



REGIONAL PROJECT TRANS* MAP IN EECA

BRIEF INFORMATION



CREATING
OUR OWN MAP
OF ACHIEVEMENTS
AND TERRAINS
OF ACTIVISM

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia demonstrates a lack of strategic information about trans* people. Existing data suggests a wide range of challenges for trans* people and a lack of resources used to overcome barriers.

Barriers to HIV services include the widespread invisibility and neglect of trans* people in the HIV response in the EECA region, limited trans*-specific prevention projects, a lack of strategic information, low awareness about HIV in trans* communities, widespread transphobia and discrimination, as well as the use of a pathologizing approach at the state level.

Despite a global approach to including trans* people (primarily trans* women) in key populations and to gathering strategic information with them, our region continues to under-prioritize trans* people in national and regional HIV response measures. Trans* people are recognized as a key population only in the national HIV strategy of Kyrgyzstan. Trans* people generally do not have access to HIV decision-making; they are included in national HIV coordinating bodies in only three countries. Strategic information on HIV among trans* people is extremely scarce. There are no available estimation of trans* population sizes, and the only comprehensive bio-behavioral surveillance study (IBBS) was conducted in 2018 in Armenia, and only among trans* women. Existing HIV prevention projects aimed specifically at trans* people only include minimal package of services. Therefore, they do not fully meet the needs of the community and are not so attractive, as they are a copy of services developed for MSM or sex workers. Meanwhile, the low level and lack of trans*-specific awareness about HIV leads to low demand for services among trans* communities.

Widespread transphobia and discrimination create a pathologizing approach to services for trans* people, based on outdated criteria, which prevents the development of trans*-competent medical protocols and prevents trans* people from seeking medical care.

Institutionalized transphobia also contributes to the fact that few countries in the region have adequate legislation regulating transition processes for trans* people.

The existing weak representation of trans* people in decision-making bodies is one of the main obstacles, as policy discussions and funding decisions are made largely without consultation with trans* people or even without taking into account their needs and opinions.

Nevertheless, there have been positive changes in the region that have taken place in recent years. Strategic information on trans* people is being developed, albeit slowly. For example, the largest desk study of trans* communities and of the contexts of 12 EECA countries, developed by ECOM, will soon be published. There are trans* initiatives and organizations; representatives of trans* communities are involved in HIV coordinating and decision-making bodies; there is some baseline data on HIV prevalence among trans* peoples; and, allies are countering draconian legislative changes and supporting the adoption of democratic political changes in countries of the region.

In order to address the existing challenges and barriers and to purposefully implement the strategic aim of the organization, ECOM, together with partners, developed the project "Trans*Map in EECA", which is supported by the Elton John AIDS Foundation. In developing the concept, strategies, and theory of change of the project, ECOM and national partners relied on research evidence, current challenges, and existing achievements.



GOAL

Expanding and strengthening HIV services for trans* people in EECA through community mobilization and creating an enabling environment.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- › Trans* community mobilization and empowerment
- › Accumulation of strategic information on HIV among trans* people
- › Trans* participation in national HIV programming and decision-making

NATIONAL PARTNERS

The project activities will be implemented both at the regional level by the ECOM Secretariat and at the national level by project partners in six cities of the five selected countries: Yerevan, Armenia; Tbilisi, Georgia; Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Kyiv, Ukraine; Novosibirsk, Russia and Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Our local partners in project implementation (in alphabetical order by country):

- Humanitarian NGO "New Generation", Armenia
 - Queer Association "TEMIDA", Georgia
 - LGBTI Organization "Kyrgyz Indigo", Kyrgyzstan
 - "T9 NSK" Project for Transgender People and Their Close Ones
- ...
- All-Ukrainian Charitable Organization "Convictus Ukraine", Ukraine

In the implementation of the project, we also expect the involvement of international, regional, and national partners, as well as trans*-led organizations, platforms, and initiatives to jointly achieve the goal of the project, which will have an impact on trans* people throughout the EECA region.

Partnership is possible in, but not limited to, the following areas:

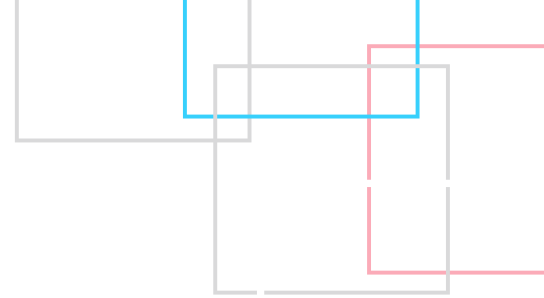
- Joint implementation of capacity-building and advocacy activities, including in the context of depathologizing activities,
- Exchange and provision of expertise,
- Joint research and collection of strategic information,
- Creation of small working groups to respond to emerging legal barriers in the region,
- Development of a network of partner organizations and sharing knowledge about available resources, including referrals to and support for one another,
- Discussion of the regional advocacy agenda and its presentation at the international level,
- Discussion of future priorities for trans* communities in the region and joint actions

PROJECT IMPACT

As the project **impact**, we envisage that trans* people will empower themselves and benefit from comprehensive, trans*-competent services, when HIV response measures meet the needs of trans* people with the support of sensitized decision-makers and trained experts.

KEY EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

1	Number of community-based organizations and initiatives that planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated advocacy work to advance the HIV response and depathologization work with ICD-11	Goal 6
2	% increase of depathologizing attitudes towards trans* people among medical experts and decisions-makers	Goal 50%
3	Number of newly approved and enacted official, trans*-inclusive, normative documents based on the needs and input of trans* people	Goal 18
4	Number of countries where trans* people are newly included as a key population in national HIV programs and/or Global Fund grants	Goal 5



THEORY OF CHANGE

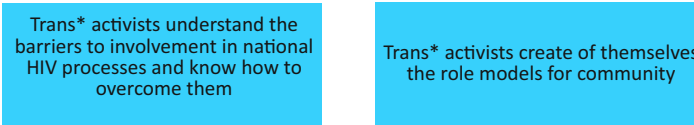
We assume that if trans* people strengthen their capacity and understand and prioritize HIV issues, then they will influence decisions in the field of HIV; if decision-makers are sensitized, they will support the needs of trans* people in relation to their health and rights; and if experts have scientific evidence and tools, they will provide comprehensive trans*-competent services. As a result, HIV response measures will fully meet the needs of trans* people.

Improved access of trans* people in EECA to comprehensive HIV services

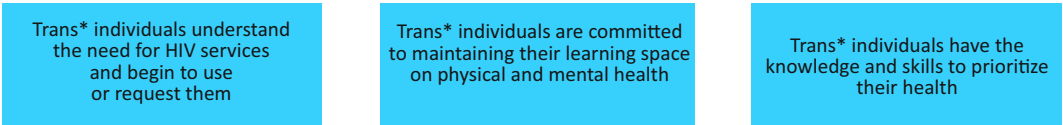
Trans* people are visible, influence HIV and health related decision making, actively use health services



Trans* activists work on overcoming the barriers to involvement in national HIV processes



A trans* individual does not accept his invisibility in HIV and health decision making



Groups of trans* individuals interested in HIV and health activism are strengthened or created

Trans* individuals from city Z learn about the project

Trans* people are invisible in society; demand for HIV services among trans* people is low; the ability to influence national HIV processes is limited

- Objective 1. Community mobilization and empowerment
- Objective 2. Accumulation of Strategic Information on HIV among Trans* People
- Objective 3. Trans* Participation in National HIV Programming and Decision Making

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

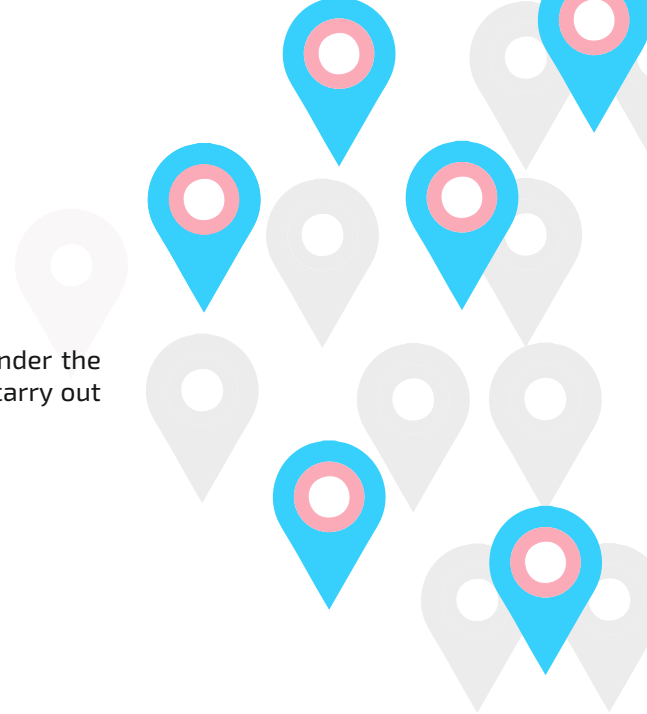
The “Trans*Map in EECA” project will be implemented in three areas under the overall coordination of ECOM together with national partners who will carry out activities at the local/national levels.

Project implementation timeline: 1 September 2020 — 31 August 2023

OBJECTIVE 1: TRANS* COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Trans* communities will develop coordinated advocacy priorities and will progress towards common advocacy goals. National partners mobilize trans* communities to inform them about and assist them with priority health issues, including in the context of HIV. The general population will receive adequate and up-to-date information about trans* communities in order to reduce stigma and prejudice. Health experts and decision-makers will be trained, and, together with community leaders, will begin advocating for a policy depathologizing trans* people, and the ground will be set for the country's transition from ICD-10 to ICD-11.

- 1.1. Regional and national trans* community meetings to coordinate advocacy priorities
 - Development of national situational analyses in the context of trans* people
 - Development of a regional advocacy plan based on the overviews of the situational analyses of trans* people
 - Development and implementation of national advocacy plans
- 1.2. National leadership training schools on HIV for the community
 - Conducting regular leadership training schools at the national level
 - Internship for participants of the leadership school: participation in open meetings of the CCM and other coordinating bodies
 - Webinars with trans* activists of the region to exchange experiences between countries
- 1.3. Regional and national media campaigns to overcome stigma and discrimination
 - Development and implementation of a regional media campaign to inform the general population about trans* people and to develop tolerant attitudes
 - Development and implementation of national media campaigns: translation of the regional campaign (materials) into national languages and their adaptation to local realities, implementing the campaigns on relevant media platforms
- 1.4. Depathologization (based on ICD-11) and sensitization of health expert and decision-makers
 - Regional training of trainers (ToT) on overcoming stigma and discrimination
 - Sensitization trainings for health experts at the national level
 - Working meetings with health experts on depathologizing trans* people (and to promote the implementation of ICD-11 in the country)
- 1.5. Capacity building for community-based organizations and initiatives
 - Training national partners on using the ECAT organizational capacity self-assessment tool
 - Ongoing technical support from ECOM according to individual plans, including on-site expert visits



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES



OBJECTIVE 2: ACCUMULATION OF STRATEGIC INFORMATION ON HIV AMONG TRANS* PEOPLE

Strategic information on HIV among trans* people, including bio-behavioral studies and population size estimations of trans* people, will become a sustainable foundation for justifying the needs and requirements of trans* people, advocacy, and for the promotion of sustainable and competent services.

- 2.1. Studies on HIV-related needs assessment of trans* people
 - Training and support for national partners
 - Conducting a study to assess the needs and requirements of trans* people at national levels
 - Analysis of national reports and data received at the regional level. Participation of the Working Group of Trans* People in finalizing the report. Publication of the regional report through ECOM's platforms and dissemination of information to partners
- 2.2. Regional study on HIV vulnerability and risks of trans* masculine and non-binary persons
 - Training and support for national partners
 - Conducting research, participation in the field stage of research on the vulnerability and risks of trans* masculine and non-binary persons in the context of HIV at national levels
 - Analysis of national reports and data obtained at the regional level. Participation of the Working Group of Trans* People in finalizing the report. Publication of the regional report through ECOM's platforms and dissemination of information to partners
- 2.3. Advocacy for the inclusion of a population size estimation (PSE) and integrated bio-behavioral research (IBBS) among trans* people in national HIV programs
 - Development of 2 national PSE protocols in Georgia and Russia, and 4 national IBBS protocols in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine among trans* people
 - Technical support to five countries to conduct national meetings with decision-makers in the field of health to present the protocols
 - Regular advocacy meetings for conducting PSE, IBBS in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine
 - Conducting PSE in Georgia and Russia
- 2.4. Regional Working Group of Trans* People (Trans* People's Working Group - TPWG) on HIV
 - Support for TPWG meetings
 - Development and implementation of a development plan for the TPWG

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVE 3: TRANS* PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL HIV PROGRAMS AND DECISION-MAKING

As part of the strategy, documents will be developed and institutionalized that will allow for the strengthening of the meaningful participation of trans* people in decision-making processes. The strategy will allow for continuous professional development and ensure the continuation of trainings on trans*-competent services for medical experts. The model packages of services created will be used as comprehensive, trans*-competent HIV response tools that are responsive to the urgent needs of trans* people.

- 3.1. Support and advocacy for trans* community involvement in national HIV coordinating bodies
 - Regional training on involvement in coordinating bodies
 - Country analyses of trans* involvement in CCMs or other national coordinating groups or bodies
 - Development/adjustment/agreement of regulations or rules of the CCM (or other coordinating mechanism) for the inclusion of trans* people
 - Assistance for/Initiation of elections of trans* people to coordinating bodies
 - Support for the participation of elected trans* people in the work of the CCM and other coordinating bodies
- 3.2. Trainings for trainers on participation in HIV decision-making and on comprehensive services based on the Practical Guidance for Implementing Comprehensive HIV and STI Programmes with Transgender People (TRANSIT)
 - Development and implementation of regional ToT based on the TRANSIT
 - Conducting national trainings and seminars based on the TRANSIT
- 3.3. Advocacy for comprehensive HIV services for trans* people based on the TRANSIT
 - Development of a model package of comprehensive services for trans* people based on the TRANSIT
 - Adaptation of national packages of services for trans* people for inclusion in national programs
 - Support for national partners in adapting and advocating for packages of services

NOTE: In the Russian Federation, the Project does not address advocacy but is focused on strengthening the provision of HIV services, in particular HIV testing and support.



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