

**Regional Cooperation Programme in countries of
Eastern Europe and Central Asia
in the field of Prevention, Control and Surveillance
of HIV/AIDS and other Communicable Diseases
(2016-2018) – Phase II**



Report period: 2017

in partnership with “AIDS Infoshare” Foundation

СПИД ИНФОСВЯЗЬ

Photo (left to right):

- Armenian Minister of Health Levon Altunyan is taking an HIV self-test
- Self-test kits
- HIV testing at a mobile clinic in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan
- Armenia: HIV testing at the Republican AIDS Center
- Miss Russia-2017 Polina Popova is taking an HIV test
- A mobile clinic in a remote area of Tajikistan
- A performance of the Kyrgyz Fashion Chamber against stigma and discrimination of persons living with HIV
- Information campaigning for self-testing in Belarus

List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ART | Antiretroviral Therapy |
| CPMF | Clinical and Preventive Medical Facilities |
| CSSSES | Center of the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance |
| HAI | Healthcare Associated Infections |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HIV/TB | HIV and TB Co-infection |
| MH | Ministry of Health |
| MSM | Men Who Have Sex with Men |
| NPO | Non-profit Organization |
| PLWH | Persons Living with HIV |
| PMTCT | Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission |
| RA | Republic of Armenia |
| RB | Republic of Belarus |
| RF | Russian Federation |
| RK | Republic of Kyrgyzstan |
| RT | Republic of Tajikistan |
| SW | Sex Workers |
| STI | Sexually Transmitted Infections |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |

SUMMARY

In 2017, the Regional Cooperation Programme in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the field of Prevention, Control and Surveillance of HIV/AIDS and other Communicable Diseases (hereinafter the Program), funded by the Government of the Russian Federation and implemented by UNAIDS in partnership with the Fund AIDS Infoshare, implemented a number of large-scale events in four partner countries - the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Kyrgyz Republic and Republic Tajikistan.

The main results of the 2017 Program include the popularization of HIV testing at the national level, which allowed unprecedented coverage of preventive activities by the population of the countries of the Program. The Program has and continues to have a positive impact on national and regional health security, ensuring effective monitoring of the epidemiological situation and taking timely measures to prevent HIV infection and provide medical care to the population, especially those at high risk of HIV infection, such as migrants and their members families.

Involvement of leading Russian scientists in the program provided a unique opportunity to work together with national experts of the four partner countries, in particular, to conduct a study to identify the causes of recent HIV infections. This preparatory period has already been completed for this new research, and from January 1, 2018, collection of bio-samples and data processing began. The main technical partner for this research is Insitute of Epidemiology Rospotrebnadzor.

The Armenian Minister of Health Levon Altunyan took an HIV self-test live over the national TV, emphasizing the importance of testing. His example is intended to promote HIV testing and help reduce HIV stigma. As part of the Programme 306 visits of the mobile clinic to various residential areas of RA have been conducted, where over 8 000 people received services regarding HIV testing and counseling, as well as testing for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis.

On February 24, 2017, UNAIDS received a special award from the **President of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan**, for popularizing HIV testing among young people and for the most successful international project in partnership with the Youth Fund of Armenia.

The Republican Center for AIDS Prevention of Armenia with the support of UNAIDS hold public events in several cities of Armenia from November 17 to 25, 2017. As part of these activities, 1,104 people were tested for HIV, hepatitis B, C and syphilis for free, quickly and anonymously in mobile clinics received by Armenia as a gift from the Russian Federation.

In 2017 the Ministry of Health of the **Republic of Belarus** issued an ordinance to sell oral HIV express tests at the pharmacies of “Belfarmatsia.” The decision to sell quick HIV tests coincided with the beginning of large scale awareness raising campaigns for HIV self-testing in the Gomel region as well as in Minsk, Soligorsk and in the Minsk region. Overall, the informational campaigns engaged over 450 thousand people. Also, RB with the support of the local UNAIDS office organized a contest of Belorussian

designers, within the framework of cooperation with the Belorussian Fashion Chamber at the Fashion Week in Minsk. The contest became an example of a regional initiative of cooperation with the fashion industry: similar events have been held in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova.

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan purchased 46 000 vacuum blood-sampling systems, 41 200 peripheral venous catheters (PVC), and 395 wall-mounted elbow soap antiseptic dispensers for 10 large inpatient facilities in Kyrgyzstan.

A computer model has been developed for electronic surveillance of blood-borne infections and analysis of the collected data. The model was implemented in 13 pilot healthcare organizations.

Owing to all the above, it became possible to develop a systematic approach to ensuring the norms of infection control in large inpatient facilities as well as safety of medical procedures. It can be affirmed that the implementation of events within the Programme helped to significantly improve control over blood-borne infections, which resulted in reduction of HAI cases.

As part of the Project the network of previously existing multidisciplinary teams (MDT) and their activities have been expanded. In 2016-2017 4 new MDTs were opened and the work of 10 MDT was organized. It resulted in expansion of access to ART and an increase in commitment to therapy. Thus, 78.6% of accessible PLWH including 93.8% of cases newly detected in 2017 receive ART, and the treatment efficacy increased from 53.7% in 2016 to 67% in 2017, which is higher by 7% than the average nationwide.

Owing to the Programme, early detection of HIV infection in children born to HIV positive mothers was improved. 89% of babies with perinatal contact were covered by early HIV diagnostics within the first 8 weeks after birth.

In **Tajikistan** it became possible to resume the work of 15 friendly offices for labor migrants and their families, where 7 000 migrants and their family members received counseling in 2017. Owing to the Programme, testing of pregnant women is conducted, 130 000 tests have been purchased and in 2017 it was noted that the number of HIV positive pregnant women decreased. Russian and Tajik specialists carry out joint research aimed at detecting cancer among HIV positive women. In the area of healthcare associated blood-borne infections significant positive changes happened after the situation was analyzed and control instruments were developed, so no new cases of infection have been registered at the medical facilities.

Owing to the work of "**AIDS Infoshare**" **Foundation**, over 135 thousand people were tested in 2017 for HIV and other infections in the three countries participating in the Programme, and over 180 thousand test systems were delivered to the Republics. In 2017, two more mobile clinics were delivered to RK and RT. The medical services provided by the mobile clinics covered a total of over 105 thousand people. An important area of the mobile clinics' work is emergency management. In 2017, the mobile clinics took part in rescue operations following the plane crash at the settlement of Dacha-Suu, near the "Manas" Airport (the mobile clinic was working at the crash site for over a month and a half).

The Centers for migrants provided an opportunity to 480 people to improve their knowledge of the Russian language, legal basics and basics of prevention of infectious

diseases including HIV. In 2017 “AIDS Infoshare” Foundation in collaboration with international lawyers prepared a survey of laws related to HIV/AIDS and migration in the participant countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS and conducted a number of organizational events in preparation for the VI Conference on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (**EECAAC 2018**).

In 2017 the Programme not only significantly affected the HIV epidemic situation in the participant countries but also changed the lives of many people for the better, providing assistance to HIV positive people, increasing the level of knowledge, helping migrants and their families and strengthening the national scientific potential. The Programme facilitates achieving real transformations in the region by means of conducting innovative prevention events and mobilizing the efforts of participant countries in combatting the HIV epidemic in the region.

THE RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME IN 2017

ARMENIA

The developed National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Armenia for 2017-2021 has been approved by the Government. In order to monitor the National Programme, a plan for monitoring and assessment of the Programme has been developed and approved by the Minister of Health. The National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Armenia for 2017-2021 and the Plan for its monitoring and assessment have been published for distribution among state, international and non-governmental stakeholders.

In order to assess the trends of risky behavior among youth and their level of awareness and knowledge, to develop indicators of the current National Programme Fighting HIV/AIDS Epidemic and to obtain basic data for the next Programme scheduled for 2017-2021, behavioral research was conducted among the said group. The report based on the results of the conducted behavioral study has been prepared for publication. The obtained results were used as basic data to define the indicators of the National Target Programme for 2017-2021. The publication was distributed among stakeholders.

As part of the Project, a three-day training seminar was conducted for the officials in charge of social protection and public health and the heads of the regional Departments of Health. The purpose of the seminar was to increase involvement of the officials in the Project and to strengthen their potential and motivation for the implementation of the Project and providing mobile medical services in the residential areas of the region.

Training seminars have been conducted in 25 residential areas devoted to teaching using the “peer-to-peer” method; **250** specialists have been trained. As part of the Project, resource centers for prevention of HIV/AIDS among youth and adolescents conduct various activities, mainly aimed towards increasing the population’s level of knowledge and forming safer behavioral patterns among youth and adolescents. In total, 609 adolescents have visited the resource centers during the report period.

As part of the Project, mutual aid groups for women continued to function in 6 regions of the country, aimed at decreasing their vulnerability to HIV and improving their motivation for testing. The mutual aid groups operate on the grounds of local NGOs working primarily with women in the area of human rights and social integration. Over the report period 72 meetings of the mutual aid groups were conducted; 1 344 beneficiaries participated in the meetings.

Activities related to providing counseling services using “peer-to-peer” method continued in 40 residential areas. Over the report period, the “peer-to-peer” counseling services were granted to over 13 thousand beneficiaries. The beneficiaries received informational and educational materials. Mobile medical groups conducted visits to all residential areas covered by the Project, providing services in counseling and testing for HIV and Hepatitis to over 8 thousand beneficiaries.

Over the report period the mobile clinic conducted 306 visits to residential areas, providing services in counseling and testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis, as well as ultrasound tests for beneficiaries.

25 outreach workers have been trained as part of the Programme to conduct prevention activities among migrants within the Project carried out with the support of “AIDS Infoshare” Foundation.

The implementation of the Project shows that the current approach to providing services to labor migrants and their families at local levels is effective and justified. The number of conducted tests proves that labor migrants and their families are willing to use the given services.

Promotion of HIV testing

On May 21st 2017 within the framework of the World AIDS Day the Republican AIDS Center in Yerevan held an event “Let’s Unite to End the HIV-Epidemic”.

As part of the event, specialists from the Republican AIDS Center at the mobile clinic invited passers-by to undergo anonymous express-testing preceded and followed by HIV counseling.

The event was designed to promote HIV testing in our society, particularly among youth, to change popular perceptions about HIV testing, convincing the public that HIV testing is important for one’s health and prevention of further transmission. 121 people participated in the event by taking tests.

3 more events will be held before the completion of the Project. On December 1st in order to promote testing specialists of the Republican AIDS Center will provide an opportunity to the public to take express tests and receive informational materials on HIV at the mobile clinic.

HIV prevention among youth and migrants

On December 23-24th 2016 the Youth Foundation of Armenia held a two day seminar in the city of Tsakhkadzor for 31 coordinators of 10 regional centers of the Foundation and their assistants.

Over the report period, as part of the Programme, 2 700 volunteers of the Youth Foundation of Armenia were engaged in educational events on HIV/AIDS, obtaining skills in counseling and motivating clients to undergo HIV testing. In the future they will organize meetings for target audiences and refer them to the regional centers of the Youth Foundation of Armenia for HIV counseling and self-testing.

As part of the Programme 15 000 informed representatives of target audiences will undergo self-testing as a result of individual counseling sessions held at the regional centers of the Foundation. A survey of the group will be conducted in order to assess the effectiveness of express tests among young people.

In the end of April reference youth groups were formed in the regions of Armenia, engaging previously trained volunteers. In addition to seminars and other events carried out within the framework of the Project they organize and conduct various informational and educational activities.

As a result of the groups' work, 1 332 representatives of youth and other age groups have been informed about HIV.

On November 17th 2017 a concert was held in Yerevan in connection to the World Youth Day. As part of the Project the concert was accompanied by events promoting a healthy lifestyle.

A video promoting HIV self-testing was created within the framework of the project. It will be broadcasted over both radio and the TV. In addition, 6 radio talk shows on HIV self-testing will be organized.

20 representatives of mass media will take part in a training seminar devoted to the problem of HIV infection, the importance of testing and opportunities of self-testing.

As part of the Project, a meeting with representatives of pharmaceutical companies will be conducted in order to develop further cooperation and ensure sufficient import of express/personal tests and their supply at the pharmacies of RA.

In order to ensure sustainability of the Project, recommendations will be developed on innovative methods of financing for Armenia. The recommendations will be submitted to the decision-makers for implementation and mobilization of political will and resources required to solve the problem.

Strengthening the professional potential of healthcare providers

As part of the Russian Programme for providing assistance with support of UNAIDS, in order to improve the professional level of medical specialists in HIV/AIDS related

matters, starting from December 2016 an educational course “HIV infection” is offered on the grounds of the National Healthcare Institute at the Republican AIDS Center.

Over the report period the course on HIV infection was attended by 225 specialists from medical organizations of Yerevan and the regions of RA. All the students received graduation certificates, counted towards the cycle of continued medical and pharmaceutical education.

Another 20 specialists will take the course before the end of the programme. The course on HIV infection, designed to strengthen the professional potential of medical specialists on HIV/AIDS related matters and conducted on the grounds of the National Healthcare Institute of the Ministry of Health of RA, will make a significant contribution towards improving the level of knowledge of medical specialists, developing their clinical thinking skills, increasing the number of tests conducted by clinical indications and the number of detected HIV cases, broadening the coverage of HIV detection services and ARV therapy as well as decreasing stigma of PLWH.

Over the report period development of an online HIV infection course was continued.

The said course is the first online course that provides medical specialists with an opportunity to acquire necessary knowledge of the HIV/AIDS topic without interrupting their work. They can take the official course and receive a certificate with the respective number of credit hours.

Before the end of the year it is planned to hire an international expert to assist in the development of documentation for filing an application for WHO accreditation on drug resistance from the laboratory of Polymerase Chain Reaction diagnostics (PCR), microbiology, virology and genetics of the Republican AIDS Center. This technical assistance will include assessment of laboratory equipment (machines, furniture etc.); assessment of the initial pack of documents, required for the application for WHO accreditation; assessment of standard operating procedures at the laboratory and, if need be, modification of the existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and/or development of lacking procedures, as well as training of laboratory specialists in correct usage of SOPs.

As a result of the said work, a final set of documents will be compiled for the application for WHO accreditation along with an updated and/or developed list of SOPs and other documents required for conducting research on HIV drug resistance using sequence analysis method and implementation of SOPs into the routine laboratory work.

On November 17-25 as part of the European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week and the World AIDS Day, the Republican AIDS Center of Armenia in cooperation with the social NGO “Armenian Network of Positive People”, with the support of UNAIDS and the International Organization for Migration, conducted public events in a number of Armenian cities: Yerevan, Armavir, Vanadzor, Martuni, Sevan, Gavar and Gyumri, and on December 1st – also in Yerevan and Razdan. During these events 1 104 persons took free of charge and anonymous tests for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis at the mobile clinics presented to Armenia by the RF.

On December 1st within the framework of the World AIDS Day a campaign for HIV self-testing was organized at the State Medical University in Yerevan with support from the Armenian Youth Foundation and UNAIDS as part of the Regional Cooperation Program. Over 120 students and staff took tests in just one hour. In addition, 350 persons took self-tests in 10 regions of RA as part of the same Programme.

The Armenian Minister of Health Levon Altunyan took a self-test live on national TV, emphasizing the extreme importance of testing and thus facilitating successful implementation of the programme. His example is intended to promote HIV testing and help reduce HIV-related stigma.

Fashion Aids Line

On December 22 the “Fashion AIDS Line” contest will be held in Yerevan as part of the “Yerevan Fashion Week Golden Lace” and the Armenian Fashion Day. The contest will present women’s, men’s and children’s models from Italian, Russian and Belorussian designers and engage Armenian show-business and movie industry stars who want to draw public attention to the problem of HIV/AIDS.

Based on agreements with the Armenian Youth Foundation regarding HIV self-testing during the activity, the audience of the contest will receive an opportunity to take HIV self-tests and learn about their HIV status.

BELARUS

Over the course of 2017 the work of UNAIDS for the Regional Cooperation Programme in RB was conducted in several areas:

- (I) Awareness raising and educational events and events aimed at increasing awareness of the general population and key populations in HIV-related matters;
- (II) Organization and support of socio-epidemiological researches.

Awareness raising campaign for HIV self-testing in support of the Order of MH concerning sales of oral HIV tests at the national pharmacies

In order to carry out the 2017 awareness raising campaign intended to promote of HIV self-testing a plan was developed and specific territories were selected according to the epidemiological situation:

- Gomel region, the cities of Gomel, Rechitsa, Mozyr, Zhlobin;
- Minsk;
- Minsk region, the city of Soligorsk.

The main target audience was defined as men and women of 35 and older for the Gomel region, men and women of 30 and older for Minsk and men and women of 35 and older for Minsk region.

In 2017 as a result of long work and advocating efforts on behalf of international organizations under the leadership of UNAIDS a decision was made to start selling oral express HIV tests at the pharmacies belonging to “Belfarmatsia” network.

In order to promote HIV testing a campaign for 2017 was developed and approved in collaboration with MH. The beginning of sales of express tests was combined with the start of the awareness raising campaigns for HIV self-testing in Gomel and Minsk regions as well as the cities of Minsk and Soligorsk.

Quality social and psychological researches in the format of focus groups and detailed interviews have been conducted in order to define the factors affecting motivation for voluntary testing and self-testing for HIV, to select effective channels of communication for the campaign's most important messages and to detect media figures and celebrities not only popular among key populations, but also capable of serving as a role model and exerting positive influence.

The following cities have been selected for the research: Gomel, Rechitsa, Mozyr and Zhlobin. The focus group participants were selected according to the epidemiological situation in specific regions.

For the majority of the focus group participants the most used media resources are social media, primarily "Odnoklassniki", then "VKontakte", Instagram and TV, both Belorussian and Russian. With rare exceptions, printed media are in demand only in Rechitsa and Mozyr. On TV, the most popular programs are morning programs (often played as a background) and talk shows discussing situations and stories from real life.

The most commonly used information materials are the following:

- Videos featuring both celebrities and "laypeople", describing various HIV-related situations (testing etc.). Placed on TV and Internet. Videos can also be useful as instructions and as a motivator for self-testing;
- Billboards, banners and posters as motivators for testing; web banners replicating messages of the videos;
- Calendars and any other objects of daily use.

The most memorable awareness raising campaign was "It concerns even those whom it doesn't concern", in particular its mass actions and informational materials. The focus group participants most often referred to the campaign's front-men, whom they knew from billboards, posters, TV programs and public actions as examples of information sources on HIV/AIDS. The most recognizable of them was Svetlana Borovskaya, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador.

According to the focus group participants in all areas, HIV infection concerns youth and adolescents more than others. The participants were for the most part over 35 years of age.

Upon having learned about the epidemiological situation in Belarus in general and in their region in particular, where the age group with the fastest growth of HIV is 40 years and older, the participants displayed surprise, but even after that the majority of them, filling in the questionnaire, named youth as the main key population for the HIV epidemic.

The above indicates an existing stereotypical perception of youth and adolescents and presents a serious obstacle for promotion of vital information about HIV prevention and need for self-testing. This fact has to be considered when planning and conducting awareness raising campaigns for self-testing.

According to the majority of the participants, in the common perception of the general population there is a barrier for any information related to HIV infection. That's why only striking, memorable materials, not associated with HIV directly, can attract people's attention.

The majority of the focus group participants were not aware of the sales of HIV express tests in pharmacies. All of them took the information positively and didn't see any threats in the fact. Several respondents said that for many people the cost of the express test may present a problem, and it would be better to distribute the tests for free at the time of various awareness raising campaigns.

Based on the above findings, the front-men of the campaign-2017 for voluntary testing and self-testing were selected as follows: TV-host Svetlana Borovskaya, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador, Denis Dudinsky, TV-host and a musician of the "Da Vinci" group; Ekaterina Raetskaya, also of the "Da Vinci" group, TV-hosts and singers Olga Ryzhikova and Yury Vashuk (aka Teo), TV-host Dmitry Bochkov and vice-director of the Belorussian TV&Radio Company and TV-host Ivan Eismont.

In order to increase the impact on the key populations new faces were engaged in the campaign, selected from among popular singers and media figures of RB: Natalya Tanelo, Honored Actor of RB, Oleg Titkov, TV-host and producer, and pop-singers Natalya Kudrina (aka Venera) and Natalya Grigoryeva (Orlova).

In order to promote voluntary testing and self-testing billboards and posters were placed in towns of Gomel region and the city of Minsk, featuring family couples participating in the campaign – Denis Dudinsky and Ekaterina Raetskaya, Yury Vashuk and Olga Ryzhikova, as well as Ivan Eismont, Alexander Goloveyko, TV-host of Gomel TV, and additional billboards with photos of Svetlana Borovskaya.

In addition Gomel TV presented 2 talk shows devoted to the beginning of sales of express tests at the local pharmacies and the start of the campaign for voluntary HIV testing and self-testing. In accordance with UNAIDS rules, publication of information in the media, including also participation in TV programs and talk shows, is always free of charge.

In order to analyze the effectiveness of sales of express tests at the pharmacies of Gomel region a research was conducted using the "Mystery shopper" model before the start of the campaign.

The results showed that the pharmacists were not fully informed regarding correct interpretations of the results of the tests, felt uneasy about customers shopping for the tests and didn't know what to expect or do if a test proved positive. In order to correct the said results additional activities were included in the campaign, such as educational trainings for pharmacies' directors and pharmacists.

In addition, accompanying booklets were developed to go along with the tests, providing visual instructions for the self-testing procedure conducted at home, correct interpretations of the results and further actions in case of a positive or falsely positive test result.

Based on the focus group findings and the analysis of the previous campaigns, local events were incorporated into the 2017 campaign (The Day of the City in Gomel and Mozyr, The Health Day in Rechitsa and Zhlobin, and the Day of the City and Half Marathon in Minsk) in order to expand the coverage of target audiences for promotion of self-testing. The above helped to significantly increase the number of people undergoing voluntary testing, primarily from among the representatives of the target audience.

Only at the Half Marathon 900 tests were used, which is exactly as many as the overall number used in all the city activities during the 2016 campaign. Additional motivating factors for self-testing at Minsk Half Marathon included its slogan: "Take your test-drive!" (developed by UNAIDS, the official informational partner of the Half Marathon in the project for cooperation with the Federation of Track and Field Athletics of RB) and the participation of the "Red Ribbon" team in various parts of the Half Marathon along with appropriate media coverage of the team's goals and messages, including social media.

The Minsk campaign continues as part of the European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week, preceding the World AIDS Day. In consideration of the main target audience, actions are conducted at various industrial organizations of Minsk: the Heating Equipment Factory (650 people) and the Association "Integral" (5 000 people). In addition to the self-testing actions, video cases and quests have been conducted for specialists working in HIV prevention at their workplaces.

Cooperation with the Belorussian Fashion Chamber and young designers on combatting stigma and discrimination of PLWH

In 2017 the work aimed at the implementation of the memorandum for cooperation between UNAIDS and the Belorussian Fashion Chamber was continued. By March 1st designer Ekaterina Tikota in continuation of the contest for the best design of a T-shirt devoted to Zero Discrimination Day improved the winning designs for further usage in mass production and attracting public attention to Zero Discrimination Day on March 1st, 2017.

A total of about 150 T-shirts with different print colors have been produced: they carry various messages related to combatting discrimination in general and stigma and discrimination of PLWH in particular. As part of the informational and media campaign, a photo-session was organized with participation of the representatives of the UN agencies and the front-men of the campaign for promoting HIV testing in order to broaden the audience for the campaign's message.

In May 2017 a contest for designers was held in Belarus, with support of the UNAIDS office in RB and as part of UNAIDS cooperation with the Belorussian Fashion Chamber at the Fashion Week in Minsk.

The goal of the contest was to draw public attention to the problem of stigma and discrimination of PLWH, to engage new people and partners in cooperation with UNAIDS, and to engage PLWH in public activities. The contest had the broadest public resonance due to major media coverage of the Fashion Week and owing to the participation of a number of celebrities of RB.

The Contest in Minsk became an example of a regional initiative of cooperation with Fashion industry: similar events will be held in Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia.

Awareness raising and educational activities and actions for HIV testing were conducted at various events of a smaller scale held by the Belorussian Fashion Chamber in 2017.

UN25 – people's stories

UNAIDS supported the initiative of the UN system agencies in Belarus dedicated to the 20th anniversary of UN's work in the country. As part of the initiative a large-scale campaign in social media was conducted. Among other things, short videos were created to honor the people influenced by the activities of UN and in particular UNAIDS in Belarus, including PLWH.

Over the course of 2017 UNAIDS was providing counseling support to:

- UNESCO Belorussian Club Association (HIV prevention, testing and treatment among vulnerable population groups of RB);
- Belorussian NGO "Positive movement" (Improving the quality of life of children living with HIV);
- Regional NGO "Real world" (HIV express-testing in Svetlogorsk; development of project proposals).

Project proposals have been developed in compliance with the recommendations for implementation for 2018.

In cooperation with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and with national partners (the Ministry of Health) research has been conducted on the topic of "Human rights of women of reproductive age living with HIV." As part of the research 6 regional trainings were approved for infection specialists, OB/GYNs and epidemiologists. The activities were designed with consideration of the recommendations of the Validation Committee and Validation Commission.

The Ministry of Health of RB confirmed its participation in the regional research on collection and analysis of recent HIV cases in 2017-2018. With participation and support of UNAIDS, MH conducted meetings with Lev Zograbyan (Strategic Information Counselor for the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia) devoted to the implementation of the research. As part of the research tablet computers were purchased for national specialists.

Assessment of the prices on ART medicine for adults, children and infants under the age of 3 in RB has been conducted, including analysis of various purchase platforms.

MH of RB obtained a list of comparative prices from 4 sources and comparative costs of major treatment schemes depending on the platform for purchasing ART medicine.

In compliance with the Order of MH of RB the Republican Center for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health was appointed in charge of organizing and conducting sociological research on the specifics of HIV epidemic among key populations (PWID, MSM, female sex workers). The Project is being registered in the Department for Humanitarian Activities. Design and toolkits for the research have been developed.

KYRGYZSTAN

Assessment of the current infection control situation

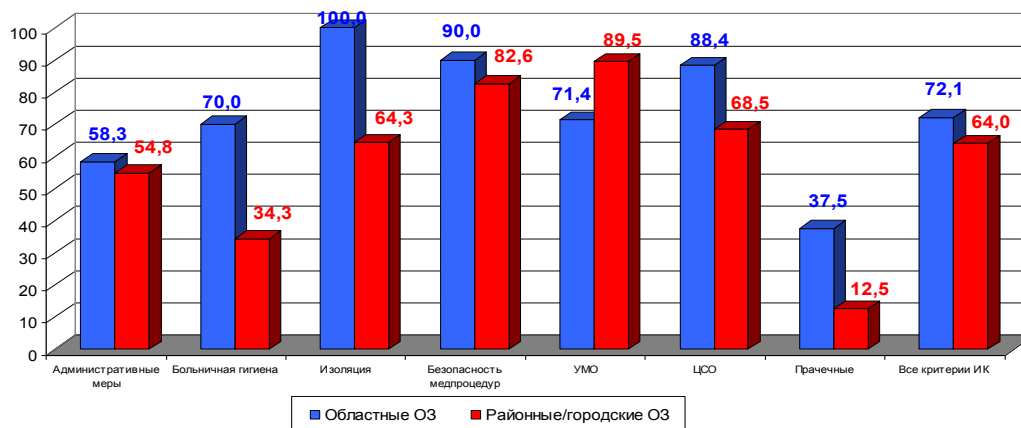
In 2017 as part of the Regional Cooperation Programa set of activities has been held that was aimed at strengthening the system of infection control in the country in general, including trainings for personnel, development of a methodological base and regular monitoring of compliance with infection control requirements in healthcare organizations of primary, secondary and tertiary levels as well as in various structural sub-branches of these organizations.

The system of infection control was evaluated using the “Assessment list for infection control in healthcare organizations,” approved by Order #214 (issued on March 28th 2016) of the Ministry of Health of RK, including 64 assessment criteria in 10 functional and clinical departments of the healthcare organizations. Each criterion contained 3-6 minimal requirements for infection control.

Comprehensive assessment of the infection control situation was conducted in 9 Centers for Family Medicine and 12 healthcare organizations providing medical aid at inpatient facilities of various levels. The assessment showed that compliance with infection control norms (including hospital hygiene, disposal of medical waste, laundry room hygiene etc.) was, in average, 67% (varying from 64.2% to 81%).

In the categories “Safety measures in medical procedures” and “CCSD - Central Sterile Services Departments” the percentage was significantly higher: the compliance with infection control requirements amounted in average to 83.2% (varying from 78.8% to 100%) and 80.7% (varying from 62.5% to 100%) respectively. Safety of medical procedures at the Centers for Family Medicine was higher than at the regional level and constituted in average 90% (versus 82.6% at the district level).

Compliance with infection control requirements by functional blocks at Centers for Family Medicine at the regional and district levels.



[Blue – Regional healthcare organizations; Red – District/City healthcare organizations]

In comparison to data from 2016 the average compliance with infection control requirements at healthcare organizations providing inpatient services increased from 36.4% to 68.1% (by 31.7%).

Significant improvement was detected in such important matters for prevention of healthcare associated cases of blood-borne infection among patients and personnel as: Central Sterile Services Departments (from 47.5% to 80.7%; 33.2% growth), safety of medical procedures (from 39.4% to 83.2%; 43.8% growth); intensive care units (from 31.2% to 54.2%; 23% growth) and the system of disposal of medical waste (from 55.7% to 85.7%; 30% growth).

Despite a sufficiently high level of compliance with infection control requirements in the above sections, the percentage is still below 100%. The shortcomings are to a significant degree linked to deficiencies in technical equipment, in particular lack of means of individual protection (face masks, medical work-wear etc.) as well as to incomplete registration of infection cases, delays in emergency notification delivery etc. These issues became the focus of the Project activities in 9 pilot healthcare organizations.

Assessment of the system of epidemiological surveillance regarding blood-borne infections was conducted in 15 healthcare organizations at the district, regional and national levels in 3 parts of the country (the city of Bishkek, Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul regions). Altogether 334 respondents have been questioned: 160 medical doctors, 141 nurses and 33 epidemiologists from the Center for State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance and AIDS Centers. The assessment showed changes in the level of knowledge, attitudes and infection control skills. Final results will be presented upon the completion of concluding monitoring in December 2017.

Implementation of programmes aimed at control and prevention of healthcare associated blood-borne infections in 10 major inpatient facilities of the Republic

In addition to ensuring infection control at pilot organizations comprehensive work was conducted in the given area in general. 400 key persons (200 practicing medical doctors and 200 nurses) who provide care at 10 pilot healthcare organizations have been trained in compliance with standard operational procedures of infection control.

As part of the Project the following injection equipment was purchased for 10 major inpatient facilities: 46 000 vacuum blood-sampling systems, 41 200 peripheral venous catheters (PVCs) and 395 wall-mounted elbow soap dispensers. All these healthcare organizations conducted internal monitoring of the infection control system, particularly of safety measures in medical procedures and compliance with SOPs. The survey conducted among medical specialists three months later showed improvements in their level of knowledge, skills and commitment to infection control:

- commitment of the heads of healthcare organizations and medical personnel to following safety measures in medical procedures was improved, which contributes to lowering the risks of healthcare associated blood-borne infections from patient to patient and from healthcare providers to patient;
- usage of hand antibacterial substances for conducting medical procedures increased by an average of 20%;
- only safe vacuum systems are currently used to collect bloodsamples for biochemical tests.

All of the above helped to develop a systemic approach to ensuring the norms of infection control and stimulated a responsible attitude to the norms of infection control in medical facilities, which increased the sustainability of activities related to safety of medical procedures.

A computer model for electronic surveillance on blood-borne infections and data analysis was developed and implemented in 13 pilot healthcare organizations (10 inpatient facilities and 3 Centers for Family Medicine). 26 specialists from pilot healthcare organizations received training in working with databases.

Local systems of electronic surveillance on blood-borne infections within pilot organizations have been integrated into the national systems of surveillance on HIV and viral hepatitis on the grounds of the Center for State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance and AIDS Centers. As a result the system of monitoring and registration of blood-borne infections detected in healthcare organizations was improved, and the waiting time for emergency notifications and receiving and analyzing epidemiological information has been decreased.

A training in infection control was conducted for teaching personnel of 5 higher education institutions and 10 secondary-level educational institutions of the Republic, teachers of 10 continued education departments and 20 national trainers/experts from partner organizations (FMHIF, Mac AIDS Fund, Hospital Association, Association of Groups of Family Doctors, Association of OB/GYNs, etc.) A total of 80 persons increased their professional potential. 2 specialists from the Republican Center for Infection Control of the Scientific and Industrial Union "Prevention Medicine" improved their professional potential in Saint-Petersburg at the Mechnikov North-Western State Medical University, taking the course # 1850 on 'Hospital Epidemiology'.

Increasing effectiveness of laboratory diagnostics of HIV (98% of laboratory research on HIV are conducted in high-quality conditions and ensure accurate test results)

The "Manual on assessing laboratory diagnostics of HIV infection in RK" has been developed in order to define approaches to advancing laboratory diagnostics of HIV and to analyze the causes of discrepancies between the expected and the actual

compliance with normative documents and manuals on laboratory HIV diagnostics and quality control in HIV diagnostics laboratories.

The Manual was approved by Order # 964 of the Ministry of Health of RK (dated November 26th 2017), along with the Manual “Laboratory Diagnostics of HIV infection”, previously developed by the Project. Both manuals have been translated into Kyrgyz and printed in 100 copies in 2 languages (Kyrgyz and Russian).

Monitoring visits have been conducted to assess the implementation of standard operational procedures in 46 laboratories for HIV diagnostics. Over the course of the visits, the laboratory personnel received training in conducting SOP procedures, collecting indicators, and assessing the quality of laboratory HIV diagnostics; they also received counseling and methodological assistance. The developed tools have been adapted; over 100 laboratory specialists have been trained at their workplaces.

Over the period of 2016-2017 head nurses and specialists from HIV diagnostic laboratories, previously trained in the pre-analytical stage of standard operational procedures, conducted their own workplace trainings. As a result an improvement in the level of knowledge of laboratory specialists was noted. In compliance with the protocol for HIV diagnostics according to Order #87 (dated February 4th 2016) of the Ministry of Health of RK, all the HIV diagnostic laboratories follow the rules for safety measures in handling biological materials and accurate paperwork. Specialists of the laboratories for HIV diagnostics at the Regional AIDS Centers conduct regular monitoring and provide practical assistance in the pre-analytical stage at blood collection stations.

Increasing the effectiveness of HIV testing in healthcare organizations in order to ensure early detection of HIV

Registration of PLWH in RK has notably increased, including children with advanced stages of HIV infection. Over the period from 2014 to 2016 about one third of all HIV cases were detected by clinical indications (from 35.5% in 2014 to 31.5 in 2016). In 2016 more than a half of PLWH (62%) were initially detected at the 3rd and 4th clinical stages. All this required detailed epidemiological investigation and reinforcement of technical assistance in the regions of RK. A toolkit has been developed to assess the process of HIV detection among the population by clinical indications.

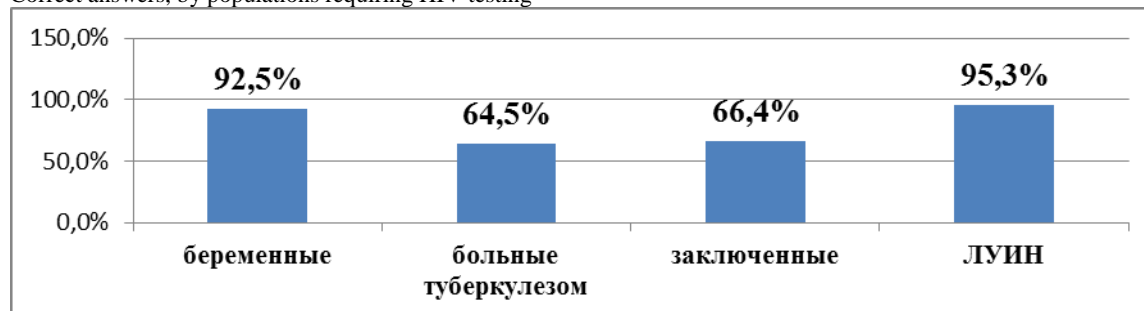
A research protocol has been developed to conduct assessment in healthcare organizations of the Chui region. The field stage of research included a survey among the specialists of the healthcare organizations and an analysis of medical documentation (children’s medical histories etc.), according to the research protocol.

A total of 107 specialists from healthcare organizations participated in the survey, including gynecologists, infection specialists, STD specialists; pediatric doctors, GPs and others. In average, each specialist sees up to 15 patients per day (min – 7, max – 40). 68.2% (73 persons) received training related to HIV infection, 38 of them (53.5%) in 2017. However only 40.2% (43 respondents) are familiar with the legal base regulating HIV testing and counseling.

The respondents were best informed about the matters of PMTCT (95.3% of correct answers). Their knowledge of AIDS-indicating illnesses was poorer. Only 22.4%

replied that cervical cancer is a reason to refer a patient to testing. Only 51.4% paid attention to recurrent infections; only 57% pointed out esophageal thrush (see Pic.2). Over 90% of respondents know that it is necessary to refer pregnant women and persons who inject drugs to HIV testing, but 35% didn't list TB patients (See Pic.3).

Correct answers, by populations requiring HIV testing



[Col.1 – Pregnant women; Col.2 – TB patients; Col.3 – Prison inmates; Col.4 – People who inject drugs]

Upon the completion of the survey counseling and practical assistance was conducted at the local level in accordance with the national clinical protocols on HIV counseling and testing. The results of the study have been submitted to the Ministry of Health of RK. Based on the conclusions of the research, educational programmes for medical doctors have been improved.

Two three-day trainings have been conducted, devoted to supervising PLWH according to the national clinical protocols on treatment, observation, care and support. A total of 39 specialists received training: doctors from AIDS Centers, epidemiologists from Centers for Family Medicine and members of MDTs from pilot sites – NGO “Araket plus” from the Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul regions.

A report regarding implementation of the national response to HIV, the policy index and the assessment of financing of HIV-related programmes have been prepared, verified and submitted to the UNAIDS online platform

http://aidsreportingtool.unaids.org/indicator/country_survey_list

A report for WHO/AIDS Medicine and Diagnostics Service (AMDS) on using ARV therapy and laboratory technologies has been prepared:

http://aidsreportingtool.unaids.org/indicator/country_survey_list

The prepared documents have become a source of information for further elaboration of the National Programme in RK during the period of 2017-2021 and filing an application to the Global Fund.

Providing HIV positive women with quality medical services in HIV and reproductive health (counseling on Family and Reproductive Health, birth control, pregnancy, PMTCT and ARV therapy)

Assessment of the quality of services and the level of knowledge of medical specialists in assisting women and children in PMTCT has been conducted with support from the Regional UNICEF Office.

As part of the assessment, the impact of PMTCT integration into the current system of Effective Perinatal Care on services designed to decrease vertical transmission has been analyzed. The assessment was conducted in two regions and covered 1 500

pregnant women supervised by medical personnel and 500 healthcare providers, including the heads of medical facilities. The results of implementation of Early Diagnostics of HIV infection in infants using the dry blood spot method have been documented. At the present stage the collected data is being analyzed and reports are being prepared. According to the plan, the reports will be presented in the second half of January 2018.

The commitment of HIV positive children to ARV therapy has been improved using mobile technologies, including creation of web platforms for communication between clients, collecting feedback for medical specialists and provision of HIV-related information in the format of computer games. In partnership with the local branch of Google Developers Group, a three-day Hackathon¹ named “Technologies for children” has been held. As part of the Forum, IT-community specialists provided support in the following areas:

- development of software for online monitoring and assessment;
- development of a web resource center for children with special needs;
- improvement of the current system of medicine consumption monitoring by HIV positive children using mobile technologies.

As part of the Hackathon Forum a comprehensive mobile application for Android has been developed. Additionally computer equipment has been purchased for the server end of the software and installed at the Republican AIDS Center. The software interface has been improved, new functional options have been added. Installment and testing of the mobile app, including the server end functionality, have been conducted in the Chui and Osh regions. Uninterrupted web access has been established in order to ensure full-range operation of the software. The application has been installed for 50 HIV positive children.

Integration of HIV prevention, care and treatment programmes with maternal and children’s health programmes

The existing PMTCT indicators have been adapted into a unified set of indicators for monitoring within the framework of effective perinatal care, integrated monitoring of children’s illnesses and infection control. The said set of indicators is now awaiting approval by the Ministry of Health of RK.

An electronic database of multidisciplinary team of experts has been built: they will be conducting field work in monitoring at medical facilities for maternal and children’s health, including certain tutoring/mentoring components. Such an approach will help institutionalize the PMTCT programmes within the general programmes for maternal and children’s health, increase their effectiveness and expand and improve the quality of services for women and children living with HIV.

A manual has been developed for home visits to children up to 5 years of age in the context of HIV infection. The manual consists of a universal module and a targeted module. The former targets children up to 5 years of age, the latter will help nurses, medical doctors as well as social workers to conduct home visits within the context of HIV. The module includes counseling on HIV, ARV therapy, sexual and reproductive

¹ A developers’ forum where specialists of various areas of web development (coders, designers, managers) work together on certain problems.

health, family planning and PMTCT. The module materials have been incorporated in the ICATT distant learning course available in a digital format.

Ensuring effective functioning of early diagnostics of HIV infection in infants with perinatal HIV contact as part of neonatal care

In order to improve the quality of medical services for pregnant women, new mothers and newborns, as well as services for early diagnostics of HIV infection in infants born to HIV positive mothers, 7 trainings have been conducted, where 194 medical specialists from 7 regions of the country improved their professional potential.

In order to institutionalize education in early diagnostics of HIV infection in infants, a two-day training was conducted on the grounds of the Institute of Continuous Education for Medical Professionals, where national trainers for teaching Early Infant Diagnostics have been prepared. The course was integrated into the academic plan of the Institute.

Due to the changing trends of the epidemic, namely the growth of sexual transmission (50.45% as of November 1, 2017), the risk of vertical transmission increased as well. 3-day trainings have been conducted towards prevention of vertical transmission for healthcare providers from Centers for Family Medicine, devoted to counseling of HIV positive women. Altogether 160 specialists from Centers for Family Medicine of the Osh, Jalal-Abad, Batken and Chui regions have been trained.

The work aimed at supplying reagents for early diagnostics of HIV infection in infants born to HIV positive mothers has been continued. Within the first eight weeks after birth, 89% infants with perinatal contact were tested.

Media coverage of the Project's activities

A media-partnership has been formed between the TV and Radio Company "Maral" ("Maral", Radio "Maral FM" and www.maralfm.kg) and 2 media: Media Center "Russia" (paper "Argumenty I Fakty-Kyrgyzstan", "Moskovsky Komsomolets-Asia", Central Asian information portal www.news-asia.ru, www.mk.kg, information resource "New Day") and the TV and Radio Company "Yntymak" ("Yntymak TV", "Radio "Yntymak FM" and www.yntymak.kg). As part of the partnership the following media products have been produced:

- a long-read on epidemic among children in RK;
- infographics on numbers of children and various approaches to treatment;
- success stories;
- interviews with mothers and children;
- talk shows (Yntymak TV)
- hashtags for social media: #ТыНеОдинок (#YouAreNotAlone), #победимСПИДвместе (#OvercomeAIDStogether), #Zerodiscrimination; #endAIDS, #UNICEF and #UNAIDS.

The concluding event was a press-tour to the Osh Regional AIDS Center.

The press-tour engaged 25 journalists of the leading media of RK: they were introduced to the innovative dry blood spot method of HIV-diagnostics. The journalists had an opportunity to observe the whole process of testing, including blood sample

collection and laboratory work. In addition, they had an opportunity to talk to the parents of HIV positive children and to adolescents who disclosed their HIV status.

The representatives of the RF Embassy in RK were invited to take part in the press-tour.

Expansion and effective functioning of the multidisciplinary approach to providing quality social and medical services to PLWH on the grounds of state healthcare facilities in the Kyrgyz Republic

As part of the Project, the network of previously established MDTs has been expanded and their activities strengthened. In 2016-2017 4 new MDTs were opened (one in Issyk-Kul in 2017) and necessary conditions for the work of 10 MDTs were provided. The Project was conducted in 5 regions of RK: Chui region – 2 MDTs; Osh region – 4; Batken region – 1; Jalal-Abad region – 2; Issyk-Kul region – 1.

10 sites have been selected for the implementation of the MDT approach. The choice was based on the biggest concentration of accessible PLWH in the areas, high commitment of the officials in charge of respective organizations to prevention programmes and the need for institutionalization of these activities nationwide by means of engaging the Republican and Regional AIDS Centers.

A roadmap has been developed for partner cooperation within the framework of the Programme for PLWH. The work was conducted in partnership with other projects and organizations working in the area of providing assistance to PLWH: ICAP/CDC and PSI/USAID Projects as well as the Department for the implementation of the grant received from the Global Fund and the Republican AIDS Center in order to share experiences, coordinate joint activities and prevent redundancies. Issues concerning improvements of medical assistance to PLWH and their families and friends are solved with the participation of the head and personnel of the Republican and Regional AIDS Centers.

The staff of 4 out of 10 MDTs includes peer-to-peer counselors; a preliminary agreement about employing peer-to-peer counselors in a number of other MDTs has been reached with the Administrations of Centers for Family Medicine and Regional AIDS Centers. Two MDTs (the Regional AIDS Centers of Kyzyl-Kiya and Issyk-Kul) used the potential of community representatives and NGOs financed by the Global Fund in order to engage peer-to-peer counselors to work in MDTs. The peer-to-peer counselors were fully integrated into work of the MDTs and the educational activities conducted for MDT members. All the MDTs have been technically equipped, and 4 all-in-one printers and 4 laptop computers have been purchased in order to scale up the technical potential of MDTs as part of the current phase of the Project.

In order to institutionalize the activities of MDTs on the grounds of medical facilities, the heads of healthcare organizations and MDT members took 2 intensive seminars on the development of strategic plans for MDTs for the period of 2017-2019, including indicators of the MDTs' state financing and labor distribution indicators; 41 specialists have been trained. Strategic plans have been developed, approved and are now used in the work of 10 MDTs. Further steps in continuing the work of MDTs upon the completion of the Project in 2017 have been discussed, such as filling applications for sub-grants to the Global Fund and other donor organizations that will be working in the future. Institutionalization of MDTs through the system of the Federal Mandatory Health Insurance Fund (FMHIF), including introduction of paid employment of peer-to-

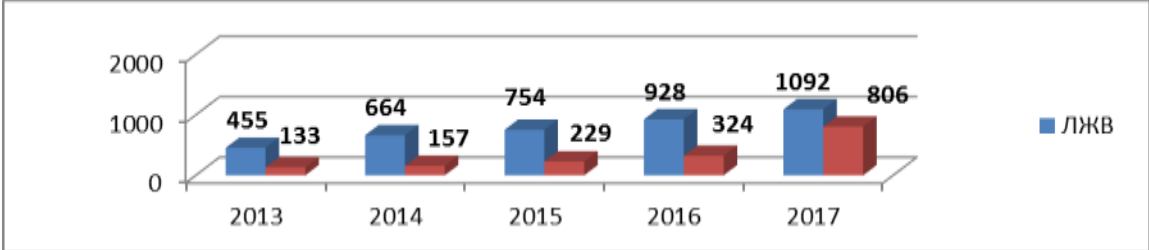
peer counselors/social workers and motivation payments to medical specialists for achieving results in treatment, care and support to PLWH, were incorporated into the draft of the National Programme for the period of 2017-2021, the plans of FMHIF and the application to the Global Fund for 2018-2020.

A system of monitoring and assessment of activities was developed by the Project in collaboration with UNAIDS country offices for each MDT.

Strengthening the system of providing medical care to PLWH, including improvements in commitment to ART and the quality of treatment

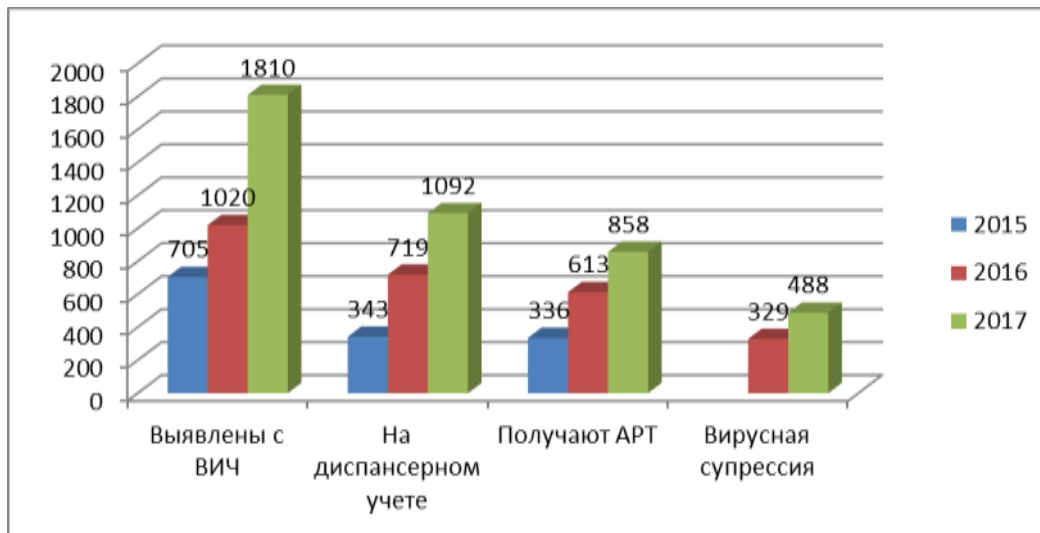
Altogether the work of the MDTs engaged 1 082 persons or 99.1% of all accessible PLWH registered at the specialized facilities in the selected areas, including: 511 women, 571 men and 235 children. 208 clients are PWID, 11 are MSM and 14 are sex workers. In addition, the work of the MDTs engaged 806 people from the immediate contacts of PLWH, including 147 sexual partners of PLWH from discordant pairs (Pic.4).

Coverage of PLWH and their families and friends by MDT services in RK in 2013-2017.



The coverage of MDT clients by medical supervision, ART and viral load evaluation has been expanded. Thus, ART coverage increased by 2.5 times compared to 2016, reaching 78.6% of all accessible PLWH. At the same time, 93.8% of the newly detected PLWH started ART in the current year. Viral load tests are not universally available to residents of rural areas due to delivery problems in the country. There is no data on viral load reduction for 2015, however in 2016 53.7% of PLWH receiving ART achieved an undetectable viral load (<50 copies/mL), and in 2017 723 persons (85%) out of 858 PLWH receiving ART were tested for viral load, of whom 488 (67%) reached virus suppression (see Pic.5).

Dynamic changes in coverage of PLWH with medical follow-up and treatment services by MDTs, 2015-2017, PLWH in 2016 versus 2015.



[Column 1 – Diagnosed with HIV; Col.2 – Registered at med.facilities; Col.3 – Receive ART; Col.4 – Virus suppression]

MDT members received practical assistance from leading specialists of the Republican AIDS Center in following up clients, coping with severe side effects of ART, optimization of treatment methods for adults and children, as well as in working with PLWH towards overcoming self-stigma. The newly appointed head of the MDT at the Suzak Center for Family Medicine took a week-long course at the Republican AIDS Center supported by the Project. Medical doctors of 4 MDTs in Osh region were engaged in the remote education program “ECHO” designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of services for HIV treatment of adults, analyzing complicated clinical cases and providing counseling and recommendations conducted by the ICAP/CDC Project “Assistance.”

There are certain positive shifts in decreasing PLWH stigma and discrimination among specialists of Centers for Family Medicine and medical personnel of inpatient facilities; collaboration with NGOs has been established. Owing to the reduction of stigma and discrimination, education and friendly attitude of the personnel, PLWH are not afraid of turning to medical organizations and receive, as guaranteed by the state, quality medical aid as needed, as well as social work services and motivation payments.

Creating necessary conditions for further rehabilitation and re-integration of PLWH and Persons Who Inject Drugs LWH through massive involvement of their family and friends into prevention programmes, including testing programmes

Special attention has been paid to matters of assisting and supporting the clients. Seminars on motivation counseling of PLWH have been conducted; a practical manual has been developed – a desk calendar designed to help the members of MDT offering such counseling services.

The members of MDTs took a series of seminars on HIV counseling and testing, on the “School of Patients” and clinical issues. The team has been trained to work with family and friends of PLWH on providing necessary social assistance in restoring personal documents, filing applications to the Medical and Social Expertise Commission, filing papers for receiving financial aid, helping with placement in kindergartens and schools for children, helping with receiving breast milk substitutes,

helping with obtaining referrals to prevention programmes for harm reduction, and applying for and receiving motivation payments and food sets from NGOs.

Meetings devoted to increasing the potential of MDT partners in the matters of human rights of PLWH and their families have been conducted with the support of professional lawyers for members of all 10 MDTs, representatives of civil society and heads of local administrations. The major goal of the meetings was to overcome HIV stigma and discrimination. The meetings were held over the period of February and March 2017 and engaged all the 10 MDTs.

The meetings were attended by officials making political decisions: representatives of the local Attorney's Offices (the cities of Kyzyl-Kiya and Jalal-Abad), deputy heads of local administration (the cities of Osh, Nookat, Suzak), and supervising specialists of the Mayor's Offices of Osh and Tokmok. The conducted work showed that the level of knowledge and understanding of legal matters related to HIV is still low, which contributes to the high level of stigma and discrimination of PLWH in the society. This, in turn, negatively affects the population's willingness to undergo testing and causes people to conceal their HIV status from their sexual partners and refuse to take ART.

An evidence based programme has been developed for providing social and psychological support to PLWH and their families. PLWH have received assistance in obtaining access to social and psychological services, including self-help groups and individual counseling sessions on the grounds of MDTs and with participation of local NGOs. The work with clients was organized on a regular basis (both in one-to-one and group formats). Psychologists offer a survey of the formed self-help groups and, if necessary, carry out psychological correction, including MDT members. Psychological counseling (both individual and group) was held on a monthly basis in all the 7 MDTs of the southern region.

Owing to this work a significant group of PLWH and their families receive direct social and psychological assistance from MDT offices. MDT members receive an opportunity to improve their professional expertise, knowledge and skills in contemporary methods of social and psychological help.

The work contributes greatly to the development of professional partnerships between stakeholders and increases the number of PLWH and their families applying for psychological assistance to MDTs; there is a local network of psychological and social support for PLWH and their families. Altogether over the period of 2017 241 meetings of the self-help groups were conducted, engaging 1 390 PLWH on the grounds of functioning MDTs.

In 2016 the "Positive life" manual was developed for members and clients of MDTs in order to conduct patient schools. The manual has been translated into Kyrgyz, approved by the Counsel on Clinical Manuals and Clinical Protocols of the Ministry of Health of RK and published in the amount of 700 copies (300 in Russian and 400 in Kyrgyz).

MDT members have been trained to conduct patient schools, including collecting feedback on the first stage of patient school implementation starting from 2016 (a total of 2 seminars have been held.) All copies of the Manual were handed over to the

Republican AIDS Center for distribution among the partners providing assistance to PLWH (GF, ICAP, PSI), medical specialists and members of specialized NGOs.

In order to control the classes taught by the patient school modules a log-and-report form has been developed and distributed among the heads of MDTs. Members of MDTs received recommendations and control tests for conducting the patient school courses. The recommendations facilitated the process of preparing and conducting the classes, and the control tests made it possible to evaluate both the quality of information being provided by the MDT members and the quality of clients' learning. The manual was highly approved both by the partners and the clients of the Programme. The implementation of the manual was included into the new National Programme for 2017-2021 and the application to the Global Fund for 2018-2020.

Providing medical, social and psychological assistance to children and families living with HIV

HIV positive children received professional psychological help in the format of interactive games. An invited psychologist prepared the children and their parents to HIV status disclosure, and a certified specialist of the Osh Regional AIDS Center disclosed their status upon the parents' request.

Out of 235 children covered by MDTs' work, only 94 had their status disclosed. It can be explained by the parents' fear for their children, caused by the high level of stigma both in healthcare and educational organizations and in the society in general. 8 HIV positive children and their parents participated in 10-day camp by Lake Issyk-Kul sponsored by the Global Fund.

Over the report period work has been conducted with 147 HIV-discordant couples. These families occupy a special place in the work of the MDT. They are offered regular laboratory tests detecting HIV antibodies and engaged in activities of self-help groups and the patient school. During the period of conducting work with self-help groups, 13 families of PLWH were formed, and some of them are planning to have children, having received information about PMTCT.

The results of the work aimed at providing psychological support to PLWH "Specifics of providing assistance to women living with HIV in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan" have been reported by a psychologist at a breakout session "Contemporary approaches to HIV prevention" at the international scientific & practical Conference "Current state of HIV infection: Women and HIV."

Owing to establishing a trusting contact with clients it became possible to organize a meeting between 10 HIV positive children and their parents with Kyrgyz celebrities and UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador Vera Brezhneva. The meeting resulted in creating a video on prevention of stigma and discrimination "You Are Not Alone." Another video has been made where show-business stars of Kyrgyzstan talked about the problems of HIV positive children that negatively affect their lives and their feeling of security.

The videos were shown a number of times at the briefing with participation of Vinay Saldanha, the Director of Regional Support Team, and Vera Brezhneva, as well as during part of the UN Day and World Campaign against AIDS.

Independent assessment of the activities of MDTs, based on collection of quality and quantity data from a survey that included 140 participants representing MDT clients, MDT members, heads of healthcare organizations and their partners, as well as 15 in-depth interviews and 5 focus groups showed that the main goal of MDTs – to expand populations' access to ART and care and support of PLWH – had been achieved. The majority of MDT clients (from 55% to 87.7%) noted that the quality of the services had improved. An improvement was noted in the following categories: 87.7% of the respondents mentioned counseling provided by infection specialists; counseling on ART related matters – 82.1%; obtaining ART treatment – 73.6%; safe behavior counseling – 79.2%; laboratory tests – 70.7%; participation in self-help groups – 70%; social work support – 55%; psychological support – 77.9%; referral to other services – 67.2%; pre-testing and post-testing HIV counseling – 72%; classes in the patient school – 56.5%. **99.2% of the respondents evaluated the work of peer counselors positively.** 92% respondents noted improvement in the quality of life, and 93% – improvement in the level of knowledge (See Table 1.)

Fashion AIDS Line

On December 10th 2017 a special contest for designers of the Fashion AIDS Line took place in the city of Bishkek.

The Fashion AIDS Line is a regional initiative of the [#UNAIDS](#) Programme for the best interpretation of the Red Ribbon, the symbol of campaigns against HIV infection.

Designers will present their work in Moscow at the VI International HIV/AIDS Conference which will take place on April 18-20, 2018.

The Fashion AIDS Line events became possible owing to the Regional Programme for Cooperation in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to Combat HIV infection and Viral Hepatitis, with support from the Government of the Russian Federation.

TAJIKISTAN

Up to 2015 45 friendly offices had been working in the area prevention of HIV and other STIs among labor migrants and their families. The clients could receive a wide range of free services in the areas of prevention and treatment: counseling, diagnostics, treatment (STI syndromes), education, distribution of means of protection (condoms etc.) and the like.

These friendly offices were opened at the primary health care facilities. Since the international donors discontinued financing the work of the abovementioned friendly offices their activities had been stopped.

Opening of friendly offices

As part of the implementation of this Programme it became possible to resume the work of 15 friendly offices for labor migrants and their families, including such major cities as Dushanbe, Kulyab, Kurgan-Tyube, Khorog and Khudzhan as well as the

regions of Shokhin, Khovaling, Vandzh, Vakhsh, Khuroson, Shakhritus, Mastchokh, Rasht, Lakhsh and ShakhriNAV.

On June 8th 2017 the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of RT issued the Order #439 “On the organization of friendly offices for labor migrants and their families.” The Order also approved the Charter of the friendly offices for labor migrants and their families, specifying all the functions and goals of the abovenamed offices.

The friendly offices are established at the AIDS Centers in order to provide medical, information and prevention services related to HIV and STI to the citizens of RT involved in international and domestic labor migration (going abroad, returning home, traveling within the country).

The services include provision of basic information on labor migration. The friendly offices offer these services to families of labor migrants as well as citizens of other states – labor migrants in Tajikistan.

The services in the abovementioned offices are provided by personnel consisting of one medical specialist (having at least secondary level medical education) and one social worker (having at least secondary level general education), who received appropriate theoretical instruction related to HIV, STI and labor migration, as well as practical skills of psychosocial pre-testing counseling on HIV infection.

In order to prepare specialists for the friendly offices the Chief Administration of the Republican AIDS Center issued Order #321 (dated July 12th 2017) in order to design and conduct 2 two-day trainings devoted to the topic “Basics of outreach work, counseling and social support for clients.” These seminars were designed for managers and outreach workers of the friendly offices.

The trainings were conducted in Dushanbe on July 19-20, 2017 for managers and on July 24-25, 2017 for outreach workers. The trainings were held by specialists of the Chief Administration of the Republican AIDS Center. 15 specialists from the friendly offices participated in each training.

The purpose of these trainings was introducing personnel of the friendly offices to new approaches to engagement of labor migrants and their families, referrals to HIV testing and appropriate support. The trainings also covered various approaches to discussing HIV/AIDS related problems with different segments of population.

The trainings gave the participants multiple opportunities to discuss and debate various aspects of the topic in consideration. The participants also practiced filling in report forms, registration journals and referrals to HIV testing.

Since the practice of referring key population groups (PWID, sex workers, MSM) using a coupon had already been implemented in the Republic for several years, we recommended the managers of the friendly offices to use these coupons to engage labor migrants.

After the trainings the migrants received informational materials on HIV, STI and other socially significant illnesses, as well as relevant legal information. It is recommended that they undergo testing at the AIDS Centers.

Strengthening the system of electronic surveillance

The system of electronic surveillance is an integral part of the national system of HIV surveillance. It's instrumental in conducting monitoring of the epidemic's trends and assessing the quality of the services for treatment and care provided to PLWH. The system of electronic surveillance in the Republic of Tajikistan has been implemented and is currently used in 32 AIDS Centers.

The system of electronic surveillance helps conduct epidemiological surveillance of HIV infection and collect data for the most detailed analysis.

In order to improve the level of knowledge among the heads of AIDS Centers in the mountainous regions of the Republic, the Chief Administration of the Republican AIDS Center and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of TR issued Order #297 (dated July 1st 2017) regarding designing and conducting 2 three-day trainings devoted to the topic of "Strengthening epidemiological control with the system of electronic surveillance over HIV cases".

The trainings were conducted for the heads of AIDS Centers from mountainous regions of RT in Dushanbe on July 3-5, 2017 and in Kurgan-Tyube on July 6-8, 2017. The experience gained during recent years proved that in order to improve the quality of work of officials in charge of filling in the system of electronic surveillance, it is necessary to educate the heads of the programmes as well. Therefore this year the skills of entering data, using the collected data in filing reports and monitoring of the timeliness and accuracy of data entering were taught mainly to the heads of AIDS Centers.

20 specialists in charge of AIDS Centers from Dushanbe, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, and the regions of Republican subordination took part in the training in Dushanbe. 15 specialists in charge of AIDS Centers of Khatlon region participated in the training in Kurgan-Tyube, Khatlon region. Altogether 35 specialists have been trained.

The trainings were conducted using theoretical and practical methods of teaching. All the participants had an opportunity to work with computers in online mode. They could practice all the previously received theoretical knowledge.

During the trainings the participants had multiple opportunities to discuss various aspects of the topic in consideration. One of the important sections concerned medical aspects of HIV/AIDS, such as the questions of HIV origins, its pathogenesis, the nature of the virus and its robustness in the environment in comparison to other infections, in particular Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

Upon the completion of the trainings feedback was collected. The participants extensively debated each section of the seminars, practiced entering the collected data into the system of electronic surveillance and received reports in table format using report forms. At the stage of collecting feedback the participants noted that they acquired additional knowledge and skills related to improving the quality of collected data and obtaining results. In the future they will be using all these skills and knowledge in the process of work in order to improve the system of electronic surveillance for each HIV patient.

The main goal of implementing the system of electronic surveillance over HIV infection is to obtain information on each HIV case in a timely manner in order to provide timely specialized help to the PLWH in need.

In order to fully implement and improve the system of electronic surveillance in all the

AIDS Centers of the Republic, the Chief Administration of the Republican AIDS Center provides comprehensive assistance to all the cities and regions of the Republic in training workforce, conducting seminars and providing practical support via Internet and telephones on the daily basis so as to assist in independent data entering and analysis.

Once in six months a comprehensive assessment of the condition of the system of electronic HIV surveillance is conducted and semi-annual reports are filed based on the assessment results.

It has to be noted that in recent years the system in question is periodically updated: new interface options are added in order to facilitate the work of the specialists entering the collected data, to fix system bugs and to make the process of obtaining necessary information easier.

Research on seroconversion

In order to develop the National protocol for researching modes of detecting recent HIV cases among the general population and key populations in Tajikistan, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection issued Order #804 (dated November 24th 2016) to form a working group consisting of specialists from the Ministry proper and organizations accountable to it. The working group met a number of times to discuss all the issues related to the specific area of work. It resulted in the development of the protocol that has been approved by the Committee for Biomedical Ethics of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the Tajik Ministry of Health and Social Protection (Protocol #10 from August 15 2017) and translated into the national language.

In order to ensure quality of the given research two trainings were designed and conducted on the topic of "Recent cases of HIV infection among the general population" for epidemiology doctors and laboratory specialists. The trainings were held on July 4-5, 2017 in Dushanbe (20 participants) and July 7-8, 2017 in the city of Khudzhand of Sogdy region (10 participants). Altogether 30 specialists in epidemiology and laboratory specialists from mountainous regions of the Republic have been trained.

In accordance to the Programme all the topics were covered in the formats of presentations, mini-lectures, brainstorm discussions, small group work and Q&A sessions. The trainings included theoretical and practical parts. One of the major goals of the trainings was to introduce participants to the approaches of defining the time of HIV transmission and to inform them about the goals and tasks of the research.

The trainings also covered matters related to laboratory tests used for the research in order to detect recent HIV cases among the general population and key populations of Tajikistan.

Then the participants were divided into two groups – epidemiologists and laboratory specialists. Each group discussed their own area of work and specified their role in the upcoming research. Epidemiologists discussed the research questionnaire to be filled in for each case. Each question was discussed separately in small groups, in order to correct detected mistakes that can negatively affect the process of entering the collected data into the system and analyzing the results.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| children born from HIV+ mothers | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|

Table 1 demonstrates that:

- 1) in 2015-2017, all HIV-positive pregnant women (100%), who were under the supervision of specialists in reproductive health centers, were covered by PMTCT (ART, ARV prophylaxis). In 2017, the coverage of HIV positive pregnant women with antiretroviral therapy was 100%;
- 2) In the dynamics, there is an increase in coverage of infants born from HIV positive mothers, early diagnosis - 32.5% (2015) → 64% (2017);
- 3) the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV among HIV + pregnant women receiving PMTCT services is 1.59% (average statistical value) in 2015-2017, that is, less than 2%.

From what has been said above, a conclusion is drawn on the effectiveness of the measures implemented in the country within the framework of the implemented program for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

In 2014, HIV infection was detected in 168, in 2015 in 174, in 2016 in 185 and in 9 months. 2017 in 126 pregnant women. The coverage rate for preventive antiretroviral treatment is 92.3%, 94.1%, 95.7% and 96.6%, respectively.

Even though in the recent years improvements have been noted regarding maximal coverage of pregnant women with testing, prevention activities, diagnostics, treatment, care and support, it is still necessary to take specific measures for purchasing tests, improving the quality of services in medical facilities for pregnant women, decreasing the number of home births (5.2% in 2016) and ensuring sufficient supply of breast milk substitutes in order to prevent vertical transmission via breastfeeding.

Since pregnant women mainly come to Centers of Reproductive Health and maternity wards, four 3-day regional trainings were designed on “PMTCT: new approaches and introduction to clinical protocols” with participation of OB/Gynecologists in Dushanbe (July 11-13, 2017), Kurgan-Tyube (July 17-19, 2017), Kulyab (July 25-27, 2017) and Khudzhand (July 20-22, 2017) in order to improve the effectiveness of the PMTCT programme.

The training mainly engaged OB/Gynecologists from Centers of Reproductive Health, GPs and heads of the PMTCT programmes. According to the plan 25 specialists were invited to participate, but the actual number of participants amounted to 82: 25 people in Dushanbe, 21 in Kurgan-Tyube, 24 in Kulyab and 25 in Khudzhand.

Over the course of 3 days the participants were receiving information related to HIV epidemiology in Tajikistan and world-wide, watching presentations on prevention, dynamics and precaution measures for HIV infection. Special emphasis was made on the session discussing the new protocol on monitoring pregnant women living with HIV.

The session discussed in detail the functional responsibilities of each official at each level, starting from the head of a primary health care station and ending with the heads of Centers of Reproductive Health and AIDS Centers in mountainous regions of the Republic.

Also issues of providing a sufficient number of test systems for pregnant women have been discussed in detail, ensuring timely detection of HIV infection in pregnant women and prevention of vertical transmission. The seminars discussed in detail the question of reporting and data collection. Various report forms were demonstrated as well, and every participant had an opportunity to fill them in and to ask questions on the topic.

In 2015 the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF) limited its activity in the area of HIV testing, recommending targeting only key populations. Therefore, the National Coordination Committee for prevention and combatting AIDS, TB and Malaria was compelled to hold a regional meeting and assigned the local authorities to purchase tests in order to cover the needs of pregnant women.

In recent years there is a notable lack of test systems for the given key population, even though local authorities contribute more than before.

In 2017 as part of the Programme for cooperation in combatting infectious diseases including HIV, STI and VH, 129 600 test systems for enzyme immunoassay analysis (Genscreen Ultra HIV Ag-Ab) have been purchased for a number of CIS countries, financed by the Government of RF. The test systems were distributed among 20 AIDS Centers of mountainous regions of RT equipped with a machine for conducting enzyme immunoassay tests based on the number of pregnant women registered within the first nine month of 2017. In total, 270 boxes with 480 tests per box have been purchased.

Conducting trainings on Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)

In order to organize trainings on PrEP, the Chief Administration of the Republican AIDS Center issued Order #321 (dated November 27th 2017) "On conducting seminars": seminars on the topic of "Effectiveness of PrEP among key populations" will be held on December 19-20 in Dushanbe and on December 22-23 in the city of Kurgan-Tyube of Khatlon region, for specialists of AIDS Centers from mountainous areas of RT. Altogether 50 specialists are expected to participate in the seminars.

Strengthening control over HAI

In order to analyze the situation with HAI a research was conducted under the title "Assessment of medical facilities' needs for effective control over HAI and implementation of the assessment's results in medical practice." The NGO "Legal Support" was chosen on a competitive basis: it has a lot of experience in conducting similar researches and assessments. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of RT issued Order #713 (dated September 5th 2017) "On conducting an assessment of medical facilities' needs and control over infections" which is used by the specialists at the local level. The final report will be submitted on December 20th 2017.

“AIDS Infoshare” Foundation

Main performance results for 2017

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------|---|
| Potential migrants trained | Medical equipment purchased | Population covered by mobile clinics in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan | Tested for HIV | Tests delivered to Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan |
| 480 | 3 mobile clinics | 105128 | 36557 | 180000 |

Delivery of express tests for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis, 2017

| | Countries | | | Total |
|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------|
| | Armenia | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | |
| HIV | 10000 | 20000 | 15000 | 45000 |
| Hepatitis B | 10000 | 20000 | 15000 | 45000 |
| Hepatitis C | 10000 | 20000 | 15000 | 45000 |
| Syphilis | 10000 | 20000 | 15000 | 45000 |

Mobile clinics

Mobile diagnostic services including counseling and testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis are conducted on the grounds of the mobile clinics.

A mobile clinic is a mobile treatment-and-prevention module for diagnostics based on a multi-section insulated van on the chassis of Kamaz 65117 type with high cross-country mobility. The clinic contains three fully equipped medical offices. The office for the GP includes an ECG machine, otolaryngology and ophthalmology equipment. The gynecologist's office is equipped with a multi-functional gynecology/proctology examination chair and an ultrasound machine. There is a laboratory included as well. The sanitary-epidemiological requirements are met owing to the usage of only disposable instruments.

The mobile clinic serves key populations vulnerable to HIV in remote and hard-to-access areas, on a free-of-charge basis and following the principles of free choice and confidentiality.

The clinic's work is almost totally financed from the budget of the given project, including: support of the work of the mobile clinic, provision of medical goods, emergency medicine, express tests, coverage of transportation expenses, fuel products and lubricants, technical maintenance for cars and medical equipment, extra bonus payments to the salary of the mobile clinic's personnel. Russian specialists give expert and counseling assistance regarding the mobile clinic's service and monitor its activities.

Currently **nine** mobile clinics are functioning in these countries, 2 of which have been launched in 2017.

Armenia

At the present time 2 mobile clinics are working in Armenia (the first one was given to Armenia in June 2014, the second – in July 2016), including 2 mobile teams conducting HIV counseling and testing for migrants, their families and other key populations. A network of outreach workers facilitates informing and engaging clients is, covering 60 rural settlements in all the administrative units of the Republic. The services of the outreach workers cover over 13.7 thousand people.

The “AIDS Infoshare” Foundation allotted a grant to the administration of the Republican AIDS Center in order to ensure uninterrupted work of the outreach teams, mobile teams conducting HIV testing and mobile clinics, including purchases of fuel products and lubricants, medical goods, and extra bonus payments to the personnel for the travelling component of their work. The Foundation also provided express tests for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis.

Currently the grants provided by the Russian project almost fully cover the expenses for the mobile clinics’ maintenance and organization of the outreach-work and the work of the mobile teams. Towards co-financing of the project, the head of the Administration of the Ministry of Health issued Order # 609-A, dated February 28th 2017 (on allocation of transportation means for free-of-charge use, signed by the National Center for Control and Prevention of [Infectious] Diseases and the Republican Center for AIDS Prevention) giving the Republican Center for AIDS Prevention two cars to facilitate transportation of the mobile teams members to their assigned stations, the costs of which were equivalent to 562.5 thousand Russian rubles.

Delivery of express tests to Armenia (In 2017, the Republican AIDS Center purchased tests autonomously, using the received grant.)

| Test type | 2014-2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| HIV | 8680 | 10000 | 10000 |
| Hepatitis B | 5700 | 4000 | 10000 |
| Hepatitis C | 5700 | 4000 | 10000 |
| Syphilis | 3700 | 4000 | 10000 |

Main performance results of the project

| | 2014-2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of clients covered by outreach services | 17382 | 11975 | 13713 |
| Number of clients examined at the mobile clinics | 6500 | 3690 | 7322 |

| | | | |
|--|-------|------|------|
| Number of clients tested for HIV | 11809 | 5547 | 8099 |
| Number of detected HIV cases | 25 | 8 | 13 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis B | | 5295 | 7243 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis B cases | | 20 | 89 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis C | | 5412 | 8099 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis C cases | | 40 | 70 |
| Number of clients tested for syphilis | | 4526 | 5724 |
| Number of detected syphilis cases | | 5 | 20 |

Kyrgyzstan

In 2017, 4 mobile clinics were working in Kyrgyzstan, serving the population of Chui, Osh, Issyk-Kul and Jalal-Abad regions. Three of the clinics were purchased during the first phase of the Program, and the fourth was purchased during the second phase of the Program.

The mobile clinics were allocated to the regional hospitals. "AIDS Infoshare" Foundation allotted grants to the hospital administrations to ensure uninterrupted work of the mobile clinics, including purchases of fuel products and lubricants, medical goods, and extra payments to the personnel for the travelling component of their work. The

Currently the grants given by the Russian Project almost totally cover expenses of the mobile clinics' maintenance. The regional authorities co-finance the mobile clinics in order to expand their field of activities: they cover travelling expenses, payments and fees of the invited medical specialists.

For trips to remote areas the mobile teams can be increased to include 10-12 medical specialists. The mobile clinics are included into the state programme "Caravan of Health" for preventive examination of rural population. The work of the mobile clinics is co-financed by the regional authorities.

Thus, for example, the Plenipotentiary Envoy of the Kyrgyz Government in the Osh region issued Order #183/b (dated April 10th 2017), allotting 838.6 thousand som (an equivalent of 707 thousand Russian rubles) from the regional budget to the Osh regional hospital to organize work of the mobile clinic as part of the "Caravan of Health." The akims (heads of state administrations) are required to provide the medical specialists participating in the "Caravan of Health" with meals and lodging.

Similar orders have been issued in the Issyk-Kul and Chui regions.

Delivery of express tests to Kyrgyzstan

| Test type | 2014-2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| HIV | 13000 | 12500 | 20000 |
| Hepatitis B | 5000 | 9000 | 20000 |
| Hepatitis C | 5000 | 9000 | 20000 |
| Syphilis | 6000 | 9000 | 20000 |
| TB | 9500 | - | - |

As of November 1st 2017 the coverage of the population in rural areas by the services of the mobile medical complex amounted to 54 thousand people. 14 917 persons were tested for HIV. 16 new HIV cases have been detected. A high level of detection for Hepatitis B (440 persons), Hepatitis C (284 persons) and syphilis (149 persons) was noted. The testing is conducted mainly among labor migrants, their families and key populations, as well as by medical indications.

In addition to the testing for the 4 infections listed above, the mobile clinics offer medical services of the following doctors: OB/Gynecologist, GP and Functional Diagnostics Specialist, which makes it possible to give counseling and diagnostic help to broad segments of rural population, including children and the elderly. Due to high demand of the OB/Gyn services up to 70% of the mobile clinics' patients are women.

Main performance indicators of the Project

| | 2014-2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|
| Number of clients examined at the mobile clinics | 18500 | 39307 | 53927 |
| Number of clients tested for HIV | 8019 | 11719 | 14917 |
| Number of detected HIV cases | 10 | 12 | 16 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis B | | 7404 | 15177 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis B cases | | 158 | 440 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis C | | 8387 | 14644 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis C cases | | 188 | 284 |
| Number of clients tested for syphilis | | 8500 | 12292 |
| Number of detected syphilis cases | | 132 | 149 |

An important area of the mobile clinics' work is emergency management. In 2017 the mobile clinics took part in the rescue operations following the plain crash at the settlement of Dacha-Suu, near the "Manas" Airport (the mobile clinic was working at the crash site for over a month and a half), the landslide in Uzgen and the earthquake in the Osh region near the border with Tajikistan. The mobile clinic serves as a base for emergency medical services since it can function autonomously while providing comfortable conditions for patient services.

Tajikistan

In 2017 there were two mobile clinics in RT serving the population from rural areas of high-hilled Khatlon region and the districts of Republican subordination. One mobile clinic was purchased during the first phase of the Programme and the other was purchased during the second phase. Yet another mobile clinic was handed over to Tajikistan on December 5th 2017. Thus, in total RT received three mobile clinics that covered over 37 thousand people. Almost 14.5 thousand people have been tested for HIV. 74 new HIV cases were detected.

"AIDS Infoshare" Foundation allotted grants to two organizations (one is NGO "Amirchon" and the other is a state organization, the Republican AIDS Center) to ensure uninterrupted work of the mobile clinics, including purchases of fuel products and lubricants, medical goods, and extra bonus payments to the personnel for the travelling component of their work.

The Foundation also provided express tests for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis. At the present time, the grants given by the Russian project nearly totally cover the expenses of the mobile clinics. The project was also co-financed by the Administration of Khatlon region: it allotted an equivalent of 65 thousand Russian rubles for purchasing fuel products and lubricants for the mobile clinic serving the local population (Order #2 of the Government of Khatlon region, dated January 1st 2017).

The local jamoats (municipal authorities) provide comprehensive assistance to the mobile clinics, granting them access to centralized electric networks and managing the meals and hotels for members of the mobile teams.

Delivery of express tests to Tajikistan

| Test type | 2014-2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| HIV | 28000 | 14000 | 15000 |
| Hepatitis B | 13000 | 4000 | 15000 |
| Hepatitis C | 13000 | 4000 | 15000 |
| Syphilis | 15500 | 4000 | 15000 |
| TB | 15500 | - | - |

Main performance indicators

| Category | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Number of clients examined at the mobile clinic | 28163 | 37488 |
| Number of clients tested for HIV | 4603 | 14388 |
| Number of detected HIV cases | 9 | 74 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis B | 1826 | 7117 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis B cases | 45 | 195 |
| Number of clients tested for Hepatitis C | 1928 | 7067 |
| Number of detected Hepatitis C cases | 13 | 68 |
| Number of clients tested for syphilis | 2291 | 7123 |
| Number of detected syphilis cases | 9 | 12 |

Delivery of the mobile clinic to the Republic of Tajikistan

On December 5th an official ceremony marking the delivery of the mobile clinic to the AIDS Center of Sogdy region took place in Tajikistan. The mobile clinic will target key populations in remote and hard-to-access rural areas of Sogdy region. The complex contains three fully equipped medical offices. The office for GP includes an ECG machine, otolaryngology and ophthalmology equipment. The gynecologist's office is equipped with a multi-functional gynecology/proctology examination chair and an ultrasound machine. There is a laboratory included as well.

Training centers for migrants in the cities of Kurgan-Tyube and Dushanbe

480 people have been trained at the training centers for migrants. The duration of the course is two months, with two hours of classes held four times a week. The course contains: Russian language, basic computer knowledge, legal basics and basics of prevention of infectious diseases including HIV. All students who successfully completed the cycle and passed the final tests receive a graduation certificate.

Survey of the laws related to HIV/AIDS and migration in the participant CIS countries and activities of the working group of the Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS Member Nations

In 2017 the Foundation for Prevention and Control of AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases “AIDS Infoshare” in collaboration with a number of international lawyers prepared a survey of laws related to HIV/AIDS and migration in the participant CIS countries.

The survey was prepared following an inquiry of the Permanent Commission on Social Politics and Human Rights of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the participant CIS countries and was aimed at developing a model law and a model inter-state agreement.

This work is being conducted based on the decision of the Regional Consultation on “Migration and HIV infection in countries of the Eurasian Economic Union” which was held in Yerevan in May 2016 as part of the Regional Cooperation programme in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Combating HIV/AIDS and other Infectious Diseases.

On November 1st a meeting of the working group for development of legislation in the area of HIV/AIDS and migration in the participant CIS countries, established at the Permanent Commission on Social Policy and Human Rights of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the participant countries of The Commonwealth of Independent States, was held in Saint-Petersburg. The group discussed the submitted project of the legal survey and defined the main obstacles for organization of treatment and broadening the access to health services in the area of HIV prevention, detection and treatment among labor migrants and displaced persons to be the legal barriers in certain countries and financing problems for the treatment of HIV positive persons in countries other than that of their citizenship.

Preparations for EECAAC-2018

Starting from 2006, the Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conferences have been making a significant contribution toward the development of measures for combatting the spread of HIV infection in the region.

The Conference is organized by the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing and The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The next, VI International Conference (EECAAC 2018) will take place on April 18-20, 2018 in Moscow. The preparations for the Conference started in August 2016. The Conference aims at developing regional recommendations which would contain a systemic cross-sector approach to HIV/AIDS problem on the national, regional and global level.

In 2017 the following events were held as part of the preparations for the Conference:

On February 20, 2017 **the first meeting of the Organization Committee** for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference 2018 took place.

Taking part in the meeting were representatives of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, respective Ministries of the Regional countries, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian Ministry of Finance, the Russian Ministry of Internal

Affairs, Rosmolodyozh (Russian Youth Organization), the Federal Antimonopoly Service, the Russian Ministry of Labor, as well as representatives of medical and scientific communities of Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and NGOs.

The Committee members developed the Concept of the upcoming forum and formed four programme committees: “Science and Medicine”, “Effective Prevention”, “Civil Society” and “International Development Assistance.”

On April 20-21 2017, **the first meeting of the Programme Committees** for EECAAC 2018 was held in Moscow. The list of participants included representatives of the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzor), the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Expert Administration of the President of RF, UNAIDS, WHO, and the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Attending the meetings also were public health officials, scientists, clinical workers and representatives of the civil society from regional countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Latvia.

The Programme Committees defined the themes for the three days of the Conference: “Experience”, “Action” and “Acceleration.” The Committee members developed the first draft project of the Programme for each of the four areas of the Conference.

For the VI Conference the Committee members stressed the critical importance of covering such topics as current trends in expanding access to testing for HIV and concomitant medical conditions, access to HIV treatment as a mode of HIV prevention, constructive development of the pharmaceutical market and expanding the access to necessary medications, the specifics of work with key populations vulnerable to HIV and the general population, HIV and migration, and new approaches to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

On October 23-24 2017 the second round of **the meetings of Organization and Programme Committees** for EECAAC 2018 was held.

Participating in the work of the Organization Committee and four Programme Committees for the VI Conference were representatives of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, respective Ministries of the regional countries, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian Ministry of Health, the Russian Ministry of Education and Sciences, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Russian Ministry of Sports, Rospotrebnadzor, the Federal Antimonopoly Service, and Rosmolodyozh (Russian Youth Organization), as well as representatives of medical and scientific communities of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine and Netherlands, experts from UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, NGOs and civil society.

The main result of the meetings was the developed project of the Conference programme in the four areas: “Science and Medicine”, “International Development Assistance”, “Effective Prevention” and “Civil Society”. The procedure for preparation of the final document for the upcoming high-level event was developed and approved.

Also, as part of the preparations for the VI Conference, two scientific practical symposiums were held: “Leading evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment of HIV infection” – on February 20th 2017, and “HIV: children, adolescents and youth” – on October 24th 2017.

Leading Russian and international experts have been invited to make presentations, including **Luiz Loures**, the Deputy Executive Director of the Programme, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, **Gottfried Hirnschall**, the Director of the HIV/AIDS Department and the Global Hepatitis Programme (GHP) of the World Health Organization, **Peter Reiss**, Co-Chair of the 22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018) and **Vadim Pokrovsky**, the head of the Federal Center for AIDS Prevention and Control.

The Symposium was aired in real time mode on the website of the VI Conference. The viewers had a chance to participate in the discussions and ask the presenters questions on the topics of interest.

For more on the VI Conference, see <http://www.eecaac2018.org>

UNESCO

As part of the second phase of the UNAIDS regional cooperation programme on strengthening of the potential of countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Field of Prevention, Control and Surveillance of HIV/AIDS, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education and the UNESCO regional programme for health education started a project for primary HIV prevention among women and children in the Republics of Armenia and Belarus, as well as in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Owing to the use and wide distribution of the educational videos, the classes and extracurricular activities in HIV prevention (including prevention of vertical transmission), healthy lifestyle and awareness among adolescents and youth in these matters have become more effective.

In collaboration with the Russian channel (studio) “NAUCHPOK”, 30 videos were created (instead of 20, as planned) in three languages (Armenian, Kyrgyz and Russian), that rendered 4 million views, in total. The videos were recommended by the Ministries of Education of Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Belarus for use in sessions on HIV prevention; appropriate methodological manuals for teachers have been developed.

Practical testing of the videos was conducted in the Republic of Belarus via a series of 50 cycles of classroom and online sessions for adolescents, by the new programme “Useful skills for a successful future.” Developed and launched by the Belorussian Association of UNESCO Clubs, the program engaged over 1 000 adolescents all over Belarus and increased their awareness about HIV.

Owing to the informational portals TEENSLIVE, adolescents and youth became more aware of the matters of HIV prevention (including parent-to-child transmission) and

healthy lifestyle; they are also more inclined to visit adolescents-friendly medical and social services.

Localized versions of the regional resources were developed in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan: TEENSLIVE.AM and TEENS.KG.

Acknowledging the high social significance of the new information resource for teenagers, the authorities of Bishkek agreed to install an art object - the symbol of TEENS.KG in the city center. The installation took place on November 1st 2017.

Owing to trainings for educators the educational program “Development of class hours on healthy lifestyle” implemented in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan has become more effective.

Over the period from February to November 2017 18 regional trainers for the educators were prepared, and by the joint effort of national and regional trainers, 194 educators (including teachers of specific subject areas, social educators and methodologists from Educational Administrations on both city and regional levels) were trained in the cities of Osh, Naryn, Karakol, Balykchy, Cholpon-Ata and Kara-Suu. They received training on the methodology of conducting class hours devoted to Healthy Lifestyle topics using the handbook “Development of class hours on Healthy Lifestyle.”

Handbooks in Russian and Kyrgyz, as well as multi-media materials (presentations and videos) have been provided to all the participant teachers. It is expected that owing to this component of the project the quality of classes devoted to Healthy Lifestyle and HIV prevention will improve in 90% of state schools in the above-listed cities, among others in the city of Osh that has one of the highest HIV prevalence in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In July 2016 an agreement for the implementation of **Inter-Country Project for HIV prevention among women and children** was signed by the UNAIDS Group of regional support for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education.

Once the agreement was signed the UNESCO Institute developed a roadmap for Project implementation and conducted negotiations with national partners, finalizing the format of the planned events and their schedule.

Development of the regional campaign for HIV testing

Over the course of the project implementation work was conducted on administration and management of the virtual community OK.RU/TEST devoted to the regional campaign for HIV testing “It concerns even those whom it doesn’t concern” that had been launched under the auspices of UNAIDS in collaboration with UNESCO in 2015. The community page regularly publishes posts informing about the campaign development in Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and events with participation of Vera Brezhneva, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador and one of the campaign’s front-persons.

The UNAIDS campaign designed for the World AIDS Day-2016 with the slogan “I

Broadcast on November 28th 2016

support HIV prevention!” was promoted, engaging singers, TV presenters and actors from Belarus and Russia who are popular among youth.

On November 28th 2016 before the World AIDS Day 2016 a meeting including parents and psychologists discussing child-parent relationships in the context of HIV epidemics was aired live. Present among the participants were V.Saldanha, the UNAIDS Regional Director, Tatyana Lazareva, a popular TV presenter, psychologist Timur Mursaliev and a mother living with HIV. They discussed matters of disclosing the HIV status within one's family, support of children and parents living with HIV by their family and peers, HIV prevention, testing and treatment. The meeting was viewed by 104 thousand users (<https://ok.ru/live/193630707265>).

On March 1st 2017 the International Zero Discrimination Day organized by the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education in collaboration with UNAIDS and with technical support of the Russian social media "Odnoklassniki", live translation was aired

from the UN House in *Broadcast on March 1st 2017*

Moscow, where the talk

show "Not Talk You Can't" was taking place, presenting Vera Brezhneva, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador, as well as persons living with HIV, health care providers and educators.

Live on air, adults and children discussed issues related to biased attitudes towards PLWH on the part of their friends, coworkers, doctors, teachers, fellow students and class peers. The participants of the talk show shared their personal stories, how they coped with expressions of discrimination, how they stood for their rights and how they received support from friends, doctors and teachers. The talk show (both live and in recording) was viewed by over one million people from various countries of the region.

Broadcast on March 1st 2017

In the following period the virtual community posted materials on children living with HIV and their life in general education institutions, including the story of the American school student Ryan White who started a battle against discrimination in his school, the results of public surveys on society's attitude to PLWH and other materials.

The Minister of Health of the Armenian Republic supports the "Out Loud" campaign

A series of publications "Out Loud" shared with the community some brief recommendations on how to talk about HIV, and what expressions should better be avoided as betraying a biased, negative attitude to people affected by this illness, as well as how to stand for one's rights and support one's friends.

The members of the community were also introduced to the new campaign **#YouAreNotAlone (#ТыНеОдинок)** that had been launched on June 1st (International Children's Day) by the UNAIDS mission in Kyrgyzstan in support of children, teenagers and families affected by HIV epidemic. The campaign's video features Vera Brezhneva, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador, and young Kyrgyzstan stars: singers Abir Kasenov, Arsen, Aiganysh Abdieva, Aiyim Aislchieva, TV presenter Arkin Ryskulbekov and rapper Baystan. Over one million people viewed this video on various social media.

Presently preparations to the event dedicated to the World AIDS Day-2017 are under way and can be followed at ok.ru/test. *Кампания «Ты не одинок» Campaign “You Are Not Alone”*



Creating educational films for youth

In 2016 UNESCO, using its own resources and in cooperation with the Russian educational channel “Nauchpok” (Youtube.com) developed a series of 5 videos on the matters of HIV prevention, personal relationships and reproductive health, targeting adolescents and youth.

One of the videos – “The mysterious story of Vanya Pugovkin” – addresses the issues of HIV testing and prevention of vertical transmission. The video was posted in the virtual community ok.ru/test and on various web portals of the countries of the region in order to draw public attention to the upcoming World AIDS Day. Over the period from December 1st 2016 to December 1st 2017 the video was viewed by 274 thousand users.

Even more popular among young people are other videos of the series: “What’s the right time for «the first time»?” (about interpersonal and sexual relationships with an emphasis on responsible behavior and defense/safety measures) and “Why do we actually do what we don’t want to do?” (about resisting negative pressure of one’s peers and avoiding risky behaviors). The views for this videos were 1 million 275 thousand and 588 thousand, respectively.

The first quarter of 2017 became the beginning of the project aimed at adapting educational films for youth in the countries of the region.

At first a collection of 11 videos was compiled: the topics are related to peculiarities of adolescence, formation of gender culture, prevention of psychoactive drugs consumption and violence, as well as to the issues of reproductive health and sexual relationships, HIV and STI prevention, interpersonal relationships and conflict-solving.

Then the selected videos were shown to schoolchildren and their teachers in order to collect feedback on the relevance of their content, comprehensibility of the language and adequacy of its presentation of the topic in question, as well as on effectiveness of the videos for promotion of preventive behaviors. In Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Belarus focus groups were conducted with schoolchildren of various ages (Grades 7 to 11) and teachers of healthy lifestyle as a subject. The received feedback and suggestions provided the basis for adaptation of the videos to each country’s distinctive social and cultural context and the content of specific school courses (“Healthy Lifestyle” for 8-11 Graders in Armenia, class hours on Healthy Lifestyle in 6-11 Grades in the Kyrgyz Republic, elective classes on Healthy Lifestyle in 7-11 Grades in Belarus).

Following the results of this work four sets of videos have been compiled:

- One set of 11 videos in Russian and 11 videos in the Kyrgyz language for Kyrgyzstan;
- One set of 10 videos in Russian for Belarus;
- One set of 9 videos in Armenian for Armenia.

A total of 30 videos have been created (instead of the 20 planned) in 3 languages. Due to limited access to Internet and social media in schools of Tajikistan no videos were made in Tajik.

The Ministries of Education of Belarus and the Kyrgyz Republic recommended to use the videos as part of the curriculum (class hours and lessons) on Healthy Lifestyle, and sent out official letters with methodology and instructions to the respective local administrations in charge of education and educational institutions.

In order to assist the teachers of Healthy Lifestyle handbooks have been developed (in Russian for Belarus, in Russian and Kyrgyz for Kyrgyzstan) containing lesson plans (class hours and elective sessions) and recommendations on how to use the videos in the classroom. 500 copies of the handbooks have been printed in Kyrgyzstan, and 500 USB-storage devices containing the videos have been distributed among the teachers of the schools whose staff was trained in methodology of teaching Healthy Lifestyle. The videos and the handbook will be available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In Belarus the videos and the handbook have been posted on the websites of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and the **Belarus Association of UNESCO Clubs** – the key UNESCO partner in Belarus.

The Armenian videos are currently being considered for approval by the National Institute for Development of Education. Upon receiving the report from the Institute's experts the Ministry of Education of the Armenian Republic will develop an instructional letter for local administrations and educational institutions and publish the videos and the handbook on how to use them on the national educational web portal. The videos in both Russian and Kyrgyz are published on the Youtube channel of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education at <https://www.youtube.com/user/UNESCOIITE/playlists>.

Using the videos in the classroom helps to give the students a visual representation of various life situations (including those related to HIV prevention, HIV testing, receiving ART and living with HIV), aiming to cause a powerful emotional response and thus activate their practical curiosity to the subject matter of the classes, which significantly increases the effectiveness of such sessions.

Besides lessons and elective classes at school, the videos are also used at training seminars and offered in various facilities of non-academic education: youth clubs, camps, health centers and associations and teenage-friendly centers (youth-friendly clinics) where group trainings, classes and counseling sessions are held.

As part of the Project, a model of **classroom/distance learning for adolescents has been tested, focusing on healthy lifestyle skills and HIV prevention**. Over 1 000 adolescents from all regions of Belarus became participants of the educational programme **“Useful skills for a successful future.”** The programme has been developed and implemented by the Republican NGO “Belorussian Association of UNESCO clubs.”

The program includes training seminars and online classes and counseling (altogether over 12 academic hours) devoted to the following:

- life priorities and values, self-understanding;
- effective communication and conflict management;
- development of friendships;
- effective relationships with one's peers, parents and teachers;
- infatuation, love and building a family;
- preservation of one's reproductive and sexual health;
- prevention of HIV, STI and psychoactive drug consumption.

The goal of the training seminars and subsequent online counseling is to improve competence and motivation of adolescents in being more responsible towards their own life, development and health. The training emphasizes such issues as defining one's life priorities and values, actualization of healthy interpersonal relationships without violence, values of physical, sexual and reproductive health, development of critical thinking and decision-making skills and improving one's personal competence for successful development and maturation.

An important element of the training is screening and discussion of the videos created by the "Nauchpok" Studio, the video lesson on HIV with Vera Brezhneva, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (<http://ru.iite.unesco.org/news/639301/>) and introduction to the TEENSLIVE.INFO portal.

Creating web sites on HIV prevention and youth health in the Republics of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan

In September 2016 the key partner for the implementation of this component of the Project in Armenia was appointed. Considering the successful experience of cooperation between UNAIDS and **the Institute for Children and Teenagers Health** (the Medical Center "Arabkir"), as part of the first phase of UNAIDS regional cooperation program on Strengthening the potential of countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Field of Prevention, Control and Surveillance of HIV/AIDS, an agreement was reached with the Institute for Children and Teenagers' Health (ICTH) to build an Armenian-language version of the web portal for adolescents on HIV prevention and reproductive health.

The ICTH performed the adaptation, development and social media marketing of the web-portal the community in social media both in the process of the Project implementation and after its completion.

In the process of building the web portal for teenagers and virtual communities in social media the developers used the materials, structure and visual design of the portal TEENSLIVE.INFO, developed previously with the support of UNESCO and now available in three languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan.

Over 80 articles have been translated into Armenian and adapted to the Armenian sociocultural context – on general and reproductive health, peculiarities of the teenage years, psychosexual development and physiological changes in adolescent bodies; pregnancy, creation of a family, childbirth and child rearing, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, HIV infection and consumption of psychoactive drugs, inter-gender relationships and gender equality, prevention of violence in interpersonal and sexual relationships, starting and developing a relationship, infatuation and love, communication skills, friendship, relationships between children and their parents, decision making, ability to resist external pressure and manipulations, ability to make independent and weighted decisions, etc.

The TEENSLIVE.AM web portal offers four main sections: ‘*read*’, ‘*learn*’, ‘*find*’ and ‘*ask a question*.’ The ‘*read*’ section offers a collection of articles on the topics listed above, answers to FAQ, a glossary of terms and useful links to other sites. The ‘*learn*’ section offers youth-related news items.

The adapted Armenian version of the portal offers an ‘ask the expert’ option which is extremely popular among adolescents.

The materials of the portal have been recommended by the Armenian Ministry of Education and Sciences for use as an additional source of information for the required courses on *Healthy Lifestyle*. The portal can be reached at <http://teenslive.am>. It also has its own community on Facebook.

A similar portal has been created in Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with the media agency “NAMBA-MEDIA”; the latter pledged to work on development and promotion of the site through its own portal nambe.kg that has over 70 thousand visitors daily.

The content of the TEENS.KG is identical to that of the Russian-language TEENSLIVE.INFO, however some materials have been adapted to the sociocultural context of Kyrgyzstan and information needs of the local target audience – girls and boys of high school age and older. The articles of the portal are divided into seven thematic sections: *Interpersonal Communication*, *Health*, *Love*, *Pregnancy*, *Tête-à-tête (One-to-One)*, *Independence and Threats*.

An important place among the portal materials is assigned to articles on HIV: they talk about the nature of the virus, the modes of its transmission, measures of prevention, importance of testing and varieties of treatment. Among other things they address the issue of discrimination of persons living with HIV, stressing that it is unacceptable. The portal also offers educational videos created in cooperation with “Nauchpok” Production.

On November 1st 2017 the portal was presented to the public at the opening ceremony for the TEENS.KG art object.

Acknowledging the high social significance of the new information resource for teenagers, the authorities of Bishkek agreed to install the TEENS.KG art object in the city center, in the Theater park. The installation became a new attraction on the map of the city, both attracting young people and serving as a visual channel of informing them about the new portal.

The portal has been supported by youth leaders – singers, TV-hosts and bloggers who are popular among young Kyrgyz people. They took part in the opening ceremony of the TEENS.KG installation and posted information about the new website on their pages in social media.

Organization and conducting of seminars for educators in the Kyrgyz Republic

In September 2016 a concept for the implementation of this component of the Project was developed and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic. It was decided to train 180 schoolteachers, including head-teachers, in methodology of teaching class hours on Healthy Lifestyle.

Since 2014 such class hours are taught according to the Programme and the handbook recommended by the Ministry of Education and Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, until now no extensive training on such class hours has been conducted among teachers.

It was the first Project where 212 professional educators received the training in 6 regional and district centers of the Kyrgyz Republic, including the city of Osh that has one of the highest levels of HIV prevalence in the country.

The Project was launched following Order №23/1 (dated January 10th 2017) of the Ministry of Education and Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, “On conducting training seminars for professional educators in the methodology of teaching classes on Healthy Lifestyle and HIV prevention.” The responsibility of supervising the matters related to the trainings for educators was delegated to the leading School of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic – the I.Arabaev Kyrgyz State University. For the benefit of the students the Project engaged national experts on Healthy Lifestyle, the authors of the handbook “Development of class hours on Healthy Lifestyle for students of 6-11th Grades.”

The handbook was developed in 2014 with the financial support from the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and with expert assistance from UNESCO. In 2017 the Project financed printing of 200 copies of the handbook in both Russian and Kyrgyz languages for the educators undergoing training.

In February 2017 the first training seminar was held: 18 regional trainers from **Osh, Naryn, Karakol, Balykchy, Cholpon-Ata and Kara-Suu** were trained. Since then they together with national experts conducted seminars for educators in their respective cities.

The program of the seminars envisaged in-depth studies of the thematic content of the class hours on Healthy Lifestyle (HIV prevention, prevention of stigma and discrimination of PLWH, prevention of STI, consumption of psychoactive drugs, issues of gender equality and human rights, self-cognition, decision making, building interpersonal relationships, friendship, love, sexual relationships, planning and building families, etc.) as well as studying interactive methods in teaching schoolchildren.

The training seminars were conducted using a variety of media resources (digital courses “Adolescents’ health within the life cycle” and “Improvement of knowledge related to HIV and AIDS” developed in cooperation with UNESCO) and interactive methods (brainstorming, discussions, screening and discussing video materials, case studies, role play and others). Over the course of the seminar the participants developed plans for class hours on Healthy Lifestyle and taught test sessions with subsequent performance analysis. The participants received practical recommendations from national and regional trainers for further improvements in the classroom teaching. It is precisely the practicing of the received skills of conducting

class hours with training elements that helped the seminar's participants get prepared for conducting such classes independently.

The level of knowledge and the degree of preparedness of the trained educators to teach class hours on Healthy Lifestyle were assessed before and evaluated after each seminar. In average, the educators' level of knowledge (by the ratio of correct answers on the questionnaire) about HIV grew by 18% and reached 95%. At the same time the educators became 20% more familiar with the content of the educational programme on Healthy Lifestyle, reaching 76%.

In total, over the period from March to November 2017:

- **8 training seminars** (32 hours in total) were conducted;
- **194 educators** received training, including 79 teachers of specific subject areas, 21 social educators, 58 principals and head teachers from general education schools, as well as 9 methodologists from the Education Administration at the local and city levels;
 - **90 schools** have been engaged (81% schools in Osh and 100% in Naryn, Karakol, Balykchy, Cholpon-Ata and Kara-Suu).

Institutionalization of trainings for educators regarding teaching about healthy lifestyle and HIV prevention

In order to ensure long-lasting results of the Project it was decided to develop educational programs to train educators at the graduate and postgraduate levels to conduct educational sessions on healthy lifestyle and HIV prevention using the handbook "Development of Class Hours on Healthy Lifestyle."

The pilot university to test such programs became the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University.

In order to provide training for all students majoring in education the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University developed a new theoretical section "Healthy Lifestyle" and implemented it during the 2017/2018 school year.

This topic is taught as part of the required "Life Safety" course during the first semester for first-year students. The main goal of the thematic section "Healthy Lifestyle" is to help students form a holistic understanding of the comprehensive approach to preservation and strengthening of schoolchildren's health and development of their knowledge, skills and determination for a healthy lifestyle and responsible behavior.

30 class hours are assigned for this thematic section, including 9 hours of practical training.

For working educators a new course on "**Healthy Lifestyle**" was developed and implemented in September 2017 on the grounds of the M.R.Rakhimova Institute for Continued Education at the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University.

The main goal of the new course is to help teachers undergoing continued education courses form a holistic understanding of the comprehensive approach to preservation and strengthening of schoolchildren's health and development of their knowledge, skills and determination for healthy lifestyle and responsible behavior. The course familiarized educators with the content of the Programme "Development of class hours on Healthy Lifestyle for 6-11th Grades" and the methodology of its

implementation. 36 class hours are assigned for this course, including 20 hours of practical training.

The implementation of these educational programs (the section and the course) in the professional training of all students majoring in education and continued education for teachers at the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University will help find a long-term solution of the problem of professional training for teachers regarding Healthy Lifestyle.

The UNAIDS Youth Program

“Test to Win” at the FIFA Confederations Cup-2017

Free and anonymous HIV testing and counseling were available at the pavillion “Test to Win” in Kazan, Russia, during the FIFA Confederations Cup from June 17th till July 2nd.

The Pavilion also offered an exhibition on “HIV and Sports.” The visitors had an opportunity to take part in various seminars, trainings and meetings with renowned athletes where matters related to health, sports and HIV infection were discussed. Besides Fatma Samoura, the FIFA Secretary General, attending were Alexei Smertin, the Ambassador of the Soccer World Cup-2018, Polina Popova, Miss Russia-2017, Serzh Golovach, a photographer, and many others.

Over the course of two weeks of the Cup more than 3 500 people have visited the Pavilion. Over 1 000 of them took HIV tests.

The campaign was organized by the NGO ‘Novyj vek’ (“New Century”) in partnership with the Foundation for sociocultural initiatives under the supervision of Svetlana Medvedeva and with support from the MH of RF, the Republican Center for AIDS Prevention, the Ministry of Health of Tatarstan and UNAIDS.

Strategic planning for the Eurasian Adolescent Network “Teenergizer” in Armenia

The first strategic meeting of the “Teenergizer” was held in the resort town of Aghveran (Armenia) on August 26-29th. Participating were teenagers and youth from 16 to 19 years of age representing a number of Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The participants discussed various problems faced by adolescents living with HIV in different countries, reported about the results of the #questHIVtest Project and developed a strategic plan for #Teenergizer2020.

Teenergizer is a unique organization encompassing 80 adolescents born to mothers living with HIV along with HIV negative volunteers from the Republic of Georgia,

Russia and Ukraine. All members of the organization share common values such as aspiring to broaden opportunities, tolerance and human rights.

Evaluation report of the first phase of the Regional Cooperation Program for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Prevention, Control and Supervision of HIV / AIDS and Other Infectious Diseases

In February 2017, the report of external evaluation of the first phase of the Program was presented to the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation at the meeting of the Program Coordinating Committee. Main findings and recommendations of the evaluation:

1. To work on developing a recommended protocol for the coordination and approval of planned and conducted activities by partner organizations, including international, state and non-government organizations in order to increase the cost-effectiveness of HIV/AIDS response at the country level.
2. To conduct detailed process mapping of the main programmes and projects carried out by international and national donor-organizations and foundations working in the countries of the region.
3. In order to ensure Programme sustainability and considering the current situation in the region, where international partner-programmes also working on scaling-up of the response to HIV/AIDS epidemic are decreasing their financial contributions, subsequent agreements with the Programme recipients ought to introduce articles on mandatory state co-financing of the Programme components, including co-financing of purchases of diagnostic testing systems.
4. Possibilities of optimizing the lengthy and complicated UNAIDS' procedure of contract evaluation and signing should be seriously considered, along with feasibility of switching to longer contract terms (three years) in order to minimize the negative influence of that factor on the efficiency of season-based activities targeting migrants in particular.
5. The scientific and research component of the Programme ought to be reinforced, joint researches in HIV/AIDS response ought to be designed and conducted.
6. To recommend the Programme recipient countries to develop a standard approach to the operational tasks and workload of the mobile clinic personnel and the outreach activities (to standardize education and professional training, create relevant protocols for each of the areas, including a list of professional responsibilities, work conditions and other regulated aspects), or implement the Programme's previously developed regulation package elaborating on organization of the mobile clinic personnel work (Appendix III).
7. To implement a standardized system of encoding the individual data for mobile clinic clients, including the currently existing and successfully employed methods and technologies.
8. To conduct cost-effective regional meetings on the implementation of the Programme in various cities of the participant countries in order to share experiences on a wider scale, deepen cooperation between the participating countries, draw public attention to the key issues, as well as to highlight the role of the Russian aid in the region.

9. To develop mechanisms of state support at the level of local administrations with a number of issues in mind, including ensuring provision of stable electricity supply to the parked mobile diagnostic complexes along their planned or usual routes of operations in distant locations as an element of state co-financing of the Programme.

The full report of the external evaluation is presented in Appendix 2 to this report.

UNAIDS and the AIDS Infoshare Fund have thoroughly studied the recommendations and are constantly implementing measures to improve the Program, taking into account the recommendations of the evaluation.

Financial and administrative activities

During the period 2016-2017, 10,067,117 US dollars were spent on program activities. Based on the approved two-year budget for 2016-2017 the grant expenditure was 99%. Detailed official financial report prepared by the financial departments of UNAIDS headquarters in Geneva is presented in Appendix 1. In addition to Annex 1 data on expenditure of funds by country.

| Component | Responsible organization | Countries | Amount Disbursed |
|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| A, B, D | UNAIDS | Armenia | 667 465 |
| | | Belarus | 482 046 |
| | | Kyrgyzstan | 761 860 |
| | | Tajikistan | 500 210 |
| | | Cross countries activities | 932 206 |
| C | Fund AIDS Infoshare | Armenia | 1 177 883,60 |
| | | Kyrgyzstan | 850 142,37 |
| | | Tajikistan | 836 820,26 |
| | | Technical support | 2 814 333,09 |
| D | | Conference EECAAC2016, 2018 | 919 025,68 |
| Total | | | 9 941 992 |

According to the recommendations of the Global Program Committee of UNAIDS, the internal procurement policy of the main partner AIDS Infoshare supply project was brought into line with the practices of the United Nations. The internal procedures of the Fund AIDS Infoshare were substantially refined, and UNAIDS increased its monitoring of this activity. May 16-19, 2017 2 employees (1 from AIDS Infoshare and 1 from UNAIDS) received a special UNDP training on procurement for UN staff and NGOs.

Training participants Kartseva IV and Peryshkina E.N. June 13, 2017 conducted training for the project team of the Fund AIDS Infoshare, which carries out the procurement process. Special attention was done to development of specifications and terms of reference, market research, tender process, evaluation of proposals and division of responsibilities in procurement activities. Thus, the last purchase of a mobile diagnostic complex on the basis of KAMAZ for the Republic of Tajikistan, carried out as a result of an open tender, allowed to study the market in detail, thereby implementing the principles of effective competition, reasonable price-quality ratio. In order to coordinate the program and administrative-financial activities of UNAIDS and AIDS Infocommunication, the Operating Committee, established in 2016, conducted its work in 2017, holding 6 meetings with the participation of UNAIDS and AIDS Infosvyaz staff, as well as invited representatives (NGOs, project evaluation teams,). The result was a systematic monitoring of operational and financial risks, as well as the development of recommendations for their management, taking into account the strategic objectives of the Program