



Community Mobilization against HIV in Uzbekistan



Participants During Proposal Training (Photo: CAPACITY/UZ Office)

Developing proposals for HIV/STI prevention in vulnerable populations at the Charvak workshop in Uzbekistan

“I’ve been to various types of trainings, but I never had an opportunity to get not only knowledge and skills, but to be able to design a project together with a budget within 4 days!”

– Sergey Kim, Charvak Workshop Participant

Limited access of the highly vulnerable populations, particularly injecting drug users (IDUs) and sex workers (SWs) to HIV prevention, treatment and support, is one of the main reasons for the rapidly spreading HIV epidemics in the countries of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan. The lack of access is related significantly to the small number of non-governmental organizations equipped with technical and managerial skills necessary to provide services to these populations.

To address the challenge of the limited NGO capacity, the Government of Uzbekistan is bringing together national, international, and community organizations in a joint effort to respond to HIV. In support to this effort, the USAID-funded CAPACITY Project developed a Community Mobilization Strategy (CMS) aimed at building and strengthening organizational and institutional capacity of community organizations, to reduce the barriers to service delivery and develop comprehensive HIV prevention proposals that address the needs of key vulnerable groups at the grassroots level.

The CAPACITY Project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan (MoH), the Republican AIDS Center (RAC), and the World Bank/DFID funded Central Asia AIDS Project (CAAP), had implemented the CMS strategy in seven sites in Uzbekistan; the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Navoi, Surkhandarya, Tashkent and Khorezm oblasts.

Under this strategy a series of highly participatory workshops were conducted to build individual and organizational skills to: 1) identify essential aspects of working with vulnerable populations, especially reduction of stigma and discrimination, in order to reduce barriers to service delivery; and 2) develop project proposals for mobilizing funds for their organizations for implementing HIV prevention programs.

More than 160 participants representing oblast AIDS Centers, Narcology, Dermatology and Venereology Centers, Sanitary and Epidemiology Departments, trust points, Internal Affairs Departments, mahalla funds, PLHIV networks, and mass media took part in the CMS workshops. As a result, 34 project proposals targeting various vulnerable groups, including combined proposals designed for each of the seven oblasts, were developed.

All 34 proposals were supported by Thematic Work Group members of the HIV Oblast Coordination Committees. The proposals have been submitted to various donors to be considered for approval and funding.