

U N IN RUSSIA

No. 5 (54)

Special
issue



Translating economic growth into sustainable human development with human rights

Published by
the United Nations Office
in the Russian Federation



**December 1 is
the World AIDS Day**

Murmansk /10

If it becomes known that an employee has been tested positive with HIV/AIDS, it is everyone's task to help and support the person. There should be no discrimination and stigma at working places. Yuri Savakov, Deputy Chairman of Murmansk Region Trade Union Council, is convinced of it

Voronezh /15

It should be noted that law enforcement officers can only recommend to those arrested to meet with social workers from AntiAIDS Centre, while the ultimate decision is made exclusively on the voluntary basis, stresses major S. Kazarov

Grozny /17

"Now I blame myself for not checking my blood before, for ruining my nephew's life. I come to the centre, receive psychological counselling and prey for my nephew and all young people living with HIV/AIDS," says a 50 year old woman

Contents

UNAIDS

"Take the Lead. Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise." 2
Different Rupert Everett in Different Russia 4

UNFPA

Doctor Vis-a-Vis Future Mother:
in Need of Dialogue and Trust 5

UNICEF

Children with a Plus 7

UNESCO

Helping Children to See
the Sunny Side of Life 9

ILO

If You Are Warned, You Are Protected 10

UNDP

Chelyabinsk Experience: State and Civil Society
Stand Together Against AIDS 12
Love Thy Neighbour... 13

WHO

Islam against AIDS 14

UNODC

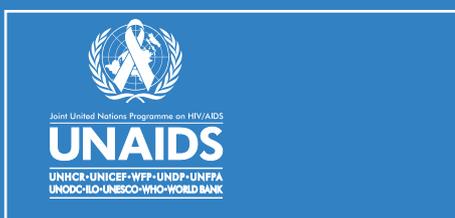
Voronezh Militia Contributes to HIV Prevention 15

WFP

Bread for Those Who Need It Most 17

WORLD BANK

The World Bank Supports HIV/AIDS
Control in the Russian Federation 18



"Take the Lead.
Stop AIDS.
Keep the Promise."



To celebrate the 2007 and 2008 World AIDS Day theme of leadership the World AIDS Campaign launched the Stop AIDS Leadership Pledge. In collaboration with national, regional, international and constituent partners, the pledge calls for people from all over the world to take the lead to stop AIDS. These pledges collected online, by mail and at events will be used to create exhibitions, banners and other visibility actions during major events in 2008. With a goal of at least 100,000 signees, these pledges will serve as a persuasive tool for leveraging greater political leadership on the universal access to AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support and act as a visual example for key national and international decision-makers to follow.

December 1 marks World AIDS Day – a day when people around the world recommit themselves to accelerating the response to HIV and AIDS. The theme of World AIDS Day 2007 is "Take the Lead. Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise." The United Nations family of agencies in the Russian Federation are working closely with a large number of Russian partners to support this goal.

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN organizations and the Secretariat. This issue of UN bulletin highlights some of the most significant initiatives of the UNAIDS family in the Russian Federation.

In 2001, heads of state and government representatives of 189 nations, including the Russian Federation, gathered at the first-ever Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV and

AIDS. They unanimously adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS, acknowledging that the AIDS epidemic constitutes a "global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity". They adopted a set of commitments, actions and goals to stop and reverse the spread of HIV. In 2006, governments gathered again at a special UN General Assembly High Level Meeting to reaffirm this commitment and agreed to move as quickly as possible towards the goal of the universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for all. The Russian Federation was the first country to hold a national consultation to develop specific universal access targets for achievement by 2010. In addition, Russia hosted a regional CIS consultation for the same purpose.

(Continued on page 3)

UN in Russia
Published once in two months
Circulation: 2,000 copies

www.unrussia.ru
www.undp.ru

Founder:
United Nations Office
in the Russian Federation

Editor-in-Chief: Victoria Zotikova
Editor: Vladimir Sadakov

Address:
119034, Moscow,
Ostozhenka St., 28
Tel. 787-21-00
Fax: 787-21-01
E-mail: vladimir.sadakov@undp.ru



"We all live with HIV. We are all affected by it. We all need to take responsibility for the response."

H.E. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations

In Russia, the HIV epidemic continues to grow. As of September 2007, 396,524 cases have been registered in Russia since the epidemic began with 22,806 new cases reported in the first six months of 2007. However, Russian and international experts believe that the actual number of persons living with HIV could be much higher. At the end of 2005, the UNAIDS/WHO estimate was 940,000 (according to different estimates, 560,000 – 1.6 million). The majority of HIV positive are young – some 80% of people living with HIV are aged from 15 to 30. While most new infections are linked to injecting

drug use, the proportion of new HIV infections due to unprotected sex has grown. More than 40% of new infections in 2005 were registered among women. Unless effective prevention efforts are expanded, especially among injecting drug users and their sexual partners, as well as among sex workers and their clients and men who have sex with men, the epidemic in Russia will continue to grow.

In the Russian Federation, the UNAIDS family jointly supports the work at the federal and regional government levels, with civil society, non-governmental organizations, communities of persons living with HIV and AIDS, media, private business, and religious organizations. Main areas of cooperation include joint efforts on policy development, strategic information and technical support, improved programme and service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and civil society engagement. A number of these initiatives are highlighted in the following pages.

As Russia prepares to host the Second Eastern Europe and Central Asia



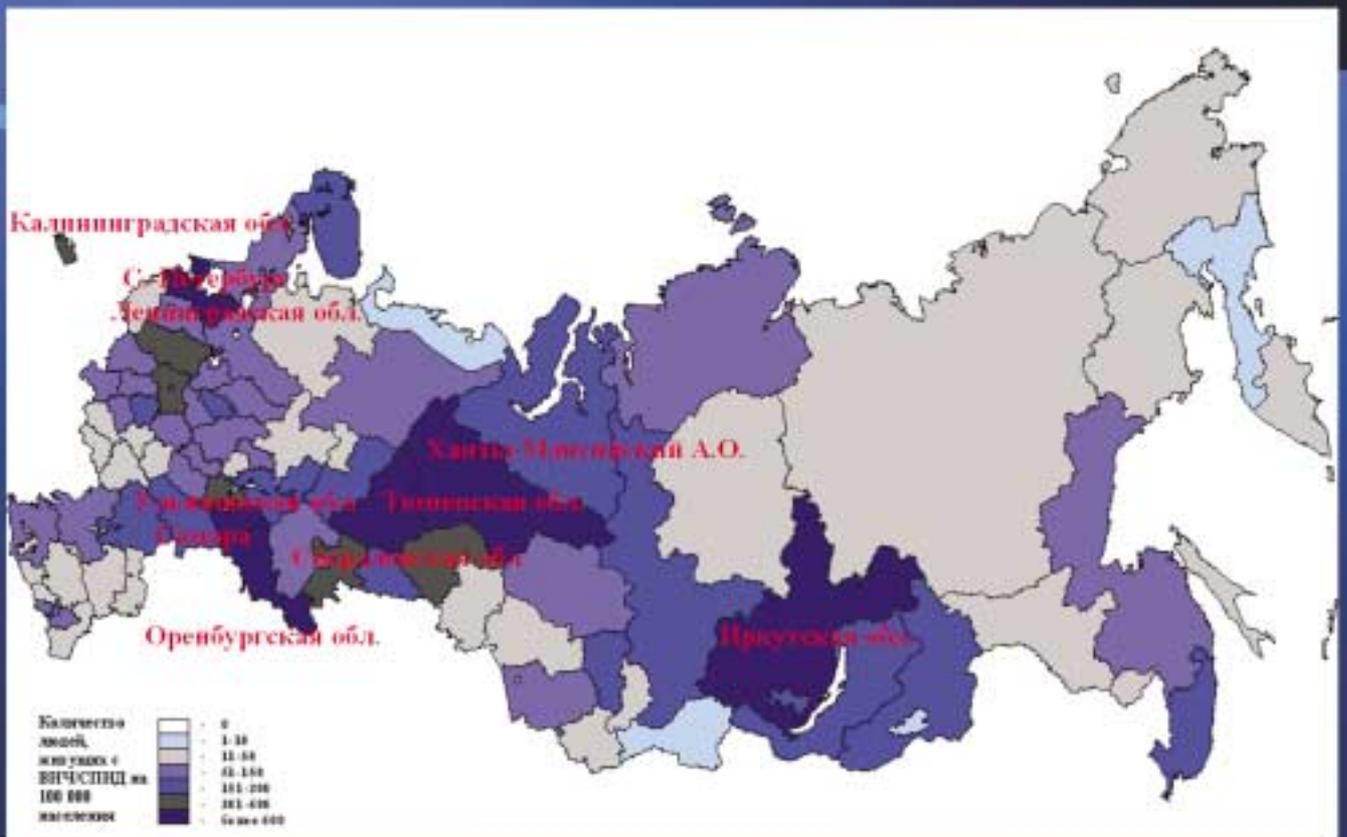
"Sustaining leadership and accelerating action on AIDS isn't something just for politicians. It involves religious leaders, community, youth and council leaders, chief executives and trade union leaders. It involves people living with HIV, and their families and friends. It involves you, me – each and every one of us – taking the lead to eliminate stigma and discrimination, to advocate for more resources to tackle AIDS."

Dr Peter Piot
UNAIDS Executive Director

AIDS Conference in May 2008, the UNAIDS family will work to support our Russian and regional partners in taking the lead in combating HIV and AIDS and moving towards the universal access to prevention, treatment care and support for all.



The number of people living with HIV per 100,000 for 31.12.2006, excluding children with unconfirmed diagnosis



The author of the diagram is Nataliya Ladnaya, Federal Scientific and Methodological Centre on AIDS Prevention and Combat

Different Rupert Everett in Different Russia

Rupert Everett, a renowned movie and theatre actor (“My Best Friend’s Wedding”, “Quiet Flows the Don”, “Another Country”), was appointed UNAIDS Special Representative on World AIDS Day, 1 December 2006. For many years prior to that he was active in the AIDS response carrying out awareness-raising work in collaboration with various NGOs.

“I am sincerely honoured to team up with UNAIDS to face the challenges posed by AIDS and help find solutions,” Everett said. “I have lost loved ones to the epidemic and I have seen with my own eyes the devastation that AIDS and AIDS-related discrimination brings. As UNAIDS Special Representative I will endeavour to advocate on the issue as much as I possibly can.”

True to his word, the actor visited Russia in September 2007 as UNAIDS Special Representative. The objective of his visit to St. Petersburg and Moscow was to learn more about HIV/AIDS and TB co-infection situation in Russia and about the measures taken against the epidemic and also about problems in this area.

“I am very grateful to everyone in Moscow and St. Petersburg who took time to meet and share their experiences with me, said Mr. Everett at the end of his visit. “These have been very busy three days: overwhelming and inspiring. Denial, pre-existing stigma and prejudices are nourished by the presence of HIV and TB in society as a whole. These are powerful forces that act as roadblocks on the journey towards an effective response to the spread of HIV and TB.”

Rupert Everett’s busy schedule included visits to and familiarization with the work of health care institutions and NGOs



providing HIV prevention programmes and support to people living with HIV, including HIV positive children left without parental care, and injecting drug users many of them living with HIV.

Everett visited the Republican Clinical Centre-Children’s AIDS Centre in St. Petersburg. Kids at the department of HIV positive and abandoned children prepared a concert for the Hollywood star that included musical pieces and acting. The Centre is staffed by highly qualified doctors, committed and dedicated to children who do not only provide the required medical assistance but also do their best to ensure these children are prepared for a normal life in the future.

Representatives of St. Petersburg public fund of medico-social programmes ‘Humanitarian Action’ presented their work with the City Infectious Diseases Hospital # 30 named after S. P. Botkin on HIV prevention among injecting drug users and support to people living with HIV. An open and frank discussion on the scope of the epidemic in Russia and the most vulnerable populations was held among the doctors present, ‘Humanitarian Action’ staff and the guests. Rupert Everett was listening carefully and asked quite tough questions. He was interested in basic HIV transmission modes, the epidemic situation among men having sex with men and attitudes towards the gay community.

These topics were also discussed at the meeting with representatives of the Population Services International project

‘LaSky’ in St. Petersburg held at on eof the city gay dance clubs. The project is geared towards gay men and includes compiling and dissemination of information, as well as a number of awareness raising activities and trainings.

In Moscow Rupert Everett learned more about the Russian response to AIDS and TB. TB is not only a preventable disease like HIV but also curable. At the Anti-TB Assistance Centre for HIV Positive People of the Ministry of Health and Social Development Everett met with staff and visited the children’s department where the incredible commitment of all staff was evident to all.

Rupert Everett greatly appreciated the professionalism and personal commitment to the HIV/AIDS response of all those he met during his visit to Russia. Unlike Mr. Everett’s previous trips to Russia when he was starring in Sergey Bondarchuk’s ‘Quiet Flows the Don’, this visit revealed to him different aspects and challenges.

Dr. Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director, said, “People in the public eye like Rupert can inspire and motivate others to unite against AIDS. I am confident that he will speak up, and speak out, building on the good work he has been doing to raise awareness and break down HIV-related stigma.”

UNAIDS

Tel.: (7 495) 232 55 99

Fax: (7 495) 232 92 45

www.unaids.ru

Doctor Vis-a-Vis Future Mother: in Need of Dialogue and Trust



“I was told to have an abortion and that I shouldn’t have a baby given my diagnosis. My gynaecologist said it was a 100 percent probability that the baby would be infected, hence I shouldn’t give birth. I had to make an abortion. Moreover, when talking to my mother he claimed that there was no point in having a baby because with HIV I wouldn’t live more than 5-7 years.”

“My gynaecologist at the local hospital used to say that we get our treatment and monitoring at the AIDS centre only, while that hospital was for healthy people.”

“I came for a check-up, and the physician told me: HIV-positive don’t come here, go to your hospital (she said aggressively).”

“When it came to labour, I was taken to hospital, where I wouldn’t be accepted. The Chief Physician said I couldn’t be with other women because they could get infected, that they would be against it if I were with them. Finally, I got into a single ward, which I had to pay

for, and I was asked to use my own tableware, not to eat with everyone else. After I had the baby I left the maternity home with huge psychological problems and had to seek psychological help.”

The comments above were made by women participating in a survey entitled ‘Reproductive Rights of Women Living with HIV’ (Community of People Living with HIV and AIDS, UNFPA, UNESCO, 2006). These simple stories demonstrate how deeply frustrated, how frightened and vulnerable HIV-positive women become when turning to medical institutions for a consultation on their reproductive health. These simple words of future mothers clearly show how urgent today is the question, “How can women living with HIV enjoy their reproductive rights?” According to official statistics (data courtesy of the Federal Scientific and Methodological Centre on AIDS Prevention and Combat, 1 November 2007), there are over 400,000 HIV cases registered in the Russian Federation. The share of HIV-positive women increased considerably: while in 2001 it amounted to 24 percent, in 2006 it

was already 44 percent. Women living with HIV gave birth to 33,844 babies, 2,093 of them have the diagnosis confirmed.

Today it is scientifically proven that subject to all the prevention activities the probability of HIV transfer from mother to baby is no more than 2 percent. In Russia, the average figure is 11.8 percent. This indicates that many women living with HIV, unfortunately, do not have access to services aimed at protection of reproductive and sexual health. This barrier can be overcome only if the existing Mother and Child Health Protection Service is involved in prevention activities. Women should get information on how to prevent HIV transmission. We should counsel women living with HIV on issues related to reproductive and sexual health. Besides, those women who live with HIV should be actively involved in preventive work themselves.

Today, counselling is considered a major tool in HIV prevention. It is a confidential dialogue that gives a client/patient an opportunity to take a conscious, informed and responsible decision on what to do next. Successful outcome of counselling is ensured not only by HIV competence of the medical expert, but also by the psychological skills. Regrettably, today’s programme of medical personnel training does not provide for teaching doctors and nurses such skills.

Responding to these problems, the Department of Medical and Social Problems of Family, Maternity, and Childhood of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation and UNFPA put forward an initiative to develop a strategy aimed at integrating HIV prevention into the system of Mother and Child Health Protection. Basic elements of the strategy were defined by a special National Expert Group and tested in three pilot regions: Irkutsk Oblast, Krasnodar Kray, and Saint-Petersburg.



Photo: L. Barilakova, G. Lenok

An important component of the strategy is a training programme, based of Russian and international best practices. It includes a three-day training of obstetricians-gynaecologists, as well as nurses in counselling skills on HIV/AIDS. In order to expand this initiative and reduce costs, each region had a group of trainers. They had a two-level training, both in counselling and in training in this field.

The training team included faculty members from medical universities alongside with NGO psychologists dealing with HIV/AIDS prevention. This allowed fitting into the programme some psychological methods that help not only to have complete understanding of the medical side of HIV/AIDS, but also to remove fears and stereotypes related to HIV infection and vulnerable groups, improve tolerance of medical professionals, and build their skills in psychological counselling.

Over 320 doctors and nurses completed the training programme within the pilot project. During 18 sessions 60-80 percent of personnel from the participating medical institutions were trained. Such significant involvement will allow to establish a common approach of medical professionals to counselling, which is secured in training; to decrease the dislike and rejection towards people living with HIV, and, on the whole, to create a friendly atmosphere in medical institutions.

It should be noted that the training programme for obstetrician-gynaecologists was adjusted to the needs of the local population in each of the pilot regions, taking into account the epidemiological situation and characteristics of the vulnerable groups.

Here is some feedback from the trainees:

“After the training I understood that we shouldn't try to hide from this



Photo: L. Bardakova, G. Lenok



Photo: L. Bardakova, G. Lenok

issue. We should work instead. Fear is gone, fear of the HIV-positive. Now I feel sympathy and compassion. I understood that anyone could be in the place of an HIV-positive person.”

“HIV-positive people are not outcasts. They should be treated with respect and understanding. Sometimes, we should try to feel ourselves in the patient's shoes.”

“Each person seeking help should get counselling on HIV-prevention.”

“At first, it seemed that counselling was something very complicated, and I could hardly do it. After the training I feel confident; the training will help to work not only with HIV-positive, but with all patients.”

“The responsibility is now higher: I must do HIV-prevention. I have improved my communications skills. And I now want to work with risk groups.”

Taking this feedback into account, a conclusion was drawn that in each of the pilot regions, there is a need for continued training of medical professionals on HIV-prevention. Now the management of Irkutsk State Doctors Training Institute, Kuban State Medical University, and Saint-Petersburg Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education is considering the possibility of incorporating this training programme or its major components into certification courses for obstetrician-

gynaecologists and a training programme for interns and attending physicians.

At the Outcome Meeting in September, the Department of Medical and Social Problems of Family, Maternity, and Childhood highly appreciated this year results of the pilot training programme. Moreover, the lessons learned have been taken into account in the development of legislative initiatives. This allows to disseminate this experience across the country and to incorporate counselling into the programme of state guarantees and responsibilities of doctors.

The establishment of a training system for medical professionals working in the Mother and Child Health Protection Service will eventually lead to improved quality and higher economic efficiency of HIV prevention services, treatment and care for people living with HIV. Thus, we have an opportunity to improve maternal health, decrease infant mortality and combat HIV transmission without expanding the range of services, increasing staff, or altering the infrastructure, but by mere allocation of certain additional funds for training and professional capacity building for medical personnel.

**Lidia Bardakova,
Ilya Zhukov**

UNFPA

Tel.: (7 495) 787-21-13

Fax: (7 495) 787-21-37

E-mail: russia.office@unfpa.org

www.unfpa.ru

Children with a Plus



From the start of HIV epidemic in the Russian Federation and by mid-2007, over 35,000 children were born from HIV positive parents. Owing to various measures aimed at prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child, most of these children will not be HIV positive. However, irrespective of their HIV status, some of them will be abandoned by parents and will spend months and, in some cases, years in hospital, sometimes in total isolation, which leads to retarded physical, intellectual and emotional development. Orphanages do not always accept children abandoned by HIV-positive parents. At the same time, HIV-positive children living in a family are often denied a chance for early development as kindergartens reject them. It is also difficult to ensure admission of HIV-positive children to schools.

This is why in late 2006, UNICEF and FOCUS-MEDIA Foundation, together with the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and Rospotrebnadzor, launched a large-scale

campaign under the slogan 'I care for every child, what about you?' The campaign aims at raising awareness about HIV-infection and forming a positive attitude to children living with HIV among the population, especially parents and employees of educational institutions.

On 15 August 2007, the information campaign 'I care for every child, what about you?' was re-launched by the Moscow Book House, UNICEF and Oleg Gazmanov, a famous Russian singer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

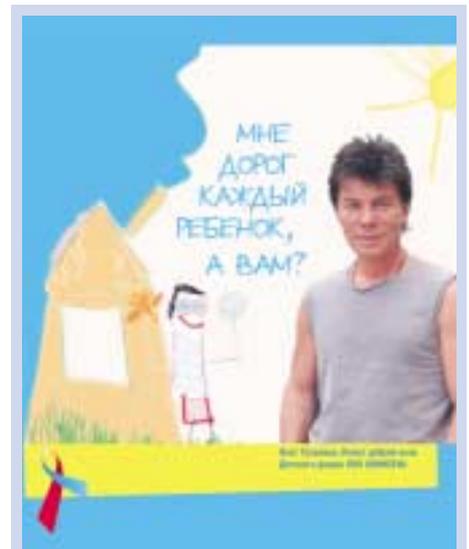
Natalya Yumasheva, Deputy General Director of the Moscow Book House, and Carel de Rooy, UNICEF Representative in Russia and Belarus, announced the beginning of a joint educational information campaign for children and their parents. The first event was presented by Oleg Gazmanov, who leads the campaign. The key message of the campaign is that children with HIV cannot infect others while playing or studying together and that they have a right to go to school together with other children.

UNICEF also supports activities aimed at developing positive attitude to HIV-positive children at schools among teachers and school management. This project is currently successfully implemented in the Chelyabinsk and Orenburg oblasts. As part of it, the first Russian summer camp for HIV-positive children was organized in Orenburg Oblast this September.

"For children with weakened immune system, who often can't attend kindergarten, it is very important to have an opportunity to be closer to nature, eat healthy nutritious food and play developing and educational games," says Tigran Yepoyan, HIV/AIDS Project Coordinator at UNICEF Russia.



Children playing with a clown at Orenburg summer camp



Oleg Gazmanov: "I Care About Every Child!"

"It is terrifying even to think that we, adults, make children suffer. Children need our support. I hope that my participation in the campaign will contribute to the efforts to change the society's attitude to children and parents facing the HIV problem." (from Oleg Gazmanov's speech at the press conference at the Central House of Journalists devoted to social rehabilitation of children born from HIV-positive parents)



Training on HIV for teachers in Chelyabinsk

Altogether 27 children and 22 adults – parents or guardians – came to the camp organized by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Orenburg Oblast. The camp was based at a unique facility – Sol-Iletsk Medical and

Recuperation Centre located near salt lakes, where water has healing qualities. The centre treats about 2,000 kids a year. Sol-Iletsk is a 300-year old resort and a salt producing town 75 kilometres from Orenburg, in the heart of Orenburg Oblast. “I don’t go to a kindergarten and rarely see other children. And here we all

play together, sometimes even with clowns, and we draw great pictures!” says Vanya, 6, who spent 20 days in the summer camp for HIV-positive children with his mother. Vanya’s mother, Lena, adds that their family of five lives in a tiny one-room apartment and the camp gives her an opportunity to finally spend some time alone with her kid.

Recreational programmes that involve whole families affected by HIV/AIDS have been practiced in the West for at least 15 years, but in Russia, the first attempt to use this methodology was made this summer in the Orenburg Oblast camp. Such programmes give parents and guardians the much-needed break from daily routine, while children can feel “normal” thanks to communication with similarly afflicted peers. Recreational programmes encourage children’s social activities, build up their skills to communicate with peers, and help them to get out of isolation. Children become more confident and can share

UNICEF

Tel.: (7 495) 933-88-18

Fax: (7 495) 933-88-19

www.unicef.org/russia



The young readers at the Moscow Book House after the presentation of ‘I care for every child, what about you?’ campaign

©2007/Healthy Russia/Elena Fomina

© 2007 / UNICEF / Alyona Stritva



UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization

Helping Children to See the Sunny Side of Life

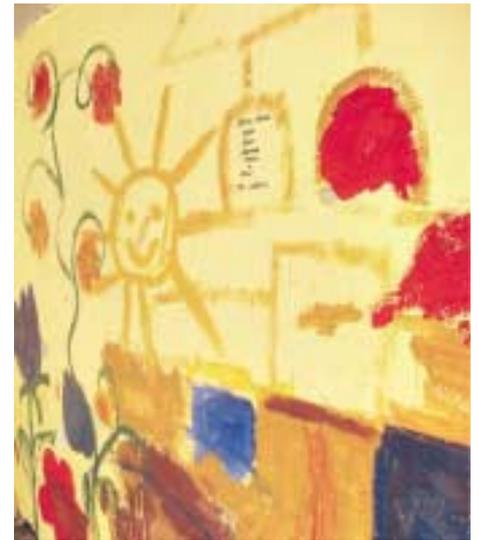


the joint UNESCO/ Stella Art Foundation project 'Art in Response to HIV Prevention among Children'.

In the framework of the project, three renowned Russian artists – Alyona Kirtsova, Eugenia Emets and Stas Polnarev – held master classes in the Regional Infectious Diseases Hospital of Ust-Izhora (St.Petersburg) and Children's Home №5 for children living with HIV in Yekaterinburg.

Alyona Kirtsova, who conducted a master class for little patients of the Regional Infectious Diseases Hospital specializing in treating HIV-positive children, believes that "art is capable to both help these children to see the sunny side of life, and make us, adults, see these

"We all know very well that the HIV epidemic has now reached a catastrophic scale. The policy of UNESCO is that further spread of the infection may be contained. But the preventive measures towards the spreading of the infection encounter on their way such grave obstacles as stigma and discrimination. Ensuring protection, respect and human rights is one of the crucial ways to fight HIV-related discrimination. Experience shows that young people and children are most vulnerable to such discrimination," said Mr. Dendev Badarch, UNESCO Moscow Office Director, at the opening of



kids as talented persons, who simply need especially careful and open-minded treatment."

"Our most important task here is to give the children what they would have had without HIV," this is how Eugeniy Voronin, the Head Physician, explained the idea of the master class in the film dedicated to this project.

Another event, the First International Social Poster Competition on HIV and AIDS Issues SOSznanie, was organized in the framework of the programme Contemporary Arts in Response to HIV and AIDS by the Cultural Policy Institute and the British Higher School of Art and Design with the UNESCO Moscow Office financial support.

About one hundred young graphic designers from Belarus, Brazil, China, Hungary, Iran, Mexico, Russia, Serbia and Turkey took part in the competition. The jury of the project selected Michail Strukov's (Russia) poster 'Common People' as the best work.



UNESCO

Tel.: (7 495) 637-28-75

Fax: (7 495) 637-39-60

www.unesco.ru

If You Are Warned, You Are Protected



Working adults quite often find themselves helpless facing the threat of HIV infection due to their negligence or lack of knowledge. In this article, a panel of experts discusses an innovative educational experience in the sphere of HIV/AIDS awareness at workplace in the Murmansk Region under a programme developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The panel includes Vladimir Kostrov, Executive Secretary, Inter-agency Commission on Countering Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trade under the government of the Murmansk Region; Viktor Zubov, Deputy Director-General, Murmansk Commercial Seaport; Yuri Savakov, Deputy Chairman, Murmansk Region Trade Union Council; and Stanislav Zenov, ILO Regional Project Coordinator.

Vladimir Kostrov: The ILO project is not the first initiative in the area of response to HIV/AIDS in the Murmansk Region, but I would not compare it with our traditional HIV programmes. First of all, this project focuses on preventive measures at workplace, which is a new approach for us.

Secondly, the ILO Education Programme has been developed on the basis of innovative methods. Initially, ILO experts conducted a survey at several pilot enterprises to determine the actual level of HIV awareness among workers. On the basis of this data, we have developed action plans for specific industry branches and enterprises. It is important that workers, together with ILO experts, determined the content of



The Power Hit Radio youth radio station has actively participated in the HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme

information materials and suggested which points should be stressed during meetings and discussions with employees. As a result, we have prepared a series of booklets, posters, and brochures under the “Learn about it at work” slogan. At present, any enterprise can use these materials to educate its employees in the area of HIV prevention.

– The Murmansk Commercial Seaport takes an active part in the HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme. How serious is this problem in your company?

Viktor Zubov: The port management does not regard HIV as an urgent problem. We simply do not want HIV to come knocking at our door one day. We have excellent personnel working here, and we highly value their lives and health. At the same time, a new and promising generation of workers is emerging. That is why we want our employees to stay informed on HIV/AIDS issues.

Besides, we do not request that the employees undergo HIV tests, nor require a medical certificate confirming that they are not HIV-positive. We want HIV positive to feel comfortable here as they are just ordinary people in a difficult life situation.



A voluntary HIV test is one of the principles of the HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme

– What is the position of trade unions on the issue of HIV epidemic?

Yuri Savakov: First of all, mandatory testing of employees should be banned altogether, and voluntary testing should be encouraged. If it becomes known that an employee has been tested

The HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme project was launched in Russia in September 2004.

The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Labour and is implemented by the International Labour Organization in cooperation with its social partners: the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia, the Coordinating Council of Employers' Unions of Russia, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, the All-Russian Confederation of Labour and the Labour Confederation of Russia.

The goal of the project is to educate workers at pilot enterprises in the Murmansk and Moscow regions on methods of HIV/AIDS prevention, to

reduce risky behaviour leading to the spread of HIV infection. Another important goal is to prevent discrimination against HIV positive at work. The workplace is an ideal place to educate workers on safe behaviours and HIV prevention, because staff are homogeneous in their socio-cultural and demographic characteristics, while enterprises provide a well-structured environment and material, legal and regulatory base for a constructive social dialogue.

In addition to the Murmansk Commercial Seaport, the Kola Mining & Metallurgical Company, the Murmansk fish processing plant and Power Hit youth radio station joined the project.



Yuri Savakov: "If it becomes known that an employee has been tested positive with HIV/AIDS, it is everyone's task to help and support the person. There should not be a hint of discrimination."

positive with HIV/AIDS, it is everyone's task to help and support the person. There should not be a hint of discrimination. It is not a secret that HIV positive employees often face different forms of discrimination, both from company management and from their co-workers. We have never received official complaints, but I personally know of HIV-positive employees who were forced to quit jobs "on their own accord," or even change the place of residence. Although there are only few cases like that, they do exist. Trade unions believe that if no measures are taken stigma will prevail and acquire even more aggressive forms.

That is why I would like to stress the importance of the fight against discrimination and prejudice at workplace as part of the ILO programme. It is a difficult task because deep-rooted fears and false assumptions lie at the heart of all these hideous phenomena.

The Tripartite Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, signed on December 19, 2005 by the parties to the Tripartite Commission on the Regulation of Social and Labour Relations, became an important step in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Russia. The Declaration stresses the necessity to implement workplace prevention and education programs, to fight against discrimination of workers living with HIV/AIDS, to provide support to them, including care, counselling voluntary testing, treatment for concurrent infections and access to antiretroviral treatment.

Meetings and discussions with workers were sometimes difficult, but it was a real pleasure to see people's attitude changing. Here is a response from a female employee, as an example: "It is considered inappropriate to talk openly about things like condoms and how to use them. I used to be ashamed to discuss these issues even with my children, let alone to bring up the subject at a meeting – everyone seemed to be embarrassed and reluctant to talk. We should thank the trainers for finding the right words to approach the subject. Now I know how to discuss this subject with my son. I want to warn him, to help him, as there are so many dangers around."

– Why do you think your northern region has been chosen as a pilot region?

Stanislav Zenov: The Murmansk Region is a constituent body of the Russian Federation, which has been successfully implementing the core principles of social partnership. I think it was a decisive factor for the selection.

– As it is common to any new undertaking, you certainly experienced some difficulties...

Stanislav Zenov: I have to admit, I was initially afraid that our regional employers would be sceptical about the project. Fortunately, it turns out my fears were unfounded – the leading regional enterprises, their management and trade union activists eagerly supported the ILO initiative.

The Regional Advisory Board and an expert group have been set up and are operating in the region. Focal points and commissions on HIV/AIDS are working at pilot enterprises. I would like to point out that we have recruited and trained a number of so-called trusted confessors or peer educators from the employees at each participating enterprise. They have been entrusted with the task of educating their co-workers on the peer-to-peer principle. I believe it is the key to the success of our project because it is implemented mainly by employees themselves.

– What results do you expect?

Stanislav Zenov: The final sociological survey at the pilot enterprises will show to what extent our efforts have been effective. But I think we have accomplished our main goal – we have developed and successfully implemented educational methods, prepared materials that could be used by any employee or any company. Today, when we are all facing the HIV/AIDS threat, we must remember that if you are warned, you are protected.

ILO

*Murmansk: tel. +7(815) 2-25 37 03,
Mr. Stanislav Zenov, zenov@ilo.org
Moscow: ILO Moscow Office,
15 Petrovka St., office 23,
tel.: +7 (495) 933-58-93
Fax: +7 (495) 933-08-20,
Ms. Irina Sinelina, sinelina@ilo.org*



Murmansk Commercial Seaport



UN Development Programme

Chelyabinsk Experience: State and Civil Society Stand Together Against AIDS



What is the attitude of Russians to their compatriots living with HIV? According to public surveys, it is generally negative. It is extremely difficult to fight such an attitude, to break stereotypes, to tell the hard truth and to be ready to stand for it every day. This is one of the tasks for many public organizations working in the area of HIV and AIDS.

The Chelyabinsk Oblast is one of the ten Russian regions with the highest rates of HIV infection. A local charity fund 'Take Care' has been working in this area since 1996. Mikhail Grishin, head of the fund, together with a strong team of professionals and volunteers, implement a number of programmes in order to improve public health. The charity received a prestigious award from the European Union and the USA for the development of civil society.

Mikhail views projects and initiatives aimed at solving social and psychological problems of HIV-positive, their relatives and loved ones as the most significant. The social information centre Advocateen is designed to help with these very issues. Here people living with HIV can take advice from a psychologist and a lawyer in private, use Internet and a specialized library to obtain necessary information, come to meet with the support group.

Some time ago a meeting with Vadim Vorobei, a deputy of the the Chelyabinsk Oblast Legislative Assembly, was organized at the centre. It became possible thanks to the joint



Deputy Vadim Vorobei talks to a visitor



Vadim Vorobei participates in the specialized workshop for deputies on HIV/AIDS issues

project of the fund and the UN Development Programme in Russia, which supported the initiative to involve representatives of the legislative authorities in the protection of the rights of HIV-positive people.

“I was involved in this project quite by chance,” Vadim Vorobei recalls. “When I was trying to learn about the situation with HIV infection, I met people affected by HIV and saw how hard the psychological situation was for so many young people. I realized that we should deal with this issue together and promised to make every effort to provide all assistance needed to individuals and to the region as whole to solve the issues related to HIV.” In October, Mikhail Grishin and Vadim Vorobei visited Moscow to attend a workshop for deputies on HIV and AIDS issues. They also met with representatives of the State Duma Parliamentary Group on HIV and AIDS. Successful cooperation with an NGO and commitment to work with people living with HIV, which you rarely see among deputies, drew attention of the workshop participants to the experience of the Chelyabinsk Oblast. Some time ago the fund carried out a survey on HIV issues among regional deputies. This survey demonstrated the

lack of knowledge in this area, as well as a variety of opinions on people living with HIV. The results of the survey will serve as a basis for further joint work with representatives of regional legislative authorities.

Among pending activities is the broadcast of a story on local TV dedicated to tolerance and the rights of people living with HIV. The next session of the Committee on Social Issues is scheduled for November. Vadim Vorobei and Mikhail Grishin will report on the situation with HIV infection in the region.

The partnership helped improve the fund's interaction with representatives of local health care authorities. Thus, Mikhail Grishin was included in the Coordination Council on HIV and AIDS established by the Governor of the Chelyabinsk Oblast. Chelyabinsk example clearly demonstrates that it is possible to overcome discrimination and stigma, fears and ignorance in the society, only if efforts and resources of public organizations and state authorities are consolidated. This is the best strategy to protect the rights of people living with HIV.

Elena Malanova

Love Thy Neighbour...

In the times of epidemics and adversities the Russian Orthodox Church does a lot to help those in need. And today it does not stay away from the problem of HIV/AIDS. In 2004, after long discussions within the church, a concept was adopted regarding participation of the Russian Orthodox Church in combating HIV/AIDS and activities concerning persons living with HIV. Thus, the activities of faith-based and charity organizations and of some clergymen helping HIV-positive persons were officially supported by the church. Though currently there are quite few such specialists their number is gradually increasing.

Today in Russia, HIV is mainly transmitted by sharing needles for drug injection that is why the assistance provided to injecting drug users by faith-based organizations in the areas of treatment, accepting HIV diagnosis and living with it is invaluable for combating the epidemic.

Vladimir Cherlin, Head of the Seraphim Vyritsky Foundation (Saint-Petersburg), holds a PhD in biology. For many years, he worked in research institutes, and like many others in the early 90-s became redundant. Like many others he turned to the church, first working as an assistant at the residence of the Optina Hermitage. Reverend Alexander Stepanov, whom he met at the time, suggested joining him in helping former prisoners at a rehabilitation centre. This centre was created in 1995 by Saint Anastasia Orthodox Brotherhood in Poshitny village of the Pskov region. Several years later Vladimir convinced Father Alexander to focus on drug dependence, the most urgent problem of the centre's patients, and became head of a newly established centre for the rehabilitation of recovering drug addicts. A fund was created to support the activities of the centre, and since then assistance was provided to hundreds of people.

The fund further expanded its activities and identified its strategy – first out-patient care, then in-patient consultations for those ready for such type of rehabilitation, and finally, a

post-rehabilitation period. It was the last stage that caused major problems: it was very difficult to keep away from drugs, when a person returned to his or her environment, very often not favourable for abstinence. It is even more difficult for an HIV-positive person, who should follow anti-retro-viral therapy.

The situation began changing for the better in 2007, when owing to the UNDP project they managed to open a

ensure sustainable development the fund is now carrying out negotiations with the City AIDS Centre to allocate fixed salary for psychologists working at the hotel.

Implementation of this large-scale project became possible thanks to the devotion of a man, who consistently implemented his plans and who managed to gather a team of like-minded people. Vladimir Cherlin has a lot of plans: women urgently need



Vladimir Cherlin and Reverend Alexander Stepanov

social hotel – a re-socialization centre for graduates from Orthodox Church rehabilitation programmes. The centre should fill the gap that exists in the rehabilitation process. Today, six people live in the premises, although renovation works are still underway. Dozens of patients took part in the activities of mutual assistance groups – for drug addicts, for co-dependent persons, for those living with HIV – and were offered individual consultations by specialists. This project is another example of partnership in a complex area such as rehabilitation of HIV-positive drug addicts. The Russian Orthodox Church provided the premises free of charge; patients themselves carried out repair work funded by UNDP. In order to

rehabilitation; out-patient assistance and group work should be better regulated, preferably to be conducted at separate premises. Resources for the fund come from charitable donations and sometimes there is not enough money for everything, but the team of the fund are confident that these plans will be implemented.

Ekaterina Ustinova

UNDP

Tel.: (7 495) 787-21-00

Fax: (7 495) 787-21-01

E-mail: office@undp.ru

www.undp.ru



Islam against AIDS



Older men listening attentively to a young woman is a rare scene in the Chechen Republic. Understanding of a common problem made these imams, cadies and other religious leaders come together in response to the joint initiative of the World Health Organization



and the Republican AIDS Centre and participate in workshops organized as part of the project entitled 'Islam against AIDS'.

“The uniqueness of this project lies in the fact that in the context of the growing HIV and AIDS threat, we tried to mobilize the religious community and support its efforts aimed at the promotion of healthy lifestyle among the younger generation. Historically, the religious leadership in our republic has always had indisputable authority. The general public might have different opinions about different officials or politicians, but when it comes to an imam he is always treated with high respect and reverence. If the religious leadership openly speaks about the problem of AIDS, it means the problem is really existent and important. We hope that our joint efforts will help eradicate stigma and discrimination towards HIV-infected and also encourage a more responsible attitude to health,” Ms. Zalina Abdulkadyrova, Head of Grozny AIDS Centre’s Prevention Department said.

The project sponsored by the Government of Norway started in June 2007 and covered 17 administrative districts in the Chechen Republic. Project partners, the Islamic High Council of Chechnya and the Department of Religious Affairs of the Chechen Republic, contributed to the project by encouraging more social and medical workers along with representa-

tives of religious communities to participate training events.

The training programme developed by specialists of the Republican AIDS Centre included various HIV and AIDS-related topics with all information materials being adapted in line with specificity of the target group and local mentality. Facilitators from the AIDS Centre spoke about issues related to socioeconomic, moral, legal and medical aspects of the disease in simple terms and only in the Chechen language.

Mr. Bagrudi Almurzaev, Deputy Head of Kurchaloi Administration, was pleasantly surprised when he found out that the seminar was to be conducted in the native language. “Good knowledge of the native language and the ability to communicate to the audience the essence of such a specific topic is a great contribution to our common cause,” Mr. Almurzaev said wishing the organizers further success in the project implementation.

The total number of training participants reached 497, including 205 imams from different religious institutions of the republic, and 292 people representing local authorities, district departments of internal affairs, health facilities and mass media. Some 4,000 copies of various printed information

materials, including a brochure in the Chechen language, were disseminated at the trainings.

On 19 June 2007, the ‘Islam against AIDS’ conference was held in Grozny with the support of the World Health Organization. The event was widely covered by the republican media.

“The problem of HIV and AIDS is of high importance in our republic and needs to be addressed with involvement of all public and state institutions. This disease can potentially destroy us and deprive us of the future. Now we restore our republic and construct new buildings, but fail to see the obvious – the foundation of our life, the younger generation, is undermined by drugs and HIV. It is our responsibility to prevent further spread of this disease and thus save our future,” Sultan Mirzaev, Mufti of the Chechen Republic, said about the current situation.

The project ‘Islam against AIDS’ is a component of a larger WHO programme aimed at HIV reduction and prevention in the North Caucasus region. Comprehensive approach in addressing the problem is ensured through such elements as material and technical support of specialized health facilities; public awareness activities on healthy lifestyle





WHO, in close cooperation with the Republican AIDS Centre, endorsed the development and production of booklets, posters, leaflets and other printed materials aimed to raise HIV awareness among the general population in the region. Some 75,000 copies of thirteen different types of booklets, containing basic information on methods of HIV prevention and healthy lifestyle. Additional HIV-related information materials are to be designed and disseminated on 1 December at events dedicated to World AIDS Day. As in previous years, WHO will actively support and participate in the preparation of meetings, conferences, youth sport festivals and other public awareness events related to the 2007 World AIDS Campaign.

Mubamed Havtsukov

among the general population; capacity building for local health professionals.

Owing to WHO efforts and the financial support of the Government of Norway, two supplementary HIV diagnostic laboratories were opened at central district hospitals in Naur and

Gudermes, which helped to reduce the patients flow to the main laboratory operating in Grozny AIDS Centre. Throughout the year WHO provided a total of 210 test system kits for the needs of HIV laboratories. In addition, 6,000 condoms were provided for distribution to the Republican AIDS Centre in Grozny.

WHO, Russia

Tel.: (7 495) 787-21-17

Fax: (7 495) 787-21-19

E-mail: wborus@who.org.ru

Web sites:

www.who.int and www.who.dk



Voronezh Militia Contributes to HIV Prevention



In December 2006, UNODC started the implementation of a pilot drug referral system in Voronezh. Within the framework of the project, drug users, detained or arrested for breaking the law, are referred to treatment. This work is aimed at the reduction of the number of criminal acts committed by drug users, and further referring those at high risk of HIV infection to relevant services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. The system is implemented by the Voronezh non-governmental organization AntiAIDS in the Levoberezhnyi Regional Interior Unit (ROVD) of the Main Interior Department (GUVd), supported by the Governor of the Voronezh Region, the Federal Drug Control Service, the Ministry of Interior, and the Regional Public Chamber.

Today the drug referral scheme is successfully implemented in many countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, while Voronezh is the only city where this experience is replicated in the Russian context.

The drug referral scheme implies the use of specially trained social personnel – drug referral workers, who establish the initial contact with a drug user kept in custody and offer primary counselling. In 2006, UNODC trained six social workers from AntiAIDS Centre for this purpose. A special training was held for law enforcement officers. AntiAIDS employees are not subordinate to the law enforcement bodies, however, they closely cooperate. It is on the request of

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established to strengthen international cooperation to counter drug use, illicit drug trafficking and crime.

UNODC Regional Office for Russia and Belarus was opened in Moscow in July 1999. The Office provides technical assistance to the government and non-commercial organizations in the prevention of psychoactive substance abuse, reduction of drug demand and supply, countering transnational organized crime and money laundering, as well as the prevention of HIV/AIDS epidemic.



Jeff Monaban, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Advisor, and colonel Igor Borisenko, Chief of the Levoberezhniy Regional Interior Unit, discuss the joint plans for 2008

law enforcement bodies that they establish contacts with the arrestees, who are suspected of psychoactive substance abuse, and after the necessary research is undertaken, those in need are referred to relevant services for assistance. It should be noted that law enforcement officers can only recommend to those arrested to meet with social workers, while the ultimate decision is made exclusively on the voluntary basis, stresses major S. Kazarov from the Main Interior Department. During the period from December 2006 through March 2007 three out of 49 people refused to meet with social workers.

At the preparation stage before the actual launch of the pilot drug referral project, a procedure was developed allowing to make the initial assessment of the physical, psychological and social status of arrested drug users, their treatment motivation, and monitoring and evaluation of the system's efficiency. Such evaluation includes questioning of clients on their drug use modes, criminal episodes and infections/diseases, as well as providing information on possible ways of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of socially significant diseases and first and foremost HIV and hepatitis. In addition, in the course of this work, risky behaviour practices related

to HIV and other blood transmitted infections were revealed (e.g., using dirty syringes to inject drugs, unprotected sex, etc.).

First results show that the majority of law-breakers who agreed to contact drug referral workers were referred to the voluntary counselling and HIV testing (43

people), others were referred to the injecting drugs users counselling programme (29), to dermatologist (29), to psychologist and narcologist (27 individuals), and other medical institutions of the city.

Currently, the Voronezh pilot project is an on-going initiative. In September 2007, further to the request of the Main Interior Department (GUVd) one more Regional Interior Unit (ROVD) was included in the pilot project. Despite the fact that the final results of the work in the past six months are not yet available, we may say that Voronezh law enforcement officers supported this initiative, provided drug referral workers with the access to the arrested and ensured due working conditions.

The implementation of the pilot drug referral system became feasible thanks to UNAIDS supported project 'Coordination in action: Applying Three Ones Principles in the Russian Federation.'

Ilze Jekabsons,
the Regional Project Coordinator

UNODC

Tel.: +7(495)787-2121;

Fax: +7(495)787-2129

E-mail: fo.russia@unodc.org

www.unodc.org/russia



Here they are – the joint team of Voronezh Militia officers, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime staff members, and AntiAIDS Centre specialists



Bread for Those Who Need It Most



"I was in Malawi and met with a group of women living with HIV. As I always do when I meet people with HIV/AIDS and other community groups, I asked them what their highest priority was. Their answer was clear and unanimous: food. Not care, not drugs for treatment, not relief from stigma, but food."

Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director

The World Food Programme currently provides food rations to people with HIV and their families in 41 countries worldwide. Recently WFP has spreaded these activities to the North Caucasus.

In late 2006, WFP, jointly with the Chechen HIV/AIDS Centre, started providing food assistance to food-insecure people living with HIV to encourage them to attend the centre and undergo psychological counselling. Since then the number of patients visiting the centre has increased from 30 to 65 patients. Since the beginning of the project WFP distributed over 25 tons of food commodities to these patients and their families.

"In the Chechen Republic, the HIV/AIDS situation is threatening. Currently, 804 cases are registered in 75 settlements of the republic," said Hedy Aidamirova, Chief Doctor of the HIV/AIDS Centre in Grozny. "WFP assistance is vital for those who are HIV infected and for their families. Since the beginning of the project more and more people register for psychological counselling (on average, 5 persons per month are added to the list), and the quality of their lives is improving with WFP's food aid."

Who are they, the patients at the HIV/AIDS centre in Grozny? "Only after a terrible tragedy that happened in my life I understood the importance of HIV prevention and awareness," says a 50 year old woman we met in the centre who did not wish to disclose her name. "My husband died two years ago. We had no children. The dearest creature that I adored and lived for was my husband's nephew. I helped my sister-in-law to bring him up. He is now 20, a very clever and handsome boy. The tragedy broke out a year ago when my nephew had a car accident. He urgently needed a blood transfusion, and all relatives came to give their blood to the boy. Mine matched him best,

and it was transfused to him. He soon recovered, but a couple of months later his blood test showed that he was HIV-infected. Then my blood was also checked and was also found HIV-positive. Now I blame myself for not checking my blood before, for ruining my nephew's life. I come to the centre, receive psychological counselling, and pray for my nephew and all young people living with HIV/AIDS," says the woman.

29 year old Hedi D. is another patient at the HIV/AIDS centre in Grozny. She was shocked when a couple of years ago, being divorced and pregnant, she heard the diagnosis. She did not believe that she was HIV-infected and thought that the doctor made a mistake. She was tested for the second time and the disease was confirmed. "My husband was also found HIV-positive. He returned to the family. The common misfortune united us. We both registered with the HIV/AIDS Centre and started to receive psychological counselling. The situation was very bad before WFP started distributing food," says Hedi. "I would never be able to cope without the WFP food aid because I have no job and have to look after



At the Grozny AIDS Centre

my family. When I gave birth to my daughter I was very worried that she would be HIV-positive. But doctors in the centre did their best to help her escape the disease. Last year in April she was deregistered from the centre's list. I am also getting stronger because of the food we receive from WFP, as now I eat three times a day. I did not want to live before and I did not make any plans for the future. Now I feel greedy for life."

Last year, jointly with the local NGO Vesta and HIV/AIDS Prevention Centre in Grozny, WFP conducted an awareness campaign at Grozny schools. Madina Isaeva, a 12 year old student of School #39, won the WFP design competition for the best poster she drew with the message "Do not let HIV/AIDS ruin your plans for the future." The poster was printed out in thousands copies and distributed among 410 Chechen schools covered by the Food for Education programme.

This year, WFP will conduct yet another awareness campaign on World AIDS Day at the Chechen State University in Grozny. All readers of this bulletin with their families and friends are invited to participate.

Tatyana Chubrikova



The best poster of Madina Isaeva

WFP
Tel.: (7 495) 956-49-68
Fax: (7 495) 956-49-89
www.wfp.org



World Bank

The World Bank Supports HIV/AIDS Control in the Russian Federation



Patricio V. Marquez

AIDS is rapidly reversing hard-won development achievements around the world. Given the impact of AIDS on development, the World Bank recognizes that HIV/AIDS must be at the centre of the global development agenda. The World Bank is committed to providing long-term, sustained support for comprehensive national responses to HIV/AIDS, and to ongoing harmonization and coordination efforts among development partners to better align support for HIV/AIDS with national programmes.

There are strong indications that Government/Bank-funded US\$286 million TB/AIDS Control Project in the Russian Federation that is implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MHSD) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) with the support of the Russian Health Care Foundation, and in coordination with other international partners (WHO, UNAIDS, Global Fund, UNODC), is helping put in place the necessary building blocks "to protect the Russian population and their economy from uncontrolled epidemics of tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS"--the project's development objective.

Participation agreements under the HIV/AIDS component have been signed with 82 regional governments out of 86 regions in the Russian Federation. With project support specialists, working under the direction of a MOHSD Working Group and in collaboration with Federal AIDS Institutes and UNAIDS and WHO, prepared prevention, treatment and care guidelines and protocols for adoption at the

national level. The strengthening of laboratory capacity (rapid tests, ELISA, PCR, CD4, CD8 and Viral Load), both in health facilities of the civilian sector and of the prison system, has supported the improvement of diagnosis, case management and patient follow up. These investments have been critical to support the scaling up of ARV treatment supported under the National HIV/AIDS Program. By the end of 2006, 19,000-20,000 Russians or about 25 percent of those in need were receiving ARV treatment. The Government's objective for 2007 is to ensure ARV treatment for 50,000 HIV-positive Russians or 62 percent of those in need.

Initial results under the TB Programme in the Russian Federation, that that is being supported by the Bank and Global Fund-financed projects and technical assistance of WHO, are noteworthy. By 2006 the following results were achieved:

- Laboratory confirmation by smear of at least 45 percent of new cases, and 55 percent by culture
- Levelling off or 5 percent decrease in new TB cases
- 85 percent of TB cases under standardized treatment
- 5 percent increase in treatment success rate among new sputum-positive pulmonary cases
- 5 percent decrease in TB mortality, compared to 2005
- Accurate data on multi-drug resistant TB notification

In addition to the support provided under the TB/HIV/AIDS Control Project, the Bank, in collaboration with other international development partners, has assisted in the generation and dissemination of knowledge as follows:

- Assessment of the Intellectual Property Issues in relation to ARV Drugs in the Russian Federation (2005), a joint effort of the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative, the World Bank, UNAIDS, and the WHO in response to a request by the MOHSD.
- Assessment of best practices in HIV/AIDS Harm Reduction Programs among civilian population and prisoners in the Russian Federation (2006), in collaboration with the Open Health Institute.
- Support to strengthen the capacity to monitor financial flows for HIV/AIDS. Since 2005, the Bank, in coordination with UNAIDS, the Imperial College of London, UNDP and other development partners, has supported the implementation of HIV/AIDS resource tracking systems in the Russian Federation utilizing the National Health Accounts. Over 2007-2008, additional support is provided to strengthen and institutionalize HIV/AIDS spending assessments and link it to the systematic assessments of future resource needs.

To conclude, while significant progress on HIV/AIDS has been achieved in the Russian Federation since 2004, much still remains to be done, particularly in preventing the spread of HIV among vulnerable populations (e.g., injecting drug users and their partners), if we are to get closer to halting and reversing the dual TB and HIV epidemic in the country.

Patricio V. Marquez,
*Lead Health Specialist,
Europe and Central Asia,
The World Bank*

World Bank
Tel.: (7 495)745-7000;
Fax: (7 495)745-7002
www.worldbank.org/ru

Summary

You can find the full version of the UN in Russia Bulletin in English at www.undp.ru or www.unrussia.ru (Documents)

UNAIDS / "Take the Lead. Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise."

December 1 marks World AIDS Day – a day when people around the world recommit themselves to accelerating the response to HIV and AIDS. The theme of World AIDS Day 2007 is "Take the Lead. Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise." This year, the World AIDS Campaign has launched the Stop AIDS Leadership Pledge asking people from all over the world to take the lead to stop AIDS.

UNAIDS / Different Rupert Everett in Different Russia

In September 2007, the renowned actor Rupert Everett, appointed UNAIDS Special Representative last year, visited Moscow and Saint-Petersburg to learn more about HIV/AIDS and TB co-infection situation in Russia. The actor visited health care institutions and NGOs running HIV prevention programmes and supporting people living with HIV, including HIV positive children left without parental care, and injecting drug users living with HIV.

UNFPA / Doctor Vis-a-Vis Future Mother: in Need of Dialogue and Trust

It is scientifically proved that prophylactic measures allow to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission to 2%, while in Russia this indicator still stands at 11.8%. The Department of Medical and Social Maternity and Family Issues of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation and UNFPA initiated development of a strategy for integration of HIV prevention in the system of child and maternal healthcare.

UNICEF / Children with a Plus

On 15 August 2007, the next stage of the UNICEF initiative 'I Care for Every Child!' was launched, which aims at improving the attitude towards HIV-positive children. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Oleg Gazmanov and the Moscow Book House presented a joint information campaign for children and parents.

UNESCO / Helping Children to See the Sunny Side of Life

In the framework of UNESCO/ Stella Art Foundation project 'Art in Response to HIV Prevention among Children', three renowned Russian artists – Alyona Kirtsova, Eugenia Emets and Stas Polnarev – held master classes for children living with HIV in the Regional Infectious Diseases Hospital of Ust-Izhora and Children's Home No. 5 in Yekaterinburg.

ILO / If You Are Warned, You Are Protected

Working adults quite often find themselves helpless facing the threat of HIV infection due to their negligence or lack of knowledge. In this article, a panel of experts discusses innovative educational experience in the sphere of HIV/AIDS awareness at the workplace in the Murmansk Region under the programme developed by the International Labour Organization.

UNDP / Chelyabinsk Experience: State and Civil Society Stand Together Against AIDS

The Chelyabinsk oblast is one of Russia's top regions in terms of HIV infection rates. 'Beregi Sebya' (Save Yourself), a local charity foundation established in 1996, works with PLWHA. The head of the foundation, Mikhail Grishin, together with a team of professionals and volunteers, implemented a number of projects in this area and were awarded an international prize for the development of civil society.

UNDP / Love Thy Neighbour

Venerable Serafim Vyritsky Foundation in Saint-Petersburg is a faith-based charity working with injecting drug users. In 2007, UNDP supported the foundation in establishment of a 'social hotel', a centre for re-socialization for participants of rehabilitation programmes run by the Orthodox Church.

WHO / Islam against AIDS

The World Health Organization and the Republican AIDS Centre of Chechnya organized workshops as part of the 'Islam against AIDS' project. The project sponsored by the Government of Norway covers 17 administrative districts of the republic. The project partners, the Islamic High Council of Chechnya and the Department of Religious Affairs of the Chechen Republic, contributed to it by encouraging more social and medical workers along with representatives of religious communities to take part in workshops.

UNODC / Voronezh Militia Contributes to HIV Prevention

In December 2006, UNODC started implementing a drug referral scheme in Voronezh. This project is aimed at the reduction of the number of criminal acts committed by drug dependents, and further referring those at high risk of HIV infection to relevant services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. The scheme is implemented by Voronezh NGO AntiAIDS and local law enforcement bodies. In September 2007, further to the request of the Main Interior Department (GUVD) one more Regional Interior Unit (ROVD) was included in the project.

WFP / Bread for Those Who Need It Most

WFP currently operates HIV/AIDS food assistance programmes in 41 countries worldwide. Improving food security is a way to slow the spread of HIV by reducing its impact both on those who are infected and on the vulnerable that remain HIV-free. The World Food Programme has taken upon itself the global task of providing food to people with HIV and their families. In addition to providing food aid, WFP runs HIV awareness and prevention campaigns in coordination with UNAIDS and National HIV/AIDS centres.

WB / The World Bank Supports HIV/AIDS Control in the Russian Federation

The World Bank is committed to providing long-term, sustained support for comprehensive national responses to HIV/AIDS. The Government/Bank-funded US\$286 million TB/AIDS Control Project in the Russian Federation implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MHSD) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) with the support of the Russian Health Care Foundation, and in coordination with other international partners, has already brought about concrete results.

United Nations



Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals is a set of specific and measurable targets aimed at reducing poverty and raising living standards, which was adopted by 191 United Nations member-states, including the Russian Federation, at the Millennium Summit in 2000.

These Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be reached by 2015 or earlier, are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Goal 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger |
| Goal 2 | Achieve universal primary education |
| Goal 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women |
| Goal 4 | Reduce child mortality |
| Goal 5 | Improve maternal health |
| Goal 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases |
| Goal 7 | Ensure environmental sustainability |
| Goal 8 | Develop a global partnership for development |