

The role of CSOs in provision of integrated services to high risk and marginalized groups

Maka Gogia

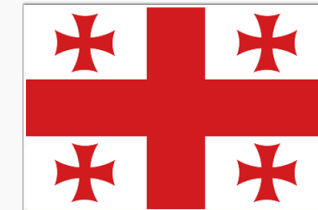
Georgian Harm Reduction Network

Georgia

11.12.2020



Georgia/Status



Worldatlas.com

- Population 3,7 m
- HCV prevalence of 7.7% in general population¹
 - Highest among EECA countries
- HIV prevalence 0.4% among general population
- HBV prevalence 2.9% in general population¹
- Epidemics concentrated among KPs (MSM, PWID)

Available at: http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=152&lang=eng;
<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-overviews/ge>;
<http://bemonidrug.org.ge/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Estimating-the-Prevalence-of-Injection-Drug-Use-in-Five-Cities-of-Georgia.pdf> (all accessed June 2015)

1 National HCV Sero-prevalence survey, NCDC, 2015

History

More than 20 years of successful engagement of Civil Society organizations (SCO) in:

- Screening of persons who would otherwise not be tested might seek anonymous HIV testing and learn their HIV status
- PoC diagnostics / confirmatory diagnostics
- Referral
- Linkage to care
- Long term adherence
- Patients education

Georgian Harm reduction network that unites 26 NGOs is playing an important role in ensuring Health and social welfare of people who inject drugs, living with HIV and viral hepatitis and TB or affected by these diseases

Several advantages of SCO's over government agencies:

- 1) They have rich experience working at the community level;
- 2) Their autonomous nature allows them to respond more quickly;
- 3) They have access to marginalized groups;
- 4) They generally work with the target groups to raise their self-esteem;
- 5) They can act as a bridge between the community and the national level;
- 6) They often employ innovative methods; and
- 7) Their method of operation allows for cost- effectiveness

*Prevention and control of AIDS: the role of NGOs, [P N Sehgal](#), PMID: 12284229

Screening and Testing on HIV HCV, HBV, Syphilis, TB

Sterile injection equipment

Overdose prevention and
naloxone

Condoms, lubricants

Risk reduction counselling

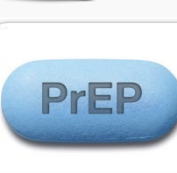
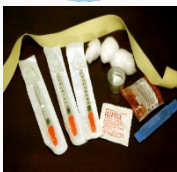
Case management

Medical, psychological and
legal consultations

Peer-driven interventions and
outreach testing, mobile
ambulatories (9+1)

PreP – for MSM and Trans*
women

Support services for PLHIV



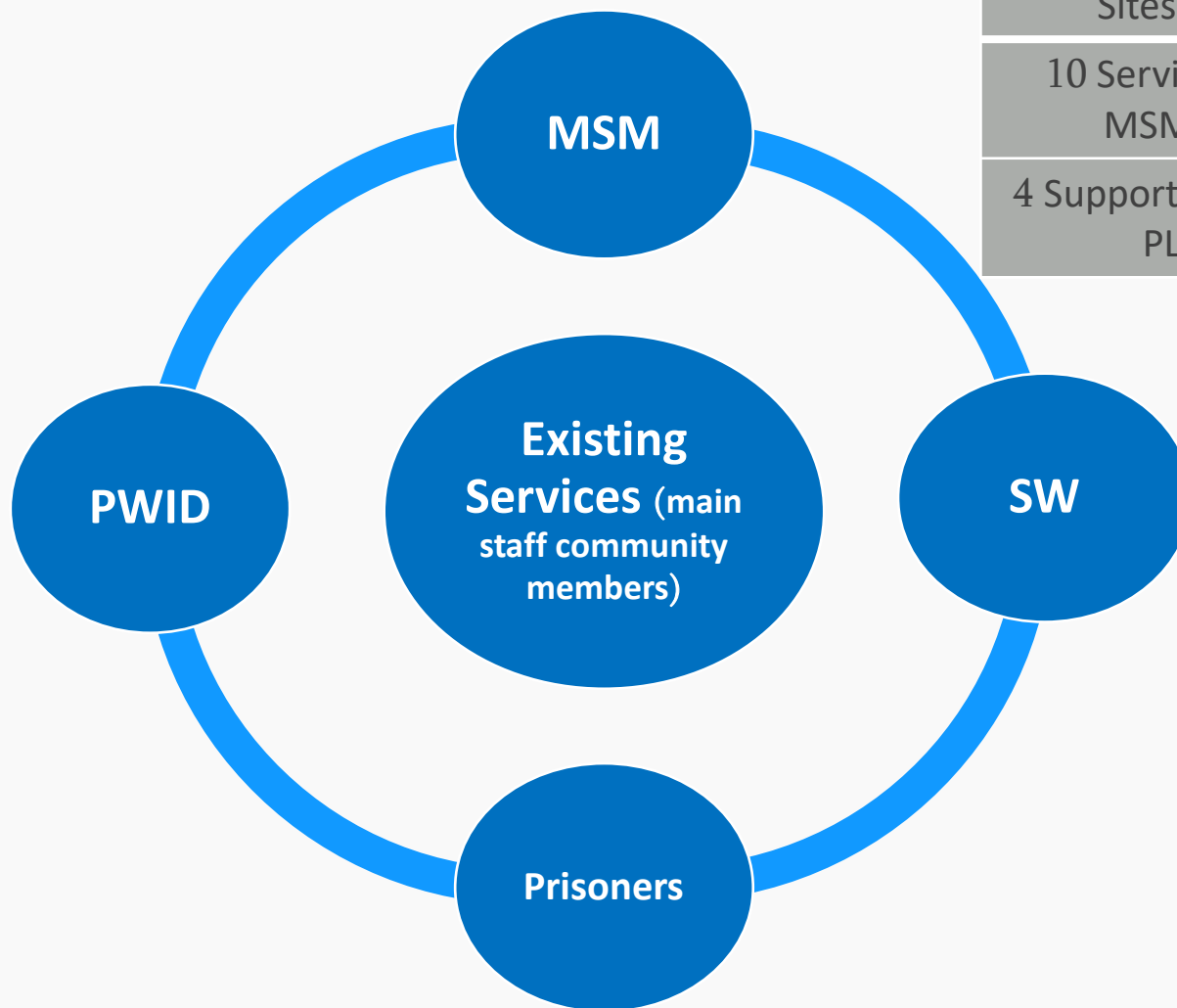
The Global Fund
To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria



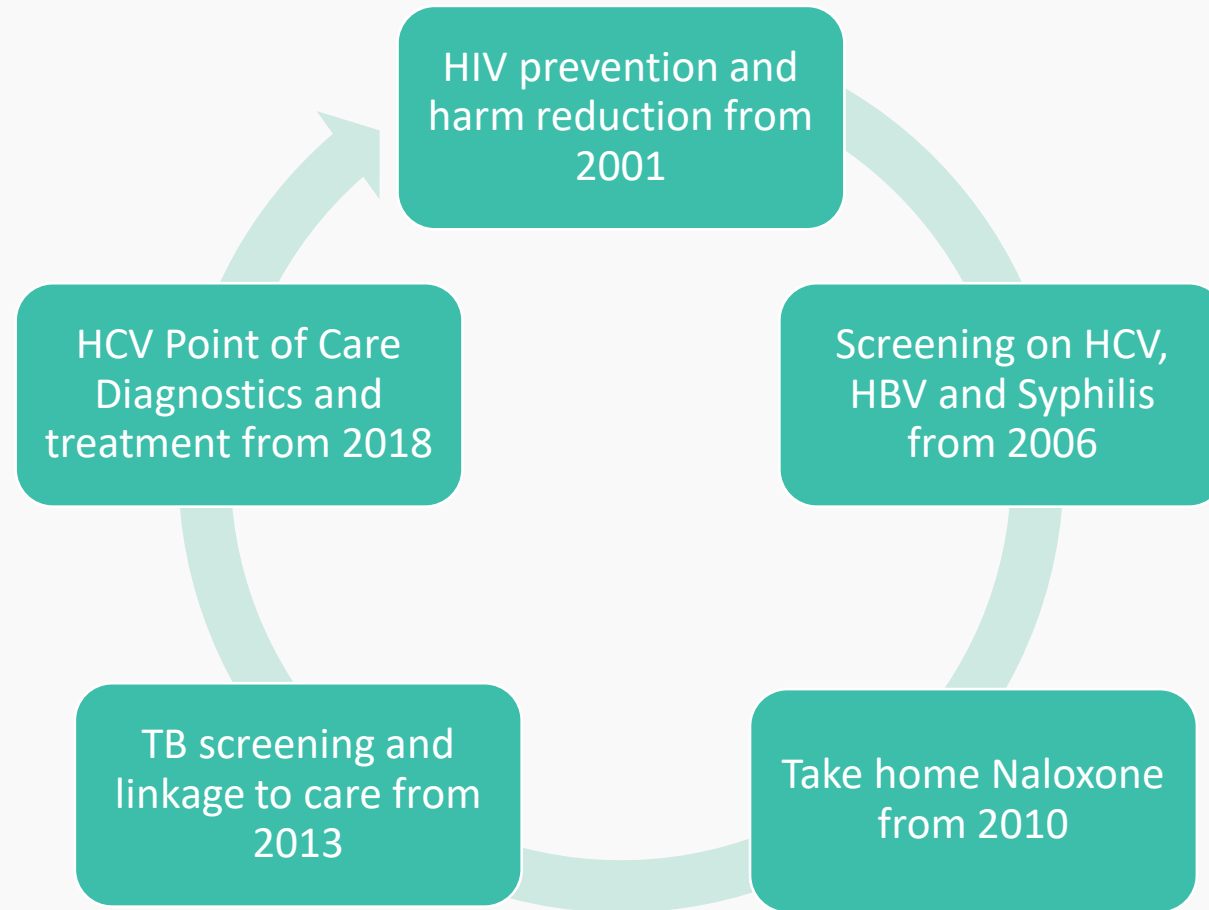
14 Harm Reduction
Sites - IDUs

10 Service Sites –
MSM/SWs

4 Support centers for
PLHIV



History of provision integrated services to high risk and marginalized groups by GHRN



Syringe Vending Machine Trial in Georgia

Funding

- 5% Initiative and Global Fund
- In collaboration with NCDC and GHRN

Components

1. Kit for opioid users
2. Kit for stimulant users
3. Male condoms
4. Naloxone
5. Female condoms
6. Pregnancy test
7. HIV self-tests

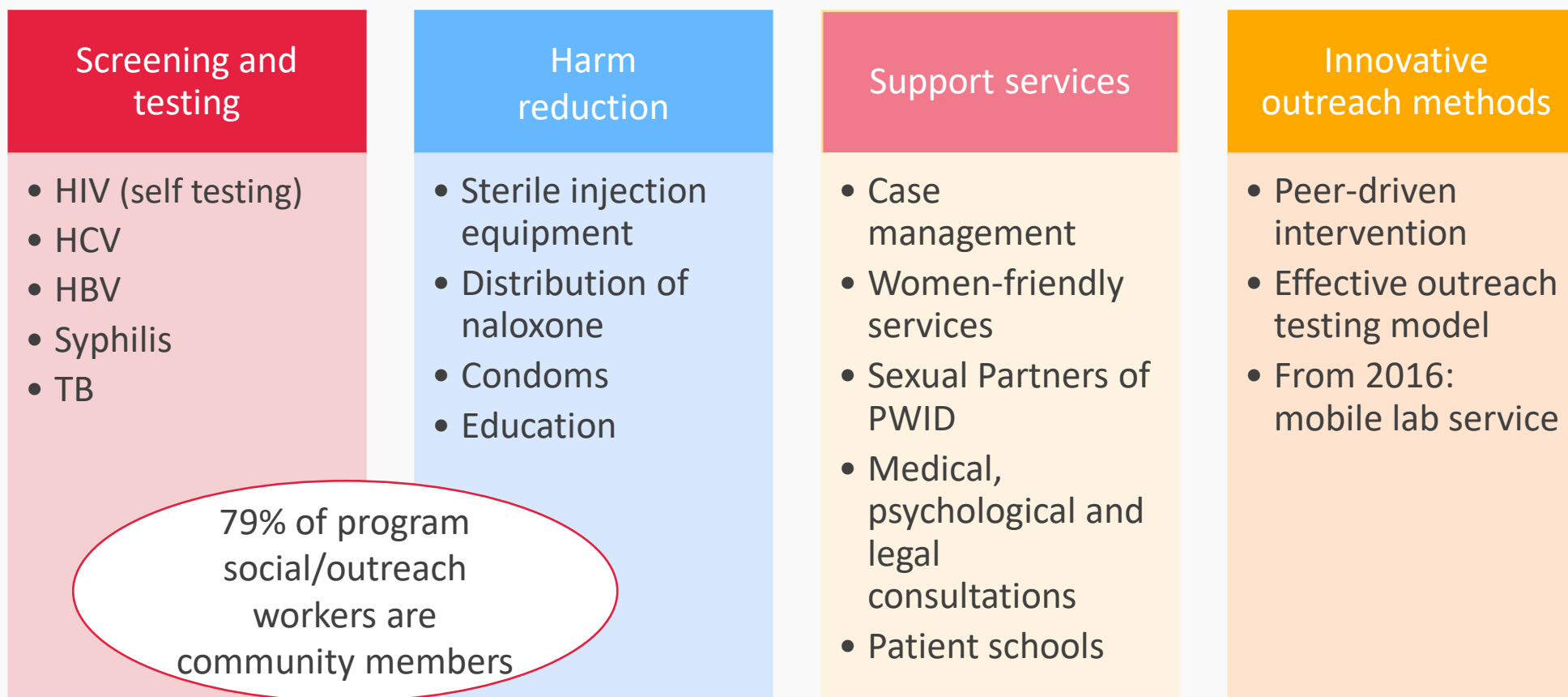
Current status:

- 10 machines are already located and functioning in Tbilisi available for PWID, MSM, Trans+ and SWs



A number of services are provided by GHRN

MG10



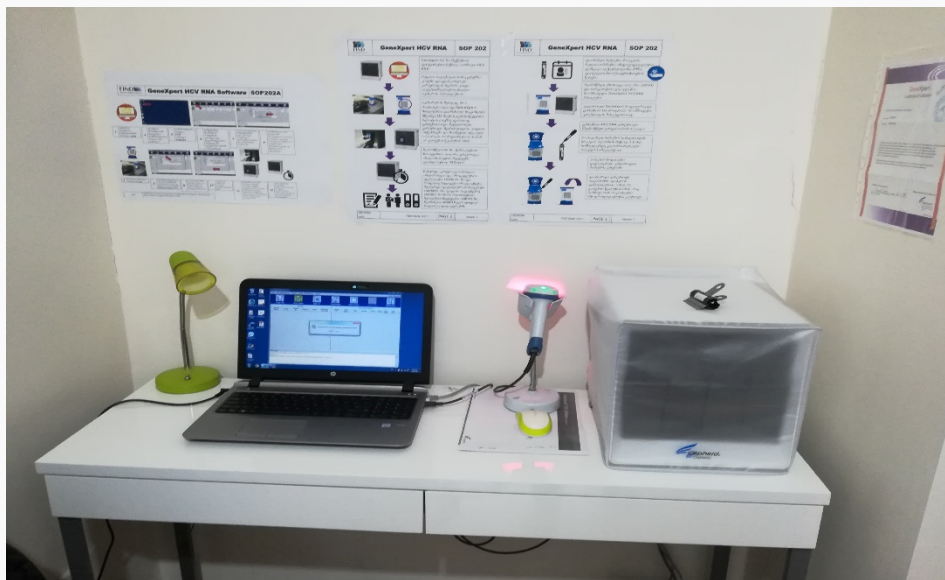
Why community members?

- They are well trusted by other community
- They have good connections, networking and mobilization skills
- They know exactly:
 - ✓ Who their clients are
 - ✓ What their clients need
 - ✓ How to deliver different services
 - ✓ When to reach them

HARM REDUCTION SERVICE SITE – SCREENING ON HIV, HCV, HBV, SYPHILIS AND TB



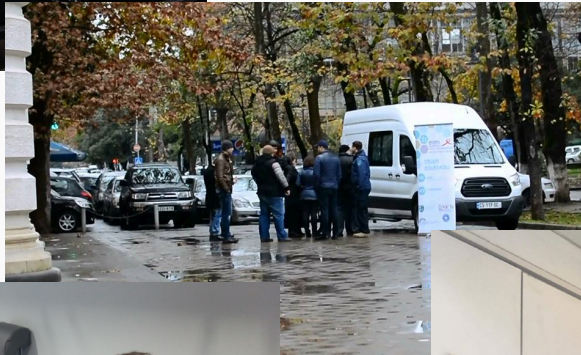
HARM REDUCTION SERVICE SITE IN BATUMI – SCREENING ON HIV, HCV, HBV, SYPHILIS AND TB



Community organizations offer HIV and viral hepatitis testing to general population



To reduce Stigma



To avoid Police



23-30
NOVEMBER
**EUROPEAN
HIV-HEPATITIS
TESTING
WEEK**
2018
TEST.TREAT.PREVENT.
www.testingweek.eu

To reach „unreached”

Success story of Community Based Testing in Georgia



Success Stories Profile
Georgian Harm Reduction Network, Georgia
HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) in Georgia

There are approximately 7,000 people living with HIV in Georgia, with close to 1,000 new diagnoses being reported in 2017. The main mode of transmission is through heterosexual contact (45.7%), followed closely by injecting drug use (40.9%). Although Georgia has a relatively low HIV/AIDS prevalence in comparison to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, this figure is expected to rapidly increase in the coming years due to the increased number of PWID.¹ In contrast to HIV, Georgia has one of the highest estimated HCV prevalence in the world with an estimated 250,000 persons infected with HCV. The prevalence of HCV is high amongst prisoners (50%), people who inject drugs (50-70%) and people infected with HIV (47%).²

The Georgian Harm Reduction Network (GHRN) is the key actor in delivering low threshold harm reduction services to PWIDs in Georgia. Apart from service delivery, GHRN pursues advocacy strategies based on human rights and public health principles. It is represented in the inter-agency council on drug policy, as well in National Drug Policy Platform and actively promotes evidence-based drug policies. GHRN is a strong advocate of community systems strengthening and community's inclusion in decision making and implementation processes at all levels.

European Testing Week 2017

For ETW 2017, through a joint effort coordinated by GHRN and a partnership with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) who operates under the Ministry of Health, GHRN organized a series of community-based testing events across the country. These events were held in various locations, including prisons, drug treatment centers, and community centers. The events were highly successful, with a large number of people getting tested for HIV and HCV. The events were also well-received by the community, and many people expressed their appreciation for the services provided by GHRN.



http://www.testingweek.eu/ckfinder/userfiles/files/2018/Success%20stories/2017%20Success%20Story_GHRN_FINAL.pdf

Integration of the treatment of hepatitis C in harm reduction sites within elimination program - „one slot shot” service in one day



HCV screened positive



To PoC diagnostics



HCV treatment initiation



Case Management

HIV
HCV
HBV
Syphilis
TB
OST

Low Threshold program



Risk
Counselling

Screening

PoC
Diagnostic

Linkage to
Care

Spatialized Treatment and Care



“Patients’ schools” on HIV, HCV, TB, Overdose





Challenges for SCO in Georgia



- Criminalization of drug consumption
- Marginalization of Risk Groups
- Stigma-discrimination, including by medical personnel
- Lack of innovative and supportive programs to reach hidden population
- ✓ Non-occupational PeP
- ✓ On demand PreP – is not available
- ✓ Peer Driven Intervention
- ✓ Optimized Case Finding)
- Transition after Global Fund and sustainability of comprehensive services
- Increased number of testing indicators by donors year by year

New services that doesn't exist:



- ✓ Non-injecting and new psychoactive substance users
- ✓ Chemsex
- ✓ Queer women and trans* people
- ✓ Youth
- ✓ Mental health services for PLHIV, including children

Thanks for your attention!

