

'Fast-track TB/HIV responses for key populations in EECA cities' project

Quarterly newsletter №1

January-March, 2017

Project brief



'Fast-track TB/HIV responses for key populations in EECA cities' project was initiated by Alliance for Public Health (Ukraine) with AFEW International (The Netherlands), Licit and Stop TB Partnership (both Switzerland) under technical guidance of UNAIDS Eastern Europe and Central Asia office with funding of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to support city responses to HIV and TB in key populations in the cities of EECA. The project will be implemented throughout 2017-2019 and plans to develop efficient and sustainable city models of HIV/TB responses that would allow to reduce AIDS and TB mortalities in the project cities as well as increase the allocation of city funding to HIV/TB interventions for key populations. Five cities are participating in the project: Almaty (Kazakhstan), Odesa (Ukraine), Sofia (Bulgaria), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Balti (Moldova).



Newsletter about project development will be provided quarterly and shared among project partners and stakeholders. This newsletter summarizes project main activities and achievements during January-March 2017.

Project progress

Achieved high level political commitment from municipality to TB/HIV



On February 28, 2017, the mayor of Odesa Gennadiy Trukhanov signed Paris Declaration of commitment to Ending AIDS and therefore joined the global cities movement initiated by the Mayor of Paris and UNAIDS in 2014. Odesa became the first city to sign Paris declaration within the Global Fund supported EECA regional cities program.

The city took the commitment to significantly increase HIV testing and treatment coverage of Odesa residents with the aim to end AIDS in 2030 and to focus on programs for key populations.

The ceremony gathered representatives of Centre of Public Health, UN Secretary General special envoy on HIV/AIDS in EECA Michel Kazatchkine, representatives of UN family in Ukraine, including UNAIDS, UNICEF, Deputy Head of Kyiv City State Administration, Chief of Party of USAID HIV-reform In Action Project, representatives of the Network of People Living with HIV, Alliance for Public Health and other civil society organizations, Olena Pinchuk Anti-AIDS Foundation, partners of the city AIDS response programs.

Mayor of Odesa Gennaidy Trukhanov said: 'The city is well prepared to take this commitment. We have a good level of collaboration with the municipal services, strong AIDS service, partner NGOs to make this commitment possible'.

Engaged key populations in city work

Regional key populations networks – Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs (ENPUD), Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), South Caucasus Network (SCN) and Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN) have been engaged to prioritize involvement in the project of key groups both on the regional and cities' levels. ENPUD and SWAN representatives will be engaged in all 5 cities, whereas ECOM will cover Almaty, Balti, Odesa and Sofia, and SCN – Tbilisi.

The Networks will be implementing project activities both at the regional Secretariat as well as at the city level. The representative at the city level is strongly engaged with the city community of key populations. They will collaborate with the NGOs coordinating the activities in the project cities as well as with the municipalities. They will perform the following activities at city level: community mobilization, participating in the development of city improvement plan, membership in City Task Forces, monitoring of city interventions for KPs, providing information on violations of rights of KPs. At National level they will: develop capacity of Network to effectively implement city level response programs on TB and HIV, update city community organizations on international and regional best practices related to DUIT/SWIT/MSMIT and TRANSIT and communicate about the project development in the cities across the Network.

ECOM's approach is to engage LGBT community representatives both from city and national levels. The city level representative is a community activist who is responsible for awareness rising among local community members, community mobilization and representing the community in work with the city administration. The national level representative cooperates with Country Coordination Mechanism to incorporate the CITIEs project in Country HIV Program. This integration has to ensure additional national support to local community activists, as well as to increase sensitization of the staff of the city administration and other local partners. In cities where LGBT activists have not enough capacity to communicate openly and on regular base with the city officials, e.g. Sofia, or where are no local experienced LGBT activists, e.g. Balti, a tactic of phased (step-by-step) development has to be used to develop a community empowerment plan targeted to defining and training local community activists who, in the 2nd year of the project, will be able to represent local LGBT community in coordination with the city administration for making the city health policy, services and funding aligned with needs of LGBT community, particularly for prevention and treatment of HIV and TB.

Built coordination mechanisms in cities

In **Almaty** there is 'Public Health Committee under Municipality of Almaty'. Within CITIEs project, it is planned to set a working group on HIV and TB (City Task Force) under the Order of 'Public Health Committee under Municipality of Almaty' with the mandatory participation of community representatives and NGOs working in the field of HIV and TB. The working group will coordinate the joint actions of partners involved in the project, providing political and expert support to the project at the city level.

In **Balti** there are 2 working groups: a) on development of municipal programs on HIV prevention and control and b) on development of municipal programs on TB prevention and control. Within the CITIEs project it is planned to unite these 2 groups in 1 working group on ensuring program implementation.

In **Odesa** there is Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) on HIV/AIDS, TB and drug use working since 2006. Within CITIEs project, it is planned to include Key population representatives into CCM and increase the effectiveness of the CCM work improving the decision-making process.

In **Sofia** there was HIV/STI City Council that was established 4 -5 years ago and stopped operating 2 years ago. Within the CITIEs project it is planned to reestablish CCM. To start this process there is a need to obtain new Order from the Mayor and to appoint new Chairperson and members. The project will work to ensure the participation of the key populations representatives in the City Council.

In **Tbilisi** there is no CCM at city level, there is only National CCM. Within CITIEs project, it is planned to establish City Task Force (CTF) involving municipalities, key affected populations and NGO

representatives to develop and implement HIV/TB plans. The CTF will be created under the Order of City Administration/Mayor's office.

Sensitizing city stakeholders

Civil Society Forum in Tbilisi



On February 23, 2017 Civil Society Forum organized by Georgia CCM was conducted in Tbilisi. It was attended by CSOs, members of the CCM, the officials from the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, representatives of Government Sector, International organization, the Global Fund. Nino Tsereteli, Executive Director of Tanadgoma, presented 'Fast-track TB/HIV responses for key populations in EECA cities' regional project to Forum participants and provided review of Municipality's involvement and perspectives overall. It was also discussed the signing of Paris Declaration by Tbilisi and possibility of having City Task Force under order of the municipality.

CCM meeting in Balti



On March 15, 2017 a meeting of CCM members was held to analyze and discuss important issues related to the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the country. The representatives of the Association 'Youth for the Right to Live', Balti and the Union for HIV prevention and Harm Reduction Moldova (UORN) raised the issue about the need to involve more actively the representatives of local public authorities in the processes and work of the CCM, thereby ensuring the possibility of increasing financial investment and also the commitment at the local level. These actions can promote the development of local effective models of HIV response, exchange of experience and good practices, which is planned to be developed in the next three years by the regional 'Fast-track TB/HIV responses for key populations in EECA cities' project.

Project opening meeting in Sofia



On March 21, 2017, Initiative for Health Foundation and Association 'Health without Borders' held an opening meeting in Sofia for the project 'Fast-track TB/HIV responses for key populations in EECA cities'.

The aim of the meeting was to present the project to a wide range of professionals and stakeholders in the city of Sofia, to collect their views and recommendations and to get them involved for the future implementation of the project activities.

The meeting was attended by nearly 30 participants, representing city's health services, state and municipal institutions and NGOs. The participants welcomed the project and expressed their view that the project comes at the right time, when the Global Fund's HIV grant for Bulgaria is being closed and it is an essential moment for the country to review and adjust its local resources. During the discussions a significant focus was put on the need to involve key populations' representatives in the decision-making.

Project meetings in Almaty



Public Foundation AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW) in Kazakhstan organized work meetings with Almaty NGO's, with a Deputy Head of the City Health Department and with the Head of UNAIDS in Kazakhstan in March 2017.

City Health Department, NGO' and UNAIDS supported the project and expressed readiness to connect all possible resources of the UN system and provide technical assistance in signing the Paris Declaration.

It was agreed to conduct in April a working meeting with the participation of city authorities, City Health Department, NGOs and international organizations with the aim of presenting the project activities, discussing the role of each party and developing work plan.

Started working on city gaps and improvement plans. Development of the situation assessment tool



AFEW international develops a tool for needs assessment in project cities featuring: availability, quality and collection methods of data on HIV and TB for key populations in the cities; current HIV and TB epidemic in key populations in the cities; coverage of key populations by key HIV and TB prevention, diagnostics and treatment services; existing coordination bodies responsible for HIV and TB programs in cities (e.g. Coordinating Councils); existing city programs and their regulation of key populations programs, levels of their funding; existing sources of funding of key populations HIV and TB responses in the city level; human rights and policing regarding key populations.

The assessment tool is expected to be developed by the end of April, and needs assessment will be conducted by the CCM/CTF in the project cities. The needs assessment will lead to development of City improvement plans in the 2nd quarter to address gaps in current municipal response.

Kick-off meeting in Kyiv



On March 30-31, 2017 Alliance for Public Health held a project kick-off meeting in Kyiv (Ukraine) with the participation of cities implementing partners - 'Initiative for Health Foundation' <http://www.initiativeforhealth.org/en/> and Association 'Health without Borders' <http://hwb-bg.info/> from Sofia, NGO 'Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health 'Tanadgoma' from Tbilisi <http://new.tanadgomaweb.ge>, Public Foundation AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW) in Kazakhstan from Almaty www.afew.kz, NGO 'Youth for the Right to Live' from Balti <http://tdvbalti.md/>, NGO 'Youth Center for Development' from Odesa <https://www.facebook.com/Общественная-организация-Молодёжный-центр-развития>; regional key populations networks - Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs <http://new.enpud.org>, Eurasian Coalition on Male Health ecom.ngo, South Caucasus Network and Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN) <http://www.swannet.org/>, technical partners - AFEW International www.afew.org, Contact Netz/Licit <http://www.licit.ch/> and Stop TB Partnership www.stoptb.org and donor The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria <https://www.theglobalfund.org>.

The participants discussed project progress to date, roles and responsibilities within the project, cities work plans for 2017-2019 and operational research to improve outpatient Tuberculosis treatment (Odesa), collaborative HIV/TB interventions (Balti), and increased uptake of ART by key populations based on case management model (Almaty).

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