Summary of civil society analysis

Over the past year, there have been significant improvements, including the expansion of opioid substitution therapy in prisons. Ukraine is also making steady progress when it comes to transitioning from donor to domestic funding, with a significant proportion of HIV treatment and prevention services now being funded by the government.

That said, the government continues to fund only a basic package of services, which excludes critical aspects like psychosocial support.

While new strategies commit to addressing harmful laws and policies, significant change is still not forthcoming.

10 ACTIONS: A CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Needs assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Prevention targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Prevention strategy &amp; leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Legal and policy reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Key population size estimates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b Defined key population package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Capacity development &amp; technical assistance plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Social contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Financial gap analysis &amp; strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Strengthen monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Performance review &amp; accountability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ON TRACK TO MEET THE 2020 TARGET?

New HIV Infections among adults (15+ years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infections (thousands)</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global HIV Prevention Coalition 4th Annual Progress Report

KEY POPULATIONS: DATA, SERVICES, STIGMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Population</th>
<th>Men who have sex with men</th>
<th>Sex workers</th>
<th>People who use drugs</th>
<th>Transgender people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latest size estimates</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV prevention services utilisation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of health care due to stigma &amp; discrimination</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
<td>NO DATA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KP Atlas, Global HIV Prevention Coalition 4th Annual Progress Report

LAWS THAT CRIMINALISE

- Same-sex sexual acts
- Sex work
- Drug use or possession for personal use
- Criminalisation of transgender people
- HIV transmission, non-disclosure or exposure

HARM REDUCTION

- Safe injecting practices for people who inject drugs: 96.6%
- People who use drugs receiving opioid substitution: 4.5%

NAIDS Laws and Policies Analytics
Global HIV Prevention Coalition 4th Annual Progress Report
In 2019, Ukraine elected a new President, and a new cabinet was formed. Since then, the Minister of Health has changed three times, due to their handling of the COVID-19 crisis. The Director of the Public Health Centre (PHC), the agency responsible for HIV prevention programming, left his role in May 2020. The Ministry Protection of Children and Youth Affairs, responsible for the COVID-19 response, also resigned. These changes, combined with the COVID-19 crisis, have meant that leadership and action on HIV prevention have taken a back seat.

The Global Fund’s Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) continues to be overseen by the Cabinet of Ministers, but ultimate coordination now sits with the Minister of Health instead of the Vice Premier. While this change hasn’t altered the day-to-day operations of the CCM the platform has lost its wider political influence. In April, the second stage of Ukraine’s healthcare reform began. Reforms included plans to devolve opioid substitution therapy (OST) and HIV and TB treatment to the primary healthcare settings, theoretically bringing services closer to people who need them. However, communities worry these reforms have led to a deterioration in the quality of harm reduction services, particularly when it comes to OST. Lack of experience in providing OST in primary healthcare settings also led to budget underestimations, despite PHC providing clear guidance on the costs involved. Despite these challenges, there is cause for celebration. Cities like Dripov have signed up to UNAIDS Fast-Track Cities targets and are actively working towards achieving zero new infections. There have also been important breakthroughs on the inclusion of marginalised communities. Women living with HIV now have a seat on the CCM. Eleven candidates representing sex workers, the LGBT community and people who use drugs also stood for local election with the support of a number of mainstream political parties.

The COVID-19 epidemic in Ukraine has heavily impacted HIV prevention efforts but also provided opportunities for innovation. Lockdown measures were incredibly strict, and all public transport was stopped. However, CSOs organised to avoid any interruption of services to key populations. Thanks to advocacy by people who use drugs and harm reduction activists, the lack of experience means general practitioners are often reluctant to promote or enrol people in OST services. As a result, the numbers of new OST clients are not increasing, and the quality of care is declining.

Female sex workers have highlighted that the current government prevention packages do not fully meet their needs. For example, the basic package of services for sex workers does not include needles and syringes, so that sex workers end up having to separately access services for people who inject drugs. Regarding PrEP, the PNH reported that, as of August 2020, there were over 2,500 people in Ukraine using PrEP, including 1,951 men and 552 women, the vast majority being sex workers and other people at substantial risk of HIV infection. Although there is some progress on reaching key populations with PrEP services, the new national HIV strategy does not include any specific PrEP indicators.

Two important strategies for HIV prevention have been approved: the National HIV, TB and Capitalise Hepatitis strategy, and the HIV/TB and Human Rights Strategy, which aims to address human rights barriers to key populations with PrEP services, the new national HIV strategy. Although this is in line with the government’s 2020 target, community representatives feel this number remains far too low.

Decentralising OST services has posed some challenges. Family doctors in primary health care centres are not well practised in supporting people who use drugs. According to activists, this lack of experience means general practitioners are often reluctant to promote or enrol people in OST services. As a result, the numbers of new OST clients are not increasing, and the quality of care is declining.

There is still a long way to go with achieving adequate HIV prevention programming at scale. The government has produced population size estimates for sex workers, men who have sex with men and people who use and inject drugs, and is in the process of finalising results for transgender people. However, when looking at coverage, only 13% of men who have sex with men, 40% of sex workers are covered by prevention programmes. The government’s 2020 target, community representatives feel this number remains far too low.

There has also been progress on prisoners’ rights. In 2020, following positive results from a pilot in Bucha prison, the Minister of Justice approved the scale-up of comprehensive OST to four additional facilities. Also, in an effort to reduce new HIV infections in prisons, civil society have trained and employed more than 50 prisoners as peer educators in prisons.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPACT OF COVID-19
COVID-19 has disrupted HIV prevention services and exacerbated economic and social drivers, with the risk that new HIV infections may begin to increase. Ukraine must commit to sustaining progress on and funding for HIV prevention, and must protect the human rights of the most marginalised communities.

LEADERSHIP
The new government – in partnership with the PHC – must strengthen leadership on HIV prevention and build political and financial support for key population programming at national, district and city levels.

LAWS & POLICIES
The government must operationalise the new HIV, TB and Hepatitis and HIV and Human Rights Strategies, including by decriminalising people who use drugs and sex workers, implementing programmes that decrease stigma and discrimination by healthcare providers and law enforcement officials, and protecting and fulfilling the rights of marginalised communities, including adolescents.

FINANCING
The government of Ukraine must continue to increase its investment in HIV prevention and ensure that it funds comprehensive HIV prevention packages, beyond the current basic packages. The Ministry of Health must work with the Ministry of Finance and National Assembly to ensure adequate funding for the national health budget.

QUALITY PROGRAMMING
Ukraine urgently needs to address the low rates of HIV prevention coverage for all key populations, and specifically must dramatically increase OST coverage and quality for people who use drugs, as well as continuing to scale up PrEP. To do this, PHC must continue to scale up funding for key population-led groups, as these organisations are in a better position to provide accessible and effective services to the most marginalised.

METHODOLOGY
As a member of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition, Frontline AIDS plays a key role convening civil society and community organisations. After the launch of the Global Prevention Coalition in October 2017, Frontline AIDS supported activists from 22 countries to participate in workshops to learn, share and agree prevention advocacy priorities. As part of this process, activists from different community-based organisations decided to work together to analyse their nation’s progress on HIV prevention. The reports are based on responses to a data collection tool developed by Frontline AIDS. In 2020, activists from seven countries agreed to update their reports. These shadow reports voice the priorities of civil society organisations and offer an alternative to the official assessments put forward by governments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
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Design: Fruit Design.

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OUR PARTNERS

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December 2020