



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Report Praises Global Fund Support for Harm Reduction Programmes

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The report quotes the Global Fund Secretariat as saying that the \$180 million the Fund invested in harm reduction services for drug users in 42 countries through 2009 has been a major leap forward for this neglected population.

According to the report, experts not associated with the Global Fund have credited the Fund with strengthening and expanding needle exchange services in many countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia – “in a hostile political environment and at a time when other funding for syringe programs was very difficult to find.” The report said that money from the Global Fund had facilitated the expansion of methadone programmes in several countries, including, in Kyrgyzstan, the “ground-breaking” expansion of methadone programmes into a prison.

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The report notes that Global Fund money has assisted NGOs in places where civil society, including groups of drug users and people living with HIV , has found it difficult to thrive. In Uzbekistan, where in recent years many NGOs, especially human rights organisations, have been shut down, Global Fund processes and funding are credited with enabling a network of support groups for persons living with HIV – which include members who use drugs – to function for the first time in large parts of the country.

In their report, the Legal Network and the OSF state that the availability of funding for harm reduction is linked in part to the inclusion on country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs) of people who can speak to the concerns of people who use drugs. According to the Global Fund, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as of December 2009, only 10 of 23 countries receiving Global Fund HIV grants had CCMs that included organisations working explicitly on harm reduction.

Inadequate representation and inclusion of people who use drugs in CCMs has been cited in numerous NGO reports, including a 2008 report by the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) that was based on the experience of people involved in CCMs in seven countries.

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