



EVIDENCE BRIEF

Civil society

Monitoring implementation of the Dublin Declaration on Partnership to Fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia: 2012 progress report

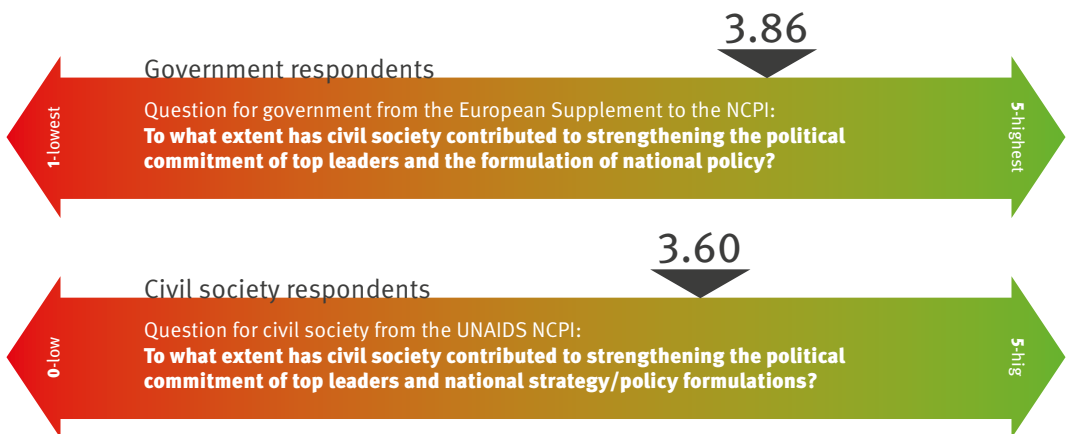
Policy implications

- **Learning from experiences in countries where the relationship between government and civil society is effective and accountable**, other European countries would benefit from reviewing their national HIV/AIDS strategies to include concrete plans to strengthen partnerships at national and regional levels.
- **Evidence shows that a more effective response can be achieved by actively involving key populations in the aspects of HIV-related programmes that affect them.** Efforts to expand and accelerate the involvement of key populations can include identifying and learning from experiences in other countries who have achieved involvement of key populations in HIV programmes.
- **Access to financial support is critical for effective participation by civil society in the national response to HIV.** Sustainable funding strategies will inevitably include government subcontracting/granting to civil society organisations but they will also require civil society organisations to develop their own comprehensive fundraising strategies, including exploring opportunities to for sustainable public–private partnerships.

Civil society plays an important and useful role in national responses to HIV

Governments and civil society agree that civil society adds value to national responses to HIV. Government respondents clearly recognised the contributions of civil society in strengthening the political commitment of national leaders and in formulating national policy.

Figure 1: Mean scores for political commitment and national policy/national strategy/policy formulations



But this role could be strengthened or expanded

Nearly 83% of government respondents believe that the involvement of civil society in the national response to HIV should be strengthened or expanded. Governments in several countries specifically reported on plans to strengthen and expand the role of civil society. For example, the German government reported that civil society will have a role in the design and implementation of HIV and STI surveillance in key populations.



Countries are making efforts to involve civil society

Governments and civil society agree that efforts are being made to increase civil society participation in the HIV response. While civil society has reported steadily increasing involvement since 2005, there could still be more effort made to involve them, particularly in light of governments' recognition of the value they bring to the response.

Civil society's role in national planning and budgeting processes could be further expanded

Although civil society is currently playing a role in planning and budgeting processes, government and civil society agree there is substantial room for improvement in the extent of that role. For example, the Bulgarian government reported, 'Civil society representatives should take [a] proactive role in the process of policy development, decision making and budgeting at the local level.' One parallel concern about planning and budgeting is the lack of information and transparency about the amount, the sources and the availability of HIV funding in many countries.

Civil society organisations could increase their capacity and take on other HIV-related responsibilities

While governments report that civil society has good access to technical support to implement their HIV activities, civil society reports far lower access to this support. Given the high percentage of government and civil society respondents who believe the role of civil society should be strengthened or expanded, access to technical support is critical. For example, the Estonian government reported, 'Continuous training and involvement in different processes would be one of the opportunities to enhance and strengthen their participation'.

Civil society is concerned about the availability of funding, including the need for additional support

▶ In the latest round of reporting, civil society respondents reported a decline in their ability to access financial support to implement their activities from the previous round. The fact that there has been a decline is a concern at a time when both government and civil society would like to see the involvement of civil society in national HIV responses expanded and strengthened. In fact, the Romanian government reported, ‘Currently, the underfunding [of] civil society working in the field of HIV has [the] impact [of] diminishing their active involvement in the national response.’

Key populations are involved in the HIV response but there are opportunities for further involvement

▶ The involvement of civil society in national HIV responses has led to greater involvement of key. Governments and civil society report reasonably high levels of engagement with populations such as people living with HIV, people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, sex workers, migrants and prisoners. But the level of engagement of these populations could be expanded further.







About this series

The Dublin Declaration on Partnership to Fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia, adopted in 2004, was the first in a series of regional declarations which emphasise HIV as an important political priority for Europe and Central Asia.

Monitoring progress in implementing this declaration began in 2007 with financial support from the German Ministry of Health. This resulted in a publication by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, UNAIDS and civil society organisations in August 2008.

In late 2007, the European Commission requested that ECDC monitor implementation of the declaration on a more systematic basis and ECDC set up an advisory group comprising 15 countries and various international partners, including EMCDDA, UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, and produced its first major country-driven, indicator-based progress report in 2010.

In 2012, the process of reporting was further harmonised with EMCDDA, UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, as well as with the EU Commission Communication and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS 2009–2013. The objective was to reduce the number of indicators, focus on reporting that was relevant in the European and Central Asian context and minimise the reporting burden for countries by making better use of existing country reported data. Responses were received from 51 of 55 countries (93%).

In this round, instead of producing one overall report, information provided by countries has been analysed to produce ten thematic reports and this series of eight evidence briefs.

Other reports in the series can be found on the ECDC website at www.ecdc.europa.eu under the health topic HIV/AIDS.

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