

Extending lives by changing attitude

Projects of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Tajikistan improve access to treatment and change attitude of people to HIV and life with HIV.



Personnel of the public organizations in close collaboration with the AIDS Centers specialists provide support to PLHIV in timely initiation of ART and/or adherence and in case of termination, provide support to PLHIV in renewing ART. In addition to medical aspects of treatment, provision of social and psychological support to PLHIV at all levels covering family members and close people is an important component of the joint efforts of public organizations and AIDS centers.

In 2013, Rustam learned about his HIV positive status and he immediately initiated ART. He visited AIDS center regularly and received ART there, but despite this fact, doctors noticed that Rustam's health was getting worse. During the regular visits to doctors Rustam did not admit that he was not taking medicines. But in 2016 when Rustam got TB, he told doctors that he did not adhere to the ART therapy because of family problems and negative attitude from his relatives.

“Having learned about my illness, my brothers and sisters began to avoid me, tried to stay away from me and did not talk to me. When I got sick with tuberculosis, they kicked me out of the house and put me in a pantry with no floor, ceiling, doors or windows. My family did not give me any food and did not allow taking water from tap. The medicines provided by the AIDS center should be taken after meals, but I did not take it, because I had nothing to eat. I was starving. Day by day I was getting worse and worse. In a word, I was waiting for my death”- says Rustam.

In 2016, in one of his visits to the AIDS center, Rustam met with an outreach worker of the public organization AFEW-Tajikistan.

“I remember very well the day I met social worker from AFEW-Tajikistan. It was on May 25, 2016. Before I couldn't share with anyone that I was starving and had nothing to eat and my family did not support me. Now, due to peer consultant I feel at ease when I talk about my problems and I understood that I am not the only person who lives with HIV and facing problems due to life with HIV. First, this organization helped me to start and get necessary treatment from TB. Social workers helped

me to buy missing medicines and provided food so that I could take my medicines in a timely manner” - Rustam continues his story.

Having received a consent from Rustam, social workers and peer consultant met with the members of his family, talked to them and informed about life with HIV, treatment of TB and explained HIV is not dangerous for surrounded people. Relatives of Rustam were explained that if he would take his medicines on a regular basis and in a timely manner, he could live with HIV for a long time. They used several examples to explain the relatives how important it is for Rustam to have support and understanding from relatives and beloved ones.

“My life has changed. I felt as if I got a new life. My family accepted me as I am. They started to visit me in the hospital. Now I take my medicines in time and I feel that my health has improved. Nevertheless, support and understanding from the family is a key factor for a long life with HIV!” - Rustam completes his story.

With support of AFEW – Tajikistan at the end of November, 2016 Rustam successfully ended his TB treatment and got a job at local market of Kurgan-Tube city as shop assistant. Presently Rustam lives in his house and is accorded the greatest care and consideration.

Note: Project on “Strengthening the supportive environment and scaling up prevention, treatment and care to contain HIV epidemic in Tajikistan” is financed by The Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and UNDP. The project is managed by AFEW-Tajikistan in collaboration with eight local public organizations in 22 regions of Tajikistan