a result kava is now banned in Germany, France the UK, and Canada. Dr. Lebot insists kava isn't the problem – it's the chemicals used to produce the pills. "Unfortunately they had a huge media coverage... they suspect kava to produce a toxic effect on the liver. I cannot understand how it could be toxic, because here in the South Pacific half the population drinks it." At a kava bar near Parliament House, Corcoran finds opposition leader Moanna Carcasses working the crowd. A migrant from Tahiti, Carcasses sips a bowl and tells Corcoran, "Since we have kava we have less problems. Before drinking was a problem – people drink alcohol they fight. With kava we don't have anymore of these problems."

Email contact: mark@sbs.com.au

16:10

Thailand's Drug Habit (Thailand/Australia)

Producer: David O'Shea
Organisation: SBS Dateline
Country Focus: Thailand

Abstract: When former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra launched one of the world's toughest crackdowns on illegal drugs in 2003, it ultimately resulted in over 2,500 deaths. A Government inquiry later found that over half of the dead were innocent people. Now Thailand's new pro-Thaksin Government is set to launch a second war on drugs, and some critics are concerned. During the first war, observers claimed it was the Thai police behind many of the shootings. So could we see a similar outcome this time?

Email contact: david@sbs.com.au

16:30

Africa's Cocaine Coast (Guinea Bissau/Australia)

Producer: Amos Roberts
Organisation: SBS Dateline
Country Focus: Guinea Bissau

Abstract: Dateline invites you inside West Africa's Guinea Bissau – an impoverished nation fighting a dangerous underground cocaine trade. Latin America's feared drug cartels have established a new pipeline for their lucrative trade and Guinea Bissau is caught in the middle. The country's army spokesman tells video journalist Amos Roberts he knows he's fighting an uphill battle against the cartels and the widespread corruption the trade has spawned. These days, however, there are serious allegations of criminal involvement by senior military and Government figures, and luxury homes – funded by drug money – continue to multiply in the deeply impoverished capital, Bissau.

Email contact: amosr@sbs.com.au

16:55

Mexico's Narco Wars (Mexico/Australia)

Producer: David O'Shea
Organisation: SBS Dateline
Country Focus: Mexico

Abstract: David O'Shea reports from Mexico, where people are struggling to cope with a horrifying increase in violence, brought about by the Mexican Government's decision to wage war on the powerful drug cartels. The death toll so far this year is 4,000 – higher than in Iraq – and around 3 to 4 people are kidnapped for ransom daily. "We're assaulted every day," one resident of Mexico City tells O'Shea, "Mexico as a country can not guarantee our security." O'Shea spends time in Sinaloa – Mexico's "Wild West" – where life is a daily rollcall of decapitations, torturing and the shooting deaths of gangsters and innocents alike. In the four days he's there he sees a hysterical young man who's just witnessed the shooting of his sister, and films the bodies of two more people, shot dead in broad daylight by assassins on motorbikes. The Governor of Sinaloa, Jesus Padilla, tells O'Shea that security is improving, yet many are still pessimistic. Some believe corrupt police are involved in the drugs trade and the kidnappings. While O'Shea is filming his story it's revealed that a federal police officer – at one point a member of the anti-kidnap team – is arrested over the kidnapping and murder of a 14-year-old boy.

Email contact: david@sbs.com.au

17:20

Bittersweet Harvest (Afghanistan/UK)

Director: David Gough
Producer: David Gough
Organisation: IRIN Films
Country Focus: Afghanistan

Abstract: Just as it emerges from more than two decades of war, Afghanistan finds itself embroiled in yet another conflict – the war on drugs.

Email contact: gough@irinnews.org

6th International Drugs and Harm Reduction Film Festival

The 6th *International Drugs and Harm Reduction Film Festival* is presented by the Burnet Institute and the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA). The festival aims to communicate differing or new, and sometimes contrasting, understandings of drug use. Many of the films have been made by people who do not work in "harm reduction" and so may not necessarily promote a view of drug use that reflects a traditional harm reduction approach. We hope to challenge and inspire delegates with the diverse programme. We encourage people to view the programme with a critical but accepting eye.

This year we received over 75 films for review; a task which was enjoyable but difficult – many quality films just could not be slotted into this year's programme. For the first time we have also included a small selection of animation and claymation films as part of the programme. Some were made by young people as a communication tool around drug use and safer sex. Other features this year include a special session showcasing harm reduction programmes on film from around the world.

The Burnet Institute is pleased to be involved in this part of the IHRA conference programme and look forward to your feedback. Information about previous conferences and Burnet's harm reduction work can be found on our website links below.

<http://www.burnet.edu.au/home/cih/film>

<http://www.burnet.edu.au/home/cih/whatisit>

For further information, please contact us at filmfest@burnet.edu.au

The 6th International Drugs and Harm Reduction Film Festival is presented by the Burnet Institute and the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA). The festival aims to communicate differing or new, and sometimes contrasting, understandings of drug use. Many of the films have been made by people who do not work in "harm reduction" and so may not necessarily promote a view of drug use that reflects a traditional harm reduction approach. We hope to challenge and inspire delegates with the diverse programme. We encourage people to view the programme with a critical but accepting eye.

