

HIV Prevention among Truck Drivers

-Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova



This inter-country initiative was aimed at HIV prevention in highly vulnerable groups of people and gained the support of industry organisations, NGOs and government agencies.

Issue

Sex workers of all genders, men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people, people who inject drugs and people in detention (prison or other closed settings) were especially vulnerable to HIV in all epidemic settings. In this context, clients of sex workers played an increasingly important role in the sexual transmission of HIV. In Ukraine, truck drivers had been identified as a key group amongst this clientele. Thus, there was an intervention to raise awareness about HIV and safe behaviour among truck drivers and decrease unprotected sex. A special training course on HIV prevention for the road transport sector was adapted into the mandatory certificate programmes by the Ukrainian Association of International Cargo Transporters, the organisation that unites 3,500 transport companies in Ukraine, involving approximately 200,000 drivers.

The issue with the same vulnerable population group also existed in the Republic of Moldova, thus the opportunity existed for a South-South cooperation to share the know-how and lessons learned.

Towards a Solution

Through a cross-country cooperation initiative, UNFPA facilitated the expansion of the positive experience of Ukraine to the Republic of Moldova as it developed targeted interventions for truck drivers. The set of interventions developed in Ukraine was composed of the adaptation of the ILO training toolkit on HIV/AIDS for the road transport sector, institutionalising the HIV prevention training course, training of trainers, training

for managers of the transport sector, and the distribution of information kits and condoms.

The knowledge and experience-sharing initiative included conducting environmental scanning to understand the structure of truck driver networks, identifying relevant partners, undertaking knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices (KABP) surveys among truck drivers to assess practices with regard to HIV and risky behaviour, and formulating action plans.

Results

This partnership generated commitment of the key stakeholders in the Republic of Moldova, such as the Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure, National Agency for Transport Auto, Union of Road Transporters and Road Workers, International Association



of Auto Transporters, Training Centre of Staff for International Transportation, Health and Education, as well as other government agencies and NGOs engaged in HIV prevention. As further proof of this successful advocacy, this planned initiative was incorporated in the draft National AIDS Strategy.

Lessons Learned

While training courses for truck drivers raise awareness about HIV prevention, follow-up mechanisms, such as conducting studies on how the courses have changed their behaviour, would be helpful. The training design requires the use of peer educators among the drivers themselves; but many are reluctant to serve as such due to lack of free time. Finally, there is a need to improve sustainability further by involving more industry players.

Partners

- Ukrainian Association of International Truck Cargo Transporters
- Federation of Transport Workers of Ukraine
- All-Ukrainian Trade Union of Transport Workers
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation, the Republic of Moldova
- Moldova National Coordination Council on HIV Programme
- Moldova Association for Truck Drivers
- Moldova National Education Centre for Truck Drivers
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- German Development Cooperation (GIZ)

Contacts

- Andrey Poshtaruk, UNFPA Programme Officer
EECA Regional Office (poshtaruk@unfpa.org)
- Alanna Armitage, UNFPA Regional Director
EECA Regional Office (armitage@unfpa.org)

