

# ADVOCACY ROADMAP TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL GAPS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO MSM AND TRANS\* PEOPLE IN ARMENIA



Yerevan, Armenia  
2021





## **ADVOCACY ROADMAP TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL GAPS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO MSM AND TRANS\* PEOPLE IN ARMENIA**

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# CONTENTS



<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BRIEF REVIEW</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ADVOCACY ROADMAP TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL GAPS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ANALYSIS</b>	<b>12</b>



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>PWID</b>	PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS
<b>CSW</b>	COMMERCIAL SEX WORKERS
<b>NGO</b>	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
<b>RA</b>	REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
<b>AIDS</b>	ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME
<b>HIV</b>	HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS
<b>CCM</b>	COUNTRY COORDINATING MECHANISM AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA
<b>MSM</b>	MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

## BRIEF REVIEW

In 2021, analysis of the financial gaps in the Armenian State Budget for social and health services provided to MSM and trans\* people was carried out with an aim of program and financial assessment of the National Program on the Response to HIV of the Republic of Armenia, in relation with the health and social services provided to MSM and trans\* people.

The international experience, available financial allocations were assessed during the analysis, the financial gaps were revealed, and recommendations were developed to ensure the financial sustainability of prevention programs among MSM and trans\* people.

The available documents were studied, information on the financial expenses was collected and in-depth interviews were conducted with experts during the analysis.

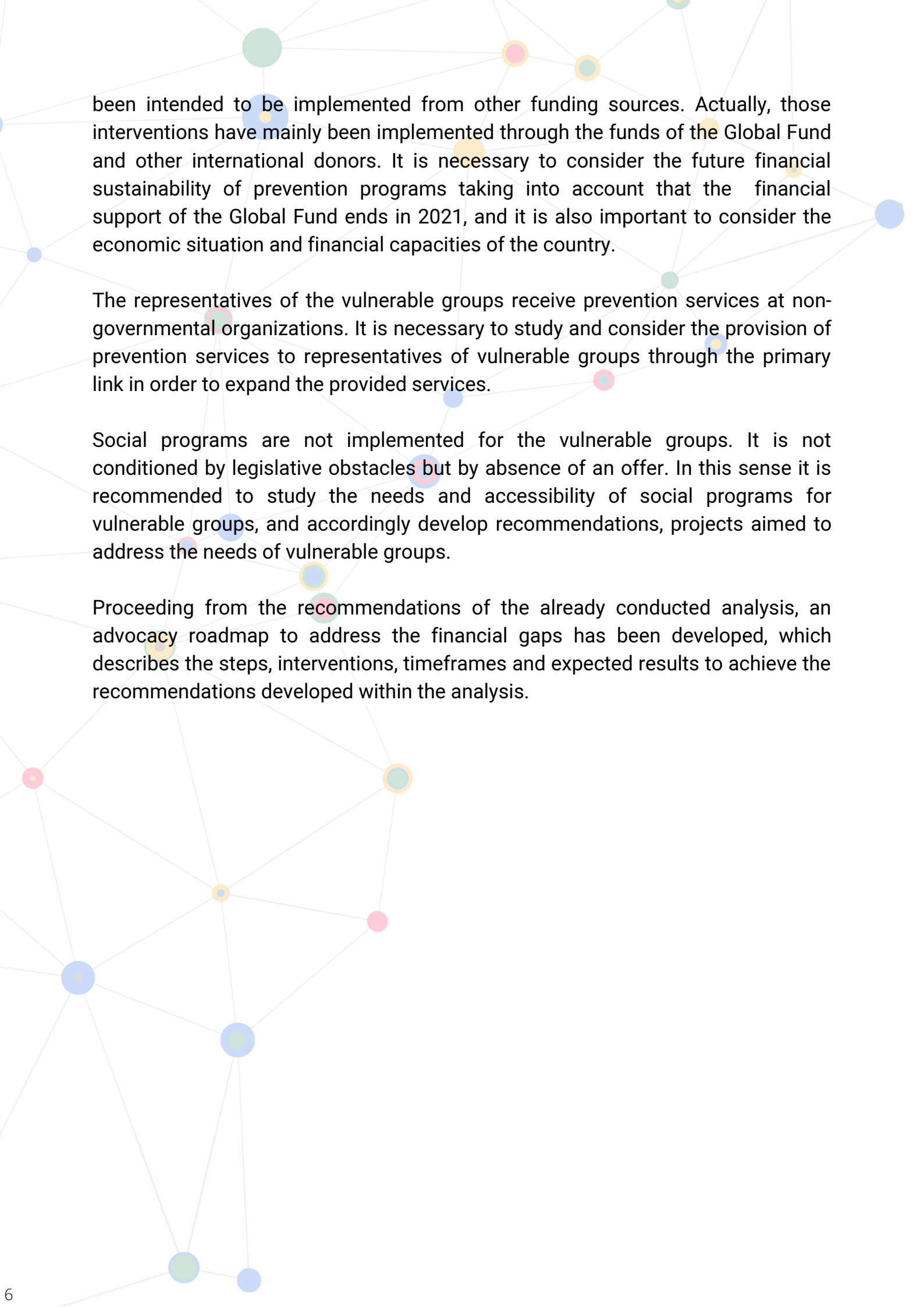
The interventions intended among the target groups within the National Program on the Response to HIV of the Republic of Armenia for 2017-2021, the expected results of those interventions, the actual results of the implemented interventions and the HIV-related epidemiological context in the country were examined during the study of the available documents.

Information was collected about the financial expenses of interventions for the target groups, incurred both from the state budget and other sources. During the analysis also in-depth interviews were conducted with experts about practical questions related to service provision to the target groups.

The collected information relating to the program interventions was presented by calendar year and the financial allocations for their implementation were presented by fiscal year, which partly restricted the implementation of analytic comparisons in a few angles. Besides, the data on a few interventions are not aggregated which has also been an obstacle to the review of funds spent on different interventions for MSM and trans\* people, e.g. pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxes.

Considering that the National Program on the Response to HIV of the Republic of Armenia for 2017-2021 ends in 2021, it is necessary to develop and establish the new National Program for the next years to ensure the sustainability of interventions.

State budget funding for prevention programs has not been provided by the acting National Program on the Response to HIV of the Republic of Armenia, they have



been intended to be implemented from other funding sources. Actually, those interventions have mainly been implemented through the funds of the Global Fund and other international donors. It is necessary to consider the future financial sustainability of prevention programs taking into account that the financial support of the Global Fund ends in 2021, and it is also important to consider the economic situation and financial capacities of the country.

The representatives of the vulnerable groups receive prevention services at non-governmental organizations. It is necessary to study and consider the provision of prevention services to representatives of vulnerable groups through the primary link in order to expand the provided services.

Social programs are not implemented for the vulnerable groups. It is not conditioned by legislative obstacles but by absence of an offer. In this sense it is recommended to study the needs and accessibility of social programs for vulnerable groups, and accordingly develop recommendations, projects aimed to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

Proceeding from the recommendations of the already conducted analysis, an advocacy roadmap to address the financial gaps has been developed, which describes the steps, interventions, timeframes and expected results to achieve the recommendations developed within the analysis.

## **ADVOCACY ROADMAP TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL GAPS**

The following recommendations have been highlighted during the analysis of the financial gaps in the Armenian state budget of social and health services provided to MSM and trans\* people:

- 1** The National Program on the Response to HIV/AIDS for 2017-2021 ends in 2021. It is necessary to develop and establish the new National Program to ensure the sustainability of interventions for the future years.
- 2** State funding for prevention programs has not been provided by the acting National Program on the Response to HIV/AIDS of the Republic of Armenia, they have mainly been implemented through the funds of the Global Fund and other international donors. It is necessary to consider the future sustainability of prevention programs taking into account the fact that the financial support of the Global Fund ends in 2021, and it is also important to consider the economic situation and financial capacities of the country.
- 3** Representatives of vulnerable groups receive prevention services at non-governmental organizations. It is necessary to study and consider the provision of prevention services to representatives of vulnerable groups through the primary link in order to expand the provided services.
- 4** Social programs are not implemented for the vulnerable groups. It is not conditioned by legislative obstacles but by absence of an offer. In this sense it is recommended to study the needs and accessibility of social programs for vulnerable groups, and accordingly develop recommendations, projects aimed to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

## 1 RECOMMENDATION

*The National Program on the Response to HIV/AIDS of the Republic of Armenia for 2017-2021 ends in 2021. It is necessary to develop and establish the new National Program to ensure the sustainability of interventions for the future years.*

Currently the development of the new National Program on the Response to HIV/AIDS for the future years has started. It is necessary to ensure participation of representatives of vulnerable groups or of non-governmental organizations working with those groups in the process of development of the new National Program in order to ensure multisided engagement.

The non-governmental organizations need to undertake steps to ensure participation of representatives of vulnerable groups in those processes. In particular, the new structure of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) is going to be approved, where new representatives of different NGOs have already been included. This is already an important step in ensuring multisided engagement in this process.

The interventions' timetable must be inquired from the CCM.

### ***Expected result:***

Active participation of representatives of vulnerable groups in the process of development and establishment of the National Program on the Response to HIV of the Republic of Armenia for 2017-2021.

## **2** RECOMMENDATION

*State funding for prevention programs has not been provided by the Acting National Program on the Response to HIV/AIDS of the Republic of Armenia, they have mainly been implemented through the funds of the Global Fund and other international donors. It is necessary to consider the future sustainability of prevention programs taking into account the fact that the financial support of the Global Fund ends in 2021, and it is also important to consider the economic situation and financial capacities of the country.*

The representatives of non-governmental organizations as well as of communities living with HIV and tuberculosis included in the new CCM shall undertake advocacy steps aimed at ensuring financial sustainability of prevention programs, in particular at the allocation of state funding.

It is necessary to give consideration to the social service contracting as well as possible funding allocation for implementation of prevention programs by other ministries besides the Ministry of Health.

Considering that the new CCM structure is established for 2 years, the advocacy steps must be taken in the coming two years.

### ***Expected result:***

Partial ensurance of state financial resources for HIV/AIDS prevention programs.



## **B** RECOMMENDATION

*Representatives of vulnerable groups receive prevention services at non-governmental organizations. It is necessary to study and consider the provision of prevention services to representatives of vulnerable groups through the primary link in order to expand the provided services.*

Currently the primary healthcare link has started implementation of rapid tests for HIV, including for representatives of vulnerable groups. It is necessary to create independent NGO-based monitoring groups which with prior agreement with the Ministry of Health will conduct periodical monitoring visits to the primary link for needs assessment of services provided to representatives of vulnerable groups, revelation and voicing the found gaps. It will provide an opportunity to establish cooperation between the state and social sector ensuring the accessibility of provided services to representatives of certain vulnerable groups.

Such community-based monitoring groups can also be formed under the CCM which will also provide an opportunity to present monthly group work analyses to the CCM.

Considering that the new CCM structure is established for 2 years, the advocacy steps must be taken in the coming two years.

### ***Expected result:***

Formation of community-based monitoring groups under the CCM. Development of recommendations based on the group reports aimed at ensuring provision of high-quality and needs-based services to representatives of vulnerable groups.

## 4 RECOMMENDATION

*Social programs are not implemented for the vulnerable groups. It is not conditioned by legislative obstacles but by absence of an offer. In this sense it is recommended to study the needs and accessibility of social programs for vulnerable groups, and accordingly develop recommendations, projects aimed to address the needs of vulnerable groups.*

To study the vulnerable groups' needs for social programs. To regularly monitor the programs announced by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

To find out what programs are implemented. To develop recommendations and project proposals aimed to address the needs of vulnerable groups. Considering that the representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is a member of the CCM, it is necessary to raise and discuss the possibility of such proposals at the CCM sessions.

Timetable of interventions: ongoing.

***Expected result:***

Needs assessment for social programs. Development and presentation of new project proposals.



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A network diagram with various colored nodes (blue, yellow, red, green, pink) connected by thin grey lines, forming a complex web across the top and middle of the page.

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