

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

The Republican public organization “AIDS Foundation East West – Tajikistan” (AFEW-Tajikistan) is pleased to report on the final results and achievements of the project “Get Informed, Get Tested, Get Treated” in the Republic of Tajikistan supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The given report provides a description of implemented Project activities and final overview of achievements and accomplishments during the whole Project period (January 01, 2015 – December 31, 2015).

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goal of the project:

To increase the number of people who use drugs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, that seeks treatment for HIV.

Objectives:

1. To support drug users’ community organizations in informing their constituencies about testing and treatment
2. To increase the number of people who use drugs in 3 countries in Central Asia who know their HIV status and when positive refer them for treatment

The beneficiaries:

- The people who use drugs.
- The local organizations (NGOs).
- Local authorities.

Expected results of the Project:

- At least 150 tests are provided and all HIV positive tested people are guided to the AIDS Centre for treatment.
- NGOs have the capacity to develop strategies and approaches to promote testing and treatment and to reach out to their constituencies.

Implementing Partners

1. “AIDS Foundation East West – Tajikistan”

2. Republican AIDS Center
3. Dushanbe City AIDS Center
4. Kulob Regional AIDS Center
5. NGO “SPIN Plus”
6. NGO “SVON Plus”

II. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Background

The first HIV case in Tajikistan was registered in 1991. Thereafter the number of detected cases was small, however it started to steadily increase and picked in 2010 largely due to the expansion of HIV testing, particularly in the risk groups. According to the UNAIDS Report on Global AIDS Epidemic 2012¹, Tajikistan is among countries where HIV prevalence has increased by more than 25% over the last 10 years, though still manages to keep the epidemic in a concentrated stage (less than 1% of general population).

As for January 01, 2015 there were 6558 PLHIV (4587 men, 1971 women) in Tajikistan. Out of 1008 new HIV cases in 2014, 24,2% were infected through injecting drug use and 60,4% through sexual intercourse.

While the HIV epidemic remained largely driven by drug injecting (PWID) male population in past, the change in the structure of new infections is observed during the past five years.

Namely, 44% increase in the heterosexual transmission and 54% increase of vertical transmission are reported, whereas number of cases with injection transmission decreased by 50% between 2009-2013².

Figure 1: Number of newly registered HIV cases per year, 2000 – 2013

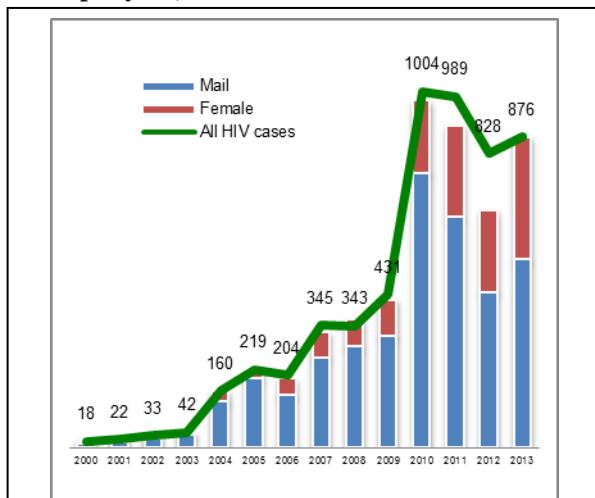
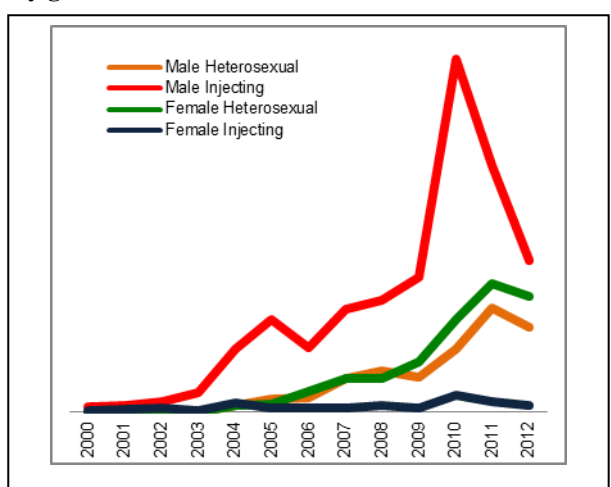


Figure 2: Newly registered HIV infections by gender and transmission route 2000-2012



Tajikistan is a transit country and market for drugs including injected drugs such as heroin. The last available estimated number of People who inject drugs (PWID) living in Tajikistan is 25,000 (in 2009). Acceleration of preventive activities during the last five years displays positive results.

¹ Mid- term review of National HIV/AIDS programme

² Country Progress report, 2014

That is why in order to increase the number of people who know their HIV status and to prevent late HIV diagnosis among drug users the focus of the HIV testing in Tajikistan was on people who use drugs.

Initial stage

Before starting of active phase of project implementation, *AFEW-Tajikistan* is conducted the series of consultations with Republican AIDS Center and PUD community organizations “SPIN Plus” and “SVON Plus”.

As result of preliminary consultations, on November 09, 2015 the General Plan of joint activities within HIV Testing Week in Tajikistan was developed by *AFEW-Tajikistan* and approved by Republican AIDS Center.

According to above mentioned plan 2 sites - **Dushanbe** (the capital of Tajikistan) and **Kulob city, which is** occupied close to Tajik-Afghan border line were selected for provision of HIV services among PUDs.

These cities were selected due to the high rate of drug users (PUDs), including injecting drug users (IDUs), according to data of the National Center for Health Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan for 100 thousand of population:



№	City	2012		2013		2014	
		Total PUDs	Including PWIDs	Total PUDs	Including PWIDs	Total PUDs	Including PWIDs
1.	Dushanbe	34,0	29,9	31,6	27,0	39,1	30,6
2.	Khudjand	9,6	9,0	17,2	17,2	21,0	20,3
3.	Qurhgoontepa	20,9	19,6	10,1	6,7	25,7	19,5
4.	Kulob	90,0	75,7	110,0	77,7	47,7	28,1

Methodology

Two implementation partners: NGOs “SPIN Plus” and “SVON Plus” were provided by Term of References with specific requirements on dates, coverage and types of services need to be provided to PUDs.

In close communication with Republican AIDS Center two united teams of outreach and social workers of NGOs and AIDS Center’s specialists were established.

NGOs staff and specialist of AIDS centers were instructed on how to select and register clients, how to inform and refer them to AIDS centers and develop



activity reports. Educated team of outreach workers and peer consultants of NGOs those have proven skills on attracting of PUDs in utilization of services and provision of HIV counseling were involved in project.

Those PUDs who willing to know their HIV status were equipped by voucher coupons filled by outreach workers and/or escorted by social workers of NGOs to AIDS Centers. By NGO's referrals AIDS Center specialists provided to PUDs needed HIV testing and post-testing counseling.

As agreed between partners, follow up HIV testing and post-testing services were provided solely by specialists of AIDS Centers.

To ensure anonymously of services all partners agreed to use UIC (Unique Identification Code) during filling referrals vouchers for HIV testing and counseling. As usual practice on delivering of HIV prevention services for key population all project services were offered on voluntary base.



Implementation report

Within Project HIV counseling, IEC distribution and referral services were provided to PUDs in Kulob and Dushanbe.

As result, 351 PUDs were reached by HIV information, counseling, testing and knew their HIV status. In 15 cases the results of rapid testing was positive. All PUDs those have positive results of rapid tests were repeatedly provided by counseling and offered to receive HIV testing through IFA screening. All these cases are under survey of reference-laboratory of Republican AIDS center.



On December 11, 2015 the working meeting "Presentation results of HIV Testing Week in Tajikistan" were conducted in Dushanbe. 22 representatives of AIDS Centers, Secretary of National Coordination Mechanism, UNODC, UNAIDS, UNDP, AIDS Centers and local NGOs took part at meeting.



Meeting participants familiarized with results of HIV testing among PUDs, achievements, challenges in HIV prevention sphere among PUDs and project's lessons learned. Based on project report, partners discussed further strategies on organization of HIV counseling and testing among key populations, gaps in delivering HIV prevention and Harm reduction services to PUDs and provided essential recommendations on improving the qualifications and level of preparedness of outreach work and increasing availability of Harm reduction services on the ground.

Outputs reports:

Planned	Actual	Comments
150 PUDs tested for HIV	351 PUDs tested for HIV	Partner NGOs developed agreements with health services that made possible to increase number of PUDs tested for HIV.
25 key partners familiarized with results of HIV testing and determined strategies for the future	22 partners	Because of weather alert and bad road conditions, three participants from hard-to-reach mountain regions didn't participate in meeting.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of NGOs and local AIDS Centers activities on provision of HIV counseling and testing services to PUDs was included in General Plan of HIV Testing Week.

Two lead specialist of Republican AIDS Center involved in monitoring of project activities, HIV testing and results data collection and verification. Later, after accomplishment of works on data verification the results of HIV Testing Week were presented to key stakeholders.

Results

- 100% of rapid tests were provided by Republican AIDS Center
- 351 PUDs went through HIV testing and counseling in two cities and knew their HIV status and have basic information about prevention and treatment
- 15 positive results on HIV rapid tests detected; All PUDs with positive results of rapid-tests were provided by peer-to peer counseling; follow up HIV testing through IFA; and familiarized with AIDS Center staff to plan next steps.
- 100% of PUDs participated in HIV counseling and testing received motivational packages;
- 22 representatives of AIDS Centers, Secretary of National Coordination Mechanism, UNODC, UNAIDS, UNDP, AIDS Centers and local NGOs are recognized project results and provided essential recommendations.

Conclusions

Drug users are the main group of HIV transmission due to use of unsterilized needles and syringes. In addition to transmission via needles, transmission through sexual contact is also a mechanism for the dissemination of HIV in this group.

For the most injecting drug users access to sterile syringes through pharmacies is limited by fear of arrest by police and subsequent problems. Therefore it is necessary to strengthen the work of drug treatment services to improve professional contacts with drug users and expanding services for this population, including of syringes exchange programs.

Ikram Ibragimov,
 Director of RPO "AIDS Foundation East West – Tajikistan"
 December 15, 2015

