

BORDERNET work Project
Model region VII
Bulgaria
Health and Social Development Foundation, Sofia, Bulgaria

Report for the period January – December 2009

Main Focus	Planned Activity	Implementation period	Responsible agency/person	Completed Activity
The focus of the network cooperation between Bulgaria and Romania in 2009 shall be on expanding exchange on the issue of youth prevention work and effective methods of participative community work.	Study visit of 2 Romanian outreach workers in Bulgaria	31 st of August – 1 st of September 2009	HESED	2 outreach workers came for the study visit: Adrian Caraboi and Valentina Dumitru, ARAS, Romania (see attachment 1)
	Sex Workers from the new EU-Member States in Germany	22nd – 24th October 2009, Berlin	SPI Research	<p>Total 6 participants from Bulgaria and 4 of them from HESED, participated in this fruitful experience exchange meeting. There were also participants from “Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS” Program of Ministry of Health– Stefka Boneva, long term consultant and Hristofor Zjumbjulski from SOS - Families in Risk Foundation.</p> <p>The main focus of the conference was on Bulgarian male and female sex workers, who work in Berlin. There was a plenary session on prostitution situation in BG, done by Stefka Boneva. There was also a special topic on Roma ethnic group, guided by Sylvia Vassileva and Boyan Vassilev. This special topic was the most attended one. There was enormous interest towards Bulgarian Roma sex workers on part of the health workers from German health services. They expressed eagerness for continuation of the experience exchange in year 2010.</p> <p>Dr. Vassilka Kouzeva, who is the Director of Regional Dispensary for Dermal and Venereal Diseases without Hospital Ward – Sofia and who is working for many years as a medical specialist in the Mobile Medical Unit for sex workers of HESED, joined a conference session for experience exchange related to the health care situations in Bulgaria, Romania and Germany and especially HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention and treatment.</p>

				<p>A very interesting part of the conference was the Market place. Participants from all countries were attracted by the Bulgarian stand. To all 120 participants in the conference were disseminated different brochures and educational materials in Bulgarian language used for outreach work, practical guidelines for work with sex workers in English and Bulgarian and also information about resources of the European Network for Sex Workers TAMPEP. A list of available services for sex workers in 13 Bulgarian towns was created and disseminated among the participants.</p> <p>A very interesting outreach visit for Bulgarian team was organized in the MSM venues in Berlin. Many of them were flooded by Bulgarian MSM sex workers.</p>
Adolescents and young adults	<p>Peer training for Roma Youngsters within the high risk community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Outreach work with Roma Youngsters</i> - <i>Identification of Roma Opinion Leaders and motivation for participation in Peer Training</i> - <i>Peer training for Roma Opinion Leaders and Roma outreach workers within the Roma neighborhood in Sofia</i> 	May – December 2009	HESED	Two Roma peer groups with total of 15 participants are completed. See the attached report for details (attachment 2)
	Outreach work with Roma Youngsters engaged in MSM prostitution	January-December 2009		Ongoing outreach work in Roma neighborhood “Fakulteta” in Sofia with special attention for Roma Youngsters engaged in MSM prostitution. Condoms, lubricants and consultations are provided. 213 Roma youngsters received outreach services with total of 792 contacts in 2009.
	<p>Testing High Risk Roma Youngsters for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and HIV and treatment of the infected ones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Outreach work with Roma Youngsters engaged in MSM prostitution and motivation for testing and treatment</i> - <i>Testing and Treatment</i> 	March - December 2009	HESED	30 High Risk Roma Youngsters from Sofia were tested for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and HIV and the infected ones received treatment. They were recruited during ongoing outreach work in Fakulteta neighborhood. See the attached report for details (attachment 3)

Continuation of sentinel surveillance in Bulgaria and Romania	International Expert Meeting on HIV/STI sentinel surveillance	6th March 2009	HESED	The meeting aimed to present the results of Sentinel Surveillance for 2008 and to plan activities for 2009. There were 2 participants with presentations from SPI, 3 participants from ARAS and 4 Bulgarian participants.
	Ongoing sentinel surveillance activities	January – December 2009	HESED	5 sentinel sites provided questionnaires. 2 on-site visits were carried out in Plovdiv in order to distribute reports, discuss some difficulties and collect papers.
	Presentation and discussion on the results of VCT survey in Bulgaria	30th June 2009	HESED	The results of the survey, held in 2008 in Bulgarian VCT services were presented on the regular annual meeting of the VCTs in Sofia. The discussion was really interesting and the result of it was the clearly declared desire of the personnel of the VCTs for burnout prevention training. (see attachment 4)

The Bordernetwork project is very important for the maintenance of the quality services for HIV prevention implemented by HESED. Our organization had very limited funding for HIV/AIDS prevention in the beginning of year 2009. The Bordernetwork project gave us chance to continue our HIV prevention activities in the Roma community in Sofia. Thanks to this project a sentinel surveillance system continued working in all 5 sentinel sites. The international exchange, especially in Berlin was really useful.

The problems of the closed minority communities and especially of the highly marginalized Roma community came in the focus of attention of many organizations in CEE. The open borders result in new challenges for the organizations active in the field of HIV prevention. In response to these new challenges and in order to increase the knowledge for good practices for work with closed minority communities similar to the Roma community, the new Bordernet project devoted a whole work package. This work package is led by HESED, which is recognition for the long and successful experience that the organization has in the implementation of different interventions targeted at the Roma community.

As a follow-up of the conference in Berlin, consultation centre for prostitution in Hanover- Phoenix invited HESED to have a workshop in October 2010 in a conference about the women in prostitution in Romania and Bulgaria.