



The Essential Package Aims to Achieve a High Coverage of Vulnerable Populations with Prevention Interventions

Based on the international experience the CAPACITY Project developed an Essential Package of HIV prevention interventions for vulnerable populations to be implemented in Central Asian countries

In the Central Asian countries injecting drug users (IDUs) represent 75% of all people registered with HIV infections and at the moment they are the main driving force of HIV epidemics. Sex workers are the next largest contributor to the epidemics development, especially where sex work overlaps with the use of injectable drugs. In order to slow down HIV epidemics development the HIV prevention interventions should reach the majority of these vulnerable populations with comprehensive HIV prevention products and services. Unfortunately, access to the prevention services for IDUs and SWs is very limited and a concept of comprehensive interventions was neither developed nor applied, even in the areas highly affected by HIV throughout the region.

To achieve at least 60% coverage as recommended by WHO and UNAIDS, the CAPACITY Project developed a package of comprehensive prevention interventions targeting IDUs and SWs. The Package includes three components: reduction of stigma and discrimination, provision of the HIV/STI prevention and ensuring medical services related to the risk practices. The package is to be implemented through the Models designed by local service providers. These models offer effective mechanisms for coordinating stakeholders to provide prevention services to the target populations. The Models are aimed at ensuring a high coverage of the vulnerable populations with an essential package of prevention services and to show the viability and efficacy of prevention service implementation. As a result of the Models implementation, vulnerable populations at each site will increase their knowledge of HIV and STIs, be better informed about how to prevent transmission, and decrease risky practices and behavior.

In order to test the proposed comprehensive prevention interventions, the CAPACITY Project, along with national partners, identified seven "hot sites". These sites represent the localities with a high prevalence of illicit drug use and a high prevalence of HIV in the vulnerable populations, or both, where limited services were offered to the target populations in the past. The sites were identified jointly with the National AIDS services in four countries and CAPACITY assisted local governmental and nongovernmental organizations in adapting the Package to the local conditions.

In order to fund the implementation of the models, CAPACITY worked with local partners to design, develop and submit a single regional project proposal to the World Bank and DFID-supported Regional AIDS Fund of the Central Asian AIDS Program (CAAP). The proposal was considered as one of the best by the Technical Evaluation Committee and was approved for funding. The prevention models will begin implementation in spring 2007 and continue for 18 months. At the end of the models implementation, CAPACITY will evaluate their effectiveness. The results will be shared with national and international stakeholders for scaling up in order to achieve high coverage throughout Central Asia and to slow down HIV transmission.

