

### Technical support

In 2004, GTZ and WHO's European Regional Office supported the establishment of the Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network (CEEHRN Knowledge Hub) to address this critical gap. Based in Vilnius, Lithuania, it focuses expertise on developing the capacity of CSOs in this region. Three activities are key to this: developing tools for state-of-the-art training, providing training, and developing a pool of regional and national trainers.

The Hub has developed and presented training modules and manuals. Training and services are largely demand-driven and adapted with attention given to lessons learnt and case studies from countries in the region. The training aims, for example, to build knowledge about harm reduction among police and prison officers and to raise awareness about treatment among mothers of drug users. As well, the Hub has developed an extensive database of trainers and other technical support providers, and offers its expertise in helping governments to revise laws and policies governing harm-reduction. Details about more than 120 national and regional experts are included in this database, along with a list of training centres and host organizations.



### Results

The demand for training has been strong. In a 12-month period, the Hub held no fewer than 24 training sessions for 404 participants, mostly from countries that had received Global Fund grants. Trainees have joined national commissions addressing drug issues, and report that they play more active roles in their CCMs. The work of the Hub has also strengthened advocacy and partnerships in the region: for example, for opioid substitution therapy in Ukraine and other countries where the introduction of this service is being supported by the Global Fund. In the last two years, access to services for injecting drug users has begun to increase in Albania, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia and Ukraine.

## Latin America and the Caribbean: empowering vulnerable groups

### Context

In Latin America and the Caribbean, HIV prevention programmes often do not target groups that are most at risk. For example, levels of HIV infection between 2% and 28% are being found among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Latin American countries, but few governments have engaged this community to shape responses to HIV and lower infection rates, even though unprotected sexual intercourse remains the main mode of transmission.

### Technical support

Addressing such weaknesses is the priority of a programme established by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance and the Asociación para la Salud Integral y Ciudadanía en el Caribe y América Latina (ASICAL), which is funded by the BACKUP Initiative. Launched in December 2004, the programme aims to strengthen the participation of gay people and MSM in Global Fund processes through capacity building in organizational development, focused interventions and advocacy.



With support from experts based in the region, training on project development and capacity building to implement interventions has been done at three regional centres – for Central America and the Caribbean, the Andean zone and the southern cone of South America. As a result, several CSOs have learned to develop strategic plans and to monitor and evaluate their activities.

Advocacy training has also helped to provide skills for awareness-raising with decision-makers and the media about the specific needs of gay, MSM and transgendered populations.

## Results

As of November 2006, the two-year programme had trained 63 representatives of 52 organizations of MSM in the three regions. It has fostered a plethora of new partnerships (for example, with the ICTC in Brazil, see Section 6) and is improving the participation of MSM groups in the coordination of Global Fund grants. HMNP, a gay organization in Paraguay that participated in the training, went on to contribute to the development of the HIV proposal submitted to Round 6 of the Global Fund in July 2006. This proposal was successful and HMNP is expected to be receiving funds soon. In Ecuador, meanwhile, there is now a seat on the CCM reserved for a representative of gay people, and this current representative has recently been elected vice-president of the national body – a major step towards strengthening the participation of MSM in Global Fund activities in the region. The project has also fostered the creation of two sub-regional networks of MSM: the Andean Alliance to Promote the Citizenship Rights of Gay and Other MSM (ALANPROC), and the Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean's Coalition of Gay and Other MSM groups (CONGA). These networks further disseminate the lessons learnt and enable CSOs to share experiences and advocate for their constituents through exchange visits.



## Guinea: timely support renews key civil society organization

### Context

Despite a fast growing HIV epidemic, Guinea had until recently limited managerial capacity and resources to fight the disease. Civil society is weak, with few nongovernmental organizations and low professionalism within most existing ones; furthermore, it is still difficult to work openly on some issues considered taboo in the Guinean context – being HIV-seropositive, for example.

### Technical support

Known as “Breaking the Silence”, a project supported by the BACKUP Initiative began in September 2003 and ran for 18 months. The purpose was to strengthen the Association Guinéenne de Personnes vivant avec le VIH (AGUIP+) so that it could become a key actor in the fight against HIV.

Instead of hiring external consultants, AGUIP+ benefited from direct funding by BACKUP to cover the cost of antiretroviral therapy for the core membership of the organization, many of whom would have otherwise died or been unable to do their work. Core members were hence able to actively support the organization and to build their capacity through participation in training sessions for HIV advocacy, information and counselling and through participation in HIV conferences in France, Gambia and Mali. They also increased the membership from 8 to more than 100 and imparted their knowledge to the new members.

### Results

According to an independent evaluation by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), BACKUP's support paid major dividends for AGUIP+ and civil society in Guinea. Its timely, flexible funding enabled them to work for the development of their association. AGUIP+ could then tap its own human resources to provide assistance to new members and other organizations. This included, for example:

- > Advocacy, information and communication in Conakry and the regions;
- > New links with health facilities and other supportive networks;
- > Home visits and psychosocial support for people living with HIV and families; and
- > Development of income-generating activities.

As a result, AGUIP+ is now known as the first effective actor in the response to HIV in Guinea, with representation in national forums including the CCM. It is also becoming more independent and, by setting an example for organizations throughout the country, helping to undermine the stigmatization of people living with HIV. Partnerships with agencies such as UNAIDS, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), USAID and FHI (Family Health International) were forged, and – drawing on the experience of AGUIP+ – Médecins sans Frontières has started to support a centre for voluntary testing and treatment of people living with HIV.

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