

## Report for period of **April to July 2009**

Report submitted by: GIP TJK

Report submitted to: TSP

### **Introduction**

In Tajikistan the user organisation is the first to be registered as such, with the aim of uniting their efforts to realize their rights. User organization was registered in January 9 in MoJ and other necessary documents (open bank account, registering in the statistic department, taxes and etc.) were prepared and received by the end of January. The User club and the User organization are working closely together, and the User organization will aim to find support to implement their first project, involving more user club members, so that they can play a significant role in the future.

### **Activities**

The specific aim of this project was defined as: **to set up a sustainable system in which users of mental health care can undertake meaningful activities and advocate for their rights.**

To achieve this aim, two sets of activities were defined. During the 4 months the following was done:

#### ***1. Promoting user club***

In these months we had several user club meetings. The number of users participated in the meetings was different from 4 till 15 persons.

In the first day of April we had a topic devoted to Life purposes, short-term and long-term. Two users said they didn't have purposes at all but others expressed similar purposes and desires that healthy people have. Then we talked about the rights of women in Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Surprisingly for us the age of marriage of men and women in Iran is much later than in Tajikistan. The age of marriage of men in Iran is 32 to 40, because they study and earn money before marriage. The age of marriage of women begins from 28 to 32. And there is short number of divorces in Iran, because their marriage is based on Islam.

*User club in the city dispensary.* We arranged a user club in the city dispensary with the inmates. We told inmates about our user club, about its history, about GIP and its mission. The inmates were slow-minded and drowsy because of the medication, but they were glad that we came, because nothing happens in the hospital which is boring.

*Personal hygiene.* Nargis, the project manager, were present in user club discussion of personal hygiene. Being a doctor she gave advises how to follow it. That we should wash ourselves regularly, go to bath-houses and use deodorants and antiperspirants.

*Discussion about status opening.* In this discussion some users said that there were not scared to open their status, but some preferred not to open it in order not to face society's misunderstanding. User club leader gave an example of such a marginal group as homosexuals in Tajikistan, because they also hide their nature and lead a hidden life because of people's misunderstandings.

*Types of love, maternal and paternal love, role plays.* A new male user joined our club and our topic was about types of love, maternal and paternal love and users were given a task to make a role plays.

At first there was information about types of love from the book and then users made role plays of being a father, mother, sister, brother, uncle and they felt by themselves these roles. The club leader

concluded that father's and mother's love are different in expressions. For example, if our mother loves us unconditional, however we must deserve our father's love.



*Tajik pilav.* At the end of June user club members enjoyed themselves by Tajik national food pilav, summer fruits and listened to the music. Users are also visited Varzob's Lake in the end of July.

We bought several new books on positive psychology and we will use its information in user club meetings.

New persons. Since January we met two more new people in user club and one of them is a lady.

## ***2. Advocacy for rights of MH users***

### **Monthly consultations of a lawyer**

**In April - July** there was not meeting with a lawyer lately, because urgent questions were answered and those who had legal problems applied to the lawyer individually.

### **Work with Mass Media**

Project coordinator met a few times with representative from Radio “Vatan” (we chosen this radio as they are very popular and have a lot of radio listener in the whole country). It was discussed about possibilities of preparation radio program with users' participation. She suggested us to prepare joint scenario for one hour online program in prime time. She also shows her readiness help with articles in popular newspapers. Finally GIP staff agreed with the authority of “Vatan” radio about morning live 1hour radio program. Five persons were present in the program: the project manager Nargis Toymastova, the project consultant Nargis Najmutdinova, user club leader Jamshed Hakimov, user club member Tuymurod and a lawyer Sergey. The topic was “Stigma and Discrimination”. The topic was divided among speakers. For example, Jamshed and Tuymurod told about user club, the organization, about existing problems from the user prospective. Nargis Toymastova opened a concept of stigma and discrimination and the reasons of its appearance in the society, Nargis Najmutdinova gave several real life examples according to the problem and referred the questions to the invited to the program advocate who answered the questions and the question of the leader of the program regarding how we could fight stigma and discrimination. It was also discussed about problems with public transport issues where human rights violated very often. By the end of the program the lawyer informed about address which we can use if it is necessary. After the program there were many reviews. There some of them: where should we apply if the users' rights are violated, questions about pensions, what should be done if the transport conductors do not allow to get on the public transport with the pensioner's book.

The social trailer on human rights issue was prepared by radio “Vatan”, content was coordinated with us and it was agreed to broadcast trailers during July.

### **Publishing brochures**

6 types of brochures were prepared and published on such topics as: “Voluntary and involuntary hospital admission” (in Russian), “About schizophrenia” (in Russian), “For the relatives of users of psychiatric services” (in Russian), “Social benefits of the disabled people” (in Russian and Tajik). The brochures were distributed among the population and the users.

After the distribution of the brochures there was a phone call of the chief doctor of mental institution. He asked whether we have a legal permission to publish such kind of brochures as he was interested brochure about “Voluntary and involuntary hospital admission”. We explained that the information was consulted with a lawyer and we are working according to the MoU with the MoH.

**To improve the dialogue with policy and decision makers in order to bring the needs and concerns of people with mental disabilities onto the political agenda.**

The official informational letters regarding our wishes to invite representative from MoH with aim to create a dialog and explain the needs of the user club members were prepared and sent to MoH and MLSP.

**MoH** answered that they will start negotiations with User organization after approving and signing an appropriate document like MoU.

**MLSP** showed their readiness meet with us and finally *meeting* with the director of the Social Protection agency was held in May. 7 users of the club, the project manager Nargis Toymastova, the project consultant Nargis Najmutdinova were present in the meeting. In this meeting the club members with the board members of the user organization “Hamdilon” told the director about themselves, about their problems and needs. The director tried to be kind and polite. Questions about employment, increasing of pension and other socially important questions were asked. One question was asked by one user: ”What should the disabled person do if his/her pension is about 14 US dollars?” The director answered that as the budget of the country is small, that's why the pensions are small However, the director said that the president of the republic of Tajikistan is paying much attention to the persons with disabilities. The director also promised to help to find a premises for a user organization and user club meetings.



PS: We should note that establishing dialogue with MLSP is better than with MoH, because getting access to the Ministry of Health is too much buerocratic than MLSP.

Start from May Nargis Najmutdinova joint to UM project after maternity leave since Nargis Toymastova started work for the new project.

**Additional work** of the project consultant Nagis Najmutdinova. Nargis negotiated on the telephone with the leader of the transport department of the city authority because of lots complaints of users that they are not allowed to get on the public transport with the pension book by the transport conductors. It was agreed to arrange mini-seminars for the workers of the public transport with the participation of the representative of the Ministry of labour. The negotiations go on.

**Obstacles**

There are still only 3-4 active users from whom we could expect some results/contribution. The work in the project showed that activity of users depends on the degree of their motivation. In this way, supporting them with transport expenses, with humanitarian aid, we maintained more active participation of users in user club meetings.

Another obstacle that we have is premises. As it is rent free premises, other local workers of the place have access to it. We feel us not comfortable as we should use the room only during the fixed time (2 h/week) and we are afraid that our things can be lost.

**Sending letters from user organization «Hamdilon» to stake holders**

Most of our users coming to user club and «Hamdilon»'s board members do not open their status in the society because of stigma and they are afraid of harsh consequences they may meet afterwards. We prepared the draft of letter but didn't send it because of the above-mentioned reasons. But we think that it is a matter of time and we will overcome this inhibition and during the current year we will be sure to send the letters asking support from stake holders.

**Unplanned activities**

During this 4 month Jamshed and Nargis T took part in OSCE seminar on torture prevention in closed institutions of Tajikistan. Also they participated in NGOs club. Also Jamshed with user Sukhrob were in the seminar of OSCE on human rights.

**Monitoring of the project implementation**

It was planned that the project activities will be externally monitored by a local consultant who has a good grasp of the situation, and is in a good position to assess the impact of the project. Since consultant could not do it because of some reasons, GIP TJK was interested to conduct internal monitoring.

First time Project coordinator Nargis Toymastova visited User club meeting in April. 9 users were participated in the meeting including 2 women. Most of them came to the meeting in time. The topic for discussion was “Personal hygiene and its importance for health”. The theme was interesting as some of participants did know what kind of complications can be in case not observing personal hygiene.

In second time when the project consultant Nargis Najmutdinova visited user club meeting 12 users attended. In both visits following negative/positive moments were noted:

- Meetings are conducting in teaching form. It is mean that leader of the user club usually preparing some topic and speaks as reader for others.
- Usually Jamshed takes over initiatives to choose topics for discussion because others are more passive;
- Some passivity and lack of initiative of user club leader as well as from users themselves cause slow promotion of the User movement in general and especially activities in framework of the user organization “Hamdilon”.

There are also positive things like:

- Users are very interested in club meetings, which give them opportunity to communicate with peer, to spend leisure time and to get news, information and skills;
- Some of them are active during discussions and share their own opinions with each other;
- One of user club members - an elderly lady, who joined the club this year - initiate intellectual quizzes, which make positive effect on others.

Based on results of our internal monitoring we are thinking about giving a chance to other user club

members to take over the responsibility for organization of user club meetings, so that they realize how important it is to be active for the benefit of themselves and of the user movement in Tajikistan.