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# NEWSLETTER

GRANTS FOR HIV,  
TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

 **KYRGYZSTAN**

May 2014

## Extended meeting with UNDP sub-recipients (SR's)

UNDP Program Manager Anna Chernyshova opened the one meeting between UNDP and Sub-recipients (SR's) in Bishkek on May 29 by introducing Paula Ghrist as the Acting Global Fund Grant Manager in Kyrgyzstan beginning on June 1.

Throughout her career, Paula Ghrist has supported numerous UNDP country offices to ensure their Global Fund programmes reach their targets to maintain strong grant performances. Ms Ghrist began working with GF grants in 2007 as a Local Fund Agent (LFA) in Malawi before becoming a Regional Advisor for LFA teams in Southern Africa. She has worked in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Last year, Ms Ghrist worked with the Kyrgyzstan CCM proposal subcommittee and the UNDP Global Fund team to prepare the HIV Request For Continued Funding. Ms Ghrist reiterated the importance of UNDP's partnership with SR's and her desire to work with SR's to continue the success of the GF grants in Kyrgyzstan.



*Ms. Paula Ghrist*

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of the Global Fund grants to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Kyrgyzstan. UNDP officers discussed the use of social networking and other Internet resources to promote organizational interests, the introduction of 1C software to sub-recipients as a common database, and the recognition of assets by SR's in accordance with the rules of the Global Fund.

Nazgul Akaeva, acting Finance Manager of UNDP Global Fund grants implementation, discussed the application of the three funds under agreements with sub-recipients and mentioned comments received during the independent financial audit of SR's.

During the second half of the meeting, representatives of State Authorities presented best practices for program implementation. Iskender Shayakhmetov spoke about the successes of the "one-stop shop" at the City AIDS Centre, where PLHIV have access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), TB medication and methadone maintenance therapy in one location. The Republican Centre for Narcology (RCN) reported that methadone therapy is being implemented in medical and penal facilities and the representative of State Service for the Execution of Sentences talked about the help given to PLHIV in prisons.



*Baigazy Ertatov, head of the Public Foundation "Tais plus dva"*

Representatives of the civil sector discussed not only their accomplishments, but also the complexity of their work. Baigazy Ertatov, head of the Public Foundation "Tais plus dva," works with sex workers in Jalal-Abad. In early 2014, the foundation, together with the Jalal-Abad region Centre of Prevention and Response to AIDS, held training for the employees of the State Department of Interior Affairs (SDIA) of Jalal-Abad to reduce the stigma and discrimination of law enforcement officers against sex workers. But police continue to raid saunas and places where sex workers are

employed under the pretence of looking for minors or missing persons. Local TV channels also participate in these raids, which negatively affects the quality of outreach work. In an attempt to alleviate the problem, the foundation held a training session for high-level law enforcement officers in April.

The programs of the NGO "Plus Centre" based in Osh reach more than 900 clients. Ravshan Majitov, Head of "Plus Centre," reported that in the first quarter of 2014, at least 600 people who inject drugs (PWIDs) were tested for HIV. About 50 of those tested were HIV positive. Of those, 38 were administered antiretroviral therapy (ART).

The Board of Representatives of people who inject drugs (PWIDs) has been opened at the centre. The representatives focus on advocacy, human rights and decide with users on the quality of services. This is another great achievement for a marginalized community! Special gratitude was expressed to Svetlana Constantinova, a lawyer who provided free services to drug users by helping them acquire passports, thereby helping their rehabilitation back into society.



*Ravshan Majitov,  
Head of "Plus Centre"*



*Participants after meeting*

"Such meetings are highly important since they help strengthen communication with recipients," said Majitov, in regard to the meetings between UNDP and sub-recipients. "The partners from various regions share their experiences and create an atmosphere of unity and trust in solving problems by coordinated efforts."

In closing, Paula Ghrist reiterated UNDP's commitment to regularly hold SR's meetings as they provide a unique opportunity for SR's to raise pertinent issues, increase collaboration and showcase best practices.

## HIV GRANT

### 4th Conference on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA)

"Significant investments have been made in this region, but very little of it has been for effective prevention. The epidemic remains largely uncontrolled," announced Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Michel Kazatchkine during his opening day speech at the 4th Conference on HIV/AIDS in EECA.

The two-day HIV/AIDS conference in Moscow on May 12-13, 2014 brought together politicians, healthcare professionals, scientists and representatives of international organizations and civil society organizations from EECA to discuss HIV prevention and treatment as well as measures to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Although HIV rates are declining globally, they are increasing in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. According to the WHO, of the 131,000 new cases reported in 2012, 76% of those were from Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

More than 1,300 people from 44 countries, including a delegation from Kyrgyzstan, attended the conference. With the financial support of UNDP, three UNDP staff from the HIV grant and three specialists from various partner organizations attended (Kristina Mahnicheva, NGO "Tais Plus"; Timur Isakov, Advisor to the Director of State Drug Control Service of Kyrgyzstan and Begaim Temirgalieva, Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases, HIV/AIDS and Dermatology-Venereology at Kyrgyz State Medical Institute of Requalification and Training).

The conference addressed new approaches to HIV prevention with a focus on high-risk segments of the population, including people with tuberculosis and people who inject drugs (PWIDs). Sessions dealt with the issue of women and girls and HIV and approaches to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS. The conference examined gaps in HIV treatment, including services available for MSM and transgender people in Kyrgyzstan.

Between sessions, attendees had the opportunity to exchange views with leading scientists and well-known professionals working in the field. In addition, participants had the chance to enhance their capacity in the areas of prevention, treatment, and care of people living with HIV. Participants were able to learn about the latest scientific achievements in the field of epidemiology and prevention of HIV, the development of new treatments and diagnostics, and the prospects of further implementation of the acquired knowledge into the process of education of health professionals and NGOs.



*Mr. Michel Kazatchkine*



*Participants of conference*

"Such international conferences are extremely important to us since they allow specialists not only to share their experiences, but also to better learn best practices applied by their colleagues to prevent the spread of the HIV infection," said Temirgalieva.

During the conference, the Russian government donated a mobile AIDS clinic to both Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. These clinics are equipped with the latest diagnostic capabilities and can operate in all climates and geographic areas. They can be used both on their own and in cooperation with other medical facilities, such as rural district hospitals, to treat patients in remote areas of the country.

UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, in his speech, stressed the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind. "Reaching key populations must be moved to the top of our agenda."

### International forum on health and human rights of people who use drugs

Chisinau, Moldova hosted a high-level regional forum on May 19-20, 2014 on the health and human rights of people who use drugs. The forum brought together more than 150 specialists from over 25 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

Moldovan First Lady Margareta Timofti conveyed Moldova's support for the state institutions and civil society organizations involved in harm reduction activities and hoped to better integrate and serve marginalized communities in the region.

The goal of the forum was to create a dialogue between drug user activists and representatives of governments and international organizations who influence national and international policies in the region. During the two-day event, participants discussed social integration, human rights and access to healthcare for people who use drugs, with a focus on transitioning from international to national funding for social and medical services.



*Mr. Sergey Votyagov*

Executive Director of Eurasian Harm Network, Sergey Votyagov said, "the criminalization of people who use drugs is costly, ineffective, and does not meet international and European standards of human rights and health standards that this region has publically committed to but not enforced through its national drug policies or law enforcement practices."

In Central Asia, 74% of people who use drugs do not have access to healthcare services to prevent HIV and hepatitis C infections. In Eastern Europe, this figure reaches 90%. Financial coverage of harm reduction programs in EECA countries is only 11% of the estimate needed, while more than 80% of the funds for this purpose come from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, instead of national budgets. According to a 2012 UNAIDS report, only 15% of financial resources for harm reduction programs in the region comes from national sources.

UNDP, through the implementation of the Global Fund grants, funded four NGO staff to attend the forum. Shukurova Baktygul (Asst. Project Coordinator of "Prosvet" NGO), Kucheryavykh Tatiana (Head of "Ravniy-Ravnomu" (peer to peer) NGO), Shershneva Julia (Social Worker of the "Harm Reduction Network" Association) and Mazhitov Ravshan (Head of the "Plus Centre" NGO) represented the civil sector of Kyrgyzstan.

Julia Shershneva felt the conference was a worthwhile experience. "This conference was valuable to me because one of the main topics was the observance of human rights in terms of drug policy and response to violence against women who use drugs," said Shershneva.

A mini-grant competition was announced for initiative groups and self-organizations of people who use drugs. Competition details can be found at [www.harm-reduction.org](http://www.harm-reduction.org). The next forum will be organized for 2015.

### Monitoring visit to the "Parents Against Drugs" NGO

Parents Against Drugs (PAD), an NGO established in 2000, promotes HIV and drug abuse prevention to people who inject drugs (PWIDs) and people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the Osh region. Between May 12 -13, 2014 UNDP conducted a monitoring visit to one of PAD's branches in the Kara-Suu district of the Osh province and the head office of a partner organization in the city of Osh.



*Burkhanov Mamosobir –  
Head of "Parents Against Drugs"*

In a series of meetings between PAD management and employees, as well as with outreach workers, the achievements of the organization in HIV prevention were discussed. During the first quarter of 2014, PWID's reached by prevention programs increased by 104% in Osh, including 175 people who were tested for HIV, and increased by 98% in Kara-Suu, including five patients tested for HIV. UNDP recommended that Kara-Suu increase outreach efforts in the upcoming quarter.

According to NGO workers, the average age of people who inject drugs in Osh is between 30-45 years. Although the youth in the Osh region are using less heroin than in previous years, these figures could be skewed since many between 18 to 30 years of age have migrated to neighbouring countries, such as Russia and Kazakhstan, for work.

### Monitoring visit to the "Plus Centre" NGO

During a UNDP monitoring visit to the NGO Plus Centre "Drop-in Centre" and "Halfway House" in Osh on May 14, 2014 clients expressed satisfaction with the aid provided to them and said they have been receiving all necessary medical items.

The benefit of the "Halfway House" is that clients participate in occupational therapy to develop skills needed for a healthy successful life. They have the opportunity to grow vegetables and herbs, breed rabbits, and raise cows or other animals. The construction of conference facilities and client trainings rooms is underway.

Because of the success of methadone maintenance therapy (MMT), UNDP has recommended that Plus Centre increase the number of clients on this type of therapy.

### Monitoring visit to the "Cries of the Crane" (Krik Juravlya) NGO

As soon as the NGO "Cries of the Crane" opened on April 1, 2014 in Osh, women and children travelled from all over Osh province to the centre for medical testing, diagnosis, counselling for HIV and TB, outreach, and adherence to ART treatment. Under a grant from the Global Fund, "Cries of the Crane" assists people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their families in the cities of Osh, Nookat, Kara-Suu, Uzgen and the surrounding areas.

Oksana Katkalova, UNDP Specialist for vulnerable populations under the HIV grant, conducted a monitoring visit to the NGO on May 14. Although only women and their children have been utilizing the NGO's services so far, the hope is that the men will soon follow suit.

"Cries of the Crane" also offer women in difficult circumstances temporary shelter at the centre, medical services, and support from social workers and peer counsellors. Now, people in the south of the country facing HIV infection can obtain quality services.

Following the visit, UNDP recommended that the centre improve recordkeeping of hygiene and food products, motivation packets and educational materials that are distributed to clients. UNDP supported Cries of the Crane's idea to open an onsite children's day care centre and is looking forward to receiving the organization's proposal.

### Monitoring visit to the Republican AIDS Centre

UNDP's monitoring visit to the Republican AIDS Centre (RAC) on May 15 revealed significant achievements in the implementation of data quality audit (DQA) recommendations. Additionally, the RAC has done a great job in achieving the top ten HIV indicators, making it possible to take intra-orders on therapy prescriptions by a council of physicians, set deadlines for information transmission during the prescription or replacement of antiretroviral therapy (ART), and report on the movement of drugs and test systems (indicating the expiration date). Reporting forms for patients in prisons receiving ART were also created for the State Service for the Execution of Punishment (SSEP).

To further improve the data quality at Republican AIDS Centre, UNDP recommended that the centre maintain a journal to monitor and evaluate visits by donors and missions to the organization. To monitor HIV trends in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP requested that the centre supply data of HIV infections on UNDP reports and track cases of HIV infection.

### Monitoring visit to the City AIDS Centre

On May 15, 2014 UNDP visited the City AIDS Centre to verify data on the number of adults and children with advanced HIV status receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART). UNDP discovered a lack of information entered on patient's charts during examinations and consultations by specialists.

To rectify the situation, UNDP has recommended that management motivate patients who are active drug users to become involved in the opiate substitution methadone maintenance program. Maintaining ART adherence should be accomplished by performing outreach work in the field to active PWID's/PLHIV; including examinations, consultations and information about "one stop shop."

### Monitoring visit to the southern regions of Kyrgyzstan

UNDP, in conjunction with the southern region Coordinator and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of the Republican AIDS Centre (RAC), conducted monitoring visits to Osh and Jalal-Abad regions between May 19 and 23, 2014. The purpose of these visits was to verify the number of adults and children with HIV status receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART), including those with advanced HIV status, and confirm the number of people tested for HIV who know their results. Additionally, the visits aimed to provide advisory and methodological



*Talgat Mambetov - Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of RAC during visit.*

assistance in the field and discuss a future course of action.

Osh Regional Centre for AIDS Relief (ORCAR), Family Medicine Centres (FMC) in the city of Osh, Kara-Suu and Naukat areas and the Regional Centre for AIDS and Family Medicine Centre in the city of Jalal-Abad in the Jalal-Abad region were visited.

The Osh region has shown significant progress since the last monitoring visit in September 2013. Almost all the issues noted during the previous visit have been addressed.

In both regional centres and FMC's, ART patient's hospital records were viewed via random selection, tuberculosis-screening cards were checked, and discharge summary and adherence to therapy were evaluated.

Following UNDP's visit to Jalal-Abad FMC, a number of errors were identified. A letter was sent to RAC with the appropriate recommendations for FMC, including detailed instructions on how the centre should collect information about PLHIV.

### Consolidated report on express HIV testing results in April 2014

Results from the express testing from 10 NGO's participating in the pilot program: 344 NGO clients underwent express testing in the month of April:

1. 14 of the 344 clients had positive test results from the express HIV testing
2. 10 of those clients with positive express test results were directed to the AIDS centres
3. One client with a positive express test result was escorted to the AIDS Centre by an NGO consultant
4. The remaining three clients underwent confirmation tests in AIDS Centres, which confirmed the results of the express testing. One of the three was registered as a new case of HIV infection (NGO "Parents Against Drugs"). Two had previously been diagnosed with HIV (NGO "Girlfriend").

## TUBERCULOSIS GRANT

### Social support for TB patients

Tuberculosis is a global health problem. Tackling tuberculosis is critical because the disease is not only a medical problem, but it is also a social problem. Although TB does not discriminate, age (young or old), lifestyle (smoking, alcohol/substance abuse), weakened immune system (HIV, malnutrition) and medical issues are contributing factors for contracting TB. And when not treated properly, TB can be fatal.

Patients begin treatment with a hospital stay. But, to recover successfully, patients must comply with their doctor's recommendations, which include diligently taking prescriptions, observing good personal hygiene and adhering to a healthy diet.

During the implementation of the "tuberculosis" component of the Global Fund grant, UNDP pays special attention not only to prevention, but also to supporting patients socially. Patients are given an \$18 USD stipend to buy healthy food and basic necessities to adhere to treatment. When this program was implemented at the beginning of 2014, there were difficulties with distributing the money, as almost 50% of patients did not have passports or bank accounts. A temporary mechanism was put in place to pay clients in cash. Now, only 20% of patients are without passports and bank accounts.

As a direct result of this stipend program, UNDP has received several letters from patients at various TB institutions in Kyrgyzstan highlighting the importance of these benefits and their appreciation for them. Because tuberculosis treatment is a long process, treatment completion rates from the UNDP social program will not become available until the end of June.



### Monitoring visit to Batken Oblast

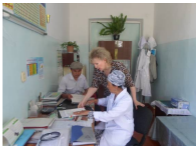
Between May 26 and May 30, 2014 UNDP conducted a monitoring visit to regional and district level medical institutions that combat tuberculosis in the Batken region. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the controlled treatment of TB outpatients and implement programs under the agreement between UNDP and the Batken Regional Centre.

In the first quarter of 2014, the Batken Regional Centre received \$2,941 USD from UNDP for monitoring visits, stipends for DR-TB patients to buy food and necessities, delivery of cultures to Osh OMRL, etc. UNDP supplies these centres with second line anti-TB drugs, side-effect relief medicines, respirators, surgical gloves, sputum containers and other medical devices.

UNDP found that anti-TB drug recordkeeping at the Regional AIDS Prevention Centre in Batken was accurate, but there were some discrepancies discovered with the documentation of medical devices.

Following the UNDP visit, several recommendations were made to the directors of FMC, district TB doctors and the Regional Coordinator of the DR-TB in Batken province:

1. Improve recordkeeping and tracking of patient's test results.
2. Maintain strict control over TB treatment regimens and dosages. (Only medical staff should be responsible for the outpatient treatment phase.)
3. Delivery of anti-TB drugs must be organized at the district level and sputum transported to the Regional AIDS Prevention Centre in Batken on a monthly basis.
4. Control the duration of the injection phase of treatment for patients with MDR-TB
5. Second-line anti-TB drugs need to be used as prescribed and cancelled or replaced only by the decision of the medical council.
6. Organize a place to store anti-TB drugs and provide a refrigerator to keep/store PAS



### MALARIA GRANT

#### Preparing for the WHO Malaria-free certification

UNDP and the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic visited the Osh and Jalal-Abad regions from May 11 to 16, 2014 to prepare for the malaria elimination certification that will result with the arrival of a specialized WHO certification team.

WHO certification requires evidence that the chain of local malaria transmission has been fully interrupted in a country for the past three consecutive years. The significance of WHO malaria-free status in the Kyrgyz Republic is very important for both economic development and the growth of tourism in the country.

Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist of UNDP malaria grant Kubanychbek Almerokov, Chief Specialist of the Department of Public Health at the Ministry of Health Baktygul Ismailova,

and the Head of Disease Prevention at the Department of Disease Prevention and State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance Abdykadyr Zhorev held meetings to discuss what needed to be done in the southern and northern regions prior to official certification. All interested departments and institutions of the region were also invited to the meetings.

The main objective was to monitor the antimalarial activities and target use of UNDP supplied laboratory equipment, prepare for certification activities in the malaria elimination period, and provide advisory and methodological assistance in preparation of documentation (14 thematic folders) recommended by the WHO.

The documents requested by the WHO include budget and program staff for the malaria program, National Register of malaria cases, national policies and recommendations for treatment, scientific publications on malaria epidemiology and vectors, annual reports on the malaria surveillance, cross-border cooperation and intersectoral collaboration reports, public relations reports, and reports of the National Committee for the elimination of malaria. Following the WHO malaria free certification, UNDP will continue to implement preventive measures in Kyrgyzstan to avoid a resurgence of malaria.

### **First assessment mission of the WHO specialized certification team to Kyrgyzstan**

The WHO Director-General officially endorsed the Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Health's request to certify Kyrgyzstan as a malaria-free country back on January 6, 2014. The first assessment mission took place between May 19- 23, 2014.

The purpose of the assessment mission was to evaluate the existing program on the prevention of a resurgence of malaria, including field trips to the Nookan region—the location of last malaria outbreak, talking with patients recovering from malaria, analysing and providing technical advice on the preparation of the documentation required for certification, and developing a plan and timetable for the elimination certification—plus the development of a national program.

The WHO expert team was comprised of Consultants at WHO headquarters Dr Shuzhen Chu and Dr Rositsa Mincheva, and WHO Regional Office for Europe Representative Dr Elkhan Gasimov.



Meetings were held with heads of state administration to evaluate the services and treatment in prevention facilities.

Following the mission, the report and recommendations will be submitted to the Regional Director of WHO/EUROPE and from there forwarded to the Director-General of the WHO.

## Procurement information for May 2014:

### **HIV Component:**

1. A contract for the provision of services for the exchange of vouchers for medical products is signed: USD 8,545
2. Vouchers for medical products are purchased in the amount of 5,400 units: USD 340
3. A contract for the supply of medical devices for the NGO "Preventive medicine" is signed: USD 4,692
4. A contract for the installation and training program of 1C for 38 sub-recipients is signed: USD 20,817
5. A contract for the supply of PCR equipment and test systems is signed: USD 157,764
6. A contract for the supply of test systems for the viral load is signed: USD 34,642
7. A supply of fourth generation test systems is expected: USD 22,310
8. A contract for the supply of test systems for the determination of opportunistic infections is signed: USD 7,827
9. Contracts for the services of one (1) international and two (2) local concept note development experts are signed within the Global Fund's new funding model

### **Tuberculosis Component:**

1. Diagnosis is implemented and repair work is carried out to restore the effective operation of the fixed fluorography apparatus 12F-4, located in the pre-trial detention centre number 5 in Osh: USD 504
2. Contract is signed with a supranational laboratory (Gauting city) for technical assistance of the National Reference Laboratory NRL: USD 42,042

### **Malaria Component:**

1. A contract is signed for the repair and construction work in the PCR laboratory of the Department of Disease Prevention and SSES: USD 25,701
2. A contract is signed for the supply of anti-malarial drugs: USD 4,736

## Information on deliveries for May 2014:

### **HIV Grant:**

1. Medical devices and other accessories for NGOs: USD 42,745
2. Test system for the AIDS Centres and NGOs: USD 24,070
3. Medicines for the AIDS Centres: USD 835
4. Information and educational materials for NGOs: USD 922

### **Tuberculosis Grant:**

5. Medicines for TB facilities: USD 253,983
6. PAS are delivered to the TB centres: USD 155,296
7. Respirators: USD 92,827



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