



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

## **Report on the year 2018**

### **Project AIDS 2018**

**Amsterdam, February 2019**

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## 1. Introduction

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has selected *AFEW International* as the lead partner to implement a draft Plan of Action for AIDS 2018 that was developed for MoFA by a consultant in 2015. Together with partners, *AFEW* carried out activities in preparation for an increased participation and visibility of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) at AIDS 2018 in quantity and in quality.

The results of the project have been impressive. The strategies, activities, and approaches unquestionably helped leverage the conference for the benefit of the EECA region.

The project has contributed to fostering linking, learning and dialogue between the different communities of the EECA region, and between communities and the governments. The project has managed to influence leaders, policy makers and donors to direct their attention to the EECA region, through organising the study tour for EECA health and financial officials to the Netherlands, coordinating Communities and Health Ministers Dialogue together with the WHO European Bureau, UNAIDS and MoFA, as well as through targeted communication with the donors prior to and at the Conference. As Vinay Saldanha, UNAIDS RST EECA, has put it: “In the history of HIV response it was the highest level gathering of decision makers from the EECA region. *AFEW* has put EECA back on the map of donors.”

The project has addressed stigma, discrimination and criminalization of people affected by HIV in EECA through providing support to coordination of the EECA network zone and “Chase the Virus, not people!” campaign, which for the first time in history has united all the KP networks of the EECA region. “The whole region came out as one team”, which was particularly visible in the vibrance of the ActivEast networking zone in the Global Village.

The focus on the EECA region has been secured through increased participation of the region in the conference – in the official program (EECA being highlighted at each plenary session and several parallel sessions and workshops), in the Global Village, through cultural events and exhibitions; and through the increased number of delegates, thanks to the Martine de Schutter Scholarship Fund.

Community-based participatory research was the driving force for selected 25 CBOs getting to the conference, and for stimulating discussions both at the conference and in the countries with the stakeholders and decision makers about effective approaches and innovative solutions for the needs of Key populations.

The project has contributed to a more visible and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders: community, industry, GO, NGO, UN bodies, leaving no one behind.

*AFEW International* is grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the confidence and trust in us, and for providing us with full support during the project implementation. Together with the partners of the project – Eurasian Harm Reduction Association, GNP+ and ECUO, we commit to leverage unprecedented unity to further support the EECA region responding to the deepening AIDS crisis.

### ***This report provides an overview of the activities implemented in 2018.***

The overall achievement and impact of the whole project implemented from October 2016 till December 2018 are reflected in the ***Evaluation report*** on the work of *AFEW International* and its partners to promote the conference in EECA and to promote the interests of EECA during and beyond the conference: “Leveraging the opportunity for Eastern Europe and Central Asia”. Evaluation has been performed by an independent evaluator Shona Shonning.

## 2. Project objectives

### Specific objectives

The **specific objectives** for this project were:

1. To foster linking, learning and dialogue, between EECA delegates and other delegates, in order to increase mutual respect and understanding on how to introduce, implement and advocate for effective, evidence-based and rights-based HIV/AIDS policies, interventions and resources worldwide and in particular in the EECA region.
2. To foster linking, learning and dialogue across borders and across all types of boundaries to develop creative solutions to unresolved challenges in research and implementation of HIV policies and programmes in the EECA region.
3. To influence leaders, including key policy makers and donors, to increase their commitment to gender-sensitive, evidence- and human rights-based HIV/AIDS interventions in EECA.
4. To address the role of stigma, discrimination and criminalisation of people in- and affected by HIV/AIDS in the AIDS response.

### 3. Report on the performed activities in 2018 split per Outcomes

#### Outcome 1

Delegates from EECA are more aware and show their commitment to the AIDS response in the region by indicating how they will use their acquired knowledge, network and expertise to apply, start or scale-up evidence-based and right-based HIV/AIDS policies in the region.

#### Outputs

##### 1a. EECA in the governance structure: in most committee's delegates from EECA are participating

In 2018 we have been heavily involved in supporting the Amsterdam Youth Force in their set up, launch and functioning by becoming their legal host and fiscal partner. The volunteer Liana Petrosova worked part time to support AFEW in preparing for AIDS 2018 and part time for the Amsterdam Youth Force, having her working place in our office, which was very convenient for both parties.

In the beginning of the year we kept contacts with the IAS scholarship volunteer and program committees to make sure we are well informed about the progress and changes and kept advocating for the EECA speakers getting support and scholarships. We also have provided technical support to EECA delegates in submitting abstracts, workshops, networking zones at the AIDS018.

The following activities have taken place:

- Global Village, Youth Working Group and Amsterdam Youth force. We have provided moral and technical support to Nadia Dubchak, the IAS program committee member and one of the working group members in preparing her for the marathon meeting at IAS in April 2018 to advocate and secure the significant EECA presence at the global Village. Being the legal partner, we have provided full support to the Amsterdam Youth Force with managerial and financial advice and work, network connections and administrative means to effectively organise their work, and supported financially the transportation of the young volunteers from EECA.
- Scholarship and Abstract Review Committees. We worked very hard to fundraise extra funds to extend the scholarship fund of the IAS allocated for the EECA region (see the extraordinary results in the section below). Besides we have provided relevant AIDS 2018 program committee members with the list of the delegates from EECA whom we have supported through our mentorship program with their abstract development and submission of the scholarship applications, with the goal to make sure that committee members have full information on the EECA representatives for the decision making.

##### 1b. Coordinate and facilitate engagement of civil society organisations and networks that are active in the region.

AFEW has developed a communication strategy in order to effectively engage with the organisations and networks in the EECA region; and hired 6 focal points in EECA to effectively collect news on how EECA is getting prepared for AIDS 2018 and to distribute news on how Amsterdam gets ready and what learning resources and opportunities are made available for potential delegates. Distribution of the by-weekly newsletter was done in partnership with EHRA, ECUO, ECOM, Teenergizer, ITPC-Ru and through these 6 focal points (Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia).

In 2018 the following communication activities have taken place to further promote AIDS 2018 in the EECA and highlight EECA in the Netherlands:

- *AFEW International* on behalf of the EECA networks and in a very close cooperation with GNP+ and EHRA have coordinated submission of the network zone proposal for the AIDS 2018 Global Village, which was successful (we have gotten 50 sq m in the very centre of the Global Village). Together with the other networks that represent the key populations at risk (SWAN, ENPUD, ECOM, ECUO, Teenergizer) we jointly developed the program and design of the zone. This zone - ActivEast – was one of the busiest zones, with more than 50 sessions during the conference, all led by community leaders, and all translated into Russian/English.
- We kept including the mentioned networks in the communication channels (listservs, social media, website) to make sure they are timely informed on the developments and preparations on the road to AIDS 2018. We have included information from the AIDS 2018 website translated into Russian, and other useful materials.
- *AFEW* was a member of the working group on the Harm Reduction networking zone of the AIDS 2018, and helped organise it together with other harm reduction organisations with Mainline and the Regenboog Groep in the lead. *AFEW* focused among others on prison health activities.
- In cooperation with ERHA we have supported coordination of the EECA joint advocacy campaign to address the issues and challenges of the region and attract attention of the international and national stakeholders. The ActivEast networking zone hosted it - "[Chase the virus not people!](#)". The campaign was developed under the strong coordination of the EHRA by all the region's community networks, who joined forces in response to the current situation to urge the world to overcome discrimination and the stigmatization of key populations. The campaign was launched before the opening ceremony of the AIDS 2018. *AFEW* has supported development of the campaign and its technical implementation.
- *AFEW International* has created an inventory of all learning resources and opportunities made available by *AFEW* for EECA CBOs like online abstract writing training, modules, abstract mentorship support etc. and promoted it widely in the EECA through our own focal points, newsletter, website and social media and through partners, to strengthen CBOs capacities, knowledge and confidence, thus contributing to their more active engagement in the region and increasing chances to meaningfully participate at AIDS 2018.
- In cooperation with the EECA Youth network Teenergizer *AFEW* has organised activities to coach and support youth delegates from EECA to the AIDS 2018 in submitting abstract and organising events at AIDS 2018. *AFEW*/Teenergizer received a grant from Aidsfonds for this. Several webinars on how to get involved with AIDS 2018 were conducted in which speakers from *AFEW*, GNP+ and Teenergizer have presented and built skills of young people to meaningfully participate in the conference. *AFEW* has coordinated and technically supported organisation of the Teenergizer's Theatre Play on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 (the description is provided under the Culture initiative part).

A Theatre play by two heroes from Teenergizer – Yana Panfilova and Dany Stolbunov - was organized in the Crea Culture space in the Amsterdam University. The general audience included partners, donors, theatre visitors, people from the activist's communities from countries of EECA region have visited the play, in total an audience of around 50 people.

The preparation of the play included translation of the subtitles into English, arrangements for the scene, lights and sounds, and promotion through different communication platforms including social media and sites of Crea, Teenergizer, *AFEW*, and partners. A Dutch based volunteer has been involved to support setting up of the play in Amsterdam, creating better connection with the Dutch student audience. There were positive remarks and feedback given by the audience after the play, many of whom were impressed by the realities of young HIV positive adolescent lives in Ukraine.

### 1c. Scholarships programme

We worked very hard to fundraise extra funds to extend the scholarship fund of the IAS allocated for the EECA region. Our efforts were paid off – thanks to the generous support from donors - Janssen Cilag, Aidsfonds, Gilead, ViiV, Deutsche AIDS-Stiftung, and MAC AIDS Fund, *AFEW International* has managed to raise Euro 200.000. Part of this funds we used to establish a Scholarship fund named after Martine de Schutter, to support strong voices from EECA to participate in the AIDS 2018, with the total contribution of Euro 130.000. Euro 112,000 from this Fund was spent on scholarships and 18,000.00 contributed to the Russian translation budget.

Part of the Martine de Schutter Fund - Euro 85,000 - has been contributed to the International AIDS Society (IAS) for the scholarships to the EECA region, which lead to the dramatic increase of the amount of scholarships in comparison to the previous conference, and also to the AIDS2010 in Vienna (our benchmark AIDS conference since it was located in Europe and had focus on EECA as well).

In total International AIDS Society (IAS) granted 149 scholarships to delegates from the EECA region or 13% of all International AIDS Society (IAS) scholarships (a four-fold increase in comparison to AIDS2016, and 1.7 increase in comparison to AIDS2010).

The rest of the Martine de Schutter Scholarship Fund was distributed directly by *AFEW International*, and allowed 57 more representatives from key populations, scientists, clinicians and journalists from EECA to take part in the AIDS 2018.

See the numbers of the delegates and IAS scholarships for the last 5 AIDS conferences in the table below.

Country	AIDS 2010 Vienna		AIDS 2012 Washington		AIDS 2014 Melbourne		AIDS 2016 Durban		AIDS 2018 Amsterdam	
	Scholar ships	Total	Scholar ships	Total	Scholar ships	Total	Scholar ships	Total	Scholar ships	Total
Armenia	9	27	2	6	1	1	1	1	6	22
Azerbaijan	4	18	0	5	1	1	0	1	2	11
Belarus	10	53	0	8	1	2	0	0	3	22
Georgia	4	40	0	25	1	6	3	6	6	34
Kazakhstan	2	43	2	19	2	4	3	10	12	49
Kyrgyzstan	3	35	4	20	2	3	0	3	8	42
Moldova	6	15	4	7	1	6	3	7	3	10
Russian Federation	30	447	8	135	4	52	9	25	32	170
Tajikistan	0	33	3	13	1	3	4	9	10	38
Turkmenistan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ukraine	20	201	13	100	13	51	17	63	62	193
Uzbekistan	1	12	0	1	0	0	2	3	5	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>604</b>
Total # delegates	<b>19300</b>		<b>17000</b>		<b>13435</b>		<b>13065</b>		<b>12960</b>	
EECA %	<b>4.79%</b>		<b>1.99%</b>		<b>0.96%</b>		<b>0.98%</b>		<b>4.66%</b>	

In total, 604 delegates from EECA visited the AIDS 2018 - an almost 5 times increase in comparison to AIDS 2016 and AIDS 2014. It is 4.7% of all AIDS 2018 delegates - the total number of delegates was 12.960. This amount doesn't include those participants who weren't registered for the main conference program but only participated in the Global Village – at least 55 EECA youngster who were brought from the region as part of the Youth Force program (supported by *AFEW International*) and at least 10 activists at the EECA networking zone.

It was the same level of EECA participation as in the Vienna conference AIDS2010, which also had a focus on EECA. AIDS2010 attracted 925 EECA delegates, with the total number of delegates 19.300 (4,8 % of all participants). With the efforts and funds invested into bringing EECA to the AIDS 2018 conference we managed to restore the proportion of the EECA delegates after three consequent AIDS conferences with very little participation from the region.

#### 1d. Mentoring and coaching programme for conference activities

AFEW has supported Yana Panfilova, the founder of Teenergizer, in preparation for her speech at the Plenary sessions by providing her with the professional coach to build her presenting skills and confidences, and helped with the content of the presentation. Together with EHRA AFEW has coordinated building up of the programs for the EECA networking zone, in which all regional networks, and on the competitive ground NGOs and CBOs have had an opportunity to present their work or organise debates and discussion sessions. All the EECA plenary speakers were approached with the request to include into their presentation a Chase the virus, not people slide and to shout the slogan of the campaign. All of the EECA presenters except for one did so.

#### 1e. Study tours and events

##### *Study tour from the EECA to the Netherlands*

A study tour of officials from Ministries of Health and Ministries of Finance from 5 countries has been organised to engage the government officials into sharing experiences and best practices with the Dutch government, other authorities, NGOs and community groups and provide learning opportunities in planning, funding and implementation of HIV programs at national and municipal levels. Total number of participants was 9 representing Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. Meetings with different Dutch organisations have been arranged: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, Stichting HIV Monitoring (SHM), Academic Medical Center, DC Clinics, Prostitution Information Center (PIC), Rutgers office, Aidsfonds, PharmAccess, Tussenvoorziening De Stek, COC Netherlands, and AFEW *international*.

As a result of the study-tour, the participants got a better understanding of:

- The Netherlands' system of addressing HIV at both national and municipal level;
- Tools and mechanisms of financing NGOs and community organizations;
- NGOs and community organizations' work, funded by the government and focused on providing services to key populations;
- The partnership between the government and civil society organizations, aimed at the elimination of HIV and the provision of services to key populations;
- A roadmap for preparation to the High Level policy meeting and engagement of EECA Ministers into its preparation.

Overall Participants feedback:

The Netherlands' system of managing health and social issues on national and municipal level impressed the study-tour participants. While some represented countries are more or less advanced in system's governance (like Kazakhstan and to less extent Belarus), some countries are far from being able to not only properly fund HIV from national resources (like Kyrgyzstan), but also to have a well-established budget circle (like Moldova). Each study-tour participant marked for himself some particular processes and mechanisms in the Netherlands' system of HIV response, which are applicable to the particular environment and country.

The Netherlands' experience is definitely worth examining and replicating with consideration of a lot of local factors, including development of economy, cultural and religious traits, overall society consciousness. Each country on the way to reaching out 90-90-90 strategy has to figure out its own direction, addressing key communities needs and working hard in those populations, where HIV is still arising and growing. The way the Netherlands addresses HIV response and all related with it issues and problems will be definitely presented by study-tour participants to their respective Ministries and bodies, responsible for managing and financing of HIV national programs and might need further communications between countries, participating in the study-tour on the one hand and the Netherlands government and civil society organizations on the other. The positive relations, mutual interest and dialogue should not be interrupted.

*The study tour for the multiparty initiative from the Netherlands to the EECA region has been cancelled as the timing was not fortunate and MPs were very busy. This trip is now being planned for the Summer 2019, together with Aidsfonds, KNCV, UNAIDS and Global Fund.*

#### 1f. Removing language barriers (mainly Russian – English)

For a full engagement of the EECA region it was critically important to ensure interpretation of Russian and English at the conference as well as during the conference. Especially important was to facilitate communication of the EECA

representatives with limited English skills between the sessions, at the Global Village and Exhibition. Together with IAS, GNP+ and EHRA, AFEW had come up with several creative solutions:

- AFEW has fundraised extra funds for providing official translation at the AIDS 2018. We also kept pushing IAS to provide translation and they have arranged it for the Opening and Closing ceremonies, and all plenary and special sessions 91 (session in total). The funds we have raised allowed us to organise translation of another 25 sessions, thus in total 35 sessions were simultaneously translated. We have developed a Russian & English list of relevant (and those with the simultaneous translation) for EECA region sessions and have distributed it widely to the EECA delegates.
- AFEW has developed a concept for the Volunteers to join Language Buddies pool and has recruited 25 Russian Speaking volunteers. We have negotiated with the IAS Volunteers Committee to provide them with the official AIDS 2018 Volunteer status which entitled them for the access to all premises of the conference and provided with lunches. AFEW has covered their travel costs. The volunteers were assigned general tasks at the AIDS 2018 and helped with the other tasks of AFEW related to the participation of EECA in the conference when they were not busy. It was an amazing group of motivated people who were intrinsically interested in the region. One of the volunteers is now working as intern in AFEW, and another one has been recently hired as our office manager.
- Through the mentorship support program several abstracts has been also translated into English and edited.
- We continued translating materials from the AIDS 2018.org into Russian and developing Russian learning resources and distributing these widely in the EECA region.
- EHRA had distributed their communication through their media channels in both Russian and English.
- ECUO has hired an interpreter for the whole duration of the conference who have translated at the Networking zone.

## Outcome 2

*Increase in research from the region and presentation of such research at the conference:*

- 100% increase compared to AIDS2014 (2014: 53 abstracts accepted)
- At least 5 workshops at the conference that address topics relevant to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and response in EECA

At the opening and each plenary session of the AID2018 the EECA regions was brought in by the EECA speaker and at times by the international speakers too (Peter Piot, Peter Reiss), and besides there were at least 6 sessions in the main program of the conference which had addressed the EECA challenges or/and had EECA presenters.

The number of the EECA speakers at the AIDS 2018 was substantial in general - 16 speakers, 5% of total number of AIDS 2018 speakers.

Compared with AIDS2016, EECA representation increased from 3.9% to 10.5% at all activities included in the official conference programme. There was also tremendous amount of activities linked to the EECA at the Global Village (in total 30, besides the ActivEast networking zone): Networking zones x 2, NGO Booths x 7, Marketplace Booths x 3, Art Exhibits x 9; Live Performances x 1; Film Screenings x 2.

The number of abstracts submitted from EECA were triple the number at AIDS2016 (627 abstracts submitted), and thanks to the mentors' support organized by AFEW International with partners, the quality improved substantially, increasing the chance of acceptance. 187 abstracts from the EECA region were accepted (a six-fold increase in comparison with AIDS2016). The acceptance rate was 30%, the average rate for all regions (an increase from 25%).

## Outputs

2a. An informed and active network consisting of scientists, and representatives of universities and (regional) knowledge centres engaged in the preparations of AIDS 2018.

In partnership with EHRA, GNP+ and Amsterdam Youth Force we have established a pool of experts and scientists to provide support to researchers, clinicians, scientists, community activists and young people from EECA who were going to submit their abstracts to AIDS 2018. The mentor panel consisted of 20 experts who voluntarily committed to consulting researchers from



EECA. Mentors have provided support with adhering to abstract guidelines, language check (including full translation from Russian to English for some abstracts), editing and structuring the abstracts. The call to submit draft abstracts for scientific feedback has been widely distributed through the networks of the EECA region. More than 100 authors have used the mentorship support. 35% of them had their abstracts accepted which is very high rate (the average acceptance rate at the AIDS 2018 was 30%).

We also have put efforts into engaging with clinicians, which was not easy. Four young researchers from EECA were supported and funded through the Martine de Schutter Scholarship Fund. We also made contacts with relevant 'clinical' networks (like EACS) to engage with clinicians in the future. Nowadays in partnership with Joep Lang Institute and The Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD) we are working on organising the INTEREST workshop - the International Workshop on HIV Treatment, Pathogenesis, and Prevention Research in Resource-limited Settings, which will take place in Kazakhstan in 2019, November and will bring together 100 scientists, members of civil society, clinicians and government officials from EECA and established international HIV experts to share original research and state-of-the-art reviews on a wide range of HIV and related topics.

## 2b. Community based research and training program

One of the drivers in the AFEW strategy to increase participation of the EECA in AIDS 2018 was a special project on Community based participatory research (CBPR), aimed at enhancing the quality of research and ensuring utilization of the research results for informed decision-making at national, regional and international levels. This project was designed to support building capacity among and partnership of CBOs, NGOs and researchers and increasing submissions from EECA countries to and participation in the international conference AIDS 2018, leading to increased awareness of the alarming HIV situation in the region.

25 project participants of this program – local NGOs and CBOs - have submitted 28 abstracts to AIDS 2018. 8 abstracts (32%) were accepted for oral (2), poster (3) presentations and abstract book entries (3) at AIDS 2018. Moreover, 14 project participants have received scholarships through IAS system to attend the conference. That's is particularly fascinating result given most of the participants have conducted their research for the first time in their lives. The rest were funded by the Martine de Schutter Scholarship Fund.

The results of the CBPR project are overwhelming, not only in the form of tangible outcomes such as number of accepted AIDS 2018 abstracts and received scholarships, but also regarding the capacity-building component. It has been transformational for participants in building their research capacity and professionalization and helping take a massive step in advocating for the needs of the key-populations more effectively. The project has contributed to closing the immense gap in data and knowledge on the key population in EECA: some of the researches were unique in the researched themes and key populations involved (for instance chemsex among MSM, or researches in the LGBT communities).

An evaluation report on the CBPR project is available upon request. A newsletter of the partner - Bearr Trust - whose experts joined the mentors pool, featuring the success story of one of the CBPR participants can be found here [http://www.bearr.org/pdfs/Bearrnews\\_no71\\_web.pdf](http://www.bearr.org/pdfs/Bearrnews_no71_web.pdf)

### **Outcome 3**

High level policy makers and celebrities from Eastern Europe and Central Asia and donors show commitment to gender sensitive, evidence and human rights-based HIV/AIDS interventions in the EECA region by attending and participating at AIDS 2018.

#### *Outputs*

### 3a. Stakeholder analysis of relevant governmental officials, key researchers, outspoken representatives of civil society and celebrities from the region

The objective of mapping was completed, and the created inventory was used to select delegates to join the Study tour in March 2018, and further engage with the stakeholders to motivate them to join the AIDS 2018.

### 3b. Contacts with local authorities and interest them in preparing for and participating in AIDS 2018.

- a) *AFEW* has put specific efforts into stimulating participation of the authorities from Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) where *AFEW network partners* have deliberately promoted the conference among governmental officials and have paid for participation of few of them. The official delegations of these country were visibly large, in particular from Tajikistan.
- b) *AFEW* has been invited to the IAS 2017 post-conference workshop ‘HIV in Eastern Europe Central Asia: regional achievements and challenges’, we presented the results of the CBPR project 2016 – 2018 and provided input to the discussion about the role of NGOs and CBOs in filling the research gaps in the EECA region. The audience were representatives of the Authorities and NGOs from the EECA region, and we used this opportunity to further promote participation in the AIDS 2018.
- c) *AFEW* in cooperation with MoFA and co-chair of the AIDS 2018 has contributed to cross-linking EECAAC 2018 conference and AIDS 2018, through promoting Dutch speakers, administering scholarships for Dutch delegates and active participation in the EECAAC 2018, which has taken place in April 2018 in Moscow. Significant efforts were made to promote the conference as well as to promote interest and understanding of the EECA region among Dutch experts and officials. *AFEW* coordinated distribution of the 10 stipends provided by the EECAAC organization committee for attendance to EECAAC by civil society representatives and inspired a delegation of Dutch officials to attend. During the EECAAC conference announcements about the upcoming AIDS 2018 were made, leaflets were distributed, and special sessions were held to promote learning about the EECA region among the Dutch delegates. We have been instrumental in coordination and organisation of the Dutch Booth at the EECAAC 2018 and provided both technical and contextual support to the delegation (presentation at the orientation meeting, support in visa processes, guidance in Moscow and overall promotion of the AIDS 2018 at EECAAC 2018).
- d) *AFEW* in cooperation with MoFA, WHO Regional Office for Europe, UNAIDS, and ECUO have developed a concept and organised EECA Health Ministries and Community Dialogue, which has taken place after the Ministerial Policy Dialogue organised on 23d July 2018. Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Health from 10 EECA countries as well as high level officials from UNAIDS, WHO, the EC and the Government of the Netherlands and representatives of civil society gathered for Policy dialogue meeting focused on HIV and related co-morbidities in the EECA region, organised by WHO Regional Office for Europe, UNAIDS, and the Government of the Netherlands. Immediately after the dialogue meeting, the Ministers and other officials were joined by 19 civil society and key population representatives for the Ministers’ Dialogue with Civil Society meeting. The idea for the meeting/s originated with ECUO and *AFEW*, with the help of PATH TB, GNP+ and overall support of MoFA have coordinated its organisation.

The goal of the meeting was to facilitate a dialogue between government and relevant community stakeholders to facilitate continuous dialogue at country level in the below areas:

- the legal environment with regards to key populations, drugs policies, sex work and LGBT to meet the needs for prevention, treatment and care of HIV, TB and viral hepatitis and fulfilment of human rights
- Meaningful involvement of civil society to better address the needs of key populations at risk for HIV, TB and viral hepatitis
- Sustainable financing mechanisms, including funding aimed at prevention.

With the set-up we have jointly created with the WHO, MoFA, UNAIDS and ECUO we managed to create an informal atmosphere which allowed for vivid and frank discussions between the Health ministry’s officials and community representatives. The idea was to initiate the Dialogue which would then continue after the ASDI2018. The WHO Regional Office for Europe has continued and coordinated development of the EECA national roadmaps in follow-up of Amsterdam meeting, whereas the dialogue with the EECA community wasn’t yet followed up. The Evaluation report by S. Shonning captures the impressions and opinions of the community representatives on the Dialogues and the need for follow up.

### 3c. Engagement of celebrities and high-level public figures

*AFEW* in partnership with UNAIDS RTS EECA has organised a visit of Vera Brezhneva, UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, to the AIDS 2018. During her stay in Amsterdam she has participated in the AIDS 2018 related events on 23th July 2018: the March Down to Zero Together (where she has supported the EECA column and wore

the Chase the Virus, not people! campaign T-Shirt), Launch of the WHO Compendium at the Ministerial Policy meeting, Atlas Exhibition at Beurs van Berlage, and the Global Village and the EECA networking zone at Conference AIDS 2018.

*AFEW International* has arranged participation of the high level journalists from Russia – Pavel Lobkov (Silver Rain radio station) and Valeria Mishina (Kommersant newspaper) who are the acknowledged media experts on the HIV and AIDS in Russia; Pavel Lobkov openly lives with HIV and is an advocate for the needs of PLHIV in the country.

Governmental officials and UN agencies, as well as high level donors visited the EECA networking zone in the Global Village: Michel Kazatchkine, Peter Sands, Vera Brezhneva among others, the Ukrainian Vice Premier even presented in the zone.

#### Outcome 4

Cultural, multi-media and other activities address stigma and discrimination around HIV/AIDS

##### *Outputs*

#### 4a. AIDS 2018 Culture Fund

*AFEW* has set up Culture Initiative to support cultural, multi-media and other performances, materials and exhibitions to address stigma and discrimination related to HIV, diversity and other related issues in general, and specifically in and of the EECA region.

The **Culture Initiative** was aimed at creating a connection, understanding and dialogue between countries in the West and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) by using art and culture. Cultural platforms and public artistic events were set up to provide a stage to connect and create a dialogue about the region, in particularly around public health issues and related topics such HIV/AIDS, TBC, stigma, discrimination, drug use and harm reduction.

The central element in the *AFEW* Culture Initiative was the Artist in Resident (AIR) programme: three visual artists from the region lived and worked in the Netherlands for a period of three months. The three artists were placed outside of the traditional studio/gallery/museum environment and 'displaced' in a social, public health context. This 'new' environment, invited them to undertake research, interact with different actors and create socially-instilled work alongside a chosen community. They have been selected by the CI team based on the competitive submissions.

For the artists placement *AFEW* Culture Initiative was proud to work with [Amsterdam Medical Centre](#) , [Trimbos Institute](#), [Mainline Foundation](#), [De Regenboog Groep](#), [PROUD](#) and [P&G292](#) .

The work and progress of these three artists in residents together with two additional commissioned works from artists from the Caucasus has been shown on several public events.

In May and June there were Plov#1 and Plov#2, two events which included multi-media programmes with art, food and cinema in collaboration with Studio/K and IDFA film festival. The final works of the artists have been exhibited at the 18<sup>th</sup> International AIDS conference. Both the Plov#1 and Plov#2 and excursions organised by the Culture Initiative team during the AIDS 2018 and artists around their exhibitions provided a unique opportunity to learn more about the region, the artist and their work, and cross cultural and virtual borders and regions. The exhibitions at the AIDS 2018 have been joined by the Culture Ambassador of the MoFA Arjen Uijterlinde.

The participating artist in the Culture Initiative were:

- Ilya Fedotov-Fedorov (Russia) stationed at AMC
- Hanna Zubkova (Belarus) stationed at Proud and P&G292
- Hassan Kurbanbaev (Uzbekistan) stationed at Mainline Foundation, De Regenboog Groep and Trimbos
- Lado Darakhvelidze (Georgia)
- Gohar Smoyan (Armenia)

The highlight of the Culture Initiative was the ART Dinner in the Hermitage where the artists as well as a wide range of stakeholders including community activists, Dutch and EECA government officials, representatives of UN agencies and donors (around 60 people in all) were given a platform to interact in a much less formal way than most other conference related meetings. The dinner gave people who wouldn't normally interact directly with each other an opportunity to do so. It was

very well received by participants (some of them confessed that was the highlight of their conference). It brought people together not only from the East and West but from completely different backgrounds. The program was successful in making spaces for people to meet and interact in a background that wasn't focused on the negative, that gave a different perspective on the EECA region.

An after-movie to capture the results and impact of the Culture initiative can be seen here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THjooPf-zGU>

### Governance and management

On top of the four specific outcomes, AFEW has acted as the secretariat of the EECA working group as part of the Amsterdam Preparedness group. AFEW organised two meetings of this group (one in January and one in June) with the goal to further coordinate communication and cooperation with the Dutch NGOs on the run up of the AIDS 2018. The work of the group intensified closer to the conference, with some joint activities planned and more intensive exchange of the individual activities organised. The reflection on the work of the WG is included into the Evaluation report by S. Shonning.

In September 2018 AFEW has hosted a bigger debrief meeting co-organised by the Share-Net and Aidsfonds to follow up on the AIDS 2018, seize the afterglow and look forward.

The members of the Core group (AFEW, GNP+ and EHRA) has taken place in January and June 2018 and have been very practical in terms of the preparations for the conference, mainly with regards to the scholarship fund, study tour, networking zone and campaign.

### Financial report

For financial report please see attached xls file "Financial report AIDS 2018 AFEW full 2016-2018"