



The Public Association

“Union for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Harm Reduction”

Starting with the year 2000, the first programs of Harm Reduction are implemented in the Republic of Moldova, which represent measures taken in order to prevent/ reduce the medical, social and economic consequences that inevitably occur when a person uses drugs. Harm Reduction programs are supported and promoted by the World Health Organization as an effective measure of protection against HIV infection.

In this context, in December 2004, 19 organizations implementing Harm Reduction strategies in Republic of Moldova have decided to formation of the Union for HIV Prevention and Harm Reduction (UORN). On November 19th, 2007, the Moldovan Ministry of Justice registered this Union.

The Union continuously performs the assessment of members' needs and concerns related to the implementation of harm reduction programs. In this context, it can be highlighted: the concern related to ensuring the continuity, sustainability and financial stability of the projects implemented for the near future; the need to expand the spectrum of services addressed to the beneficiaries for the purpose of broader coverage and efficiency of activities; the need to adhere to unique operating standards for harm reduction projects; the need to create a viable reference system that would solve a wider range of problems faced by the beneficiaries.

The organization's Vision

External: A tolerant and empathetic society, aware of the fact that HIV and drug use are complex health and social issues, and which provides a supportive environment in the form of access to services and specialized assistance through harm reduction programs, considered as effective public health interventions in the Republic of Moldova.

Internal: Organization that actively promotes the rights of vulnerable groups in the context of HIV and other communicable diseases, which develops and implements, with local, national and international financial and technical support, sustainable and qualitative innovative interventions, that meet the needs of vulnerable groups, and collaborates with governmental and non-governmental structures active in the field of public health and safety.

The organization's Mission

Creating a favorable legislative, legal, social, medical and ecological environment in the society in order to improve the quality of life of communities of people at high risk of infection: by developing these communities, by providing services and promoting their rights, and by strengthening and expanding the capacity of member organizations' efforts.

Target group of beneficiaries

- The Organizations implementing harm reduction programs.
- The communities of people at high risk of infection:
 - people who inject drugs (PWID);
 - sex workers (SW);
 - people infected and affected by HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis;
 - young people, including those from vulnerable groups and at high risk of HIV infection;
 - society in general;

The organization's general objective is to promote the development and continuous implementation of harm reduction strategies, as an effective approach of public health protection in the Republic of Moldova.

The organization's goals consist of contributing for:

1. promoting the new Health Policies in Moldova;
2. promoting medical, social, legal, ecological education as a facility to knowledge acquisition that would allow the understanding of health, social, legal and environmental issues in their depth and complexity;
3. consolidating the efforts of all involved and interested parties in solving problems in the field of psychoactive substance use, HIV/AIDS prevention and other diseases prevention - viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
4. developing and promoting the Harm Reduction strategy, Opioid Substitution Treatment (TSO) and rehabilitation and treatment systems for users of psychoactive substances, including those HIV-infected;
5. preventing HIV, STIs, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis and other diseases spreading among the members of the vulnerable groups, and providing the corresponding psychosocial support to the persons affected by these diseases;
6. providing organizational, technical, methodical, informational support to organizations implementing HIV prevention programs based on harm reduction strategies and taking the gender perspective into account;
7. creating conditions for organizing exchange of experience and information, and promoting of successful practices;
8. elaborating the strategies for interaction between the member organizations of the Association and the legislative, executive and community forces in order to create a favorable environment of activity;
9. participating to improve the legislative base necessary for the development and involvement of harm reduction strategies;
10. being involved in ensuring the financial continuity and stability of the programs implemented by the member organizations;
11. promoting the interests of HIV prevention and harm reduction programs in the Republic of Moldova at national and international level;
12. developing and implementing of policies and practices of legal empowerment, which respond to the needs of vulnerable and HIV-affected communities;
13. promoting the national concept of alternative interventions for drug users and reforming the legislative framework in the field of drugs in the Republic of Moldova;

Main directions of activity:

- Facilitates the exchange of experience and good practice multiplication between the organizations involved in Harm Reduction - organizes study tours and field visits at local/national, regional and international levels for the staff of these programs and representatives of the affected communities. (since 2013)

- Strengthens the capacities of the Organizations implementing programs based on Harm Reduction strategy by providing continuous education and professional trainings - organizing seminars, workshops, trainings, consultations and supervision. (permanently)
- Ensure direct connections between organizations implementing programs based on Harm Reduction strategy and institutions in the field - organizing round tables, conferences, facilitating participation in international events held in the field, establishing dialogue between organizations implementing risk reduction programs and state institutions in the field of health care, social assistance. (permanently)
- Coordinating the elaboration of *Minimum quality standards* for the organizations implementing harm reduction programs for key populations affected by HIV in the Republic of Moldova. (2013-2015)
- Advocates for continuous implementation of Harm Reduction programs from the National Public Budget resources by participating in the elaboration and by facilitating the process of application of the minimum quality standards for the organizations implementing harm reduction programs in the Republic of Moldova; defines the mechanism of social contracting of the implementing organizations. (since 2013 till present)
- Participates in changing the social perception towards the groups with high risk of infection (drug users and sex workers) from the Republic of Moldova. (since 2007 - till present)
- Ensures the provision of primary legal assistance services that respond to the needs of vulnerable communities (such as injecting drug users, sex workers, people living with HIV / AIDS) through the activity of specialized paralegals. (since 2017 - till present)
- Advocates for implementation humanistic policies towards drug users by promoting the application of alternative interventions in the case of penalties associated with drug use. (since 2016 - till present)
- Organizes HIV, tuberculosis and viral hepatitis B and C prevention activities among the vulnerable populations: through Social theatre and Forum theatre and distribution of informational materials, and organizing seminars, aiming to educate the beneficiaries of harm reduction programs from different regions of the republic. (2009-2010)
- Promotes constantly the development of organizations' members' capacities in the direction of gender expertise, implementing gender analysis, which is a base for revealing, studying and decreasing gender inequality, also contributes to promote gender equality and equity in the field.
- Promotes activities in the field of public health: at the moment - through social networks, and previously - through the quarterly newsletter "Your Project", a newsletter that addressed topics of interest for the staff implementing harm reduction programs in the Republic of Moldova, describes events and news of the field, presents models of good practice. (permanently)

Cooperation and financing

The Union for HIV prevention and Harm Reduction is member of the:

- Country Coordination Mechanism for HIV/TB/STI Programs (CCM)
- National Antidrug Commission
- National Committee of Key affected population (KAP)
- Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)
- Eurasian Key Populations Health Network (EKHN)
- South and East Europe Regional TB and HIV Community network (SEE RCN)

We also cooperate with:

- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- Dermatology and Communicable Diseases Hospital
- Republican Narcological Hospital
- Local Public Authorities
- Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN)

Our main donors are:

- Soros Foundation-Moldova
- Center for Health Policy and Analysis (PAS)
- UNICEF Moldova
- UNODC local office
- UNAIDS Moldova
- GFATM through grants operated by local agencies
- Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)