

Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons

Republic of Moldova

PROJECT REPORT

31 December 2011

*The humanity of a society
can be judged
by the treatment of its prisoners.*

Winston Churchill

*in fulfilment of the requirement of the project grant
provided by the
« Fonds de Lutte contre certaines formes de criminalité »
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe's Pompidou Group in association with the Government of the Republic of Moldova is currently implementing an initiative to address problematic drug use in prisons. The project "Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons (THRP)" has been designed to improve the human rights and public health situation in Moldova through enhancing the positive impact of measures aiming at reducing drugs-related risks in prisons through awareness raising and capacity building.

The program included the following key components:

- Building prison administration capacities to implement harm reduction measures and drug treatment in prisons;
- Building prisons administration capacities to overcome pre-judgments and misconceptions towards harm reduction and drug treatment;
- Raising awareness about drug consumption risks and to promote adequate anti-drugs measures in prisons;
- Establishing training and information materials in Romanian and Russian languages.

Based on desk reviews, site visit reports, and seminar evaluations the Pompidou Group assesses the project as largely successful in reaching its objectives.

II. ABBREVIATIONS

CBM	Confidence Building Measures
COE	Council of Europe
DPI	Department of Penitentiary Institutions
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IDU	Injecting Drug User
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
OST	Opiate Substitution Treatment
PG	Pompidou Group
TB	Tuberculosis
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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1. INTRODUCTION

Prison is a risky environment both for the prisoners and the staff. Transmission rates of blood-borne diseases such as Hepatitis C and HIV are often much higher in prisons than in society in general. The 2011 UNAIDS World AIDS Report states that Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Russia are home to the world's most rapidly expanding HIV epidemic. There was a 250 percent increase in the number of people living with HIV from 2001 to 2011. Injecting drug use remains the leading cause of HIV infection in this region although considerable transmission also occurs to the sexual partners of people who inject drugs.

“There is little indication that the epidemic has stabilized in the region, with new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths continuing to increase. After slowing in the early 2000s, HIV incidence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia has been accelerating again since 2008. Unlike most other regions, AIDS-related deaths continue to rise in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.” (UNAIDS 2011)¹

Research had consistently shown not only HIV prevalence to be very high in IDU populations but also Hepatitis C (HCV). Injecting drug users are also exposed to various other health risks than transmission of blood-borne diseases namely addiction disorders, overdosing and abscessed infections of injection sites.

The Pompidou Group's Drugs and Prison Programme in Eastern Europe aims at helping drug addicted inmates and in particular injecting drug users who are vulnerable to HIV and Hepatitis C contamination, thus recognising the need to promote health and tackle health inequalities in prison settings. Human rights and the right to health are indivisible and interrelated. The right to health contains entitlements such as the right to prevention, treatment and control of diseases, and freedoms such as the right to be free from non-consensual medical treatment, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.² Limiting the spread of communicable diseases in prison thus benefits both prisoners as well as society as a whole and reduces the burdens on a country's health system. The Pompidou Group promotes an integrated approach in dealing with the drug problem in prisons. Treatment and detoxification schemes are crucial for creating a healthy prison environment but are often undermined by supply of illicit drugs. Improving health in prisons through the reduction of drug usage has to go hand in hand with measures which disrupt the drug trade in prisons such as the development and use of technology, intelligence and partnerships with police. Drug strategies aiming at both the reduction of drug demand and supply result in safe establishments where prisoners and staff working in prisons are treated humanely, decently and lawfully.

¹ UNAIDS Report 2011

http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2216_WorldAIDSdaily_report_2011_en.pdf

² The Right to Health (Fact Sheet No. 31). Geneva, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/World Health Organization, 2008 (www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf), accessed 20 September 2011

1.1 BACKGROUND

In Moldova the rate of new infections with blood borne diseases increasing. Also the prevalence of drug use in the general population is augmenting. Intravenous drug use in prison settings is widespread, while preventive measures offered by the government are largely confined to a limited number of sites, underfunded and not conducted on a scale commensurate with the target group's requirements.

The Moldovan government has launched a programme which includes the detection of HIV infection, monitoring of HIV cases; harm reduction measures and Opiate Substitution Treatment (OST) for prisoners. Despite the fact that Moldova sets a positive example in the field of harm reduction and treatment in prisons for most countries in the region, there are some areas which require special attention and improvement: continuity and coverage of treatment services, quality standards on substitution maintenance therapy psycho-social support to inmates; relationship management between prison staff, inmates and other sectors.

The Moldovan government asked the Pompidou Group in May 2010 to implement a project in the field of drug treatment and harm reduction in prisons. In September 2010 the Fonds Lutte contre certaines formes de criminalité signed with the Pompidou Group a convention and granted 50.000 Euros for the project "Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons" to be implemented in the Republic of Moldova. The overall objective of the project is to improve the human rights and public health situation in the Republic of Moldova. More specifically the project aims at contributing to the improvement of prison conditions in Moldova through furthering the health services in prisons. Expected long-term results are the prevention of drug abuse and transmission of communicable diseases in Moldovan prisons.

- The relations between prison staff and inmates, especially between security and inmates;
- provision of psychosocial support together with pharmacological treatment;
- continuity and coverage of treatment services (treatment should be available all over the country in prisons and in the community);
- capacities among health care professionals on implementing quality standards on substitution maintenance therapy;
- the development of legislation to support medical treatment of drug addicts; provision of treatment as an alternative to imprisonment;
- database development of medical records of prisoners, measures on the supply side: preventing the import of drugs into prisons;
- commitment of the prison authorities and decision-makers to clearly state the priorities of the government in terms of substitution treatment - both in prisons and in the community (developing a vision of harm reduction);
- high staff turnover in prison settings is a challenge to sustainable interventions and ensure continuity of quality of services provided to inmates.

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

In order to increase the effectiveness of existing actions in the field of treatment and harm reduction the Pompidou Group launched in collaboration with the Moldovan Department of

Penitentiary Institutions a capacity building and awareness raising to increase the impact of preventive measures in prisons. The project objective was thus to enhance the positive impact of measures aimed at reducing drugs-related risks in prisons through capacity building and awareness raising.

Overall objective	To improve the human rights and public health situation in Moldova, in accordance with European and other international standards
Project objective	To enhance the positive impact of measures aiming at reducing drugs-related risks in prisons through awareness raising and capacity building
Output	Professionals trained on how to transmit knowledge on measures aiming at reducing drugs-related risks
Action 1	Round table of experts and professionals in the field of treatment and harm reduction
Action 2	In-country training for professionals on how to raise awareness about drugs consumption risks and promote adequate anti-drugs measures in prisons
Action 3	Support the establishment of training and information materials in Romanian and Russian languages

1.3 PROJECT DURATION

The project was carried out between September 2010 and December 2011. The length of the project was extended due to supplementary funds provided by the German Embassy in Chisinau and joint project events with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

1.4 PROJECT PARTNERS

The main Moldovan governmental partners were:

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice
- Department of Penitentiary Institutions (DPI) (Ministry of Justice)

The main non-governmental partners in Moldovan were:

- Innovating Projects in Prisons (Harm Reduction in Prisons)
- New Life (Rehabilitation, Though-care)
- Carlux Moldova (TB in prison)

Our partners in Moldova showed themselves to be competent, reliable and to have a good standing with both local authorities and practitioners alike. The Ministry of Justice and the Department of Penitentiary Institutions supported PG activities and provided information whenever requested.

Other bilateral and international partners were:

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- German Embassy in Moldova
- Dutch Ministry of Justice

1.5 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The project was established in Chisinau and supervised by a Project Manager. All meetings, round tables and training seminars took place in Chisinau. Overall administrative project management was ensured by the Pompidou Group, Directorate of Social Cohesion at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The project activities were managed and implemented by the Council of Europe in cooperation with local partners, in particular the Department of Penitentiary Institutions of the Moldovan Ministry of Justice. The Council of Europe ensured the active participation of local professional skills where available, and a suitable mix of European and local experts in the project activities. All local experts were independent and free from conflicts of interests.

2. APPROACH TO ASSIGNMENT AND GENERAL OUTCOMES

2.1 PROJECT EVENTS

Three events have been held in Chisinau with the goal of awareness raising and capacity building. The event “Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons” and “Mental Health and Addiction” combined training workshops and round table discussions to a larger audience, while the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop “Step by step to Motivational Interviewing” focused only on practical training of a few selected senior professionals. The organization of all three events went smoothly. The Department of Penitentiary Institutions and local partners provided substantial support whenever needed.

2.1.1 Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons

The training seminar and round table “Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons” took place in Chisinau, 1-3 December 2010. 60 participants attended the event. During the three days prison directors, security heads and doctors from all prisons in Moldova participated and were trained on how to implement harm reduction measures and substitution treatment in prisons. The seminar helped to overcome pre-judgments and misconceptions towards such preventive measures. The opening of the seminar was attended by national and international decision-makers, donors and the Moldovan press. The German Ambassador Johannes as well as the Director General of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions gave a welcome address to the audience. Four international experts from the Netherlands, Slovenia and Romania lead the participants through the seminar. Seminar costs were financed by the German Embassy in Chisinau.



2.1.2 Mental Health and Addiction

More than 30 psychologists, psychiatrists and medical doctors working with drug addicted prison inmates in the Republic of Moldova attended the training seminar on “Mental Health and Addiction in Prisons” in Chisinau, 26-28 September 2011. Specialists from both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr in Moldova were present and shared their experience. The training seminar was organised by the Pompidou Group (PG), the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with the Moldovan Department of Penitentiary Institutions (DIP) of the Moldovan Ministry of Justice. International experts from the Netherlands, Slovenia and Romania as well as national experts organised workshops, presented lectures and triggered fruitful discussions with their practical knowledge and experience. Amongst the subjects covered were the role of psycho-social care in drug treatment, inmate screening as well as monitoring of inmates who abuse drugs. Moreover, the training seminar provided specialised knowledge in the field of opiate substitution treatment (OST). In doing so the seminar “Mental Health and Addiction” built on relevant topics and problems identified during the previous event “Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons”. The cooperation with UNODC went smoothly and synergies were produced. UNODC organised the training of the medical doctors and the Pompidou Group focused on the training of psychologists. Funding of the seminar took place in a complementary way. Different funds were used for different actions with separate cost statements.

2.1.3 Step by step to Motivational Interviewing

As a follow up to the Mental Health and Addiction seminar the Pompidou Group designed together with the Moldovan Department of Penitentiary Institutions a project entitled “Counselling and Motivational Interviewing in Moldovan Prisons”. The project aims at developing practical counselling skills among 30 Moldovan psychologists working in prison, while sustaining training results through Training of Trainers (ToT) methodology. The first workshop entitled “Step by step to Motivational Interviewing” took place near Chisinau in the Training Centre of the Moldovan Department of Penitentiary Institutions, 5-7 December 2011. Two Dutch and one Romanian expert trained seven senior psychologists. Each training session included methodological knowledge as well as practical assignments. Another goal was to initiate the process through which the psychologists will become trainers themselves.

The participants showed great interest in the lessons and role plays and said that they are looking forward to implementing the methods at their workplace.

2.2 TRAINING MATERIALS

The Pompidou Group produced a training video on Opiate Substitution Treatment (OST) in Moldovan prisons. The video comprises four chapters:

- 1) The Opiate Substitutions Treatment Programme
- 2) Methadone in the Prison
- 3) Security
- 4) Working together

The video is an effective tool for training of prison staff. It shows how the Methadone programme works in Moldovan prisons, describes roles and responsibility of prisons governors, guards as well as doctors, and gives inmates who benefit from the treatment a voice. The high quality video has been produced together with the local film team OWH TV Studio (shooting) and the German film company Oase (concept and editing).



2.3 MATERIAL SUPPORT

The Pompidou Group purchased and installed a server for registration of drug abusing inmates and patients in treatment. The server will connect different computers used for medical recording in a large number of prisons in Moldova.

2.4 OTHER SUPPORT

The Pompidou Group produced further outputs and synergies in following fields:

- assessment of the drug situation in the Republic of Moldova
- regional integration in the framework of Council of Europe's Confidence Building Measures (CBM) Programme Across the River Nistru/Dniestr

- regional integration through improving information exchange between Moldovan, Romanian and Ukrainian professionals
- information exchange and project coordination with international organisations

3. RESULTS AND CHALLENGES

3.1 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Based on desk reviews, site visit reports, and seminar evaluations, the Pompidou Group assesses the project as largely successful in reaching its goals.

Components	Actions	Results
Building prison administration capacities to implement harm reduction measures and treatment in prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ project group formed ▪ training seminars held on harm reduction and drug treatment ▪ Training of Trainers (ToT) project initiated ▪ recommendation for prison health services developed in line with European standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ more than 100 professionals working in prisons trained ▪ Information and best practices exchanged between Moldova, Ukraine and Romania.
Building prisons administration capacities to overcome pre-judgments and misconceptions towards harm reduction and treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interdisciplinary seminars held on the importance of adequate health care delivery and improvement of human rights in prisons ▪ training video on Opiate Substitution Treatment produced in Romanian and Russian language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prison governors, security heads, doctors, psychologists and NGO leaders worked together in workshops exchanging experience about health care delivery ▪ prison staff informed about the importance of adequate health care delivery and improvement of human rights in prisons
Raising awareness about drug consumption risks and promoting adequate anti-drugs measures in prisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ project group formed comprising public relation professionals ▪ press releases drafted and interviews held ▪ video materials about drug treatment in prisons and aftercare produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mass media informed the public about drug consumption risks and adequate health care ▪ prison staff informed about drug consumption risks and adequate anti-drugs measures in prisons
Establishing training and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training video on Opiate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the training video on

information materials in Romanian and Russian languages	Substitution Treatment produced in Romanian and Russian language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training materials drafted in Romanian and Russian languages 	Opiate Substitution Treatment is a training tool for the Moldovan prisons administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the video and training materials will be used also outside Moldova in Russian speaking countries
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3.2 CHALLENGES

Moldova is a country with clear laws about health care delivery. The legislation environment in Moldova is favourable for Harm Reduction, Opiate Substitution Treatment, psycho-social support for inmates and rehabilitation. The set of regulations and laws regarding these preventive measures are similar to those used in most European countries. Despite the fact that Moldova sets a positive example in the field of harm reduction and drug treatment in prisons for many countries in the region, there are some areas which require special attention and improvement:

- The relationship management between prison staff and inmates, in particular between security and inmates;
- Capacities of health care professionals in the field of psycho-social support for inmates (e.g. in the fields of counselling and motivational interviewing);
- provision of psychosocial support together with pharmacological treatment;
- continuity and coverage of treatment services (treatment should be available all over the country in prisons and in the community);
- capacities among health care professionals on implementing quality standards on substitution maintenance therapy;
- database development of medical records of prisoners;
- measures on the supply side: preventing the import of drugs into prisons;
- commitment of the prison authorities and decision-makers to clearly state the priorities of the government in terms of substitution treatment - both in prisons and in the community (developing a vision of harm reduction);
- high staff turnover in prison settings is a challenge to sustainable interventions and ensure continuity of quality of services provided to inmates;
- strict interpretation of laws and regulations which limits the freedom for health professionals in prisons to create a innovative and sensible health care delivery system;
- interruptions of the treatment are quite frequent to various reasons;
- collaboration between psychologists and medical doctors working on addiction-related disorders;

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received by its experts the Pompidou Group recommends that the Moldovan authorities take steps to

- 1) further develop the profession of prison psychologists and offer external stimulation, support and training possibilities to such staff, and in particular to
- 2) improve the relationship management between prison staff and inmates, and in particular between security and inmates
- 3) reinforce the provision of medical care for drug dependent inmates and in particular
 - to ensure the availability of opiate substitution medications;
 - increase and sustain the continuity and coverage of treatment services inside and outside of prisons (through care); and
 - develop a database for medical records of prisoners.
- 4) foster measures against drug supply in prisons with the aim to prevent the import of drugs into prisons with the respect for human rights.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

According to the feedback by experts and beneficiaries the Pompidou Group project has been highly relevant to the circumstances in Moldova targeting important gaps in the country's health services in prisons. The Moldovan counterparts appreciated that project activities were implemented in a flexible manner which responded to their needs, changes in the policy environment and saw new opportunities for collaboration. The project objectives matched well with the Council of Europe's broader health and justice related priorities aiming at fostering human rights and public health. All project activities aimed at the project goals and outcomes have been enhancing the positive impact of measures aiming at reducing drugs-related risks in prisons through awareness raising and capacity building. Training seminars and round tables were well reflected by mass media and clearly and regularly communicated to relevant stakeholders. The Pompidou Group is confident that the project made a difference in the Moldovan prison health care environment. The Moldova counterparts showed much interest in the project activities and subjects dealt with during the seminars. However, all projects in the Moldovan penitentiary system should recognise that introducing new kinds of health services or involving new providers requires substantial learning curves, and that in most instances the initial training needs sustained supervision and expert consulting from outside and within the penitentiary system.

4.3 THE WAY AHEAD

In 2012 the Pompidou Group will start the implementation of the project "Preventing Drug Trafficking and Abuse in Prisons - Extending Best Practices in Eastern Europe (Moldova, Romania, Ukraine) and Bosnia and Herzegovina". The main objective of the project is to prevent drug trafficking and improve health in penitentiaries with respect for human rights. The project will further advance the development of strategies of social re-insertion of former drug using inmates. The promotion of through-care shall sustain drug treatment efforts and

aims at continuing care for people entering and leaving the prison. The project, while taking into account the specific needs of the countries, will emphasise regional interaction, and facilitate experience exchanges among national prison administrations and community services. In Moldova the project ensures the continuation of activities, and in particular in the field of training of prison psychologist.

5. ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Seminar Report “Treatment and Harm Reduction in Prisons”
- Annex 2: Seminar Report “Mental Health and Addiction”
- Annex 4: Training Video “Opiate Substitution Treatment in Moldova”