

Training journalists to report on HIV and AIDS **News**

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The first regional HIV and AIDS training-the-trainers workshop for journalists took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 9 to 13 June. This five-day training activity was organized by the Central Asia AIDS Control Project (CAAP), in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Almaty. Its objective was to prepare Central Asian reporters to run workshops for their colleagues on the coverage of HIV and AIDS related subjects.

According to the project coordinator, Chinara Seitalieva, the role of mass media is extremely important in the fight against the HIV infection. This is why the establishment of a pool of journalists regularly working in this field is crucial for the region. A good article on HIV and AIDS should treat about prevention and the fight against discrimination of people affected by the virus. It should be scientifically accurate and devoid of any sensation and prejudice. To prepare such articles journalists themselves must well understand the issue and keep their knowledge up-to-date.

20 journalists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the workshop. Besides learning how to fill information gap of their colleagues, they were introduced to the Regional AIDS Centre activities and visited a number of AIDS organizations in Tajikistan.

The Central Asia AIDS Control Project, together with the UNESCO Office in Almaty, designed a manual, specifically for the purpose of this workshop. It is hoped that it will be translated into national languages of all Central Asian countries.

The Central Asia AIDS Control Project is the first regional HIV and AIDS initiative financed by the International Development Association (IDA) and the Department for International Development (DFID). The project, which received a total amount of 27 million US dollars, aims to contribute to the control of HIV spreading in Central Asia through strengthening regional and national capacities and cooperation between the public sector, NGOs and private companies. It is being implemented in four Central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - and is expected to be completed by 30 June 2010.