



Central Asian NGOs Prepared to Fight the HIV Epidemic



Participants of Regional Work-shop for Project Proposal Development (Photo: CAPACITY/KG Office)

Mobilizing and capacity building of community organizations for responding to HIV epidemics in Central Asia

“It’s everyone’s task to help those most vulnerable to HIV; only together can we make a change!”
-Training Participant

Dynamic actions have been taken by the Governments of Central Asia to respond to HIV spread, such as establishing national AIDS control programs, allocating significant resources for HIV prevention care and support, and mobilizing over US \$100 million from international organizations to respond to the the epidemics. In spite of this HIV epidemics is expanding rapidly among highly vulnerable populations, most notably injecting drug users (IDUs) and sex workers (SWs) across the Region. Today the highly vulnerable people have very poor access to HIV-prevention services, the percentage of the coverage with the services to them varying from 7% to 15% with the best case of up to 23%. To have the greatest impact in stemming the tide of the epidemic, UNAIDS and WHO recommend scaling up HIV-prevention activities to reach a minimum of 60% of vulnerable populations.

A situation analysis conducted by the USAID-funded CAPACITY Project in 2005 revealed that, regionally, one of the primary barriers to achieving appropriate levels of service coverage was insufficient experience and participation of NGOs and civil society in provision of prevention, care, and support to vulnerable populations.

To address this challenge the CAPACITY Project developed a Civil Society Mobilization Strategy, which outlines critical components of the community mobilization and requisite resources needed to provide a comprehensive package of prevention services that would reach at least 60% of those in need. Since February 2006, CAPACITY has implemented a broad range of activities in 26 provinces in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan yielding the following results:

- Motivated civil society organizations engaged in HIV prevention among hard-to-reach populations (247 NGOs compared with 69 NGOs prior to the intervention);
- Improved local multisectoral coordination via establishment of the oblast level technical working groups;
- High coverage included as a strategic target in all national and local HIV programs; and
- Consolidated and individual project proposals developed that are aimed at covering 27,500 injecting drug users and 5,500 sex workers with comprehensive packages of HIV prevention services with a total budget of US\$4.3 million. The proposals have been submitted to the Global Fund, World Bank, DFID, and other donors investing in HIV control in the region. Decisions regarding funding are expected soon.

The above achievements lay down a solid foundation for building national capacity of HIV prevention programs to reach high coverage. USAID and the CAPACITY Project are committed to provide support to civil society organizations responding to AIDS in order to strengthen their capacity and ensure accessibility of resources for scaling up HIV prevention programs.

