**The Meeting of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Partnership on Substance Abuse**

**PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICES IN**

**DRUG-RELATED PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE**

**RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

**Place and date**

*Vienna, 13rd March 2015*

**Venue**

*Austrian Red Cross*

**REPORT**

**Main conclusions and recommendations:**

The purpose of this meeting was to identify the best way to consolidate RCRC response to drug abuse, promote and protect the respect of human rights for drug users, expand the role of the partnership including also external relevant stakeholders. (see Annex 1. Meeting objectives and Agenda)

The Partnership meeting gathered more than 20 National Societies from all regions, colleagues from Villa Maraini Foundation, IFRC as well as other partners. (see Annex 2. List of participants)

The meeting welcomed the initiative of establishment of the partnership and organisation of the meeting. The group also acknowledged that partnership strategy and objectives addresses the current realities in terms of drug abuse and aims to improve the situation by covering several areas: political commitment, financial mechanisms and adequate service delivery.

The group noted that RC RC together with other civil society and community partners are key actors in addressing challenges related to drug abuse.

The group provided following general and specific recommendations.

**General recommendations:**

1. Promote and support National Societies in addressing the problems related to drug abuse at country levels.
2. Encourage and further advocate with National Societies and the IFRC to keep harm reduction as a priority in health (and not only) agenda.
3. Support to analyse drug related problems at country levels (in particular access to Prevention, care and treatment) associated with HIV, Hepatitis and among most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups – prisoners, migrants and others.
4. Set up a core group from different RCRC NSs, who will have the task to plan, disseminate and coordinate the activities of the Partnership.
5. Establish regional networks for the promotion of the harm reduction programmes and Partnership’s activities.

**Scale up harm reduction activities at country level?**

The group recognized the success of the implementation of harm reduction activities in different countries. But also acknowledged, that more needs to be done – more countries to be engaged. The group recommends the following:

1. National Societies that are already engaged in programmes, need to scale up. At the same time, many Societies need to initiate those activities. Prevention activities can be a good way for some NSs to start working in the drug field
2. Advocate for drug use / dependency as a health issue and not a legal or criminal issue
3. Advocacy must be supported by concrete and evidence-based interventions with positive impact.
4. Integrate Harm Reduction in other health and social welfare activities.
5. Integrate Harm Reduction in youth and migration programmes
6. All initiatives should be in line with Government policies and strategies, however RC/RC can influence the agenda of government in harm reduction
7. Continues capacity building and improve skills and capacity of RC/RC staff
8. Increase activities inside prison and enlarge overdose prevention programs with the use of naloxone

**Recommendations for Partnership**

The group acknowledged the importance and potential of the partnership and recommends the following:

1. Establish regional networking among neighboring countries
2. Disseminate wider all the documents related to the partnership, using all the network available in the zones, regions, etc
3. Internal and external advocacy based on scientific evidence and benefits of Harm Reduction programs and humanitarian drug policy
4. Provide technical support, ensure capacity building in programmes related to drug abuse
5. More training for RC staff at local and regional level (training for trainers)
6. Organization of regular Partnership meetings (each 2/3 years)

**Recommendations for National Societies**

The group recognizes the importance of National Societies in promoting the harm reduction strategy as well as Partnership and recommends following:

1. Using other RC/RC platforms to disseminate and develop Partnership
2. Involving in the Partnership relevant NS staff from local branches when needed
3. Regular consultation with neighboring sister National Societies to share the knowledge, experiences, identify common challenges and difficulties
4. Translating the partnership documents in local languages and promoting at regional level
5. Financial support to partnership, when possible

**Annex 1.**

**Meeting Objectives**

The purpose of this meeting was to identify the best way to consolidate RCRC response to drug abuse, promote and protect the respect of human rights for drug users, expand the role of the partnership including also external relevant stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

* To discuss the role of the Partnership and the expected contribution from RCRC Societies;
* To identify progress made, gaps and challenges; to highlight evidence and good practices;
* To reaffirm and reinforce RCRC commitment toward the promotion of an humanitarian drug policy, in the context of the Rome Consensus:
* ensuring the right to health of drug users
* strengthening rights-based approaches to drug-related HIV and Hepatitis C epidemic
* To determine the concrete role of the Partnership in the framework of the IFRC and UNODC MoU, as well as in promoting human aspects of drug policies, that includes respect of human rights of drug users, their access to health and care services;
* To promote and establish cooperation with relevant external stakeholders.

**Agenda**

**9.00 – 9:30, Opening**

- Welcoming and Introduction of participants (Austrian Red Cross)

- Introduction of the meeting (Massimo Barra)

**9.30 – 10.00 , RCRC involvement in drug abuse (Fabio Patruno)**

- The Rome Consensus

- The Partnership on Substance abuse

- The MoU with UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

- The MoU with WFTOD (World Federation for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence)

**10.00 - 10.30, Good practices in harm reduction programmes (Lasha Goguadze)**

**11.00 – 13.00**

**Discussion: RCRC role in drug policy development and implementation**

- Brief update from National Societies on the drug problem in each country/region, drug policies and NSs activities

- Brainstorming: Problem analysis of role of NSs in drug policy development and implementation

**14.30 – 16.00**

**Session: Methodological tools to improve the role of RCRC NSs in the drug field**

- Working group on:

* How to scale up harm reduction activities at country level
* How the Partnership can assist NSs in improve their involvement in the drug field

**Annex 2.**

**List of Participants**

- Mansooreh Bagheri, Iranian Red Crescent

- Mario Luis Mendes Moreira, Cape Verde Red Cross

-Praphan  Phanuphak, Thai Red Cross

- Lea Kujundzic, Bosnian Red Cross

- Sinisa Zovko, Croatian Red Cross

- Gastón Tramutola Aguirre, Uruguay Red Cross

- Miguel Lago, Portuguese Red Cross

- Anne Beatrice Junière, French Red Cross

- Alena Dzemidovich, Belarus Red Cross

- Aissa Fall, IFRC Africa Zone

- Eberhard Lueder, Red Cross EU Office

- Marcus Day, Santa Lucia Red Cross

- Icro Maremmani, WFTOD

- Marilena Guareschi, WFTOD

- Emilie Goller, Austrian Red Cross

- Michael Opriesnig, Austrian Red Cross

- Lasha Goguadze, IFRC Health Department Geneva

- Massimo Barra, Villa Maraini Foundation/Partnership on Substance abuse

- Fabio Patruno, Italian Red Cross/Partnership Secretariat

- Vittorio Lelli, Italian Red Cross

- Mauro Patti, Italian Red Cross

- Gianfranco Varvesi, Villa Maraini Foundation

- Philippe Garcia, Villa Maraini Foundation/Partnership Secretariat

- Nadia Gasbarrini, Villa Maraini Foundation/Partnership Secretariat