



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
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FINAL REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IRELAND

HIV/AIDS National Capacity Building and Awareness Raising Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project Category:	Migration and Health
Project Sub-Category:	HIV/AIDS Prevention
Executing Agency:	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Project partner agencies	UNAIDS, the Federation Ministry of Health, the RS Ministry of Health, IGs, NGOs and Media
Geographical Coverage:	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Project Management Site:	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Target Group(s):	Mobile and host populations, NGOs, mass media professionals
Total Budget:	50,666.50 Euro
Project period:	January - June 2005 (6 months)

SUMMARY

On the basis of the high mobility trend that characterizes BiH and the limited access to health care for migrants, IOM Sarajevo identified that there is an urgent need to provide information and services to mobile communities in BiH, in order to address their particular vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS. IOM Sarajevo additionally highlighted the significance of the presentation of HIV/AIDS in the mass media in BiH. Four main activities were completed during the project, in order to further the knowledge base in BiH about these key areas.

IOM Sarajevo designed and implemented two social researches related to HIV/AIDS in BiH. The first, 'Mobile Populations and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina', was a pilot Knowledge, Awareness and Practices (KAP) research which analysed samples from targeted mobile populations in BiH; 632 people from the seven key target mobile groups participated in this pilot research. The second research, 'Mass Media and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina' comprised both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the mass media and HIV/AIDS during 2005 through detailed analysis of outputs and two focus groups.

Additionally, IOM Sarajevo built the capacity of relevant NGOs and mass media representatives to appropriately deal with HIV/AIDS issues through two targeted trainings: 'HIV/AIDS and Mobile Populations: Strengthening NGO Cooperation and Communication' and 'Mass Media and HIV/AIDS: Informing Attitudes and Behaviour'. 26 NGO representatives attended the first training, and 24 media and NGO representatives attended the second.

As a result of all activities conducted under this project, IOM Sarajevo was able to strengthen local and national-level awareness and understanding of key HIV/AIDS issues among related actors in both the NGO sector and the media. IOM Sarajevo additionally supported the development of communicative relations between all targeted actors, in order to facilitate sustainable cooperation in the future.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BiH is currently considered a 'low epidemic' country in terms of HIV infection, with a small reported number of HIV/AIDS cases¹. However, there are many risk factors present in BiH, which combine to place BiH at a high level of vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The large mobile population in BiH, including refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Trafficked Human Beings (THBs), labour/economic migrants, and international peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, is a potentially vulnerable group to HIV infection. Many of these mobile groups are frequently without access to any health care information or treatment.

IOM Sarajevo implemented four main activities under this project which aimed to decrease the vulnerability of mobile populations in BiH to HIV/AIDS, and support the BiH National Strategy for HIV/AIDS. All activities involved consultation and cooperation with the Ministries of Health in the Federation and Republika Srpska, International Organizations and national Non-Governmental Organizations.

Two social researches were conducted in order to assess the needs and perceptions of migrant groups, and assess the best approaches to reach them with HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The first research was entitled 'Mobile Populations and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina', comprising a pilot quantitative data collection on the HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of targeted mobile populations in BiH. The second research, 'Mass Media and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina', analyzed mass media outputs for 2005 in BiH, on the basis of key indicators provided by IOM Sarajevo. Additionally, qualitative research was carried out on this topic, through two focus groups which explored public perceptions of the media and HIV/AIDS.

IOM additionally strengthened the awareness and ability of local actors and the media to address HIV/AIDS among mobile populations, through two capacity building training courses. The first, 'HIV/AIDS and Mobile Populations: Strengthening NGO Cooperation and Communication' gathered national NGOs working with mobile groups and/or HIV/AIDS issues in order to build their communication and synergized action. 'Mass Media and HIV/AIDS: Informing Attitudes and Behaviour', brought together media representatives, national NGOs and governmental representatives in order to explore issues related to presentation of HIV/AIDS in the mass media.

¹ According to World Health Organisation and UNAIDS

2. ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

2.1 Preparations/Assessments

In order to ensure the compatibility of activities with the work of national and international Governmental institutions, IOM Sarajevo discussed the planned activities with the two HIV/AIDS Coordinators for the Ministries of Health in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH, and the Chair of the BiH United Nations Thematic Group on HIV/AIDS. Following these discussions, IOM Sarajevo identified key mobile groups to target through research, and primary organizations for which planned trainings would be most appropriate.

2.2 'Mobile Populations and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina' KAP Research

On the basis of governmental priorities indicated by meetings with the entity-level Ministries of Health, IOM Sarajevo designed a pilot Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) research to be distributed among key mobile groups.

During January 2006 IOM Sarajevo prepared a draft questionnaire, based on key indicators. The questionnaire was three pages long and, apart from initial questions regarding demographic information, questions were multiple choice for easy completion (Please find KAP Questionnaire in Annex 1 of KAP Research Report). The questionnaire was distributed among relevant key organizations working in the field for their comments and suggestions. A 'test run' of the questionnaire was completed on January 24th 2006 among visitors to the IOM Medical Centre, and improvements were made to the questionnaire following this trial.

IOM Sarajevo decided that the research would gather baseline data on a range of mobile groups in BiH: Roma, International Transport (truck and bus) Drivers, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees, Humanitarian and Development Workers, Victims of Abuse and Trafficking and Irregular Migrants. The questionnaire was translated into Russian, Romanian and Albanian, in order to assist distribution among all target populations.

A total of 632 people from across the target groups completed the KAP questionnaire:

- 220 Roma in BiH
- 128 International Transport Drivers in Federation of BiH
- 105 Refugees/Asylum Seekers in Reception Centres in BiH
- 67 Internally Displaced Peoples/Returnees in the Republika Srpska
- 50 International Humanitarian/Development Workers in Sarajevo
- 32 Victims of Abuse and Trafficking in Shelters
- 30 Irregular Migrants through IOM AVR

Questionnaires were gathered during March - May 2006, and results were statistically analyzed by Mareco Index Bosnia (MIB) Market Research Company. As it was apparent that results varied between target groups, results were kept separate between groups. Results were compiled into a report, containing background on HIV/AIDS and mobile groups in BiH, general population briefs, summary of results, full results, key findings and recommendations for future targeted preventative action. IOM Sarajevo received the final analysis from MIB on 8th May 2006.

As was anticipated, this research revealed significant differences in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of each target group regarding HIV/AIDS. Although none of the risk groups which were targeted through the research contained a majority which considered themselves to be 'at risk', the low level of general knowledge about HIV/AIDS among some groups indicates the potential for risk behaviour.

The wide need for more information regarding where HIV testing facilities in BiH was revealed, as the majority of participants in all groups, excepting 'victims of abuse and trafficking', did not know where an HIV test could be taken. Additionally, negative attitudes towards those living with HIV were indicated through responses to questions regarding an infected friend, or the sharing of toilet facilities with an infected person, among all groups apart from international humanitarian / development workers.

On the basis of the research findings, the following mobile groups were identified as potentially at an increased risk of HIV infection: Roma, International Transport Drivers, Refugees / Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants. These groups demonstrated particular potential risk on the basis of a significantly low knowledge of some or all of the basic details of HIV/AIDS and HIV infection routes. In particular, responses to two basic UNAIDS key indicators regarding mosquito bites and sharing a meal with an infected person as possible means of HIV transmission indicated low level of knowledge.

IOM Sarajevo recommended that further investigation be carried out with the key Risk Groups identified through the pilot research. Additionally, it was concluded that, as Victims of Trafficking, Internally Displaced People and Returnees could not be targeted effectively through the research, additional follow-up research should be carried out with these groups. IOM Sarajevo also recommended that future, targeted preventative action be carried out with vulnerable groups.

The final research report was produced in PDF format in both English and Bosnian, and will be distributed to the Ministries of Health in the Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH, members of the United Nations Thematic Group on HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNTG), and key national NGOs working within this field in BiH. Please find the KAP Research Report attached in Annex 1.

2.3 'Mass Media and HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina' Research

Following discussion with key actors in the field of HIV/AIDS (Ministries of Health, UNFPA, national reproductive health NGOs XY and APOHA), IOM Sarajevo designed and implemented a Mass Media Research. Market Research Company Mareco Index Bosnia (MIB) was hired in order to conduct two main activities:

- Mass Media Analysis of key print and broadcast outputs during 2005. The Mass Media Analysis comprised detailed analysis of:
 - Print Media throughout 2005
 - Television Outputs Focused on HIV/AIDS throughout 2005
 - Print and Television Outputs on World AIDS Day (1st December 2005)

- Two Focus Groups regarding the Mass Media and HIV/AIDS

The research was carried out by MIB, beginning on 23rd February 2006, on the basis of key indicators provided by IOM Sarajevo, including breakdown of outputs, confidentiality, information provided about HIV/AIDS etc. Results were sent to IOM Sarajevo for final analysis on 23rd May 2006. On the basis of these findings, IOM Sarajevo produced the final Media Research Report.

Mass Media Analysis key findings were:

- An extremely low number of articles in BiH print media specifically and seriously dealt with HIV/AIDS news or related information during 2005. Just 569 articles across the 11 national publications surveyed throughout 2005 - included keywords HIV/AIDS/SIDA -, and the majority of press outputs (54.7%) were 'Secondary Outputs', in which keywords were mentioned as incidental to the main story.
- HIV/AIDS issues in the BiH print media were generally covered as part of another story, usually following a specific event or development in the international or, to a lesser extent, national arenas during 2005.
- The majority of journalists in BiH reported on HIV/AIDS responsibly in the print media during 2005. Investigation into the 'tone' of journalism found that the majority of Primary Articles (88.4%), maintained neutrality when presenting HIV/AIDS.
- A significant number of print media outputs related to O. P. a victim of trafficking and sex worker who died in Mostar in 2005 violated Privacy Article 9 of the 1999 Press Code during 2005. 15.4% Secondary Articles related to the case of 'O. P.', and reported her name and other personal details.
- There was little investigative or in-depth broadcast journalism regarding HIV/AIDS in BiH, leading to production of a television series on the topic. Regarding television output, only one specific commercial/television series related to HIV/AIDS could be found during 2005, in the form of an information campaign designed by a national sexual health NGO.
- World AIDS Day 2005 (1st December) was marked by a minor increase in coverage of HIV/AIDS in print media, and a number of broadcast outputs in BiH.

Focus Groups key findings were:

- Participants overall felt that their knowledge of HIV/AIDS issues, transmission and treatment was adequate. However, a number of participants stated that they would like to receive more information on HIV/AIDS, specifically on transmission/ treatment methods and prevention.
- Participants generally agreed that the number of infected people is bigger than the media present, although they commented that the media just publishes what it receives from its sources.

- Respondents indicated the importance of having real life examples in the media, in order to find out the ‘real story’ from people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Participants noted the increase of information regarding HIV/AIDS in the BiH media on World AIDS Day 2005. In both groups, focus group respondents identified that people talk more about HIV/AIDS on 1st December. However, participants considered that this was inadequate, and awareness should also be high during the rest of the year.

The final research report was produced in PDF format in both English and Bosnian, and will be distributed to the Ministries of Health in the Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH, members of the United Nations Thematic Group on HIV/AIDS in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNTG), and key NGOs working within this field in BiH. Please find the Media Research Report attached in Annex 2.

2.4 NGO Training

‘HIV/AIDS and Mobile Populations: Strengthening NGO Cooperation and Communication’ was a two-day training course held on 19-20th April 2006 in Sarajevo. Twenty six national NGO representatives attended the training, who were based in the fields of sexual/reproductive health, youth health, women’s health, mobile groups (including refugees and victims of trafficking) and local activism.

The training aimed to guide NGOs in the development of communication, lobbying and strategizing skills regarding HIV/AIDS prevention among mobile populations in BiH. Additionally, two regional IOM HIV/AIDS representatives attended, from IOM Kosovo and IOM Macedonia, in order to present information about HIV/AIDS and mobility elsewhere in the region, reflect upon IOM research and trainings in the 2003 HIV/AIDS project, and discuss possible activities and strategies for targeting mobile groups in BiH. Two professional trainers from Italy led the programme.

The training covered issues including:

- The role and position of NGOs in BiH
- Strategies for communication and lobbying
- Presentation of data on mobility and HIV in Macedonia, Kosovo and BiH (presentations by IOM Pristina, IOM Macedonia and IOM BiH)
- Design of preventative activities concerning HIV/AIDS and mobile groups in BiH

The training received positive and constructive feedback. Through participant evaluation questionnaires the participants average feedback included:

- 3.6 out of 5 for meeting participant expectations
- 3.3 out of 5 for being useful in participants’ future work
- 3.7 out of 5 for interest value of training

The training experienced some constraints: there was a wide range of experience and knowledge regarding the topic, some participants demonstrated a much lower level participant knowledge about basic facts of HIV/AIDS than had been anticipated; some

participants were expecting different things from the training than had been told to them. These constraints were overcome through the modification of the agenda, in order to enable participants to share their varied knowledge and experience with each other as far as possible. Strong collaborative links between many NGOs were built, as indicated by final evaluation questionnaires and subsequent contact between NGOs.

Recommendations for the future based on this training include follow-up trainings on HIV/AIDS facts, prevention and assistance within mobile populations among all participants, in order to build upon this introduction to the key issues. In addition, it was revealed that many NGOs working in this field are in need of an extensive basic training on HIV/AIDS. Please find the NGO Training Report in Annex 3.

2.5 Media Training

The two-day training ‘Mass Media and HIV/AIDS: Informing Attitudes and Behaviour’ was held on 7-8th June 2006, for twenty representatives of the mass media (print and broadcast media and media agencies), four key sexual health NGOs and the two HIV/AIDS coordinators from the Ministries of Health in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH. In order to secure the full participation of media representatives, the training was held in a location equidistant from Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

The aim of the Mass Media and HIV/AIDS training was to provide the opportunity for participants to explore the impact of media communications regarding HIV/AIDS in BiH, and to suggest strategies for appropriate outputs on HIV/AIDS. The training was coordinated by the IOM Regional Coordinator for HIV/AIDS, IOM Rome and a Journalist from AdnKronos (Italian media agency).

The training covered topics including:

- An overview of basic facts and current HIV/AIDS situation in BiH (presentations by HIV/AIDS Coordinators from Ministries of Health in Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH)
- Science journalism techniques
- Avoiding discrimination, loaded terminology and sensationalism in HIV/AIDS reporting
- Diverse strategies for presenting information about HIV/AIDS e.g. video campaigns

Participant evaluations of the trainings were extremely positive. An average score of participant feedback includes:

- 4.2 out of 5 for meeting participant expectations
- 4.2 out of 5 for how useful it will be in participants’ future work
- 4 out of 5 for interest value of training

Although the training was too short to develop future strategies for cooperation, debate was opened into the role of the media in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Thus, in addition to strengthening participant knowledge about HIV/AIDS, the training opened a debate between media representatives, NGOs and Government, regarding the possibilities for future communication and cooperation. The event was well-covered in the media, as all media

representatives subsequently reported on the training, both in broadcast and print media. Please find the Media Training Report in Annex 4.

4. CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Although all project activities were satisfactorily completed, there were some constraints to activities:

- Limited Timeframe
As the project was ambitious in its scope and planned activities within a short planned time, it is possible that activities could have been more comprehensive with more time. The KAP research, in particular, targeted a number of hard-to-reach target groups, and as a result the samples were small. Extended research needs to follow this pilot examination. Furthermore, many participants from the trainings expressed their desire to continue activities, building strong networks in order to cooperate more closely in the future. Under the present project, this was not possible. In order to ensure the sustainability of activities as far as possible, IOM will ensure that research reports will be disseminated among all relevant actors, and that results of the project will be available to all for future continuation of any of the initiatives under the project.
- Mass Media Research
A few problems were experienced with the media analysis 2005 – most could be rectified. Firstly, in the Mass Media Analysis 2005, some of the key indicators assigned by IOM Sarajevo were misinterpreted by the market research company, despite three extensive meetings prior to beginning the analysis. This was addressed, once IOM Sarajevo had checked the research findings, but some time was lost before the material could be reanalyzed. The market research company also experienced difficulties in conducting the planned broadcast analysis, as general television outputs were too numerous to analyse for HIV/AIDS keywords throughout the year in the short period, for the given budget. The annual television analysis was therefore shortened to encompass only commercials/series dealing solely with HIV/AIDS, of which only one was found. Future research will hopefully be able to cover this area more extensively.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Despite some constraints, the project achieved its objectives; its efficacy is indicated by the positive relationship that has developed and strengthened between key actors working in the HIV/AIDS field in BiH. Baseline data has been provided analyzing HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and practices among a number of mobile populations at risk of HIV/AIDS infection. This will assist further, targeted research to groups identified as particularly vulnerable. It will also support and direct future preventative and treatment-oriented actions by NGOs, International Organizations and governmental actors. Furthermore, the media analysis from 2005 provided a key critical and impartial evaluation of the sensitive topic of media reporting on HIV/AIDS, providing material for discussion and further research in this field.

The first training, targeting NGOs working in this field, brought together key NGO actors to improve cooperation and communication regarding this issue. Many of them did not know about the existence of other NGOs and left having benefited from mutual experience - IOM hopes that future collaborations have been engendered. Furthermore, this training revealed key issues for further attention, highlighting the low level of knowledge about the possible link between HIV/AIDS and mobility in BiH, and a lack of basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS among many participants. This can be developed in future activities by IOM and other actors in the field.

The second training, involved media representatives, NGOs and the government, enabled open discussion about the issues involved in reporting on HIV/AIDS. Sensitive issues were highlighted, and positive participant feedback indicated the impact of this event. Future action must be taken in order to continue the relationship between these key actors.

Thanks to funding made available by DCI, IOM was able to carry out some of the activities outlined in a wider project proposal which was originally planned. This proposal outlined a series of additional activities, including a wider series of trainings for NGOs and the media, a study trip to Italy and two conferences – one national and one international. It is hoped that, due to the success of this project, the interest of governments will be triggered to support the activities not yet implemented and the recommendations outlined in the two research reports.