



Advocating for High Coverage of Vulnerable Populations by HIV Prevention in the Kyrgyzstan

CAPACITY successfully advocated for high coverage of vulnerable populations with the Essential Package of preventive services to be included into the Kyrgyz State Program

The Government of Kyrgyzstan (GOK) is significantly increasing its efforts to combat HIV epidemics, and international donor community has greatly increased their funding for HIV/AIDS. This has led to a growth in the number and scope of service delivery programs in the country. However, the number of new HIV infections, particularly among injecting drug users (IDUs) and sex workers (SWs), continues to grow. To address this problem, the GOK requested that international stakeholders, including the CAPACITY Project, share their HIV prevention approaches and best practices.

The CAPACITY Project began its work in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Working with national and international partners, the Project emphasized strengthening national AIDS Program leadership and increasing national coverage of vulnerable populations. The Project focused on comprehensive HIV prevention interventions that would result in reducing risk behavior and, ultimately, reductions in HIV transmission. From the beginning of its involvement, CAPACITY emphasized the UNAIDS recommendation that HIV prevention interventions must cover at least 60% of vulnerable populations to achieve significant impact in slowing the epidemic.

Initially the CAPACITY emphasis on the 60 Plus coverage was met with criticism from some stakeholders. Several arguments were made including: (1) such high coverage rates are unrealistic and cannot be achieved; (2) if targets not achieved the jobs of the service providers and funding may be at risk; and (3) it is not known if 60% coverage is really needed or if some lower levels would be sufficient. However, all national and international partners agreed that some level of coverage was needed, and that if it was not met, the impact on the epidemics would be insufficient.

CAPACITY staff embarked on a series of advocacy meetings and presentations to convince partners of the need to incorporate the high coverage rates into local and national programs. After considerable dialogue with partners, it was agreed that the 60 Plus approach was appropriate. This has led to incorporation of this approach as a priority in the Third State HIV/AIDS Program, which covers the period from 2006 to 2010.

