

FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

The Republican public organization “AIDS Foundation East West – Tajikistan” (AFEW-Tajikistan) is pleased to report on the final results and achievements of the project “Get informed, get tested!” supported by the Gilead Scientific Europe.

The given report provides a description of implemented Project activities and final overview of achievements and accomplishments during the whole Project period (August 01, 2014 – July 31, 2015).

I. Project description

Objectives:

1. To inform people who use drugs (PUD) about Hepatitis C and its risks and urge them to get tested;
2. To get a better understanding of the prevalence of Hep C among PUD and needs on development of a national action plan for hepatitis C

Expected results of the Project:

- A better insight in the prevalence of Hep C among PUD
- A list of actions and next steps to develop a national action plan to test and treat Hep C.

II. Report

Key achievements:

Impacts:

- Project assisted on defining the level of viral hepatitis prevalence among PUDs in pilot regions of Tajikistan
- 1397 PUDs have been tested and knew their status regarding Hep C and B
- Discussion on neediness of development of country action plan on prevention of viral hepatitis and decreasing the stigma and discrimination towards PUDs is initiated

- Multisectoral working group on development of Country Action Plan on prevention of viral hepatitis and decreasing the stigma and discrimination towards PUDs is established and began its activities

Outputs:

- 1397 people who use drugs received information about Hep C, provided by counseling and received hepatitis testing and knew their status regarding Hepatitis B, C, and B&C;
- Updated version of brochure “Hepatitis” is printed with 8000 copies and disseminated among general population and people who use drugs.
- Hep C testing results are presented and discussed with 37 international, national and local partners including community based organizations of PUDs, LGBT and PLWH during Round Table.

Planned	Actual	Comments
1200PUDs tested for Hep C	1397 PUDs tested for Hep B, C, B&C	Partner NGOs developed agreements with health services that made possible to increase number of PUDs tested for hepatitis.
5000copies of leaflet printed and distributed	8000 copies of brochure “Hepatitis C” printed and distributed	Additional 3000 copies is printed on the basis of requested of partner NGOs working with PUDs.
2 monitoring visits to perform the quality the project services and provide assistance to partners	3 monitoring visits	Monitoring of the quality of Hep C counseling testing has been conducted within “Get Informed. Get Tested” Project and other <i>AFEW</i> -Tajikistan projects funded by MoFA and USAID.
35 key stakeholders familiarized with results of Hep C testing and discussed neediness of development of national plan on Hep C	37 stakholders	

Progress report

AFEW-Tajikistan is organized series of pre-project consultations with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan and conducted preparatory activities to timely launch of “Get Informed, Get Tested!” Project in Tajikistan.

As result of consultations, on July 31, 2014 the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan (MoH RT) officially requested *AFEW-Tajikistan* to see opportunities to study situation with prevalence of parenteral hepatitis among people who use drugs in four regions of Tajikistan. (Letter 9-29/137). Based on this request on August 16, 2014 the General Plan of *AFEW-Tajikistan* and MoH RT activities within of “Get Informed, Get Tested!” project have been developed and submitted to consideration of the MoH RT.

Finally, on October 01, 2014 the General Plan of joint activities on conducting hepatitis C counseling and testing among 1200 people who inject drugs in four regions of Tajikistan was signed by *AFEW-Tajikistan* and the MoH RT.

Activity 1. Development of leaflets with information on Hep C

During October, 2014 – January, 2015 *AFEW-Tajikistan* and MoH RT worked on updating the content of *AFEW*'s brochure “Hepatitis”. The final version of brochure “Hepatitis” was approved of MoH on March 03, 2015. Brochure was printed with 8000 copies and disseminated among general population and people who use drugs through outreach workers of 13 NGOs. Initially, it was planned to print 5000 copies of brochure “Hepatitis C”, but on demands of partner NGOs it was decided to print additional 300 copies to fill the need of PUDs on essential information about Hep C.

This brochure has the information about the transmission, symptoms, prevention measures of viral hepatitis, what must do if he/she has hepatitis, the addresses of public organizations, where people can go to get support. The brochure is intended for vulnerable groups against infection of viral hepatitis B and C. The brochure has been coordinated with the MoH RT in order any organization can republish it again. It is also uploaded on the web site of the AFEW-Tajikistan www.afew.tj so the website visitors could get acquainted with it or print it out.

Activity 2. Referrals to Hep C testing centers and careful monitoring of # of people who get tested via a voucher system

On October 23, 2014 *AFEW-Tajikistan* signed service agreements with three partner NGOs “SPIN plus”, “Rohi zindagi”, “Sudmand” and its Representative office in Khatlon region on providing outreach counseling on Hepatitis C, referrals to diagnostic centers and issuing testing among people who use injection drugs (PWID) living in Dushanbe, Qurhgoontepa, Kulob and Khudjand.

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

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

Taking into account requests of partner NGOs on additional testing and counseling PUDs on Hep C and available savings on the budget, AFEW-Tajikistan issued additional service agreements with NGOs “SPIN Plus” and “Rohi Zindagi” to cover other 180 PWID in Dushanbe and Khudjand on April 15, 2015.

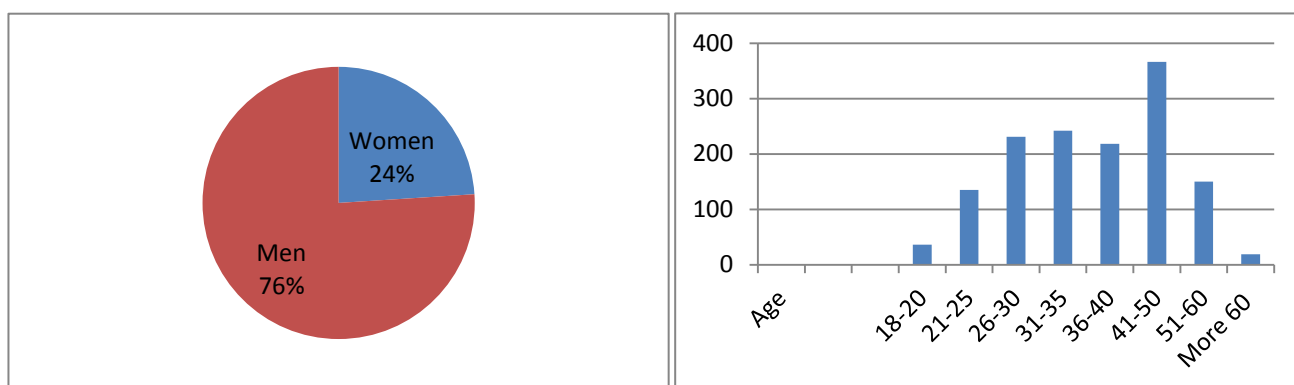
At the end of the Project 1397 PUDs (instead of the planned 1200) are tested on hepatitis C and B. As result of testing 435 cases of Hep C (31,1%), 65 cases of Hep B (4,7%) and 39 cases of Hep B and C (2,8%) were detected. Detailed information is provided in table below:

Table 1. Results of referrals to Hep testing

№	Organization	Region	Plan of referrals	Number of referred and results of testing among PWID					
				Hepatitis B		Hepatitis C		Hepatitis B and C	
				# of PUDs referred	# of cases detected	# of PUDs referred	# of cases detected	# of PUDs referred	# of cases detected
1	NGO “SPIN Plus”	Dushanbe	300	438	19	438	189	438	22
2	NGO “Sudmnd”	Kulob	300	305	1	305	169	305	8
3	NGO “Rohi zindagi”	Khudjand	300	354	23	354	39	354	2
4	AFEW Representative Office in Khatlon region	Qurhgoontepa	300	300	22	300	38	300	7
Total			1200	1397	65	1397	435	1397	39
Data in percent			100%	116,4%	4,7%	116,4%	31,1%	116,4%	2,8%

These results indicate that infection of hepatitis C using non-sterile injecting equipment is a key factor in the development of the epidemiological situation in the pilot cities and determines the level of disease in certain age groups.

In addition, the results show the necessity of development of separate program for the prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis as socially significant disease.



During project implementation period two leading specialists of Sanitary and Epidemiology Department of the Ministry provided technical consultations to partner NGOs organizing outreach activities in the fields, collected data of results on hepatitis testing, prepared situational analyses and presented project results to key stakeholders participated in the Round Table.

Activity 3. Round table for the stakeholders

On June 24, 2015 AFEW-Tajikistan together with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan conducted Round Table with participation of 37 representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic Tajikistan; Drugs Control Agency under the President of the Republic Tajikistan; the National Center for monitoring and prevention of addiction Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic Tajikistan,; Republican and regional AIDS and TB centers; Republican Blood Center; UNAIDS, PSI, OSI and local NGO "SPIN Plus", "Equal Opportunities", "Vita" (Dushanbe), "Sudmand", "Dzhovidon", "SVON Plus" (Khatlon region), "Buzurg", "Rohi Zindagi", "Ikbol nek", "Khayoti nav" (Soughd regions), "Nur" (GBAO region). Related link: <http://www.afew.tj/tg/chm/news/malumot>.

Mr. Navruz Jaffarov, Deputy of Minister of Health and Social Protection/ Head of Sanitary Doctor of the Republic of Tajikistan facilitated Round Table and familiarized participants with epidemiological situation with parenteral Hepatitis in Tajikistan for the period of 2005-2014 and presented the results on Hepatitis C testing among injecting drug users within "Get Informed, Get Tested!" Project.

After long and heated discussions of the testing data and issues, related to the prevention of hepatitis, the Head of Epidemiological Control Administration of the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Mirhamodding Kamolov presented the draft of Country Action Plan on Hepatitis C prevention, treatment, care and support.

The Round Table decisions are following:

- To disseminate information on results of Hepatitis B and C testing among PWID conducted within “Get Informed, Get Tested!” Project and draft of Country Action Plan among partners, working on prevention of social-significant diseases in Tajikistan.
- To establish of intersectoral “Working group on development of Country Action Plan on prevention of parenteral hepatitis” consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, NGOs and leading international agencies.
- To conduct the first meeting of “Working group on development of Country Action Plan of activities on prevention of parenteral hepatitis” on July 24, 2015.

The meeting contributed to the beginning of discussion and development of a national action plan against viral hepatitis B and C, to increase access of vulnerable groups to hepatitis treatment and decreasing stigma and discrimination towards PUDs.

Activity 4. Monitoring of partners

Three monitoring visits to perform the quality of Hep C counseling and results of testing have been conducted by AFEW-Tajikistan. Two monitoring visits to partner NGOs have been conducted within AFEW-Tajikistan “Bridging the Gaps” and “HIV React” projects funded by MoFA Netherlands and USAID.

On June 4-8, 2015 two specialists of Sanitary and Epidemiology Department of MoH RT (M. Kamolov and Salimov F) conducted final monitoring visits to partner organizations "SPIN Plus" (Dushanbe), "Rohi Zindagi" (Khujand), "Sudmand" (Kulob) and the AFEW-Tajikistan Representative Office in Khatlon (Kurgan-Tube).

The conclusions of monitoring are following:

- PUDs have not access to free of charge treatment of viral hepatitis B and C.
- A significant prevalence of viral hepatitis B and C among IDUs justify the need to develop and expand hepatitis B and C prevention programs among key populations;
- To consider the possibility of integration of such researches into the state epidemiological control for hepatitis B and C.

These conclusions and recommendations were presented and discussed during Round Table. Recommendations will also be used in the preparation of Country Action Plan on Hepatitis C prevention, treatment, care and support

Challenges to activity implementation during the reporting period

Due to the fact that the project strategy, activities and expected results have been previously discussed with key stakeholders and coordinated with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Tajikistan – there were not any difficulties and challenges during the realization of the project.

Conclusions

Such specific study of prevalence of hepatitis C among injecting drug users was organized for the first time over the last 4-5 years in the Republic of Tajikistan. The previous studies were evaluative in nature and did not include arrangements for provision of information and consulting.

The high prevalence of hepatitis C among injecting drug users in Tajikistan is result of low general and risky group of population awareness about hepatitis, lack of qualified medical specialists in remote districts of Tajikistan, insufficient funding in the field of prevention of infectious diseases, relatively high cost of testing for hepatitis and non-tolerant attitudes of health workers and general population toward PUDs.

The joint efforts of *AFEW*- Tajikistan and the Ministry of Health initiated a national dialogue about the need for the organization of work of hepatitis prevention among the most vulnerable groups. National partners noted the importance of analysis of legislation and regulations to improve the access of PUDs to comprehensive package of medical and social services in the area of hepatitis.

It should be noted, that the objectives of the project have been achieved due to the interest and comprehensive assistance of the Ministry of Health RT.

Annexes:

Financial report

Gratitude letter from MH RT

Photos from the project events

Submitted by
Ikram Ibragimov
Director of RPO "AFEW-Tajikistan"
August 07, 2015

