

# UNAIDS in action

06

## Tajikistan: Joint UN HIV Advocacy Programme

### Objective

The purpose of the Joint Advocacy Programme is to improve and support capacity for HIV prevention and care programmes in Tajikistan.



The first Billboard on HIV in Tajikistan in which a famous local radio DJ is encouraging young people to use condoms

### Overview of the situation

Tajikistan is still in the earliest stages of its AIDS epidemic. Nevertheless, there is cause for serious concern. Tajikistan's epidemic is being driven largely by the dramatic increase of intravenous drug users (IDU's). In Central Asia IDU's make up 70 % of new HIV infections with young people being most affected. Tajikistan's most vulnerable group is the mobile population and particularly labor migrants estimated at approximately 620,000 (IOM, 2003). Another concern is the low level of AIDS awareness among the population. Only 34.4% of young people aged between 15-24 and 43% of the general population are correctly informed about HIV transmission and how to protect themselves. The government has recognised the problem and is taking a number of positive steps in setting up prevention programmes among vulnerable groups of the population.

### Description

In 2005, within the framework of the support to the government of the Republic of Tajikistan, a joint UN HIV advocacy project was established aimed at raising HIV awareness in the general population with emphasis on youth. The strategic intention is to coordinate partner's priorities in order to address HIV issues in a systematic and comprehensive manner. The overall goal of the Joint UN Advocacy strategy in Tajikistan is to slow down the rapid increase of new HIV infections and eventually to eliminate the epidemic in Tajikistan. The guiding principle behind the Joint UN HIV advocacy programme is the respect and protection of human rights and the active involvement and

### Partners involved

- Governmental institutions
- Local and international non-governmental organizations
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
- United Nation Development Programme
- United Nations Populations Fund
- United Nations Children Fund
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Health Organization
- International Organisation for Migration

participation of people living with HIV and marginalized groups in the response to AIDS in Tajikistan.

### **Deliverables**

During 2005 within the framework of the Joint Advocacy project, the following activities have been implemented:

- Community mobilization in 40 regions.
- An estimated 13,000 people were reached during the campaigns.
- Close to 400 local leaders and 160 school children were trained.
- Around 45,000 information, education and communication materials were distributed. 19 Billboards on HIV prevention, ways of transmission and testing are displayed in key regions of the country.
- Three roundtables among people living with HIV were conducted in different regions in Tajikistan in 2005.
- Some 60 people living with HIV were trained on adherence to antiretroviral treatment.
- NGO core staff was trained in administration and financial management and information technology.
- Information, education and communication materials for people living with HIV were produced (in Tajik and Russian, 5000 in total).
- Provision of psychological and social support to people living with HIV by hiring 2 doctors who are trained on antiretroviral therapy.

### **Media response**

- Talk Show on national television. Ten radio spots on commercial

and national radio. Eight articles on various HIV issues published in the local newspaper "Asia Plus".

- Five special reports on HIV broadcast in Tajikistan and other countries. In central Asia.
- Two comedy contests among high school and university students.
- Production of a play "To Resha Dar Ob Ast" (While Roots are in Water) addressing the issues of stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV.

### **Next steps**

- Coordinate activity around HIV prevention programmes.
- Introduce an integrated programme on healthy living into the national school curriculum.
- Develop a national information, education and communication programme with emphasis on mass media.
- Expand community mobilization programmes to the country level.
- Promote the usage of condoms in Tajikistan.
- Scaling up towards Universal Access.

### **Contacts**

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