



Annual report of the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS) for 2012

During 2012, the JWGHS adopted the Barents TB- programme and provided input to the Barents Action Plan on Climate Change. 2012 was the first year of implementation of the 4th Barents Collaboration Programme in Health and Related Social Issues 2012-2015. Two meetings of the JWGHS were held – one in Murmansk and one in Karelia. The Steering Groups of the Barents TB- Programme and the Barents HIV/AIDS programme held a joint session in Oslo. A jubilee conference for the CYAR-programme took place in Petrozavodsk. An NGO-forum on HIV and tuberculosis was arranged in Saint Petersburg by the Steering Groups of the Barents HIV/AIDS programme and the Barents TB-programme, together with the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and associated infection. Norway (as co-chair) took part in the reference group for the BEAC chairmanship and reported to the BEAC CSO-meeting in Oslo in December.

1. Introduction

The Chairmanship was shared between Norway and the Republic of Karelia in 2012. (Ms. Vibeke Rosvold Gundersen, Senior adviser of the Ministry of Health and Care Services, and Ms. Valentina Ulich, Minister of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Karelia).

2. Meetings during 2012

The JWGHS had two meetings during 2012. One hosted by Norway in the Royal Norwegian Consulate in Murmansk 12 March and one hosted by Karelia in the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Karelia 6 November.

3. Members of the JWGHS

Members of the Working Group are Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Both the central government level and the Barents regions in all four countries are represented. The Indigenous People's Working Group is represented by a member. The EU Commission, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being take part in the work as needed.

4. Activities

Activities were based on the 4th Barents Collaboration Programme on Health and Related Social issues 2012 - 2015. The scope and priorities of the programme are:

- Prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases

- Reduction of lifestyle-related risk factors to improve health and the social situation of the Population
- Development of primary health care, public health and social services.

The Barents Co-operation Programme has worked through three programmes during the reporting period. The Working Group has also during 2012 adopted a Barents TB Programme.

The three programmes under the cooperation programme and their activities are described as follows.

5. Programme on HIV/AIDS in the Barents Region

The Barents HIV/AIDS Programme aims at strengthening the national capacity to respond to the HIV epidemic. The objective is to improve the situation among vulnerable groups.

This programme was first established in 2005 and then prolonged for 2008 – 2011. The Programme is also included into the 4th Co-operation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region for 2012-2015.

Chair of the Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme is Ms Evgenia Kotova, Deputy Minister of Health from the Republic of Komi. Finland finances the programme coordinator.

In 2012 the Steering Committee had two meetings, and it participated in organisation of a NGO Forum.

The Steering Committee together with the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections organised a **NGO Forum on HIV and Tuberculosis** on 22-23 November, 2012, in St. Petersburg, Russia. The Forum was organised in cooperation with

- Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office in St. Petersburg,
- Regional NGO "Stellit",
- Consulate General of Finland, St. Petersburg
- Drug Abuse Prevention Center, St. Petersburg,
- UNAIDS Regional Support Team, Moscow, and
- Barents Tuberculosis Programme

Aims of the Forum were the following:

- to discuss current tendencies, challenges and strategic views on the situation with HIV and tuberculosis in Northern Dimension area
- to share best practices and discuss possibilities of future collaboration in the following areas:
 - Prevention of HIV among youth;
 - Prevention of HIV and TB in penitentiary institutions;
 - Intersectoral, interregional and international cooperation on combating HIV and TB.
 - IDUs access to comprehensive services, as well as role of NGOs in increasing

access to HIV treatment;

- to present the long-term action plan/ objective analysis of the NDPHS HIV/AIDS&AI Expert Group and to collect comments and input from NGOs.

The Forum was attended by 80 representatives from NGOs, GOs from Northwest Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Forum included a workshop which produced altogether 23 project ideas, as well as numerous comments into the objective analysis of the HIV/AIDS&AI EG.

The Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme **had two meetings in 2012**: the first in May in Oslo; the second in St. Petersburg in November 2012 in connection with the NGO Forum.

At the Oslo meeting the main themes were presentation of the Norwegian HIV strategy, results of the EMIS project, development of HIV situation in NW Russia and questions concerning continuation of the Programme. The collaboration was started in a different situation; nowadays Russian regions do have all the necessary information and knowledge.

6. Tuberculosis Programme; follow-up of the Kirkenes declaration 2003

The JWGHS has continued its follow-up of the Declaration of the Prime Ministers at their meeting at Kirkenes 2003. The declaration states that the Barents authorities are to gain full control of the tuberculosis situation in the region within 10 years, i.e. in 2013 at the latest.

In order to coordinate the efforts against tuberculosis in the region, planning of the Barents Tuberculosis programme was implemented during 2011. The Barents TB Programme was presented at and approved by the 16th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS), in Petrizavodsk, Karelia. The actual goal of the Barents Tuberculosis Program is to take more active measures to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and HIV/TB co-infection in the Barents region through intensive international collaboration.

The following measures are suggested for this purpose:

- To establish and strengthen the mechanisms of collaboration and joint management between HIV programmes and TB-control programmes for delivering integrated TB and HIV services.
- To develop the guidelines, standards and standard infectious control programs for the Russian part of the Barents region. To improve the implementation of the existing plans for infection control
- To introduction earlier and more accurate diagnostics of TB and MDR TB
- To improve Capacities of facilities and Institutions
- To develop closer interaction between the civilian and penitentiary healthcare services.
- Further develop cooperation between the Russian Federation and Northern European countries in prevention and treatment of tuberculosis.

The Steering Committee meeting in Oslo, in May 2011, approved the final version of Barents TB Programme. The meeting also elected Prof.Sven Hofner, Director of the WHO Supranational TB

Reference Laboratory, Department for Preparedness, Swedish Institute for Communicable Disease Control, as Co-Chair of the SC. The joint meeting with the SC of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme took also place in Oslo, where issues related to the strengthening of cooperation between those two programmes were discussed.

The Barents TB Programme SC was invited and it had organized special session on TB, during the 2nd European Conference on Antimicrobial resistance and Infection Prevention, which took place in Vilnius (Lithuania), in October, 2012. The programme was also introduced at the meeting of the TUBIDU Project, which is co-funded by Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC). The aim of this project is to empower Civil Society and Public Health system to fight TB among vulnerable groups.

At the end of the year, the SC had participated in the NGO Forum on HIV and TB, which took place in St.Petersburg. Possible project proposals related to the involvement of the NGOs in the prevention of TB were discussed and presented at the Forum.

The SC developed suggestions for the activities with the aim for achieving the 2015 target related to TB within the Millennium Development goals in Barents Region. The Steering Committee of the Programme keeps a close contact with the NDPHS.

7. Programme on Children and Youth at Risk in the Barents Region (CYAR)

The CYAR programme for 2008 - 2015 aims at strengthening the competence among the regional and local social administrations and at stimulating inter-agency co-operation in the Barents Region, in order to assist children and youth at risk. The programme has had four key activity areas:

1. Situation review in the Barents region - through annual regional reports and Barents meetings
2. Annual conference of experts on issues related to children and youth at risk
3. Dissemination of knowledge about methods of working with children and youth at risk. Several selected sub-programmes targeted at children and youth at risk are implemented:
 - Incredible years (focusing on children with behaviour problems)
 - Family group conferences
 - Aggression replacement training (ART) and Family ART
 - What About Us? (focusing on special needs parenting for parents of children with disabilities)
 - Restorative justice - intermediary committees (for minor offenders)
4. Exchange of information; design of a web-site for CYAR and International Barents Secretariat.

The chair of the CYAR Steering Committee is Mr. Pål Christian Bergstrøm, Director of Bufetat (Children, Youth & Family Department) Region North, Norway. For the years 2008-2012 the CYAR programme has been allocated approximately 1 million euro through the NDPHS/Norway.

In 2012, the Steering Committee had two meetings; in June in Oulu (Finland) and in November in Petrozavodsk (Karelia, Russia). In addition to the projects run in CYAR, the Steering Committee coordinates also a large bulk of other related (Norwegian-Russian) work in the Barents region.

Representatives of the CYAR Programme held a number of meetings with organizations and representatives for the regional and national authorities relevant for the cooperation on children and youth at risk. Regular meetings with regional ministries of Health and Social development, ministries of Education, commissions on minors and protection of their rights, representatives of the penitentiary services of the project region have ensured good communication and understanding between the partners. At the meetings with the Penalty service in Moscow (Russia, August), in Norway (Stavanger, September) and the Penalty service in Vologda (Russia, August) the topic of CYAR competence sharing on ART "Aggression Replacement Training" within the Russian penitentiary system was discussed. So far, the ART is under pilot implementation in two youth colonies in Russia (colony for boys and colony for girls).

The Ministries of Justice of Russia and Norway signed a co-operation programme for 2010-2012 in the field of children and youth at risk in the regions of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Within the CYAR programme the work is in progress on implementing restorative justice or mediation in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk (Russian Federation) according to the cooperation programme mentioned above and regional protocols on co-operation on minor offenders between Norway and Archangelsk Oblast and Norway and Murmansk Oblast.

The results of CYAR 2008 – 2012 were presented on the Barents Youth Conference on October 22, 2012 in Tromsø (Norway). On November 8th, 2012, in Petrozavodsk an annual conference on CYAR related topic took place. The conference presented the results of the 10 year long cooperation between Norway and Republic of Karelia on social services for children and families in a difficult life situation.

The main activity in 2012 was the implementation of the CYAR Programme Support Project 2010-2012. This consists of dissemination of the selected evidence-based methods for children and youth at risk, with competence building in all Russian regions under the direct supervision of the Steering committee. Within the CYAR support project, in 2012 189 specialists were trained for work with programs and approximately 700 children and parents got help from trained specialists.

The CYAR SC has developed the continuation of the programme during the upcoming Cooperation Programme period 2012-15. On October 2, 2012, the CYAR has signed a Grant contract with the Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme for 2012 – 2014 with the total budget approximately 2 mln euro. For the next programme period 2012 – 2015, CYAR will focus specifically at multilateral aspect of the project as well as more attention will be given to sexual exploitation, corporal punishment and monitoring of children's rights. An online educational programme "From Violence To Caring" developed by the University of Oulu has started in September 2012 and includes students, teachers, social workers from the Barents region.

In connection with the continuation of the CYAR programme an application on national co-financing have been submitted to NDPHS/Norway. For the next period the CYAR has also signed an agreement with the Russian Charity Fund "Spread Your Wings!" (Moscow) that will provide national co-financing for the Russian partners.

Co-operation with the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council is a Partner of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS). The Barents co-operation programme in the field of health and social issues is adapted to the NDPHS priorities. Finland as the chair of the NDPHS has made presentations on recent developments in the NDPHS in all three Barents meetings during the chairmanship. The participants of the Committee of Senior Representatives of the NDPHDS have been informed on the recent developments in JWGHS on continuous basis.

The chair of the NDPHS expert group on alcohol and substance abuse (ASA EG) was invited to the meeting in Petrozavodsk to inform about the groups activities and links to the JWGHS. A sub-group of the ASA EG met in Petrozavodsk the following day.