

Association HERA XXI in Georgia: From Stigma/Discrimination To Positive Action

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Georgia has one of the highest frequencies of STDs among CIS countries. According to official statistics, Georgia is considered to be among the countries of high risk because of the Injective drug use, migration in the neighboring countries of high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and increasing tendencies of spreading Sexually Transmitted Infections(STIs).

There is no national network of PLHIV so far which advocating for their rights. With support of HERA XXI the new independent organization PAPA (Positive Attitude, Positive Action) has founded. The situational and individual case analyses showed the ultimate need of combating Stigma and Discrimination for the effectiveness of prevention, prophylactics and treatment. For the moment the priority of HERA XXI and PAPA is to build the multilateral capacity of Advocacy-Initiative Group on their rights based on the principles of IPPF declaration of Sexual Rights, in order to strengthen their advocacy networking commitments locally and lay background for initiating the first national PLHIV network. HERA XXI created the team which is cooperative, effective flexible and with reliable resources which will make prominent contributions in the process of decreasing the HIV AIDS related Stigma and Discrimination at the national level and in further on will be the owners of the processes in Georgia.

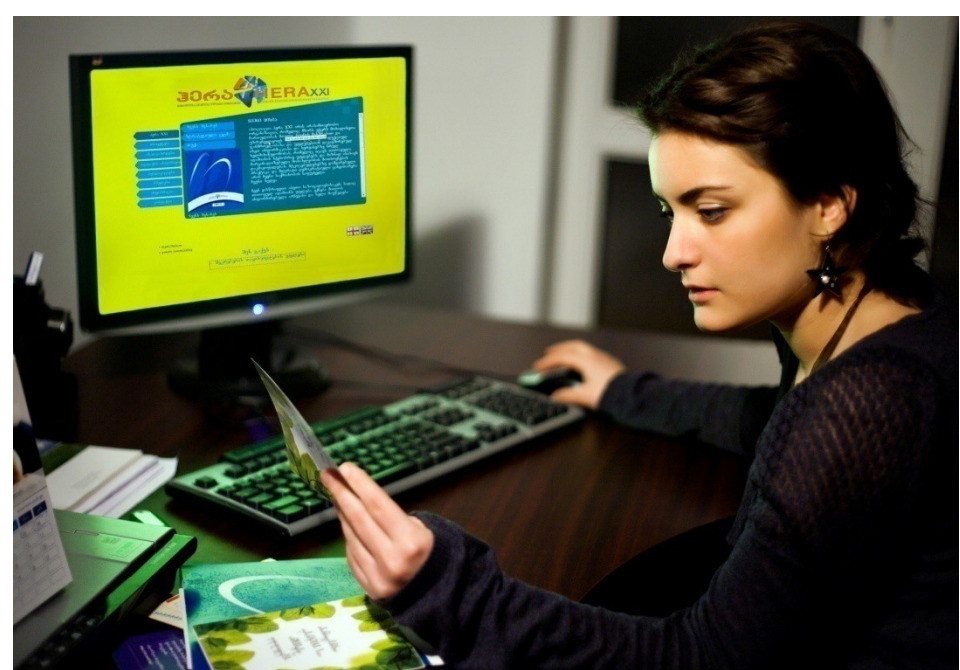
1 What project/programme/innovation over the past two years are you most proud of? Why?

MA Association HERA-XXI during the last years worked in the framework of the worked out Strategy on HIV/AIDS. In the framework of the Strategy were implemented several project named “Equal Rigths for PLHIV Georgia” Years 2008-2011.

The goal of this project is to achieve that the incidence of STI and HIV is reduced and HIV infected people enjoy equal rights and opportunities. HERA XXI aimed to reach this by increasing public awareness on HIV/AIDS and rights of PLWH, including SRHR and by strengthening its own capacity to address HIV stigma and discrimination in Georgian society and strengthen commitment of the policy makers and actors

Innovations:

- Survey PLWAs with special IPPF Toolkit of Questionnaires;
- Capacity Building of PLHIV;
- Involvement of PLHIV on the all levels of the project;
- IEC materials and Making the film Do not let us down!;
- MA Strengthen Networking and partnership with organizations working on issues of HIV;
- Promote the sexual rights of PLHIV in Georgia by integrating Sexual Rights Declaration;
- Set up of the Initiative Advocacy PLHIV group and newly establish Non-governmental organization “Positive Attitude-Positive Action”(PAPA);
- Gathering and analizing of the new cases/life stories of PLHIV;
- Worked out the recommendations with support of the 42th Article of Constitution for the key agencies working on the HIV AIDS issue on the better implementation national laws and by laws protecting the rights of PLHIV;
- Open letter to CCM included the review and analyzes of live cases of discrimination and rights violation of PLHIVs across Georgia. Every case and life story in the letter was supported by the local or international documentations including the Laws, Conventions etc.



2 What challenges did you face?

- PLHIV are afraid to stand in front of the questions on their health status in Georgia;
- Large number of discrimination cases still exists;
- Lack of confidentiality;
- Unemployment problems among PLHIV;
- Identifying the high risk groups of population in country;
- No real data and statistics on the high risk groups of population in country;
- Low accessibility to HIV/AIDS related information and services, as financially, as well as geographically;
- Limited access to medical services for PLHIV;
- Later diagnosis of HIV/AIDS in medical facilities;
- Low awareness on STI/HIV/AIDS problems among mass-media representatives ;
- Lack of awareness about Sexual and Reproductive Rights as a basic Human Rights and recognition of these rights among society in general;
- No exist Monitoring and evaluation system of the implementation of the National Laws and International Conventions on STI/HIV/AIDS at national level.

3 How will you build on this success?

- Wide usage of new technologies Facebook, Twitter da Renren (internet resources and accessibility to internet);
- Development of local online platform and establishment of PLHIV coalition on its basis;
- Involvement of HIV positive people in all levels of HIV programmers and in the process permanent analyses of their needs;
- Strengthen and Capacity Building of newly establish “PAPA” as an independent PLHIV organization;
- Adoption of information according Georgian reality;
- Support of development and implementation of programmes that will ensure regionally equally distributed information and services, and involvement of Young People especially from rural and remote areas;
- Promotion, accessibility and usage of Condoms for high risk groups as a dual protection form STI and pregnancy;
- Increase accessibility to Reproductive Health services for PLHIV;
- Sound Referral System in order to create equal opportunity for rural and urban population especially high risks groups to access necessary medical treatment and services for PLHIV;
- To reduce stigma and discrimination by equipped of high risk groups of Sexual Rights Declaration;
- To support creation The Global Network of PLHIV in Georgia in order to using the opportunities for advocacy on local and international human rights fora.
- Establish partnership with Public Defender office of Georgia and work on National Preventive Mechanisms of Stigma Discrimination of STI/HIV/AIDS in society.



access=life