

REPORT

Round Table Meeting on institutionalization of the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center

Location: Bishkek City, the Kyrgyz Republic

Date: 14 March, 2008.

Participants: 49 persons including Kyrgyzstan Parliament Deputy, representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan Ministries of Health, Justice, Home Affairs, AIDS Republican Centers Directors, NGOs representing country associations of NGOs working on harm reduction, international partners (WHO, CARHAP, UNODC, CAPACITY, AFEW, WB, SOROS Foundation, Red Crescent), Coordinator of Training-Information Center for Harm Reduction in Europe and Central Asia (ENHR).

Facilitator: Tilek Meimanaliev, Executive Director, Central Asian AIDS Project (CAAP).

Round Table Opening

I. An introductory speech was made by Tilek Meimanaliev, Executive Director of Central Asian AIDS Project who greeted all participants, informed about aims and objectives of the session, expressed a hope for an integrated corporate decision-making on organization of the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center (hereinafter – “Center”).

II. Damira A. Niyazalieva, KR Parliament Deputy, Member of Committee for Health, Social Issues and Migration under KR Parliament greeted participants of the Round Table and assured to fully support a proposed initiative to establish the Center. She informed about her personal participation in the inter-country consultations on harm reduction in Goa/India and offered an overall support by Parliament in decision-making on Harm Reduction (HR) Programs development in Kyrgyzstan.

Presentations

Batma Estebesova, President of Harm Reduction Programs Association “Kyrgyzstan Partnership Network”, Overview of the situation on implementation of Harm Reduction Programs in Central Asian Republics.

The presentation presented HR Programs formation stages, characteristics of implementation and development of those programs in all four countries, overview of the current situation in Central Asian region and peculiarities in the existing legislation of the countries on narco-politics and HIV prevention. Main services proposed in the frame of HR in our countries have been reflected, the issues on HR programs monitoring and evaluation have been raised, the existing problems have been shown and priority objectives have been set. A key conclusion of the presentation by B. Estebesova was a reflection of a great need to establish Regional Training-Information Center for HR in CAR.

Zakir Kadyrov, Component Coordinator, Central Asian AIDS Project, Information on the First Asian Consultative session on HIV prevention related to drug use held in January 2008 in Goa/India; agreements accomplished.

The presentation announced a report on participation of a group of specialists from Central Asia in the above indicated session and agreements accomplished. Experience exchange obtained during participation in the session served as development of specialists capacity in advancing this issue in the countries.

Tilek Meimanaliev, Executive Director, Central Asian AIDS Project, CAAP Initiatives in the frame of harm reduction issues advancing.

The presentation reflected three regional initiatives implemented in the frame of CAAP for advancing of harm reduction programs in the region.

- Establishment of Central Asian Training-Information Center for Harm Reduction in partnership with national and international partners, backgrounds of centers establishment have been stated, analysis for completed measures have been made;

- Central Asian Inter-Parliament working group for advocacy and harmonization of harm reduction issues in the region;
- Establishment of Regional technical working group on harm reduction. Interaction with international and national partners has been highlighted in detail, possibility to harmonize partnership activity in the regional level in establishment of regional training centers has been shown;

Shona Shonning, *Coordinator of Training-Information Center for Harm Reduction (TICHR) of Eurasian Network of Harm Reduction*, Network interaction and knowledge management in harm reduction sector based on ENHR and TICHR experience.

The reporter informed about the history of ENHR establishment and formation of Eurasian Center for HR in its base, about aims and objectives of those structures and services provided by them. She shared work experience, showed how inseparably Center and Network interact and complement each other in implementing their activities. Also the issues on Center's activity on trainings conduction, interaction with partners, certification of training modules were reflected. The reporter stated about training courses existing in their Center and new subjects being at the development stage. The issues on Network and Center management and legal form of their functioning were of a special interest.

The reporter expressed a complete consent with the fact that in CAR there is a great necessity to establish personal regional training-information center for HR and stated a readiness for a close collaboration in the frame of implementation of this initiative.

Tynchtykbek Asanov, *HR Consultant, Central Asian AIDS Project*, Concept on establishment, development and support of the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center.

The reporter described in detail a draft concept on formation of CAR Center for HR for CAR developed by CAAP, its aims to establish and objectives set. He presented various models of its functioning and management, forms and conditions of work for the discussion. Prospective base organizations to allocate the Center were named, a model of steering committee was proposed, financing and subsequent institutionalization options were stated.

Questions, answers, debates

Debates have come about on two key issues:

- 1) Draft regulations and draft list of regional technical working group (RTWG) on HR programs advancing in CAR – as a main body for harmonization of partnership activity in the field of HR in the region.
- 2) Draft concept on establishment, development and support of Central Asian TICHR.

Mirzahid Sultanov, *UNODC Regional Advisor on HIV/AIDS*

Question: Has the budget for establishment of the Center been calculated?

Answer: No, this document will be prepared after decision-making on Center functioning form. Along with it CAAP has already planned to invest over USD 200.000 for the support of Center staff and organization of trainings on HR in 2008.

Aleksandr Zelichenko, *Head of MHA KR Reforming Center*

Speech: It is hard to overestimate a necessity to establish a unified regional training center. It is an issue of a great importance and all CAR has been fully ready to realize this initiative. We have lots of ideas in both, educational component and practical implementation of those programs. Now it is necessary to systematize all in one place, establish a single pool of trainers and training materials. Inter-country coordination in this direction of activity is needed.

Question: Would you express your vision on which one is more preferable – the option on formation of the Center as a self-dependent legal entity or in the form without legal self-dependence?

Answer: We assume that it is better to establish Center in the form of self-dependent legal entity which would provide more independence, flexibility of interaction with both, international, non-

government and government sectors. Along with it, it is more complicated way since organizational and financial issues need to be solved independently.

Proposals:

1. To take a proposed name of the Center as a base (CAR CHR)
2. To establish Steering Committee which will be staffed of individuals making decisions from leading partner organizations and Technical Council which should consist of regional specialists-experts on various directions in the field of HR.
3. To pay a special attention to human recourses policy. The Center should be headed by a well-deserved specialist who has an authority in all CAR countries. In order to achieve that we need to appoint him/her via open contest.
4. It is necessary to supplement the list of Regional Technical Working Group with representatives of the Ministries of Health, Justice and Home Affairs of all four countries, Narcology Service Managers as well as members of Councils for AIDS servicing organizations of CAR.
5. The functioning form of the Center is to select self-dependent juridical organization since it would not link it to no structure, ensure self-dependence and enable accessibility to all partners equally.

Azizbek Boltaev, Regional Specialist on Harm Reduction

Speech: The idea on establishment of Regional Center for HR was many times discussed by us and CAAP representatives and surely we fully agree with it. As for the form of organization I propose to apply to ENHR experience. The Center should be established based on savings: the staff should be minimal and multifunctional. A serious emphasis should be made to professional qualities of the personnel hired to this Center. The critical point is to have an effective manager to ensure active and overall activity of this Center.

Proposals:

1. It is possible to use option one and two of the Center organization. Maybe, it would be easier to start working in the base of some organization, and then, gaining power and using the developed recourses to solve the issue on separation into self-dependent legal unit.
2. A special attention should be paid to training materials expertise.

Anna Deryabina, CAPACITY Project Deputy Regional Director Заместитель

Speech: Due to funding limitations, CAPACITY cannot be directly involved into the Harm Reduction activities; however we are actively involved in HIV prevention among vulnerable groups. We agree that regional cooperation is important to ensure high coverage and comprehensive approach to prevention, therefore we support this Training Center.

Proposals:

1. Not to limit activities of the Center to IDUs only, but rather to consider inclusion of other vulnerable groups such as SWs and prisoners, because they interlinked.
2. Considering intensive work done by the CAPACITY project jointly with CAAP and CARHAP, it is important to ensure that consultants trained within the Civil Society Mobilization Strategy are used as trainers for this Center.
3. Using good experience of ENHR it might be beneficial to include M&E of HR projects into the curriculum of the Center.
4. There were several rather unsuccessful attempts to create a Regional Network of organizations working on HIV prevention among the most vulnerable groups. This Center can become a good platform for re-start of the Network
5. CAPACITY has a very good experience seconding NGO Liaison in Kyrgyzstan. Considering this very positive experience we propose to transfer our specialist together with the NGO database and all the results to the Center. CAPACITY can consider cost-share of this specialist during the initial stage.

Tologon Ch. Chubakov, Rector of Kyrgyz State Institute of Retraining and Continuous Medical Education

Question: Is it presumed to establish country branches of the Center? How will country interaction be realized?

Answer: Physically, the Center should be located in Kyrgyzstan. Several technical specialists will be working in it and trainers will be regional representatives. They will be combined into mobile groups during organization of trainings. Both types of trainings will be conducted, regional and national.

Proposal: It is necessary to gather a group of experts, modify the Concept taking into account the proposals made today and develop Regulation or Charter on the Center .

Murtazakul Hidirov, “RAN” Public Association Director, Dushanbe

Speech: A very important and actual issue has been raised at this session. We frequently share recourses conducting our own prevention activity in the field of HR and HIV. Today we have to think about consolidation of efforts and recourses to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Proposals:

1. I consider that it is necessary to organize the Center as self-dependent legal organization and make memorandum on cooperation with base organizations.
2. We should not consider such vulnerable groups as IDU and CSW separately. They are interrelated. Their risks are identical and Center’s activity should cover interests of both groups.
3. RTWG list should be revised a little taking into consideration a proportional representative agencies of countries and interested organizations.

Tanyana A. Rodina, Chairperson of Kazakhstan Association of Organizations working in the filed of HIV/AIDS and Narcotism

Question: Who allocated trends of Regional Training Center by countries?

Answer: Experts participating in the development of a design of our Project based on the best country practices and existing needs.

Question: Would you please clarify training component organization in this Center? Is ToT presumed?

Answer: Mechanisms on organization and conduction of trainings will be different. Trainings will be regional and national. They will be conducted for trainers and specialists. Trainings will be provided with an overall or partial support of donors and, in perspective – a transition to self-financing is possible. Subjects will be determined based on the needs assessment. Selection of trainers will be made via bidding. Logistics will be realized in places by “Customer” during field trainings and in case the training is conducted in Center dislocation place – by Center staff. But it is our temporary proposals and our vision for your consideration.

Proposal: Transparency should be ensured while selecting Manager of this Center. Hence, it is necessary to regulate mechanisms and criteria of his/her selection in advance.

Guzal M. Giyasova, Director of Republican Center for AIDS Prevention and Fight, Uzbekistan

Speech: I would like to focus your attention on B. Estebesova’s presentation which allowed us entering the essence of a matter and seeing the entire current situation in the countries on HR. we have all done a huge work so far on establishment of our regional Centers in the frame of CAAP. We all gathered lots of times with the WB assistance. Countries chose directions of development of regional training centers long ago. I also agree with an idea on establishment of regional training center on both, HR and other directions which Mr. Meimanaliev mentioned of. I would like you pay attention to one of the most important issues – institutionalization of Centers. After completion of CAAP Project the centers should stay in the countries and should work successfully.

Proposals:

1. It is necessary to revise the staff of RTWG, to exclude CAAP specialists from it since they are only technical support group of this initiative. In my viewpoint, it is not worth to include several persons from one organization into the list if they are not HR experts. It is necessary to supplement the list with representatives of Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Narcology Service. I propose to include specialists from Uzbekistan right away (list enclosed).

2. The same Round Tables should be conducted for the discussion of the design on Centers establishment on the other directions.

T. Meimanaliev, CAAP Executive Director informed participants on the fact that at the decision-making individuals' level in the countries it was agreed to conduct a Round Table on organization of Regional Training Center on Treatment, Care and Support of PLWHA in Tashkent on April 11-12. The identical session has also been planned on Center for Youth in Almaty in June.

Yuri Kalyudzny, "Help" NGO Executive Director, Kostanay City

Speech: The meeting is very important, the issue discussed is actual. Efforts to establish such a Center have already been made in CAR previously but they generated only ideas. If currently we have initial recourses the partners are ready to get consolidated. I hope this time we will be successful. The main thing is a content. Training materials should be relevant, it means that they must be advanced and regularly updated. Also, trainings should be the most universal by both, form and content. I am ready to take an active part in establishing this Center.

Proposal: To disseminate an updated list of RTWG with all contact data.

Batma Estebesova, President of Harm Reduction Programs Association "Kyrgyzstan Partnership Network"

Proposal: I fully support a proposal to establish the Center and a proposal to expand its services. It is necessary to include into RTWG representatives of communities of target groups as well.

Murodali Ruziev, Director of Republican Center for AIDS Prevention and Fight, Tajikistan

Speech: I agree with previous speakers and also would like to emphasize an importance of organizing such a Training Center in our region. I support a status of self-dependent legal body for this Center.

Question: Have the negotiations with administrations of potential base organizations for the Center been held so far?

Answer: Yes, we have many times met with representatives of different organizations in Kyrgyzstan. We signed agreements on cooperation with CAAP, CHSD, KSIRCME. The agreement on cooperation with Kyrgyzstan Harm Reduction Programs Association has been signed. A preliminary consent on cooperation with WHO was received.

Sherboto Tokombaev, Harm Reduction Association Manager, Kyrgyzstan

Question: Unfortunately, there were no negotiations with our organization. Who will be a mover of the process at the initial stage of the Center organization?

Answer: At the initial stage of the Center organization CAAP is ready to take up a leading role including the issues on Center activities financing.

Salya Karymbaeva, HIV/AIDS Specialist, WHO/Kyrgyzstan

Speech: We also support the form to establish the Center as legal agency. At the same time we are for establishment of the Network on the base of which the Center will function.

Nurali Amandzolov, President of "Kazakhstan Union of PLWHA in KZ" Public Association

Speech: I consider that founders of the Centers should be organizations which would make their own contribution into its organization and development.

Melitta Jakab, WHO Advisor on Health Policy in Kyrgyzstan

Speech: WHO supports an idea to establish the Center as self-dependent legal entity and is ready to provide technical assistance.

Pulod Dzamolov, "AIDS Plus" NGO Director, Tajikistan

Question: Will it be information center for services delivery? Is there a detailed regulation on this Center?

Answer: At this stage we are busy with development of a draft concept. Only after adoption of a unified design of establishment of the Center we will start developing Regulations on the Center where the issues on harmonization and institutionalization of training processes will be reflected.

Asel Sargaldakova, Human Development Sector Health Specialist, WB Kyrgyzstan office

Speech: Our discussion shows how important it is to hold such meetings since everyone may have his own vision of this problem. We should make our own regional initiatives for such discussions and henceforth, to reach consensus. We should really consolidate recourses in the region. As for the design of the Center on HR we should come to a common opinion and then, step-by-step solve problems of its establishment and development.

Niyaz Kamran, UNODC Regional Advisor on Epidemiology

Speech: Establishment of such a Center is a great step, but, at first, it is really necessary to determine its status. The Center should be recognized at the regional level. It should be approved at the level of all interested ministries of all countries. Cooperation with WHO is a unique possibility of development and support of the Center activity and I consider that we have to reach a positive result.

Shona Shonning, Coordinator of Training-Information Center for Harm Reduction

Speech: I am pleased to be a participant of this event. I can see a huge capacity of CAR countries. Today I have also seen that you have a consensus that such a Center is needed. In your region it is possible and it is necessary to establish Regional Training Center and we are ready to provide technical assistance.

Proposal: In the nearest future it is necessary to gather a working group of experts who would solve the issues of strategic planning on Center establishment, perfect the concept and develop the Regulation. We are ready to participate in this working group's work.

Summary and conclusions

Summaries of the discussion have been made by Mr. Meimanaliev, CAAP Executive Director. Speeches of the Round Table participants allow making two main conclusions:

1. Revise the staff of Regional Technical Working Group as a key body for harmonization of partnership activity in the field of HR in the region and taking into account the accepted proposals and refer it to all participants for coordination ; Round Table participants;
2. Approve main regulations of the draft concept on establishment, development and support of the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center and elaborate it taking into account comments and proposals made;

Next Steps:

1. Regulation and staff of RTWG will be brought out to the nearest session of CAAP Regional Steering Committee to delegate official authorities to RTWG as a body for harmonization of partnership activity in the field of HR in the region (*April-May 2008*);
2. Continue negotiations with partner organizations on bases to locate the Center and implement the training component (*March-April*);
3. Based on Shona Shonning's proposal CAAP jointly with partners from ECCP and CARHAP will hold three-day working session of a group of experts out of the staff of RTWG in Bishkek. The goal is to elaborate a Concept on the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center, Center Regulations, action plans, structure, staff selection criteria and propose mechanisms on stage-by-stage institutionalization and sustainable development of the Center (*till the end of April*);
4. The Concept on the Central Asian Harm Reduction Resource and Training Center to be approved by CAAP Regional Project Steering Committee (*April-May*).