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NEW WEBSITE IN EECA PROVIDES INFORMATION IN RUSSIAN RELATED TO GLOBAL FUND POLICIES, FUNDED PROGRAMS, ETC.

An innovative project has been created to inform Russian-speaking communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) about the news, important decisions and policy documents related to the Global Fund, and about the programs financed by the Fund in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA). The project takes the form of a website. The site also shares opportunities for training and funding, and educational resources related to HIV and TB.

The site was created as part of the regional program, Regional Civil Society and Community Support, Coordination and Communication Platform – EECA.

The project is being implemented by a consortium of technical assistance providers and regional networks led by two entities – the EECA technical assistance HUB and the Alliance-Ukraine Consultancy – affiliated with the Alliance for Public Health.

The program supports communities from different countries in the region to exchange information, and it strengthens coordination between different initiatives across the region. Through the website, CSOs also learn about various opportunities for technical assistance (TA) and how to apply for such assistance.

According to an [assessment](#) recently conducted by the regional program, the lack of capacity of communities is the significant challenge for implementing services related to community, rights, and gender (CRG). The assessment found that communities were not aware of different policies and tools distributed across the region. Concern was expressed about the lack of materials available in Russian. The website fills this gap by providing translated resources on a wide variety of topics.

The web-site is easy to navigate. It consists from the following sections: information about the regional program; news; educational resources; and information and advice concerning TA. The website also has a calendar of main events planned across the region. Further, the website allows users to subscribe to an email newsletter which provides a weekly digest of all news and updated resources placed on the web. Finally, the website is linked to a Facebook page, which is a popular social media vehicle in the EECA.

Building the capacities of communities is important, given that HIV and TB programs are being transitioned from Global Fund to domestic support in many countries – and given the need for communities to become more proactive in pushing for services of key affected populations; in protecting their rights; and in promoting the liberalization of restrictive drug policies.



Kateryna Maksymenko

Funding for this project will end in April 2017. The project coordinators are seeking ways to keep the website and newsletter going beyond that date. Kateryna Maksymenko, manager of the regional program told GFO that the website is the intellectual property of the Global Fund and that the Fund will probably continue financing it for as long as they are funding programs in the region.

Ladder of citizen participation

Meanwhile, the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), released a [self-assessment tool](#) for CSOs in the form of a video. The tool, called *The seven steps through the ladder of citizen participation*, helps community representatives know where they stand on the ladder at any particular moment.

The tool, which has been adapted from an [instrument](#) originally created in 1969 by Sherry Arnstein, defines three levels and seven steps of the civil society leader’s power in state decision-making (see table).

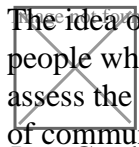
Table: The levels and steps in the ladder of citizen participation

Level	Steps	Key characteristics
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NON-PARTICIPATION	1-Manipulation	CSO representation is invited, but CSO is not allowed to participate in planning, allocation, implementation and monitoring of processes.
		At this stage, community is invited to all meetings with the purpose to share own story, own story, officials listen with empathy, maybe shake a hand and share a share a visit card and the communication ends here.
	2-Psychotherapy	and monitoring of processes.
		At this stage, the community is invited to all meetings with the purpose to share own story, officials listen with empathy, story, officials listen with empathy, maybe shake a hand and share a visit card and the communication ends here.
TOKENISM	3-Informing	The government listens and takes into the account the opinion of the community actively presenting monitoring outcomes, suggesting changes, which are accepted verbally, included into the minutes, but the final result is still not there.
	4-Consultation	No actual change happens.
	5-Placation	
CITIZEN POWER (CONTROL)	6-Partnership	The level of the citizen power and citizen control over the decisions of the government.
		The leaders in working groups are from the
	7-Delegated Power	community, represent the community, are supported by the community, and are accountable for the work.

The video is in Russian. It describes the information provided in the table in simple, understandable language by

providing practical examples of real situations. The authors of the video told GFO that it will be translated in English, using either subtitles or dubbing.

The idea of developing the video tool came when a team delivering training to representatives of the community of people who inject drugs asked about meaningful participation in CCM processes. “Once we asked participants to assess the level of their engagement with the government, most found themselves either on the first or second level of communication and they were really shocked,” said Igor Gordon, Membership and Community Strengthening team leader for EHRN.

Gordon added, “Communities are often frustrated, they put so much efforts in advocacy, but still there are no tangible results achieved in policy changes across the region. This tool can give them clear answer, why and will give them right direction.”

For more information about the tool, including the English version of the video, please contact Igor Gordon at igor.gordon@harm-reduction.org.

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