

QUARTERLY TECHNICAL REPORT



**Second Quarter Report – Fifth Year
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by

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and partners:

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I. Environmental Impact

Like all USAID-funded projects, CAPACITY is concerned with any environmental impact it may be having in Central Asia. Nearly all of CAPACITY's activities are trainings and other capacity building and partnership building activities. Through these activities, there is no environmental impact. However, CAPACITY received donated condoms from USAID in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. CAPACITY has in turn donated these condoms to local AIDS service organizations, which are each distributing them to HIV vulnerable populations. The goal is to reduce unprotected acts of risky sex by increasing condom use.

While achieving this goal will reduce the individual and population risk of HIV transmission, there is a potential that it could increase environmental risk, if the condoms are not disposed of properly. Therefore, CAPACITY is working with recipient local AIDS service organizations to ensure that they include in their educational messages about condom use, the proper disposal of used condoms. In doing so, CAPACITY and its ASO partners are minimizing the environmental risk of this condom use promotion activity among populations most at-risk to HIV.

II. Programmatic Progress

A. Regional

A.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Support for Regional HIV/AIDS Strategy

CAPACITY participated in the regional round table to discuss development and implementation of the Regional HIV/AIDS strategy. The draft strategy was prepared by CAAP and CAPACITY has submitted comments and took active participation in the follow-up discussions.

A.2. Strategy 2: Educating and Empowering Vulnerable Populations

Support to TUMAR HIV prevention models

CAPACITY has helped to organize and facilitate a Regional meeting of the TUMAR implementing partners. Objectives of the meeting were to discuss project to date results and plans for the following 6 months. CAPACITY stressed the importance of effective outreach work and referrals to STI screening and treatment services as well as VCT.

Support for the development of a Central Asia Regional PLHIV Network

Following the request of the Kazakh Union of PLHIV, CAPACITY has developed a ToR and started recruitment process for the consultant to assess capacity of organizations working with PLHIV in the region. This assessment will help to plan activities of the Regional PLHIV Network that is currently being developed. CAPACITY participated and helped to facilitate two regional meetings of organizations that are going to become members of the Regional PLHIV Network. All of those organizations will be actively involved in the upcoming assessment and will devote their time to participate in the national trainings and following interviews with key informants across the region. The assessment is planned for April –May and the final report with recommendation should be ready by the end of June.

Technical Assistance to Small Scale HIV Prevention Pilots

During this quarter, CAPACITY has continued to provide technical assistance to all 7 TUMAR HIV prevention sites. 8,756 clients were contacted the program for the first time, 4,911 people were covered by the program making 55% of all target groups to be covered. Among all covered, 2,980 visited DICs, 7,928 were contacted through outreach workers, 8,146 received condoms; 5,414 clients have received brochures; 6,240 participated in mini-sessions conducted by outreach workers; 1,998 were referred to HIV testing, 2,084 to STIs treatment, 763 to detoxication, and 647 to PMTCT services. Also to date, a total of 654,708 condoms and 75,657 IEC materials were distributed to vulnerable groups.

During this time, overall, 862,634 condoms and 93,092 IEC materials were distributed to vulnerable groups.

Development of Outreach Guidelines

Six types of guidelines have been developed with CAPACITY's technical assistance for outreach workers working at TUMAR sites. The guidelines are printed and being distributed among all 150 outreach workers. These outreach guidelines are the first of their kind in Central Asia, written in accessible language for outreach workers to use in their daily work with vulnerable populations. They are available for other projects to use for their outreach workers.

A.3. Strategy 3: Improve the Quality of HIV/AIDS Services

Support for the Regional Training Center for HIV Treatment, Care, and Support

CAPACITY participated in the regional round table to discuss development of the Regional Training Center for HIV treatment, care and support. This Center was initiated by the CAAP project and will be located in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It is planned that AIHA will provide technical assistance and develop training materials for the center, but input of other partners is very much welcomed. CAPACITY has briefed the participants about its work in TB/HIV, specifically the developed training curriculums for the post-graduate and graduate medical schools, as well as curriculums on HIV, stigma and discrimination for general practitioners in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

B. Kazakhstan

B.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Secondment Staff

This quarter, the seconded Communications Specialist participated in internal RAC Conferences where RAC specialists exchange information. The participants exchanged information about news and events of different departments of RAC. The Communications Specialist also had a meeting with CAAP to discuss the CARISA database, specifically how to improve information gathering, the quality of technical data and the future promotion of CARISA.

B.3. Strategy 3: Improve the Quality of HIV/AIDS Services

TB/HIV pilot project

This quarter CAPACITY had several meetings with the Almaty City TB Dispensary and AIDS Center Head Doctors and with the monitoring team to discuss intermediate results of the pilot project implementation. On January there was a meeting of TB\HIV TWG where these results were presented. The results show the improvement of interaction between the two services, increasing TB diagnosis at an earlier stage among HIV patients, increasing of patients receiving IPT and cotrimoxazole prophylaxis. CAPACITY also had two meetings with facilities managers to discuss the provision of IPT for PLHIV; review/ approval of the developed TB/HIV IEC materials; and to organize the final meeting on the results of TB/HIV Pilot model implementation.

TB/HIV M&E results show good performance and improvement

- Number of PLHIV screened for TB increased and is more than 470;
- Number of PLHIV prescribed and receiving IPT also increased and is 270;
- Number of patients registered with dual infection is 39.

Both services gave a positive feedback regarding strengthening of collaboration between services.

The TB/HIV pilot project with technical support from CAPACITY is coming to the end. Starting from the next quarter, TB and AIDS services will collect and enter the data by themselves. TB and AIDS services M&E teams requested to simplify Excel database. CAPACITY agreed and it was done, eliminating unnecessary indicators from TB and AIDS services quarterly M&E form.

In February, KZ TB/HIV pilot project end-line assessment was conducted. PLHIV were given a questionnaire aiming at PLHIV TB screening and prophylaxis procedures assessment. 14 PLHIV were questioned. The results of end line assessment showed successful results of strengthening collaboration between two services and increasing PLHIV access for services. CAPACITY provided technical assistance in this process including entering end-line assessment results to Excel database. The results will be presented early next quarter in the final meeting of the pilot project and in the final pilot report documents. All documents with results and methods will be made available and shared with all partners.

IEC Materials

In order to increase awareness on TB/HIV, CAPACITY developed IEC materials for patients and specialists from TB/HIV pilot facilities. CAPACITY provided AIDS and TB Center with the scope of TB/HIV IEC materials to get their specialists comments and approval. The cost of the IEC materials will be shared with Project Hope.

VCT Activities

At the beginning of this quarter, CAPACITY provided Chief Doctor of the Almaty AIDS Center with the report on VCT service analysis (results of VCT situation assessment in Almaty, September, 2008). Dr Suleimenova agreed with all conclusions and recommendations of the report.

- Providing informational campaign;
- Training of specialists;
- Development and printing of informational materials;
- Creation of M&E system.

She mentioned that VCT model, suggested in this report is quite helpful and very useful for the AIDS center. Together with the Almaty AIDS Center, CAPACITY agreed to conduct two VCT trainings: one TOT (5 days) and a second for specialists (3days). The cost of the trainings will be shared among CAPACITY, Almaty AIDS Center, and AFEW.

Quantitative Assessment of Antiretroviral Therapy Uptake and Adherence

This quarter the CAPACITY Project in cooperation with the Almaty and Temirtau AIDS Centers conducted a quantitative assessment of ARV therapy uptake and adherence. The aim of the study was to quantify the rates of ARV uptake and adherence to ART, clinic appointments and ARV medicines dispensing in two AIDS centers through the review of ARV patients' clinical records. This research was the second stage and continuation of a qualitative study earlier conducted in Temirtau. During the study all patients who are under AIDS Centers' observation were divided into two subgroups: those who are on ARV therapy and those who are not on ARV treatment but are under observation. Of the patients on treatment, information on viral load, CD-4 cells counts, attendance at clinic appointments, ARV drugs prescription and dispensing, IPT, and drug dispensing logs were examined. Of those who are under observation and not on treatment, date of registration, date of becoming under observation at the AIDS Center, attendance at clinic appointments, and CD-4 cell counts were examined. It is expected that this study will quantify the current situation with regards to overall ART uptake and adherence to treatment and clinic appointments. It is also expected that more will be learned with regards to barriers to adherence. Knowledge obtained from this study, together with experiences from other countries, will provide the ability to recommend specific changes within the health system to improve uptake and adherence to ARVT and HIV/AIDS services.

B.4. Strategy 4: Improve Resource-Use to Integrate HIV/AIDS Services

Integration of ARVT in Polyclinics in Temirtau

The ARVT integration pilot in Temirtau continued this quarter on the basis of a Prikaz issued at the Oblast Health Department level. CAPACITY continues to negotiate with the MoH for

a Prikaz at the national level, but to date, this has not been signed. A national prikaz will be necessary for scaling up the work of the pilot project nationally.

This quarter CAPACITY made a monitoring visit to Temirtau. Meetings were held with the Head Doctor of Karaganda Oblast AIDS Center, Deputy Head of Karaganda Oblast Health Department, Head of Temirtau AIDS Center, Head Doctor of Temirtau #2 City polyclinic and the NGO "Shapagat." At the various meetings, these were the main issue raised was about ARV procurement and availability. At the moment, the AIDS Center is running low on nevirapine and efavirenz.

Results as of the monitoring visit:

- 146 adults + 8 children are on ARV treatment in Temirtau.
- 278 HIV-infected patients are under observation at polyclinic #2, including 56 patients on ARVT.
- Patient load at polyclinic #2 requires an increase in the number of trained infectionists working with HIV-infected patients from the current one, to two.
- Discussions are already taking place at the oblast health department about scaling up the pilot to other districts in the oblast. Thus, it will be necessary to begin preparation for the second phase of the pilot by beginning preparation of doctors and nurses on ARVT and adherence issues at other polyclinics.
- There is a need to understand work load norms for polyclinic infectionist and psychologist for providing care to PLHIV. Thus, a provider timekeeping study will be conducted during the next quarter.
- Though not part of the integration pilot, the substitution therapy pilot was started in Temirtau at about the same time. The substitution pilot includes 25 patients including 18 PLHIV IDUs, 7 of whom are on ARV treatment. The main obstacle of the substitution therapy pilot is the refusal of some IDUs to be registered with narcology, a requirement before receiving methadone maintenance therapy.

The monitoring team met with the Head doctor of the polyclinic and the integration pilot project implementing staff and discussed the project implementation. The main issues were provision of ARVs to the polyclinic, development of the package of documents on integration, the storage of ARV medicines in the polyclinic, the database of patients receiving ARV treatment, the possibility of involvement of district specialists in the pilot, and the key monitoring indicators. The team also met with NGO "Shapagat" and noted that it closely cooperates with Temirtau AIDS Center and polyclinic #2 to provide social support, through 5 volunteers, to patients that are receiving ARVT to promote adherence, as well as those who are preparing to start treatment.

C. Kyrgyzstan

C.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Support to the CMCC Secretariat

During the reporting period, the CAPACITY country team continued providing technical support to the CMCC Secretariat through its seconded specialists as well as the country project team. In particular, CAPACITY assisted in the organization of and took part in the selection process of new staff for the Secretariat. As a result, a new head of the Secretariat has been selected and started her work with the Secretariat in January 2009.

CARISA

The CAPACITY country team has been closely working with CAAP and RAC to ensure the sustainability of the regional web portal CARISA at the country level. As a result of tri-partite negotiations, it was agreed to transfer the administration of CARISA to the newly established M&E department at RAC. In order to ensure a smooth transfer, the CAPACITY Communication Specialist and CAAP's respective specialist have been providing training to RAC specialists on how to administer and enter the data into CARISA. At the same time, in March 2009, the CMCC Secretariat conducted a partners meeting with participation of a wide range of governmental, non-governmental and international organizations where among other issues CARISA was presented and partners were invited to contribute and use this communication and monitoring instrument in their daily work. Following to the official introduction of CARISA, CAPACITY's Communication Specialist in collaboration with RAC and CAAP has been closely working with each partner to further advocate and train on CARISA.

Development of National Proposal for 9th Round of GFATM

In February, a working group consisting of representatives of governmental and civil sector was established by the order of the Ministry of Health, to develop a national proposal for the GFATM round 9 proposal development. CAPACITY through its M&E Specialist (as a group member) and programmatic staff (as external consultancy) has been providing technical assistance to the working group. The M&E Specialist has been supervising over the whole process of the proposal's development, while CAPACITY programmatic staff has been involved in the particular parts of the proposal which correspond to the Project's priority areas: IDU interventions, TB/HIV co-infection, and VCT improvement. CAPACITY has been advocating best practices in the above areas to be included into the proposal in order to ensure their expansion to the national level. Development of the proposal will continue until the end of May 2009.

Seconded Specialists

During the reporting period, the Seconded Specialists continued working within the Secretariat of the CMCC as core staff, assisting in all areas of office operations: logistics, administrative, and secretarial work, in addition to their main responsibilities. Seconded Specialists have been orienting and updating a newly appointed head of the Secretariat about the work, responsibilities, partners, etc. of the Secretariat at the initial period of her work with

the Secretariat. According to the head of the Secretariat, the support of the Seconded Staff has been extremely helpful to her to smoothly overcome the transition period.

One of other achievements of CAPACITY during this quarter is the transferring of the NGO Liaison Specialist to the PIU/HIV of GFATM, thus ensuring the sustainability of this position. Thus, the specialist will continue his efforts aimed at mobilizing ASOs with more recourses and long-term prospects.

Overall, the **M&E Specialist**'s activity during the reporting period has been focused on three main directions:

- Development and finalization of the M&E national and departmental systems;
- Development of the national proposal for GFATM round 9; and
- Drafting country report for UNGASS.

Thus, the M&E Specialist conducted a series of meetings and on-line consultations with partners to finalize the package of M&E documents. As a result, the draft national M&E system's documentation has been reviewed and recognized as corresponding to the international standards by the UNAIDS M&E Regional Expert. By the end of March, the package of documents passed through almost all the required procedures including agreement with departments and partners. It is expected to finalize the agreement process during April and to receive approval by the Government in April or May 2009.

In addition, the M&E Specialist took part in the development of standards and indicators for risk reduction activities, as well as made site-visits to the Oblasts of the country in order to analyze data flow and develop indicators for monitoring activities among children living with HIV. To draft a country report for UNGASS, M&E Specialist has been closely working with RAC.

The **NGO Liaison Specialist** took the lead in organizing and conducting the second National Forum of AIDS-service NGOs, including issues of fundraising, mobilizing people, etc. He also organized and facilitated meetings of the GFATM Portfolio Manger, who was visiting Kyrgyzstan in February 2009, with ASOs. During these meetings, representatives of ASOs had a chance to discuss the forthcoming GFATM round 9 and express their wishes and views on the process of selection of the principle recipient from civil sector.

The NGO Liaison participated in the GFATM grants commission that selected grant proposals from NGOs in the area of HIV prevention among youth, as well as principal sub-recipients for prevention activities among IDU, PLHIV, MSM and sex workers.

In January, a working group established for preparing the national report on drug policy in Kyrgyzstan for the 52nd Special Session of the UN Commission on Drugs, started its work. The NGO Liaison Specialist has been facilitating the work of this group representing MFA, National Narcology Center, Drug Control Agency, and NGOs, during January-February. As a result, this year the report included a big section devoted to risk reduction and human rights including issues of HIV prevention that made the report more comprehensive. In March, the national report was presented in Vienna by the official delegation of Kyrgyzstan.

During the reporting quarter, the **Communication Specialist** continued his efforts in improving communications between the CMCC Secretariat and partners. Thus, he has been continuing to issue and distributing the monthly calendar of events and digests. Apart from his work on CARISA, the Specialist he has been updating the CMCC's website. One of the

significant events organized by Communication Specialist along with other Secretariat staff was a partners meeting where the Secretariat had a chance to introduce its new structure, work plans and most important achievements.

Coordination with Donors and Key Partners

A series of informal meetings has been organized by the country team with the new head of the CMCC Secretariat to discuss joint advocacy work for approving the National M&E system package, ensuring sustainability of the seconded staff and other joint activities for the next 6 months. CAPACITY has also been approached by the Secretariat to assist in organizing a meeting of the new head of the Secretariat with the USAID representative, as the CMCC Member. A number of bilateral meetings with the partners in Bishkek, Osh and Karasuu have also been initiated by CAPACITY. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss achievements of joint activities and further collaboration for the period left till the end of CAPACITY with each of the local and international partners, such as AIDS and TB centers, Hospitals, CMCC, UNDP, Medical Educational Institutions, Professional and AIDS-service Organizations, etc.

C.2. Strategy 2: Educating and Empowering Vulnerable Populations

Second National Forum of AIDS-service Organizations

CAPACITY provided financial and technical support for organizing and conducting the Second National Forum of AIDS-service NGOs of Kyrgyzstan. The Forum took place in Bishkek, in January. The main purpose of the Forum was to consolidate the efforts of civil society in responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Kyrgyzstan. During the Forum, the following issues were reviewed and discussed:

- Interaction of the non-governmental sector with state and international organizations,
- Role of NGOs in implementing the State HIV/AIDS Programme in Kyrgyzstan,
- Participation of AIDS-service NGOs in the implementation of the State Social Order,
- The situational analysis of NGOs.

During the session related to the discussion of problems and perspectives of the development of PLHIV communities as well as the Union of PLHIV in Kyrgyzstan, the participants reviewed and recognized as essential the package of services for prevention, support and care of PLHIV developed by the CAPACITY Project. The Forum was concluded by an approval of the Resolution, reflecting recommendations on improving interactions between public organizations and state/international agencies. Moreover, with the purpose to promote and coordinate the work of non-governmental organizations working in the area of HIV/AIDS, it has been decided to institutionalize the Coordination Council of the AIDS-service NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, which was established during the previous Forum.

Participation in the grant commission of NGO Sotsium

In March 2009, CAPACITY was included into the grant commission of the NGO Sotsium. The NGO became a primary sub-recipient for HIV prevention activities among IDUs under PR RAC within the funds of GFATM round 7. This kind of collaboration between PR and an NGO is happening for the first time in the history of the GFATM presence in Kyrgyzstan. According to the new procedure, NGO Sotsium has announced a competition among NGOs

working on HIV prevention among IDUs in the country for the best grant proposals. As a result, dozens of grant proposals have been received by Sotsium and reviewed by CAPACITY among other members of the commission. Most of the NGOs who have applied received TA and onsite consultations from CAPACITY.

C.3. Strategy 3: Improve the Quality of HIV/AIDS Services

HIV/TB

In the reporting quarter, CAPACITY has transferred its responsibilities of the Secretary of HIV/TB TWG under Coordination Council on TB to AFEW. However, CAPACITY remains an active member of TWG. Thus, in February, CAPACITY participated in the TWG meeting during which it was agreed to delegate three members of the TWG to develop HIV/TB component for the national proposal on HIV for the GFATM round 9 proposal. CAPACITY has been appointed to provide technical assistance.

VCT Model implementation

In February, CAPACITY country team conducted a regular monitoring visit to Osh and Karasuu. Most of the pilot facilities were visited. Overall, during the period of November 2008-February 2009, around 600 people received VCT services within the Model. As a result of monitoring, a set of recommendation for improving VCT services has been provided and discussed with VCT TWGs and Consultants in Osh and Karasuu. In particular, it was recommended to improve:

- Pre-test counseling in Osh Oblast TB Center,
- Registration of the clients and quality of counseling,
- Conduct an additional training with the focus on actual needs of consultants.

A two-day training will be conducted in April-May 2009.

Substitution Therapy

In March, CAPACITY provided organizational and financial support to the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic in conducting the Round Table devoted to the discussion of the Pilot Program of the Substitution Therapy with Methadone (PSTM) in penitentiary institutions of Kyrgyzstan and interaction of various institutions in reforming the penal-executive system. The meeting brought together the representatives of the Prime Minister office, state agencies, international and non-governmental organizations. During the meeting the participants reviewed the results of the PSTM pilot project in the penitentiary system. The cumulative number of the program's clients made 120 people and as of March 25th, 2009, 82 prisoners were continuing participation in the pilot program. As a result, it was agreed to continue implementation of the pilot program until August 2009. If the results will be positive, Ministry of Justice will scale-up the program to the whole penitentiary system of the country.

ARVT

CAPACITY supported the participation of the Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases of the Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, Professor Kutmanova, in the international seminar on Anti-retroviral and Related Drug Management in Low Resource Settings, which took place in

India, in January 2009. Professor Kutmanova is one of the national experts on ARVT and CAPACITY's consultant/trainers. The key purpose of the training was to acquaint the participants with the methods of effective organization of ARV therapy and develop recommendations towards the improvement of the quality of HIV/AIDS related services and enhancement of the accessibility to ARVT.

As a follow-up step, in March, CAPACITY conducted a Round Table devoted to ARVT issues. During the meeting Professor Kutmanova introduced the international standards and experience in ARVT management that she studied during the workshop. CAPACITY also presented the findings of the ARVT adherence study conducted by the Project in Temirtau, Kazakhstan. Moreover, the participants discussed the achievements, problems and obstacles in providing ARV-therapy in Kyrgyzstan. The representatives of AIDS centers, USAID, WHO and a number of non-governmental organizations took part in the meeting.

C.4. Strategy 4: Improve Resource-Use to Integrate HIV/AIDS Services

Analysis of public financing for NGO outreach activities

An analysis of the current budget financing system in Kyrgyzstan to explore possible ways for allowing public money to fund specific outreach activities of the health NGOs in general and HIV/AIDS NGOs in particular was initiated in February. The specific tasks to be completed within the proposed study include:

- A detailed description of the current legal framework about health budget funds flowing to NGOs/Community-based Organizations (CBOs)/Professional Associations (PAs) working in realizing the national/government program on HIV/AIDS, with references and description of all relevant laws and regulations (such as, budget laws, MOF and Treasury System procedures, etc.);
- A comprehensive assessment of whether the existing legal/regulatory framework allows health budget funds flowing to such NGO/CBO/PA activities; and
- A clear description of exactly what steps an NGO/CBO/PA would have to go through for receiving public budget money, what does the NGO/CBO/PA need to do to get money from the Treasury System, and what would be the specific administrative and financial requirements to this end, including reporting mechanisms. The first draft of the report will be ready by the end of April.

D. Tajikistan

D.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Seconded staff

The RAC changed its location and moved to a new building. The director of RAC requested CAPACITY to temporarily place seconded staff in the CAPACITY office due to lack of working space in the new building of RAC. Nevertheless, the seconded specialists continued to provide technical assistance to RAC.

The **Communication Specialist** continued to maintain the main communication tools of the NCC and RAC with partners. The NCC website, along with the RAC website were updated regularly by posting interesting information on different events, grants announcements etc. A new section for NCC and RAC staff was added into the website contents. The monthly RAC bulletin was edited and circulated as usual among partners.

The communication specialist circulated a request for information among partners and updated the CARISA database. The seconded specialist also met with CARHAP to discuss CARISA and its links with M&E. The seconded specialist also met with NGO "Center for legal support" to discuss the provision of TA to improve, restructure, and maintain the NGO's website.

The **M&E Specialist** met with the head of the M&E department of RAC to discuss and develop a draft work plan for the TWG on M&E for 2009. The work plan was developed and presented at the M&E TWG meeting and approved with few amendments. The Seconded specialist participated in the meeting of the TWG on M&E called by CARHAP. The M&E specialist and communication specialists participated in a meeting of the M&E TWG summoned by UNAIDS to discuss the collection of necessary data on HIV to be presented on behalf of MoH at international conferences in Moscow (April, 2009) and Moldova (May, 2009). Within the framework of this activity, the M&E specialist met with the head of Medical Statistics and Information Center to discuss statistical data required for preparing the Report on Assessment and Forecasting in HIV/AIDS related area.

The **NGO Liaison Specialist** continued serving as a focal point for AIDS service NGOs and coordinated the provision of consultative and training support on institutional/organizational development and other issues by oblast level consultants/trainers upon NGOs' request. The NGO Liaison specialist provided consultations on proposal writing issues to NGOs on grants announced by GFATM and CARHAP. In the reporting period the major input of the NGO Liaison specialist was in the initiation and establishment of the PLHIV Union of Tajikistan. The seconded specialist participated in a round table organized by NGO Marvorid, working with prisoners. At the round table a new project was launched, and a new Drop-in-Center was presented to partners.

D.2. Strategy 2: Educating and Empowering Vulnerable Populations

Creation of PLHIV Union

In the reporting period two roundtables were organized and conducted with PLHIV activists in Kurgan-Tube and Khujand to discuss the establishment of a PLHIV Union of Tajikistan. Participants of the meetings discussed the type/model of association. This activity was cost-shared with UNAIDS. During the meeting the issues of organization of self-assistance and support groups were reviewed as well. Based on results of the meeting, particular attention should be stressed on organization and regular holding of self-assistance, groups, provision of psycho-social and emotional support to PLHIV. Also participants discussed the comprehensive package of services on prevention, care and support for PLHIV developed by CAPACITY based on results of the regional workshop. The package of documents required for registration of the PLHIV union was prepared and analyzed by a lawyer. He provided recommendations and comments regarding the documents and agreed to provide assistance for registration of the Union.

Third round of trainings

CAPACITY met with representatives of AIDS service NGOs to discuss the third round of trainings to be undertaken within the framework of CAPACITY's Civil Society Mobilization Strategy. During the meeting, topics/themes of the training and candidature of possible trainers were discussed. CAPACITY also met with UNAIDS and CARHAP to discuss cost-sharing issues of the training. Meetings resulted in agreement to develop a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on cost-sharing the organization and implementation of the Training for AIDS service NGOs and PLHIV representatives. CAPACITY developed a draft MoU with detailed responsibilities of each partner and a draft budget that was provided to partners for review and approval. Partners agreed with the proposal of CAPACITY regarding candidature of trainer for this event. The trainer provided the agenda of the training which includes the issues important for AIDS service NGOs. The training will be conducted in April 2009.

D.3. Strategy 3: Improve the Quality of HIV/AIDS Services

TB/HIV

Regular monitoring of implementation of the TB/HIV services interaction in Dushanbe was held with CAPACITY technical assistance. On February 24, 2009 CAPACITY organized a round-table on TB/HIV services interaction and the role of NGOs in this process. CAPACITY presented recommendations based on the results of the pilot model on interaction of TB and HIV services in Dushanbe. NGOs working with PLHIV presented and shared experience of their activities in the area of TB/HIV. The National TB/HIV Coordinator of the Ministry of Health underlined the importance of using on oblast level the positive experience of TB/HIV model tested by CAPACITY and noted the need for partnership and involvement of NGOs working with PLHIV in this direction.

CAPACITY within the frameworks of its activity on TB/HIV and preparation for the World TB Day adjusted/developed informational and educational materials (booklet and instructions) on TB/HIV co-infection. Materials were disseminated among national and

international partners working on TB/HIV co-infection for their recommendations and comments. The Republican TB Center was very enthusiastic and requested translation into Tajik language. Considering partners' recommendations and comments, the materials were finalized. Final versions will be translated into Tajik and presented at the next meeting of TWG on TB Communication for review and approval. According to the request of National TB/HIV Coordinator, CAPACITY printed and provided Republican TB Center with technical instructions on detection and management of patients with TB/HIV co-infection. These instructions will be disseminated among TB Institutions in the country.

Meeting of TWG on Substitution Therapy

CAPACITY participated in the working group meeting on Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST). Participants of the meeting reviewed and discussed the draft OST Strategy developed by the group of national experts (representatives of MoH, National Narcology Center). The document was disseminated among partners and they were requested to provide comments and recommendations. CAPACITY also participated in the meeting on OST, organized by UNODC. During the meeting, the UNODC international consultant presented his recommendations on implementation of OST in Tajikistan and shared the UNODC experience on OST implementation in other CA countries.

D.4. Strategy 4: Improve Resource-Use to Integrate HIV/AIDS Services

Integrating HIV prevention and stigma and discrimination reduction services with PHC

In February 2009, CAPACITY organized and conducted a Training for Trainers on "HIV/AIDS: epidemiology, clinic, prevention, and stigma and discrimination reduction." The training was carried out based on the Manual on HIV/AIDS prevention and Stigma and Discrimination reduction for General Practitioners, which was approved by the Ministry of Health in January 2009. Considering that the Manual will be introduced into the curricula of educational and clinical centers of Family Medicine, parties agreed to invite specialists of Family Medicine departments of the Tajik State Medical University, Postgraduate Medical Institute and Republican Educational and Clinic Center of Family Medicine. As a result, 13 specialists of Family Medicine from above institutions were trained on HIV/AIDS and stigma and discrimination reduction.

Also on March 2009, the CAPACITY project in response to the request of the National Association of Family Doctors provided support for the organization and implementation of two trainings on "HIV/AIDS: epidemiology, clinic, prevention, and stigma and discrimination reduction." The trainings were carried out within the project's strategy on integration of HIV/AIDS services into primary health system. The participants of the trainings were PHC specialists, namely family doctors, from a group of districts of republican subordination (Gissar, Shahrinav, Vahdat and Rudaki). Trainers were specialists trained on ToT conducted on February 2009.

This activity is the first step in introducing of the Manual into curricula on training of family doctors on HIV/AIDS and stigma and discrimination reduction towards HIV infection. In accordance with a MoH request, CAPACITY project provided technical support in printing of the Manual, which will be distributed among educational and clinical centers of Family Medicine and among PHC facilities of the country.

E. Turkmenistan

E.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Strengthening NAPC Communications

The communication specialist provided support to the National AIDS Prevention Center for the development of the CCM work plan for 2009 and preparation for the CCM meeting which was held on February 26, 2009.

By support of seconded communication specialist, the National AIDS Prevention Center has continued to issue the information bulletin widely among national and international partners on regular basis.

The adapted version of the communication paper on improving communication among partners was approved by the director of the National AIDS Prevention Center. The next step is to send the paper to the Ministry of Health for approval.

Supporting Partners' Events

CAPACITY with the other national and international partners participated in the review of national monitoring and evaluation indicators on HIV. The updated indicators were submitted to MoH for approval. CAPACITY served on the AED selection committee for this year's Training Future Leaders program.

E.2. Strategy 2: Educating and Empowering Vulnerable Populations

The Ashgabat Youth Center

During the quarter the following coverage was reached by the Ashgabat YC activities:

162 Trainings covering 698 (393 males and 305 females) ARY in Ashgabat;
1898 ARY were covered with mini-session during outreach work (988 males and 910 females)
113 ARY were covered by psychologist's counseling (47 males and 65 females)
111 ARY were covered by gynecologist counseling (40 males and 71 females)
173 ARY were covered by dermatovenerologist counseling (104 males and 72 females)
848 ARY were covered by alternative to risky behavior activities (6- Arabic dance club, 83 – chess, 324 - computer class/internet, 217 - English class, 19 - table tennis, 16 – break dance)

Total number of ARY contacted with program in March is 3297.

During March 2009, a series of trainings on journalism were conducted at the Youth Center in Ashgabat. The trainings were organized on a weekly basis – every Sunday – through the month. At these trainings, volunteers and clients of the Youth Center advanced their knowledge and communication skills, as well as practical skills regarding team building. The involvement of youth as “journalists” conducting individual and group media reports, as well as acting in role-model training helped participants to understand new information and gain

the practical skills obtained in the seminars will help youth leaders in their work in HIV/AIDS and drug use prevention among partners.

Dashoguz Youth Center

ToT to train peer educators for Dashoguz Youth center was conducted on February 20 – 24, 2009. Twenty peer educators were trained to share their HIV prevention knowledge with their peers within the Dashoguz Youth Center activities. The Ashgabat Youth Center Peer educators served as trainers for this training. On February 26, 2009, the Dashoguz Youth center was launched. During March, the following coverage was reached:

44 Trainings covering 444 (230 males and 214 females) ARY in Dashoguz;
75 ARY were covered with mini-session during outreach work (42 males and 33 females)
216 IEC materials were distributed to ARY in Dashoguz
1125 ARY were covered by alternative to risky behavior activities (81- Arabic dance club, 91- break dance club, 226 – chess, 695- computer class, 131 - English class, 221 - table tennis, 83 – Russian class, 8 – needlework class)

Total number of ARY contacted with program is 1355.

A peer education coordinator was selected for Dashoguz Youth center. Following the selection, orientation training for her was conducted at the Ashgabat Youth Center.

An information leaflet about Youth Center activities was updated and reprinted. Leaflets are being distributed among the youth of Ashgabat and Dashoguz for attracting them to the Youth center activities.

HIV prevention targeting IDUs

Following the oral agreement with the MoH and UNODC on joint implementation of HIV prevention approach targeting IDUs, the work plan was developed and sent to MoH for approval. The work plan was approved on January 21, 2009.

Within the framework of HIV prevention among IDUs, two trainings were held in Ashgabat. The first training on methods and techniques of drug abuse treatment was held on January 26-30, 2009. Participants of the training were representatives of the narcology clinics, AIDS prevention centers of national and velayat levels and professors of narcology department of Turkmen state medical institute. The total number of trained people was 20. The five-day training covered the following key topics: prevention of job burnout, development of consultative skills, addiction severity index and evaluation of problems related to drug use, IEC component of risk reduction program in the clinic environment, application of motivation skills in practice as well as prevention of stigma and discrimination of risk groups. The trainees also received information about new methods of assessment problems related to drug use, principles of motivation interview and stages of behavior change through practical and interactive work, slide-show presentations and discussions. Specialists are applying in their work newly gained valuable knowledge and skills, with different risk groups.

The second training was held on February 2-6, 2009 and was aimed to train teams of outreach workers for providing HIV prevention education among IDUs. The total number of trained people was 21. Based on a request of UNDP HIV prevention program, sex worker outreach

workers also were included in the training. The five-day training covered the following key topics: organizational structure of programs on HIV prevention among IDUs, basic package of services for IDUs in HIV prevention programs, category of clients and methods of work with them, attraction of the clients into the program, organizational structure of outreach work, motivation interviews and stages of behavior change, model of joint work with police and overcoming obstacles through training of police.

For conducting both trainings, the international consultants from Republican Scientific and Practical Center of Medical and Social Problems on Drug Use of Pavlodar, Kazakhstan were invited.

Site selection for the drop-in center was finalized. The MoH issued a Prikaz on opening of the drop-in center. The Prikaz is signed by the Minister of Health. The drop-in center will be based at health house #4 of Ashgabat at the address of 5 Gagarina St. Bikrova town (not at the narcology clinic that originally was thought). Preparation activities for opening of the drop-in center have begun. Opening of drop-in center is expected at the end of April or beginning of May 2009.

An information card on the drop-in center to promote the drop-in center and to attract the target group to the drop-in center activities was developed and printed.

Preparation for start of outreach activity among IDUs has also been started.

The TUMAR IEC materials for distribution among target group are being adapted for Turkmenistan.

F. Uzbekistan

F.1. Strategy 1: Improve Stewardship of National HIV/AIDS Programs

Seconded Staff

The **CAPACITY M&E Specialist** prepared summary tables on national M&E indicators for 2008 based on Oblast AIDS Centers' annual reports on implementation of the National Strategic Program on response to HIV epidemic in Uzbekistan for 2007-2011. At the present time the collected data/information are being analyzed and recommendations on situation improvement will be developed and submitted to MoH for consideration in April 2009.

During the reporting period the M&E specialist:

- Rendered technical assistance to Trust Point specialists to increase effectiveness of activities;
- Participated in preparation, analyzing of Oblast and Republican AIDS centers' annual reports and their submission to MoH;
- Took an active part in project proposal development for the GFATM Round 9 for HIV.

On February 3-5, 2009, the M&E specialist took part in the Training in Minsk (Belarus) on "Estimating the number of vulnerable groups." The training was organized by UNAIDS and conducted by international experts. The aim of the training was to acquaint the participants with methods for estimating the number of vulnerable groups and to discuss its importance in the context of sustainable policy determination and planning of prevention programs.

During the reporting period, the **Communications specialist**, prepared and disseminated PARC/NACM's monthly bulletins to all interested national and international partners and updated the materials for the PARC/NACM website in both English and Russian languages.

Additionally, the Communications specialist was in charge of collecting information from Oblast AIDS Centers on the response to HIV/AIDS according to UNGASS Indicator 5. At the present time the communications specialist is collecting the same information from all national and international partners.

The communications specialist, jointly with CAAP, conducted a series of meetings with national partners on the promotion of CARISA usage on the national level. At the present time this issue is under consideration by the MoH.

During the reporting period, the **Community Liaison Specialist** took part in the series of meetings with GFATM, CAAP and CDC/CAR on organization of training on sentinel surveillance for specialists from all regions of Uzbekistan. The training is planned to be conducted on May 4-7, 2009.

CAPACITY Seconded Specialists were in charge of information collection from the regions and monitoring of Decrees implementation according to new President's Decree on "Additional measures on increasing the effectiveness of response to HIV prevalence in the Republic of Uzbekistan" and new Cabinet of Ministries' Decree on "Measures on improvement of organizational structure and activity of Oblast AIDS Centers."

Seconded Specialists are actively involved in preparation of Uzbek version of M&E Manual on implementation of “National Strategic Program on response to HIV prevalence in Uzbekistan for 2007-2011.”

Work Group (WG) on National Proposal Development for GFATM Round 9

The Secretariat of NACM and RAC/Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan organized an Orientation meeting with participation of all interested national and international organizations with the purpose to discuss the GFATM recommendations to the country proposal for the 8th Round of GFATM on HIV and to develop an action plan on proposal development for the 9th Round of GFATM on HIV.

During the meeting the main sections of the new proposal were defined and WGs on each section development were appointed. Based on GFATM recommendations and the current situation in the country, CAPACITY advocated including a section of AIDS and TB services interaction into the proposal. CAPACITY was included into the list of WGs – on “HIV prevention among IDUs”, “HIV prevention among sex workers” and “Interaction of AIDS and TB services.”

F.2. Strategy 2: Educating and Empowering Vulnerable Populations

Monitoring visit to TUMAR site

Within the frame of providing technical assistance, facilitating and monitoring implementation of prevention model in Samarkand Oblast/Urgut (TUMAR Project) Financial and Administrative Manager Firuza Kabulova made a site visit to Samarkand. During the visit she conducted the monitoring and evaluation of financial activities of TUMAR Project and developed recommendations on weaknesses elimination and activity improvement.

Later, during the meeting with TUMAR Project Manager and Project Accountant in Tashkent the recommendations on finance/administrative issues were discussed and Work plan on weaknesses elimination was developed.

Besides, it was agreed the necessity of monitoring of TUMAR program activities. The draft work plan and questionnaires for outreach workers and mahalla trainers were developed. It is planned to conduct the visit in early April'09. Within the frame of monitoring visit Uzbekistan Program Coordinator will:

- Discuss work plan and steps of its realization with the aim to introduce proposals on increasing the implementation efficiency;
- Meet with a selected number of outreach workers and makhalla trainers to evaluate the level of knowledge/skill and develop recommendations/proposals;
- Analyze the activity related to maintenance of TUMAR database.

Increasing the capacity of communities in response to TB prevalence

In the framework of Joint Work Plan implementation (Republican Fund Mahalla, Institute of Health/MoH, TB Institute, Tashkent Medical Academy, Project HOPE/USAID, Health-2/WB and CAPACITY/USAID) on increasing the population awareness on TB prevention and stigma/discrimination reduction towards TB patients with mahalla leaders involvement,

CAPACITY rendered technical assistance to WG of national experts in development of Training Module for mahalla leaders. The Module was developed and in January 2009 the positive references on the Module from leading national experts were received. It is planned to submit the Module for the approval to MoH and Republican Fund Mahalla in April 2009.

During the reporting period, CAPACITY in collaboration with partners conducted the baseline survey for identifying the level of population awareness on TB prevention issues in pilot regions (Tashkent and Samarkand cities). The survey was carried out according to the methodology developed by national partners. Developed for this case and approved by partners, a special questionnaire was used for conducting the survey among the mahalla population. CAPACITY assisted in printing 1,000 copies of questionnaire - 500 per each pilot region.

The survey was conducted by specialists of Fund Mahalla and Institute of Health in collaboration with Tashkent Medical Academy, Samarkand Medical Institute and TB Institute. The survey data were entered into the online electronic database developed by CAPACITY. After data processing the survey results demonstrated a relatively low level of population awareness of 56.5%. In particular, according to the baseline survey more than 50% of respondents think that TB can not be treated, 55% think that TB can be inherited and 83.5% think that people with TB should be isolated. It should be noted that the survey was conducted in administrative centers of Uzbekistan and the level of population awareness on TB issues is much lower in other regions of the country. This proves a high necessity, importance, and significance of conducting educational campaign on TB issues among population. The survey results will be submitted to leading specialists of Fund Mahalla, Institute of Health, TB service and all other interested national and international partners for discussion and coordination of further joint activities at the Orientation Meeting planned to be conducted in April 2009

Moreover, within the framework of additional TB activities CAPACITY had a series of meetings with WHO, Republican DOTS Center, Project HOPE/TB and GF/TB on development and dissemination of IEC materials for the general population. The brochure and poster proposed by partners were revised and approved by “Thematic Work Group on informational and preventive work on TB issues under the Republican DOTS Center”.

CAPACITY provided support in printing 6,000 copies of the brochure in Uzbek language and 5,000 copies of the poster in Russian. 1,000 copies of IEC materials (containing general information on TB, symptoms and hotline numbers) were disseminated among the general population during the action held in the frame of World TB Day commemoration and distributed to all medical organizations of Tashkent city.

Engaging local communities into HIV prevention

In the framework of Joint Work Plan of partners (Republican Fund Mahalla, Institute of Health/MoH, RAC/MoH, CAPACITY and Health-2/WB) on increasing the level of population awareness, CAPACITY rendered technical assistance in preparing national team of trainers (232) from among mahalla leaders for conducting educational sessions among the general population. In September – December 2008 trained mahalla leaders carried out educational activities among population of mahallas and M&E of their activities was conducted by Institute of Health’s specialists.

As the next step of joint partners' activities the end line survey on evaluation of population awareness level in 5 pilot regions was conducted in January 2009. Responsible specialists of Institute of Health were provided with questionnaires collected by representatives of Fund Mahalla for entering into electronic database developed by CAPACITY and further analysis.

After processing the comparative analysis of the baseline and end line surveys demonstrated that the level of population awareness on HIV issues has risen 26.9% (the level before the activities started was 58.4% and the result after the educational campaign was 85.3%). The end line survey results proved the effectiveness of work with communities on HIV prevention issues with makhalla leaders involvement. In April 2009 the survey results will be submitted to all interested partners for discussion.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SISF

In 2008 CAPACITY rendered technical assistance to local NGO "Social Initiatives Support Fund" (SISF) in conducting series of social youth events entitled "We are for healthy life style, we don't have time for anything else." More than 15,000 young people from nine cities of Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Fergana, Andijan, Namangan, Kokand, Bukhara, Navoi, Samarkand and Karshi) were covered with informational and educational activities on the HIV/STI and drug addiction issues. Baseline evaluation of the level of knowledge of the activity participants showed 30% and the post-action evaluation of knowledge demonstrated 90%. CAPACITY presented the results of the joint activity to national and international experts during the Annual National Conference organized by SISF. All experts underlined the effectiveness and success of the conducted actions.

In this regard, with the aim to increase the sustainability of these activities CAPACITY and SISF signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on future joint cooperation in 2009. The goal of the upcoming activities is to engage youth and teenagers into healthy lifestyles and to increase the level of their awareness on HIV/STI, TB and drug addiction issues. According to the MoU CAPACITY will:

- Participate in development of joint work plan of activities;
- Provide technical assistance in conducting all events (trainings, seminars and public actions).

Support for Children affected by HIV/AIDS

During the reporting period, CAPACITY participated in an event devoted to the first anniversary of Daycare Center for children from families affected with HIV/AIDS. Within the frame of events CAPACITY provided children living with HIV with special souvenirs/presents.

F.3. Strategy 3: Improve the Quality of HIV/AIDS Services

Ensuring of the sustainability of AIDS/TB services interaction in Uzbekistan

During WHO TB partners meeting in February, the WHO expert noted a lot of successful interventions were initiated and implemented in the area of HIV/TB by CAPACITY during the period 2005-2008. In particular, CAPACITY:

- Succeeded in Model implementation of AIDS/TB services interaction in pilot regions (113 medical facilities);
- Rendered technical assistance to the WG on development of technical recommendations on “TB detection, registration, treatment, and prevention in HIV-patients in the Republic of Uzbekistan” which was approved by the MoH;
- Rendered technical assistance in development of “HIV/TB” courses and incorporation into curriculums of all medical institutes (Samarkand, Andijan and Bukhara Medical Institutes, Urgench and Ferghana branches of Tashkent Medical Academy, Nukus branch of Tashkent Pediatric Medical Institute) and Tashkent Institute of Advanced Medical Education.

With the purpose to ensure the further sustainability and scaling up of HIV/TB services interaction Model to other regions of Uzbekistan:

- CAPACITY provided TA to WG of national experts in development/revision of reporting forms and instruction for including into the list of MoH statistic documentation. This provides the sustainability and further scaling up of AIDS/TB services interaction Model to other regions of Uzbekistan. In this regard reporting forms and instructions were translated into Uzbek language and submitted to the MoH for approval.
- Based on the training materials developed by CAPACITY, GFATM Project on TB is conducting series of trainings for medical specialists in all regions of Uzbekistan.

F.4. Strategy 4: Improve Resource-Use to Integrate HIV/AIDS Services

Training module development for nursing specialists

During the meeting for interested national and international partners initiated by CAPACITY the necessity of Training Module on HIV prevention development for nursing specialists was underlined. In this regard, partners signed Joint Work Plan on Module development and its incorporation into the curriculum of medical colleges. The following organizations are involved into Plan implementation: Association of Nurses of Republic of Uzbekistan, RAC, Scientific Research Institute of Virology, projects CAPACITY, ZdravPlus/USAID, Health-2/WB and “Improving maternal and child health”/ADB.

According to MoH order #1211 dated 31.12.2008, a WG of national experts on Module development was established. During the reporting period CAPACITY rendered technical assistance to the WG in conducting a series of meetings. Within the framework of work meetings the content on the Module, responsibility of experts for chapters development were determined and Module chapters prepared by experts/WG members were discussed. In April 2009 it is planned to submit the draft Module for references to national and international partners.

Development of Manual for PHC providers

CAPACITY rendered technical assistance to the WG of national experts for the development of a Manual for PHC providers. In January positive references with comments/recommendations from national and international experts were received and at the present time the Manual is under revision by WG members. In April 2009 it is planned to submit the Manual to MoH of Uzbekistan for approval.

HIV prevention Course incorporation into the TMA Curriculum

CAPACITY provided technical assistance to the WG of national experts for the development of a Technical Manual “HIV prevention and GP” for students of Tashkent Medical Academy (TMA). During the reporting period, the WG had a series of meetings on the Technical Manual development/revision. The developed Manual was approved by MoH and the course will be incorporated into TMA curriculum in September’09. In June-July 2009 it is planned to conduct series of trainings for TMA teachers on HIV prevention issues.