

APRAD - Albanian Association for Prevention and Rehabilitation from Aids and DrugsAddress: Rr. "Jani Vreto", No. 39, Tirana, Tel/Fax: + 355 (4) 232151, E-mail: aprad_al@hotmail.com, Web site: http://www.geocities.com/aprad_al

The mission of APRAD is "to use harm reduction strategies to reduce risk for HIV or STD acquisition or transmission. Restricting the spread of drug addiction and increase the proportion among injecting drug users (IDUs) who abstain from drug use or, for those who do not abstain, use harm reduction strategies."



In this edition you may read:

Pg.1 Evaluation and monitoring mission of SEP and Human Rights program

Pg.2 APRAD's social activities

Pg.3 APRAD's activities organized in the field

Monitoring and evaluation mission

From 1st-16 of June APRAD had an evaluation and monitoring mission for Syringe Exchange Program and Drop in center and Human Rights program activities.

To the expert charged with the monitoring and evaluation of the work done by APRAD was offered all the available information and materials such as: APRAD's narrative reports, description files, staff files, data bases etc. Further, was presented an overview of the activities and projects that APRAD



is implementing, explaining thus how the professional staffs proceed in a normal working day, registration of

APRAD appreciated as very useful and important the evaluation and monitoring



clients in the confidential files and data base, psychological individual and group sessions, syringe distribution process, participation in training etc.

In addition, the expert was present in some of the activities organized by the staff, such as: field visits, training, focus groups, and lead by the outreach workers he met target groups (IDU, DU, MSM, Roma people, etc.) in the field where APRAD team and outreach workers distribute clean syringes, condoms and information. Individual staff interviews, staff questionnaires and board meeting created a complete view also on managing and administrative direction of organization.

mission, being aware that will serve as a guide in our work and APRAD's future strategy.

APRAD's social activities

During June 06' the centre was frequented by a lot of new clients and regular ones. They belonged to injecting drug users community, Roma people, MSM, CSW, migrants, etc.

The centre become known among drug users community through the services offered in the centre premises and in the field and also as result of the good job of the outreach workers.

All the new clients were registered in confidential files.

The Drop in Center environment is very useful to attract in the center clients who need services offered by APRAD. There the clients pass time discussing with each other, they watch movies focused in the bad effects of the drug use, they prepare for themselves coffee, tea and in some of the cases they have shower and personal cleaning.

The multidisciplinary team work have consisted on educating drug users through training and psychological individual and group counseling sessions to understand and recognize the risk of high-risky behaviors, such as:

- Sharing and using the same syringes and needles,
- Having multiple sex –partners,
- Having unprotected sexual intercourses.

The multidisciplinary team has collaborated for ensuring a concrete engagement in offering psychosocial services, to be near to the community necessities, taking in consideration these crucial points:

- ❖ Establishing and maintaining contact with drug users
- ❖ Creating support, to provide faith and confidentially relationships.
- ❖ Engaging the clients in educative, entertaining and informing conversations.
- ❖ Giving educative and preventive information on HIV/AIDS and STI
- ❖ Offering to assist the drug users in some way to move toward less risky injecting or to maintain less risky injecting
- ❖ Increasing the awareness to IDU about the services programs on HIV/AIDS and STI
- ❖ Providing information and education in a way that appeals to IDU, in language and visual materials they understand and trust

- ❖ Attracting IDUs to the Drop in Center
- ❖ Accessing psycho-social intervention or advice on health social and legal problems or referral to appropriate services
- ❖ Promoting safer injecting practices
- ❖ Improving the health of local communities by preventing the spread of blood borne viruses and by reducing the rate of discarded used injecting equipment.
- ❖ Free HIV-Test counseling sessions
- ❖ Distributing of a range of free sterile needles and syringes.
- ❖ Referring to other treatment services

Another objective was the training of outreach workers to become peer educator. Information materials were distributed during the training sessions.

As usually we went in the field twice per week to get in the community. Also we went there to offer our services for those who are frightened or being discriminated.

GENDER FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

During these weeks APRAD centre has organized a several activities in the centre premises and in the field. These activities were focused to the communities' needs. Many clients showed interest to visit the centre, to learn about it, to be informed on HIV/AIDS&STI, drug use effects, about the risky behaviors, and their health rights etc.

The activities were held in different communities like in Bathore, Romani Baxt etc. People living in these areas lack of information on these issues. So it is very important to perform their knowledge and to improve the quality of their lives.

ACTIVITIES IN BATHORE

During the activities in Bathore were discussed about:

- HIV virus and how it is related to the gender,
- Why men and woman are at risk of getting infected with HIV?
- Which are the ways to prevent the infection of this virus?

People living in these areas are especially at risk of getting infected with HIV because of the low culture and lack of information; therefore it is very important for them to know the ways of prevention.

A confidential atmosphere created by APRAD's training experts, made the participants more active;



more open and free to discuss and to make questions.

The infectionist doctor of the centre after making a short explanation of the most important issues, such as HIV virus effects, STD, the importance of getting the professional help, using condoms etc, he answered to the questions raised by the participants.

The assessment form in the end of the activity gave a clear the effectiveness of the work done and the necessities that this community had.

ACTIVITIES AT ROMANI BAXT

The targeted population was Romani Baxt women and girls and the topic of the training was on family planning. In general

people in these areas it is a lack of information on family planning; the effectiveness of the condom and the necessity to use it even with the stable partner.

During the training was discussed about the importance of a family planning; how family planning changes the quality of life; to have condoms access and to be responsible for their decision in the



future.

The interest on this topic was discussions and questions of Roma women directed to APRAD's specialists.

In the end of training were distributed brochures, leaflets and condoms.

ACTIVITIES WITH SOS KINDERGARDEN STUDENTS

There were organized two other activities at APRAD Center. The participants of these activities were youths of SOS village.

Youths are mostly a risk target



especially for having a risk behavior. That's why APRAD multidisciplinary team in cooperation with SOS kindergarden educators made a

plan for a set of an informative training on STD, drug use consequences, importance of testing, etc. During the training sessions students, both boys and girls participated actively by making a lot of questions and sharing opinion or experiences between each other.

In the end of the activity there were tested voluntary. Lots of information was distributed with relevant information on these issues.

TRAINING SESSIONS

"Amphetamine"

The participants were students of Social Science Faculty (15 in total). We have thought to develop this training with the students because some of them use and abuse with amphetamines. At first, the lector asked them if they had information about this substance. Further was explained the negative physic and psychological effects and consequences that this substance cause. The training modules were:

- ◆ What are amphetamines?
- ◆ The negative effects of amphetamines
- ◆ The signs of immediate interruption, amphetamines overdose.

The auditor interest was in high levels. The activity was followed by different questions that were directed to the social worker and to the psychiatrist doctor.

In the end of the training were distributed many leaflets.

"The reduction of HIV transmission through outreach workers"

The participants were outreach workers of the center (IDU or former IDU).

At first, the training was developed as a discussion. The outreach workers shared their own opinions and ideas about their experience as outreach worker. Different questions were directed to the lectors. Then the lector pointed out:

- ◆ What is an outreach worker?
- ◆ Who is appropriate to do the outreach worker?
- ◆ Who are the outreach methods?
- ◆ Policies and the program implications and specifically APRAD's policies for OW.

"Safe Injection practices"

The participants were 12 injecting Drug Users (8 male & 4 female) clients of the centre.

Some of our clients have had problems with their veins and many of them serious abscesses. The lector explained them to distinguish when they shoot in a right or in the wrong place.

The main issues discussed were:

- ◆ Learn more about your veins
- ◆ Take information about your needles
- ◆ Abscesses, where and how they happen?

"HIV/AIDS and sexual transmitted diseases"

This activity was organized in Bathore. In this activity took part many people of different ages. For migrants is very necessary to be informed about the sexual transmitted diseases. Migrants are a vulnerable group in facing these risks. In the beginning the staff made a brief presentation of the subjects that would be discussed in the training. It was talked about:

- Which are some of the transmitted diseases?
- How can we be infected from STIs?
- Which are the ways that prevents the STIs?
- Which are the behaviors that lead towards the infection?

During the activity was pointed out the necessity to use the condom and to be very careful while having sexual relations with foreigners. Many women discussed and shared with the staff their experiences. The doctor of the centre emphasized the importance of having regularly controls in the health care centers and getting previous measures to prevent the infection with sexual transmitted diseases.

The modules of the training:

- ◆ What is HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted diseases?
- ◆ Which are some of the sexual transmitted diseases?
- ◆ Which are the ways to prevent the sexual transmitted diseases?

“Reproductive Health”

This training was organized in Kinostudio where are located many people of Roma community. In this training took part many young people. In most of times people want, need and have a right to reproductive and sexual health services. They face many barriers in accessing these resources. Stigma may surround youth services and concerns over lack of confidentiality and disrespectful treatment may inhibit young people using them. The reproductive health needs of young people differ according to their age, living arrangements, education, working status and particularly marital status. Despite the fact that early marriage may indeed mean that young women are more likely to have fewer sexual partners, this fact does not protect them from HIV, because their husbands are usually older and have been sexually active for years. In fact marriage may

actually increase women’s vulnerability to HIV infection because of their inability to successfully negotiate condom use or adopt other risk reduction options. In addition, younger women are more physiologically susceptible to STIs and HIV because of the relative underdevelopment of their reproductive tracts. All this factors and topics were discussed during the training. The doctor of the centre asked all the questions done from the participants.

The modules of the training were:

- ◆ What is reproductive health?
- ◆ Which are the factors that cause serious problems to reproductive health?
- ◆ Which are the ways to improve the reproductive health?

FOCUS GROUPS

“Psychological problems of the heroine use”

In this focus group have participated



injected drug users. The participants were more than 3 years intravenous drug users. During the focus group was spoken about the psychological problems of heroine.

- ◆ Which are the differences between DU and IDU?
- ◆ Why IDU are more in risk than DU?
- ◆ How can IDU prevent the risk?
- ◆ The healthy behaviors.

- ◆ The psychological problems of the heroine use.

“Avoiding the heroine overdose”

In this focus group had participated 8 regular IDU of the centre. All the participants were male. The issues pointed out in the discussion were:

- ◆ What is overdose? (Every drug users will pass an overdose; even he is a new or an old drug user).
- ◆ Which are the cases when an overdose can happen?
- ◆ Advises for preventing an overdose.
- ◆ Advises for the specific cases of the heroine overdose.

**A FOCUS GROUP ON:
*“Woman’s rights”***

The aim of this activity was to discuss about the women’s rights. It was held in APRAD environments. In this activity took part fifteen women from different ages. The focus group participants discussed about their rights, if they know or not their rights, if they feel discriminated etc. In this focus group the participants shared their own experiences with each other on the women’s rights.