

PPROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD FIELD VISIT | 4-5 October 2012

UNAIDS PCB Field Visit to Ukraine

The Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) field visit to Ukraine proved to be an excellent opportunity to expose the PCB delegation to the particular challenges of one of UNAIDS high impact countries and the most severe epidemic in Europe.

The delegation was able to view the considerable progress made in the national response and to see UNAIDS leading an effective Joint Team in the context of the UNCT, with strong support from the RC. Positive elements included the national strategic framework to guide the response, the dramatic growth in domestic investment in recent years (tenfold increase between 2005 and 2010), strong civil society involvement (including as Principal Recipient), and significant reduction in mother-to-child transmission.

Despite this progress, however, many supportive policy decisions are not operationalised, reliance on external resources remains at 50%, ART costs are high and coverage is only 25% of estimated need and more limited among most at risk populations, and a highly medicalised response and lack of integration of services lead to high levels of stigma and discrimination and difficulty in scaling up prevention.

-
1. The following key issues were addressed during the visit:
 - The long term sustainability of the response which is of concern as external financing is only assured until 2016, especially as the epidemic has the potential to become generalized
 - The model of increased government ownership being envisaged and the extent to which it will embrace a continuing central role for civil society
 - The importance of the dialogue with the Global Fund, taking into account the new funding architecture and strategic investment approaches
 - The need to move towards integrated approaches where HIV, TB, harm reduction programmes and sexual and reproductive health services are integrated, and towards multi-sectoral approaches where HIV is treated as more than a health issue.
 - Exemplary collaboration with civil society
 - Special focus to be placed on key populations and access to treatment
 - HIV-related stigma and discrimination and punitive laws that block the HIV response, including the adoption earlier in the week by the Ukrainian Parliament of the first reading of a homophobic law that attracted much criticism from NGOs and international partners within and beyond the Ukraine.
 - Opportunities created by the ongoing reform of the health system
 2. The programme of the visit and the participants list are annexed

Report of the Programme Coordinating Board visit to Ukraine

Representatives from the UNAIDS PCB visited Ukraine from 4-5 October to learn about its National AIDS Programme and to experience first-hand the progress made and the challenges remaining in the country's AIDS response. This was the first visit of the UNAIDS governing body to the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.

The PCB delegation had lengthy meetings with the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Health and her most senior colleagues, discussions with representatives of the All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV and other civil society organisations, and site visits to opioid substitution, HIV prevention for IDUs, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and needle exchange programmes. The delegation also met with representatives of the major donors and with the full country team.

Meeting with Dr. Raisa Bogatyreva, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Health

Dr. Raisa Bogatyreva, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Health of Ukraine provided an overview of the national response to HIV, including some of the key achievements and challenges that remain.

Key issues discussed included:

- Political commitment and leadership in the HIV response, in particular with regards to the multisectoral approach and the close collaboration with civil society.
- New National Strategic Plan under development in collaboration with national and international partners.
- Collaboration with the Global Fund and other development partners in funding the response and the need to increase national investments;
- Ways to ensure government adequately finances HIV services in close collaboration with civil society and with a focus on key populations
- Setting up of one unique governmental structure to address the interconnected issues of HIV and TB
- Successful implementation of harm reduction policies across the country.
- Elimination of stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV and vulnerable populations, especially in the health sector, and promotion of an enabling legal environment for the response.
- ARV pricing and coverage.

The meeting was also an opportunity for each member of the PCB delegation to interact with representatives of the different government institutions involved in the HIV response in the country.



Dr. Raisa Bogatyreva, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Health
Dr. Tatyana Alexandrina, Head of the State AIDS Service
Dr. Yelena Yeshchenko, Deputy Head of the State AIDS Service

Meeting with representatives of All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV

The meeting provided an opportunity to engage with national and regional networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV), to gain a better understanding of their concerns and needs, in Ukraine and in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.

All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV / AIDS

The organization was established in Ukraine in 2000 to address the gaps in the national AIDS response, with the direct support of UNAIDS and other partners. The organization is in many ways a model of how such networks of PLHIV can organize themselves, both at the national and local levels. They have local groups of affiliated organizations throughout the country, engaged in a wide range of services. They focus on the rights of PLHIV, on the reduction of stigma and discrimination, and on increasing access to HIV treatment, medical and non-medical care and support. The network has been successful in advocating for the reduction of prices of ARVs. Representatives of the network are members of the national and subnational TB/HIV coordination councils and are therefore actively engaged in strategic planning and decisions making processes. The network also serves as Principal Recipient of the Global Fund and implements programmes focusing on HIV treatment, care and support, and advocacy work.

Eastern European and Central Asian Union of Organizations of PLWHA (ECUO)

ECUO is a regional union of organizations of PLHIV which implements advocacy programmes to ensure access to timely, comprehensive and high-quality treatment, care and support for adults and children living with HIV in Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The Ukrainian network serves as a secretariat for ECUO and plays an essential role in the promotion of PLHIV organizations in the region as equal partners in responding to the HIV epidemic.

Meeting with the UN Country Team and the Joint UN Team on AIDS

The meeting provided an opportunity for the PCB members to understand the UN role in supporting the national response to the HIV epidemic in Ukraine.

UNAIDS in Ukraine:

UNAIDS is present in Ukraine since 1996 and currently coordinates the efforts of the eight UNAIDS Cosponsor resident agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, WHO, WB) as well as the HIV-related work of the IOM, in support of Ukraine's national response to HIV.

Joint UN Team on AIDS

The Joint UN Team on AIDS in Ukraine is a strong and active team of dedicated professionals, who are primarily responsible for the management and implementation of the Joint UN Programme of Support (JPS), under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The Joint Team is the UN System's permanent operational and technical body on HIV and AIDS, and consists of at least one UN staff working full- or part-time on HIV and AIDS from each

UN agency. The aim of the Joint Team is to ensure cohesion and effectiveness of the UN contribution to an expanded national response to the HIV epidemic in Ukraine

The Joint UN Programme of Support on AIDS for 2012-2016 (JPS)

The JPS falls under the Government of Ukraine-United Nations Partnership Framework for 2012-2016. The JPS aligns with the Ukraine's Millennium Development Goals for 2015, the National AIDS Programme 2009-2013, the GFATM grant-supported programmes on AIDS and TB, the National Targets for Universal Access. It also articulates the UN system's practical support in the national implementation of the Three Ones Principles. It is finally in full alignment with the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly in June 2011, as well as with the new UNAIDS Strategy for 2011-2015 and its Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework for 2012-2015. In addition, the JPS is well harmonized with the other development partners' programmes focused on AIDS in Ukraine. The JPS is an expression of strategic choices made by the UN Country Team and the Joint UN Team on AIDS on how to best support the effective implementation of the National AIDS Programme and reaching the National Targets for Universal Access.

Key issues discussed during the meeting included:

- Efforts related to the UN coordination of the HIV response (one of the most effectively coordinated development areas in the country)
- Integration of the HIV response in the national health system
- Protection of drug users from becoming infected with HIV
- Access to comprehensive HIV services for people in prisons and other closed settings
- Preventing mothers from dying and babies from becoming infected with HIV
- Treatment for people living with HIV and prevention of dying from TB
- Stigma related legislation and the role of the judiciary services
- Involvement of civil society in the response
- Sustainability of funding for the national response



Mr Eugenio Arène, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of El Salvador in Geneva at the meeting with UN Country Team in Ukraine

Meeting with development partners

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss current challenges faced by development partners (USA, GIZ, European Union, ANTI/AIDS Foundation, and the Global Fund) in addressing the HIV response in Ukraine.

Issues discussed included:

- Greater financial commitment by the government.
- Harmonization of funding among national and international donors.
- Limited involvement of the private sector into the response
- Focus on key populations including through media and educational campaigns
- Support to NGOs
- Evidence of the impact of the GF funded programmes, including harm reduction services.
- Urgent need for a debate on how to ensure long lasting funding for treatment and other key services, especially after the upcoming GF withdrawal from the country.

The members of the delegation had the opportunity to visit several health facilities to see the work being done on the ground.

Visit to the the Kyiv City AIDS Centre and Kyiv City Hospital

This visit provided an opportunity to witness first-hand the provision of a full range of HIV and TB related services to people who inject drugs and to interact with them and the service providers (staff, medical professionals, psychologists, social workers and volunteers), to learn more about their daily practices, lives and challenges.

The site provides treatment and care services for people who inject drugs infected with HIV and TB, with the support of the Global Fund. The site is exemplary for its integration of community-level and state owned facility-based services, implemented by governmental and civil society partners.

The services are provided by personnel of two medical facilities – the Kyiv City Hospital #5 and Kyiv City AIDS Centre - and a community-based organization of former and active drug users - the International CF “Vertical”.

This site is one out of the three sites in Kyiv offering substitution methadone therapy (SMT), and is the facility where the first SMT pilot started in 2004.

The SMT programmes in Ukraine are currently providing opioid substitution to more than 7000 patients through 140 health care institution in all the 27 regions of Ukraine.

The integrated services provided include

- HIV treatment,
- substitution methadone therapy using methadone and buprenorphine,
- TB treatment and care using DOTS,
- forming adherence of clients to treatment,

- psychosocial support including counseling

The site also hosts and supports self-support groups.

Over 190 patients currently receive methadone (in tablets) and 61 patients are on buprenorphine (in tablets). 200 of them are HIV-positive of whom 100 receive ART. 20 have Hepatitis B and 192 have Hepatitis C, 40 have TB. 70% of the patients are men and 30% female.

Issues discussed during the visit included:

- Partnership between government and community-based organizations
- Efforts to scale up early HIV detection, including anonymous versus confidential testing
- Treatment adherence services for people who inject drugs
- Solid evidence for the effectiveness of harm reduction and SMT services
- Sustainability of services provided by the centre and the hospital
- Low scale of ART in the country (25% as of the end of 2011)

Visit to the Clinic for People Living with HIV at Kiev-Pechersk Lavra

This visit provided an opportunity to see the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra clinic which provides high quality services for HIV diagnosis, treatment and care to people living with HIV.

The Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Clinic is playing a crucial role in providing lifesaving care and treatment to PLHIV in Ukraine, and serves as a reference and state-of-the art clinical centre, even outside of Ukraine. It was the first medical facility in Ukraine and one of the first clinics in Eastern Europe to provide care to HIV-infected patients and since 2000, antiretroviral treatment. It plays also an important role as a methodological and resource centre for training of health care professionals specializing in HIV and opportunistic infections not only in Ukraine but also other countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The clinic is currently functioning as the only tertiary level specialized medical facility for HIV-positive adult patients from all regions of Ukraine both in its outpatient and inpatient wards. It provides clinical care to patients with HIV and AIDS, co-infection of HIV/TB, HIV/Viral Hepatitis B and/or C, treatment of HIV and opportunistic infections. It provides medical care to more than 3 500 HIV-infected patients and antiretroviral treatment to over 1 600 of them from different regions of Ukraine. Since 2008, the Clinic has been running an intensive care and hospice care unit. The clinic closely collaborates with the All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV, other CBOs, NGOs and community members, academia, WHO and other international organizations.

The clinic is funded both by the state budget and through the Global Fund. The clinic is also supported by the private sector (Elena Pinchuk ANTI-AIDS Foundation). It has been reopened after the renovation by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

During the visit the delegation had an opportunity to discuss the following issues:

- Cross-country structure of medical support to people living with HIV
- Success of the stability of treatment

- Crucial role of the partnership between the government and civil society organizations
- Challenge presented by the upcoming end of external funding
- Special needs of the key populations groups
- Efficiency of the Voluntary Counselling Testing
- Structural challenges related to the TB detection
- Data collection



UNAIDS PCB delegation visiting a drop-in centre for people who use drugs and other key populations being implemented by the NGO Convictus in Kiev. 5 October 2012.
Credit: UNAIDS

Visit to the Kiev City Centre of Reproductive Health and Perinatology

This visit provided an opportunity to see the Kiev City Centre of Reproductive Health and Perinatology which provides prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and substitution methadone therapy services to pregnant women.

The President of Ukraine is signatory of the *Global Plan to Eliminate New HIV Infections in Children and Keep Their Mothers Alive by 2015*. The PMTCT national targets are to reduce the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to 2%, and to ensure early detection of HIV-infection in 100% of infants born to HIV-positive mothers by 2015.

PMTCT in Ukraine is integrated into the routine maternal and child health services provided by the state, in collaboration with the network of public AIDS centres in all the regions and large cities in Ukraine. Perinatal, neonatal, and pediatric care, and HIV testing, PMTCT services, including prophylactic ART, are funded from the state budget. Currently 98% of pregnant women in Ukraine are tested for HIV. More than 95% of HIV positive pregnant women in Ukraine received ARV MTCT prophylaxis in 2011. As a result of Ukraine's intensified efforts since early 2000s, the MTCT rate dropped from 27.8% in 2001 to 4.7% in 2009.

However, in 2011, injecting drug use was identified as risk factor in over 19% of reproductive-aged women, and 4% of HIV-positive pregnant women were active drug users. Only 7% of HIV-positive pregnant women who used drugs received SMT and most opioid dependent pregnant women continued using drugs during pregnancy. Pregnant women who inject drugs are in a particularly vulnerable situation: HIV-infection is usually more

advanced, they have less access to services, they have more adverse pregnancy outcomes (preterm delivery 16% vs. 7%), and a higher MTCT rate. They are also 3.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV in labor than other women. Relatively few HIV-positive pregnant women who inject drugs receive ARV prophylaxis (65% compared with 95% overall).

Issues discussed during the visit:

- Last stretch for MTCT elimination in Ukraine –focusing on high risk women
- PMTCT services for drug dependent mothers
- Abstinence syndrome treatment in infants
- Male partners involvement in PMTCT programmes
- Decentralization of PMTCT services
- Perspectives of introduction PMTCT B+ option in Ukraine with a focus on providing lifelong access to ART to HIV-positive women after they give birth

Visit to a Community Centre and Mobile clinic implementing needle-syringe programme for people who inject drugs

The visit provided an opportunity to meet with patients of needle-syringe exchange programme, service providers, and other staff.

Through the Community Centre, the All Ukrainian NGO “Convictus Ukraine” provides comprehensive HIV prevention and care services to people who inject drugs, with the support of the Global Fund. It also provides a safe place to access information and discuss issues related to the social and housing support, referral services to drug treatment and rehabilitation programmes, care and support to HIV-positive drug users, and SMT services.

Issues discussed during the visit included:

- Scope of harm reduction programmes.
- Sustaining civil society organizations and PLHIV networks.
- Gender sensitive programmes and human right based programmes.
- Linkages between HIV prevention and care services.
- Scaling up of early HIV detection, early onset of treatment and care, and treatment adherence services especially for people who inject drugs.

Meeting with representatives of the civil society

This informal meeting provided an opportunity to interact with civil society organizations working both at the national and local levels, to gain understanding of their concerns in Ukraine, and discuss opportunities for supporting them in addressing the gaps in the national responses to HIV in Ukraine and the region. Civil society organizations included CBOs, HIV-service providing NGOs, FBOs, women’s organizations, networks of PLHIV, people using drugs, sex workers, LGBTV and other communities, human rights advocates and activists.

Throughout the visit, the delegation highlighted the key role played by civil society organizations in advocating for, and providing HIV services for key populations, care and support to people living with HIV, and in reducing stigma and discrimination towards affected communities.



PCB delegates with the UN Country Team and Joint Team on AIDS in Ukraine at the UN House in Kiev. 5 October 2012.
Credit: UNAIDS

Annex 1 - Programme of Visit (4-5 October 2012)

Day 1 - October 4 2012

Time	Institution Venue	Participants
8.00-8.45	UN House 1 Klovsky Uzviz	Welcome by UNAIDS Country Office Ukraine team
9.00-10.00	UN House 1 Klovsky Uzviz	Meeting with UN Country Team, acting RC and the Joint UN Team on AIDS
10.30-11.30	Ministry of Health 7, Grushevskogo str	Meeting with Dr. Raisa Bogatyreva, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Health (and Dr. Tatiana Alexandrina, Head of the State AIDS Service, Dr. Natalia Nizova, Director of the Ukrainian AIDS Centre)
12.00-13.30	Kyiv Hotel Restaurant 26/1 Hrushevskogo str., Cristal Hall	Meeting with Dr. Raisa Bogatyreva, Vice-Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance, Minister of Economy, Minister of Education, State Penitentiary Service, Minister of Social Policy (Labour), Head of the State AIDS Service, Director of the Ukrainian AIDS Centre
16.00-17.00	Office of the All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV 86A Mezhygirska str.	Meeting with representatives of All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV
19.00	Predslava Hall President Hotel, 12 Hospitalna str.	Partnership Cocktail Reception

Day 2 – October 5 2012

08.30-10.15	Kyiv City AIDS Centre, 11 Vidpochynku str.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opioid Substitution Therapy site • HIV prevention programme for people who use drugs
11.00-12.30	Lavra Clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clinical care to patients with HIV and AIDS, co-infection of HIV/TB, HIV/Viral Hepatitis B and / or C, treatment of HIV and opportunistic infections
09.00-10.00	Kyiv City Maternity Hospital #4, 16 Heroiv Stalingrada str., 1 build.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMTCT plus opioid substitution for drug using pregnant women (UNICEF project site)
11.00-12.30	Community centre/mobile clinic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needle exchange programme
13.00-15.00	Restaurant Dnieper Hotel Dnipro, ½ Khreshchatyk str	Meeting with Civil Society (CBOs, HIV-service NGO, FBOs, Women org., Networks, human rights advocates/activists)
15.30-16.30	UNAIDS Office 36, Saksaganskogo Str	Meeting with Donor Organizations
16.30-17.30	UNAIDS Office 36, Saksaganskogo Str.	Meeting with UNAIDS Country team

Annex 2 - List of Participants

The delegation comprised:

PCB Bureau

Poland

Mr Igor Radziewicz-Winnicki
Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Health, Warsaw
PCB Chair

India

Ms Aradhana Johri
Additional Secretary, National AIDS Control Organization, New Delhi
PCB Vice-Chair

USA

Mr Charles Vitek
Country Director Ukraine/Russian Federation, Division of Global HIV/AIDS, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
PCB Rapporteur

Member States

Africa

Togo

Ms Mounto Agba
Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Togo, Geneva

Asia

Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr Javad Aghazadeh
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Geneva

Eastern Europe

Poland

Ms Anna Marzec-Bogusławska
Executive Director, National AIDS Centre, Warsaw

Latin America and Caribbean

El Salvador

Mr Eugenio Arène
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of El Salvador, Geneva

Western Europe and Other States

United Kingdom

Ms Anna Seymour

Health and AIDS Adviser, United Nations and Commonwealth Department, Department for International Development (DFID), London

PCB NGO delegation

Europe NGO Delegates

Mr Matthew Southwell

International Network of People who use Drug (INPUD), UK

Ms Laura Kirkegaard

AIDS- FONDET/ International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Denmark

Cosponsors

WHO

Ms Kerry A. Kutch

Partnership Adviser, HIV/AIDS Department

UNFPA

Ms Elizabeth Benomar

Senior Technical Adviser, Acting Global Coordinator

UNDOC

Ms Zhannat Kosmukhamedova

Expert, HIV/AIDS Section, Gender and HIV

UNAIDS Secretariat

Ms Jan Beagle

Deputy Executive Director

Mr Jacek Tyszko

Chief a.i., Governance and Multilateral Affairs