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LEADER FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ACTIVITY FACT SHEET

The Leader for People Living with HIV activity works to strengthen the capacity of civil society in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan to more effectively address stigma and discrimination, advocate for equitable access to comprehensive prevention, treatment, and care, and address human rights issues affecting people living with HIV (PLHIV).

MAJOR FOCUS AREAS

- Strengthen the organizational and leadership capacity of civil society. Build competencies of civil society organizations to reduce stigma and discrimination to improve PLHIV access to quality services.
- Strengthen the ability of civil society organizations to reduce legal and policy barriers for access to services for PLHIV.
- Enable PLHIV organizations to advocate for quality systems that will deliver equitable services for PLHIV.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Leader activity, initiated in 2014, has greatly contributed to efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV in Central Asia. Several key achievements include:

- Through Leader, President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and USAID supported the introduction of the **PLHIV Stigma Index** survey to Central Asia, first conducted in 2015 and then again in 2020. Over 4,000 PLHIV were surveyed; where the key finding was that PLHIV experience a high level of stigma and discrimination in Central Asia and this continues to be a significant barrier to achieving universal access to HIV treatment and care.
- As a result of the stigma index, the Leader activity actively cooperated with state and international organizations to develop a unified strategy to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination at the individual and policy levels. The National Plans to Combat Stigma and Discrimination against PLHIV were jointly developed with the AIDS Centers and successfully implemented in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan with a major focus on reducing stigma and discrimination in health care facilities.
- The Leader activity conducted stigma and discrimination training with healthcare providers to provide more welcoming services to PLHIV and key populations (such as female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs). A total of 1,318 health care professionals participated in stigma and discrimination training. Training modules were also introduced into the curriculums of 5 of the region's leading medical institutions.
- The Leader activity played a coordinating role for the PLHIV community, conducting three Regional Summits of PLHIV that focused on advocacy for reducing stigma and discrimination, and access to treatment and care services for PLHIV. The summits became a technical platform for discussing joint actions, prioritizing inter-regional cooperation with PLHIV networks, and promoting the exchange of experiences on preventing and reducing stigma and discrimination.
- Finally, the Leader activity developed a web-based tool for PLHIV to report on their access and quality of services. In Tajikistan, a mobile application "*Salomat bodesh*" was developed to inform about targeted assistance to HIV patients, as well as legal support, protection of rights, HIV prevention and treatment.

PROJECT DURATION: April 2014 – December 2020

REGIONAL BUDGET: \$2,210,870

CONTACT: Arman Dairov, USAID/Central Asia, Email: adairov@usaid.gov