



Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues

Progress Report 2011

Organisation

National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) carries responsibilities of former STAKES and KTL, including coordination of the Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme.

The implementation of Barents HIV/AIDS Programme was organized so that the responsible organization THL and the Programme Co-ordinator (PC) operating under THL were holding primary responsibility. The PC was also acting as a Secretary and Drafter to the Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (SC). Members of the SC have been appointed from countries or regions in the Barents region. The SC reports to the JWGHS through an annual report. (SC members are listed in the **Annex 1**.)

HIV situation in the Northwest Russia

According to the Northwest District AIDS Centre, St. Petersburg, the cumulative number of HIV-infected people in Northwest Russia was 89,268 by December 31, 2011.

Transmission routes in NW Russia during 2010 were the following: IDU – 44.9%, sexual contact – 29.3%, mother-to-child – 0.8%, not known - 25%. By the end of 2010, cumulatively 7929 children have been born to HIV-positive mothers. MTCT rate was 8.6% during 2010.

Registration of new HIV- cases and incidence in the regions of Northwest Russia

| | Region | Cases in 2005 | Cases in 2006 | Cases in 2007 | Cases in 2008 | Cases in 2009 | Cases in 2010 | Cases in 2011 | New cases per 100 000 population in 2011 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| BARENTS REGIONS OF NW RUSSIA | <i>Archangelsk Region</i> | 49 | 62 | 62 | 68 | 71 | 84 | 78 | 6,6 |
| | <i>Murmansk Region</i> | 241 | 371 | 416 | 421 | 446 | 387 | 338 | 42,6 |
| | <i>Republic of Karelia</i> | 81 | 55 | 92 | 123 | 89 | 106 | 158 | 24,5 |
| | <i>Republic of Komi</i> | 135 | 147 | 134 | 140 | 115 | 171 | 210 | 22,8 |
| | <i>Nenets Autonomous District</i> | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 11,8 |
| OTHER NORTHWEST REGIONS | <i>Leningrad Region</i> | 1094 | 973 | 1165 | 1212 | 1401 | 1175 | 1533 | 89,1 |
| | <i>St. Petersburg</i> | 4045 | 4459 | 4548 | 4727 | 4666 | 4150 | 3751 | 81,9 |
| | <i>Vologda Region</i> | 119 | 134 | 133 | 154 | 147 | 191 | 220 | 18,3 |
| | <i>Kaliningrad Region</i> | 414 | 454 | 501 | 434 | 431 | 403 | 431 | 45,6 |
| | <i>Novgorod Region</i> | 77 | 96 | 134 | 118 | 130 | 176 | 240 | 37,8 |
| | <i>Pskov Region</i> | 30 | 46 | 44 | 49 | 61 | 62 | 64 | 9,2 |
| | TOTAL | | 6287 | 6799 | 7233 | 7453 | 7563 | 7085 | 7028 |

Source: Northwest District AIDS Centre, St. Petersburg

HIV situation in Norway, Sweden and Finland

The epidemic situation is relatively stable in all these countries. The annual number of newly diagnosed cases has for the last years been 4-6 per 100 000 inhabitants and the implementation and coverage of ART is good. The number of new infections in IDUs remains low. Most concern is caused by the high number of newly acquired infections in men who have sex with men (MSM). In addition, immigrants from high-endemic areas (Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia) contribute to a significant proportion of newly diagnosed cases in these countries. Recently in Sweden new strategies have been adopted including needle and syringe exchange programmes.

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Cases in 2005</i> | <i>Cases in 2006</i> | <i>Cases in 2007</i> | <i>Cases in 2008</i> | <i>Cases in 2009</i> | <i>Cases in 2010</i> | <i>Cases in 2011</i> | <i>New cases per 100 000 population in 2010</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| <i>Finland</i> | 138 | 193 | 188 | 149 | 177 | 187 | 176 | 3,5 |
| <i>Norway</i> | 219 | 276 | 248 | 299 | 282 | 258 | 269 | 5,2 |
| <i>Sweden</i> | 392 | 390 | 541 | 448 | 486 | 465 | 465 | 4,9 |

Activities in 2011

The Steering Committee had one meeting in 2011, in Petrozavodsk on 31 May. Evaluation of the Programme was conducted in May-September by Professor Pauli Leinikki. The Murmansk AIDS Centre celebrated its 20 years by organising a conference on 1 December.

An evaluation of the Programme was carried out in June–September 2011 by professor Pauli Leinikki. In his report he described the main achievements of the Programme as follows:

- Access to most at risk populations has been established in sites where low threshold centres and outreach work have been implemented, with an impact on the spread of the disease and corresponding social and medical consequences.
- Civil society and NGOs have been involved.
- Training of experts has modified attitudes more favourable towards vulnerable populations and given tools to work with them.
- The need for coordinating activities has been met.
- Planning processes for programs and projects have been improved (LFA, training).

The evaluator gives the following recommendations:

- In the field of the development of technical capacity:
 - a. Platform for international collaboration should be maintained and developed further. Here, coordination and regular meetings of the steering committee are the most

important tools. Also the link with the Northern Dimension Partnership should be maintained. Activities should include high level training in the forms of seminars, exchange visits and collaboration in working with media and involving NGOs.

- b. Development of data exchange between sectors.
- c. Projects supporting independent academic research and networking of academic institutions should be promoted.
- d. Dialogue concerning legal and economic issues should be continued and promoted.
- e. Training on project and programme planning (e.g. by Logical Framework Approach) should be continued.
- Concerning prevention and surveillance:
 - f. Support to easy access low-threshold centres and outreach activities should be extended to meet the challenges that the widening epidemic will pose in the near future.
 - g. Support to peer training and voluntary work should be continued and promoted.
 - h. Promotion of anonymous testing with easy access and quick results should be promoted. Linking such activities with research should be encouraged to find the optimal algorithms and best access to at-risk populations.

Recommendations are given also to learn from each other in implementation of anti-retroviral drug therapy, as well as to develop projects in order to remove discrimination and stigma of HIV-infected people. It is emphasized that inter-sectoral coordination is becoming more and more important and that the Steering Committee of the Programme has an important role in promoting it.

The Steering Committee met in May 2011 in Petrozavodsk in order to discuss the current situation of HIV as well as of co-infection of HIV and tuberculosis. Special attention was paid to the epidemic situation of the host region, Karelia. The participants were informed that during the last 2 years the number of HIV infection cases has been increasing in Karelia. In 2010, there were 114 new cases detected, most of which had been transmitted due sexual contact – 58%. The share of the young people of 20-29 years of age among the HIV infected cases is 57%, but the infection is "getting older".

At the meeting in Petrozavodsk it was noted that it is problematic that there is no federal normative document about prevention and treatment of HIV+TB. HIV-infected persons should get TB screening in the AIDS centre and not in the TB dispensary - in order not to catch TB while screening.

Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre celebrated its **20 years** of activity and organised a **conference** on 1 December. The seminar covered e.g. the following themes: development of the HIV situation in Northwest Russia, developing HIV/AIDS services in the Murmansk Region, the impact of Murmansk AIDS Centre in the development of HIV collaboration in Barents and Northern Dimension area, international experience in preventing HIV infection, problems in diagnosing and treating TN in HIV-infected patients.

Two **study tours** were financed by NCM: 1. for project "Social partnership against drug addiction - preventing HIV/AIDS in Northwest Russia" - to Norway and Finland in March-April 2011; and 2. for project "Together for youth" to Finland and Sweden in October-November 2011.

Representatives of the Barents HIV Steering Committee participated in meetings of the new **Barents Tuberculosis Programme**. Meetings took place in St. Petersburg in May and October.

As Finland and the Republic of Komi were chairing JWGHS during 2010–2011, the Programme Coordinator participated in organization of many activities of the chairmanship, including tuberculosis meetings mentioned above and **JWGHS meetings** in March in St. Petersburg and in October in Syktyvkar. The activities of the Barents HIV Programme were presented in both JWGHS meetings.

The **financing of coordination** of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme is implemented through a Finnish-Russian project. The **application for 2012** was submitted for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland.

Regular contacts were kept with the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections. The Barents activities were reported to the meetings of the Expert Group of NDPHS, and vice versa. The Chairperson of the Expert Group participated at the Barents HIV meeting and Murmansk Conference.

Projects

At present there are 12 ongoing projects under the umbrella of the Barents HIV/AIDS programme, and 6 projects under consideration. All these projects are also considered to be under the umbrella of the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections. (Annex 2)

Annexes

- Annex 1** Members of the Steering Committee
- Annex 2** List of projects

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List of projects under the umbrella of Barents HIV/AIDS Programme

List of projects being implemented during 2011

ONGOING FINNISH – RUSSIAN PROJECTS

1. “Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Regions. (Phase III): Technical assistance and coordination.” (2011-2012) Coordination: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland and Ministries of Health and Social Development of Northwest Russia. Budget for 2011: EUR 164,900. Financier: Finland.
2. Strengthening of municipal anti-drug networking in the Murmansk Region (2010–2012). Coordination THL (Finland) and Monchegorsk City Administration. Budget for 2011 - 90,600 EUR + local input. Financier: Finland.
3. HIV prevention among reproductive-aged women in the Republic of Karelia (2010–2012). Coordination: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland and the Republican AIDS Centre, the Republic of Karelia. Budget for 2011 - 74,600 EUR + local input. Financier: Finland.
4. TB/HIV collaboration in Murmansk. Project planning phase 2009. Implementation 2010–2012. Coordination FILHA, Finland. Budget for 2011 - 97,000 EUR. Financier: Finland. *Interrupted in August 2011.*

Development of low threshold services in Leningrad Region (2010–2012). Coordination THL and Leningrad regional AIDS centre. (- not officially Barents region). Budget for 2011 - 84,000 EUR. Financier: Finland.

ONGOING NORWEGIAN – RUSSIAN PROJECTS

5. "Health under prevention guard" - mobile facility for adolescents and youth designated to prevent HIV/AIDS and drug abuse; medical, social and psychological assistance; HIV and hepatitis testing. (May 2010-) Approximate budget NOK 200,000. Coordination: Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre and Centre for Social Medicine (Tromsø). Financier: Norway. NDPHS ID 154
6. “Cross action between STI Clinic in Archangelsk and Olafia Clinic in Oslo”. Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget for 2011: NOK 112,500. Financier: Norway (B504). NDPHS ID 1392.
7. Face the problem. Peer education. Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway, partners in Archangelsk Region. Financier: Norway (B1001; NOK 135,000 granted in 2010).
8. “HIV and co-infections in Murmansk region, seminar”. Coordination: University Hospital of Northern Norway. Approximate budget for 2010: NOK 206,000. Project region: Murmansk Oblast, Russia.
9. "Camp Murmansk 2010". Health promotion, education and information concerning HIV and AIDS. (Duration: May 2010 - Dec 2011.) Coordination: NGO New Beginning and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre, University of Bergen, Norway. Financing: Norway. NDPHS ID 1397
10. Vera 2: HIV and STI prevention among Russian-speaking female sex-workers in Norway and Northwest Russia. Approximate budget in 2011: NOK 397,800. Coordination: NGO Stellit, St. Petersburg and Pro Center, Oslo. Financing Norway. *Estimated starting time: January 2012.*
11. Enhancing tolerance in society to people with HIV/AIDS through training of media professionals. Coordination: NGO Sodeistvie, Petrozavodsk and Olav Andre Manum, Norway.

Approximate budget for 2011: NOK 250,000.

12. THINK Murmansk - a pilot youth empowerment. Youth campaign on HIV/AIDS. Coordination: Think Mental Fashion, Norway and Committee for cooperation with NGOs and youth affairs of the Murmansk Region. Approximate budget for 2011: NOK 326,000.

List of projects under consideration (in December 2011)

1. "Social partnership in prevention of HIV/AIDS and TB". Training of prison personnel in Northwest Russia; work with drug users in Kaliningrad Region. (Duration: 2011-2013.) NCM St. Petersburg office, NGO Stellit (St. Petersburg), NGO Rassvet (Archangelsk) and NGO YLA (Kaliningrad). Applied from NCM.
2. Training in HIV prevention for health and social workers. Based on results of the research project "The Governance of HIV/AIDS Prevention in North-West Russia". Coordination: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Norway. Applied from Norway through NDPHS pipeline.
3. Cross action between the STI Clinic in Archangelsk and the Olafia Clinic in Oslo, and the Archangelsk regional AIDS Centre. Coordination: Olafiaklinikken, Oslo. Applied from Norway through NDPHS pipeline.
4. Face to face with the problem III. Coordination: Pertinax group, Norway and Archangelsk Regional AIDS Centre. Applied from Norway through NDPHS pipeline.
5. "Challenges and best practices in MDR tuberculosis control among vulnerable populations". Application to organize a seminar in St. Petersburg, including the theme of HIV-TB co-infection. THL, FILHA, Karolinska Institutet and LHL. Applied from the Finnish chairmanship of NCM in 2011. *Did not get financing, but the idea is not abandoned*
6. Enhancing of HIV prevention in Murmansk prisons and among ex-inmates and their families. Coordinators - the Murmansk Low Threshold Support Centre and THL. *Applied from Finland, did not receive funding in 2011, and might be re-applied from another donor.*

List of completed projects

1. "Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions in 2005–2007" Coordination of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme and support to EG on HIV/AIDS for the ND partnership. Coordination: STAKES, Finland. Approximate budget EUR 715,000 (3 years). Financier: Finnish Government.
2. "Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions. Phase II." (2008-2010) Coordination: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland and Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Murmansk Region. Budget EUR 573,000 + local input (3 years). Financier: Finland.
3. Development of Low Threshold Support Centre in Murmansk region" (2005-2007). Pilot project of the above mentioned programme. Coordination: STAKES, Finland. Budget EUR 247,905. Financier: Finland.
4. "Further development of low threshold services in Murmansk and Kantalahti" (2008-2010). Continuation of the Pilot project of the above mentioned programme. Coordination: THL (Finland) and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre. Budget EUR 270,000 + local input (3

- years). Financier: Finland.
5. "Workshop of workers in LTC sites for IDUs". Coordination: National Public Health Institute, Finland. Approximate budget EUR 20,000. Financier: Finland.
 6. "AIDS Alarm in North-West Russia". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget NOK 151,000. Financier: Norway.
 7. "Sexual and reproductive Health of Adolescents in Northwestern Russia" Coordination: Sweden, RFSU. Approximate budget SEK 16,091,000 (1997–2007).
 8. "Activate patients at Murmansk Municipal HIV/AIDS Centre". Coordination: Norway and Murmansk AIDS Centre. Approximate budget NOK 16,000. Financier: Norway
 9. "The Bus" for Republican AIDS Centre, Petrozavodsk. Approximate budget NOK 250,000. Financier: Norway (Humanitarian Fund of Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit).
 10. "The ConTact Bus – Arkhangelsk Region". Coordination: Norway. Approximate Budget: NOK 280,000 (Continues with financing by the Arkhangelsk Region)
 11. "Territory of Life. Mobile unit work for prevention of HIV in Murmansk Region" Coordination: Norwegian Institute of Public Health. Approximate budget NOK 270,000. Financier: Norway.
 12. HIV/STI and Drug preventive efforts in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Karelia". Coordination: Sweden - Noaks Ark Barents. Approximate budget – SEK 980 000
 13. "Only for you". The ConTact Bus- Murmansk Region (B606). Coordination: Norway and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre. Approximate Budget 34 700 USD
 14. "Love your neighbour". Arkhangelsk region. Coordination: Norway. Approximate Budget 330 000 NOK
 15. Youth peer education in Murmansk related to HIV, STI and communication skills (B710). Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway, partner Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre. Approximate budget NOK 90,000. Financier: Norway. (Grant given in 2007, no grant received in 2008).
 16. Assistance in development of palliative aid in Arkhangelsk Region 2007. Coordination: Norwegian Church Aid and NGO Rassvet. Approximate budget 214 000 NOK.
 17. The Clinton HIV/AIDS initiative and Russia. Exchange of Russian and Norwegian clinicians". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget - NOK 460,000.
 18. "HIV: to be aware means to live". Coordination: Norwegian Church Aid and NGO Rassvet, Arkhangelsk Region. Approximate budget: 250 000 NOK.
 19. Strengthening of inter-sectoral action to fight drug abuse and drug related harm in Murmansk Region 2008–2009". Coordination: THL, Finland and Anti-Drug Commission of the Murmansk Region. Approximate budget EUR 178,000. Financier: Finland through NDPHS project pipeline.
 20. "Prevention of HIV infection in the Republic of Karelia in 2007–2009". Coordination: THL, Finland and Republican AIDS Centre of Karelia. Approximate budget EUR 300,000 (3 years). Financier: Finland.
 21. Vera". Development of international network of interaction between organisations dealing with women and adolescents, involved in commercial sex business and trafficking victims. Coordination: NGO Stellit, Russia (Pro Sentret, Norway). (No grants given for 2009.)
 22. (*"Psychological and social support to HIV infected women in Leningrad Oblast 2007–2009". Coordination: THL, Finland and Leningrad Oblast AIDS Centre. Approximate budget EUR 300,000 (3 years). Financier: Finland. - Leningrad oblast is not officially Barents region)*
 23. Youth peer education in Arkhangelsk related to HIV, STI and communication skills. Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway, three partners in Arkhangelsk Region. Financier: Norway (B808; NOK 125,000 granted in 2009).
 24. Research project "The Governance of HIV/AIDS Prevention in North-West Russia".

Coordination: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Norway.

Approximate budget: EUR 622,500. Financier: Research Council of Norway. Training and dissemination component of the project is financed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs through NDPHS project pipeline.

25. Educational project "New View" in the sphere of the HIV/AIDS and drug addiction prevention, organization of voluntary group for the specialists, working with teenagers and young people, students of higher and special educational institutions. Coordination: Norwegian Sami Mission, partner "New Beginning", Murmansk Region. (Project B816; granted NOK 200,000 in 2009).
26. "Prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections in Northwest Russia with particular focus on capacity and capability building of partner consortium and local government. Coordination: DanChurchAid office in St. Petersburg, partners Botkin Hospital, Humanitarian Action Foundation and PSP-fund Ravnovesie. Financier: Norway.
27. Social partnership against drug addiction, HIV/AIDS in Northwest Russia (2009–2010). (Archangelsk and other northwestern regions of Russia). Financing NCM and Archangelsk regional government.