

FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT

July 2004 – March 2005

Participation at Seminar in Budapest/meetings with mentors

During the reporting period I participated at two seminars at the Center for Policy Studies. They were useful for shaping my research paper and policy paper. The satellite meeting with my International mentor Matt Curtis was particularly useful in terms of locating new sources of literature and materials to be used for the development of my policy paper.

I also had regular meetings with my local mentors Tatul Hakobyan and Aramayis Kochryan.

Research-related activities

a) Identification and collection of additional information sources

During the reporting period I continued my desk research. Additional electronic and printed resources which could provide background information and the data for desk research were identified and explored (see the full bibliography in the research paper at my website www.policy.hu/markosyan).

b) Meetings/communication with key informants

During the period July 2004 – March 2005 my main activities were focused on the field research, e.g. exploration of the real state of affairs with drugs, drug users and their HIV risk in Armenia. For that purpose I carried out about 40 key informant interviews using the preliminary developed field guides.

The organizations and individuals contacted/interviewed during the reporting period included:

- Southern Caucasus Anti Drug Programme, focal point in Armenia;
- "Drug abuse monitoring system (DAMOS)" project in Armenia;
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia;
- The Principal Recipient (World Vision –Armenia) Implementing Unit of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;
- Psychonarcology Center of the Republic of Armenia;
- Armenian National AIDS Center;
- NGOs which are currently implementing needle exchange pilot projects, including AIDS Prevention, Education and Care NGO; Antidrugs Civil Union NGO; and Armenian Red Cross Society;
- The coordinator of the Network of NGOs working with IDUs
- Ms. Anahit Papikyan, the Coordinator of health programs at OSI – Assistance Foundation-Armenia;
- The expert of the OSI who came to monitor the pilot needle exchange projects funded by OSI

Participation at conferences/seminars

- Between October 17-19 attended the joint FSU/ Baltic-U.S. Scientific Workshop on Cooperation in HIV/AIDS and Related Infections organized by the U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) in Yerevan, Armenia. At the workshop I presented the results of my previous project which was a pilot HIV-risk reduction behavioral intervention for commercial sex workers, as well as a proposal for a future collaborative project with the Emory

University to be funded by CRDF. Since the majority of workshop participants were people working in the area of HIV and drugs in Armenia and in the USA, I used the workshop as an opportunity to collect some data for my current project through networking.

- Between April 14-16 attended the International Conference on Health and Human Rights at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA where I presented the data on my current project. I also had an opportunity to clarify some human-rights related issues with high-level professionals from around the world.
- On April 18 attended the seminar of AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP) of the Emory University where I made a presentation concerning my current project

Publication/presentation of data

Three abstracts with the results of the project have been submitted and accepted by the following conferences:

Challenges to Effective Responses to Drug Use and HIV in Armenia 16th International

Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm. Belfast, Northern Ireland. March 20-24, 2005 (poster presentation)

Overcriminalization of Drugs May Result in a Generalized HIV Epidemic in Armenia 16th

International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm. Belfast, Northern Ireland. March 20-24, 2005 (poster presentation)

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm, however, my both abstracts have been published in the books of abstracts

Human Rights of Injection Drug Users and HIV Epidemic in the Former USSR.

International Conference on Health and Human Rights. Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA (panel presentation).

I attended the conference and presented there. At the conference I had an opportunity to submit a draft paper based on my presentation to the special issue of the journal: "Health and Human Rights: An International Journal".

The policy paper is currently being translated into Armenian language in order to publish it and disseminate to the key policy makers.

A paper is going to be published in the local print media.

Conclusions

Overall, the research proceeded in a satisfactory way. However, several limitations have been encountered with respect to collection of primary data. Key informant interviews with representatives of the police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have not been conducted due to unwillingness of the latter to provide any information. The interviews with drug users were also not collected due to the failure to reach out to the latter. However, the attempt was made to collect missing information from other sources. The difficulties of data collection resulted in a delay in finalizing the policy paper.