

ERNA Strategy

2016-2025



2016

Introduction

Many things have happened since 1997, when some Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies, gathered in Villa Maraini in Rome, decided to set-up ERNA as a tool for strengthening and joining efforts to combat HIV, TB, hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

In few years, mankind has been able to cope with what seemed like a divine punishment, turning HIV from an inexorably fatal disease to a controllable chronic infection, even if not completely curable.

In addition, thanks to incredible pharmacological developments, since 2015 hepatitis c, which affects millions of people worldwide, has become a treatable disease. On the other side, TB continues to affect with forms that are resistant to conventional treatment.

During all these years, ERNA has provided regular information and technical support to European National Societies that consider these infectious diseases as a priority of their action in the field of public health and assistance to vulnerable groups such as migrants, sex workers, IVDUs, prisoners, hard-to reach people.

A new start of ERNA is now needed, adapting its strategy to the new manifestations of these infectious diseases. Hence, the following document that we bring to the attention of those who would like to contribute with their experience to regard improve and make it as their own.

With this document, we encourage a renewed commitment of the European National Societies who have joined the Network as well as of those who have not taken part to our common initiative, yet.

Further, we expect that the finalized strategy will be put in practice with renewed effort in favor of those who suffer the consequences of major infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB and hepatitis C. First of all thanks to the power of Red Cross and Red Crescent emblems, which are recognized all over the world as a symbol of protection, and to the power of humanity of RC/RC volunteers.

President of ERNA Network,

Dr. Massimo Barra

General information

At the European Regional Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Conference that took place in 2002 in Berlin, National Societies (NS) decided unanimously to focus both on the HIV/AIDS and TB, and strengthen the network to support these activities.

ERNA is taking a lead role in promoting the links between 40 RCRC National Societies in European region and other organizations. ERNA is coordinating body which provides communication platform for different regional as well as national actors.

ERNA works in line with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) strategy 2020 which recognizes the diverse health roles that Red Cross and Red Crescent play at community and country level. Community-based health programmes bring better health to disadvantaged and underserved populations. In their role as auxiliaries to governments, National Societies are engaged in the formal health system. In all these areas, we have a role to play in improving services, mobilizing the expertise of National Societies and supporting their work.

Epidemiology situation in the European Region

There are impressive achievements in HIV and TB made in the multi sectoral response to date. However, there is still a long way to go. AIDS and TB still continue to be a global health threat, and many populations continue to be left behind.

According to the WHO approximately 1.6 million people were living with HIV in 2001 in the European Region, and estimations suggest that this number increased to more than 2.5 million people in 2014. Alarmingly, around half of those people do not know that they are infected. In the WHO European Region an estimated 13 million people live with chronic hepatitis B, and an estimated 15 million people are infected with hepatitis C. Because the disease is often asymptomatic and left untreated, chronic hepatitis is a major cause of liver cirrhosis and primary liver cancer. Worldwide 9.6 million people are estimated to have fallen ill with TB in 2014. While the burden of drug-susceptible TB in the European Region is one of the lowest in the world and lower than in other regions, our region has one quarter of all cases of the multidrug-resistant form of TB that occur globally.

The major gaps in HIV, Hepatitis or TB control remains in meeting the needs of most disadvantaged groups of people who are often out of reach for diagnosis and treatment. The right to health and care is a central dimension of inclusion for many groups such as migrants, people affected by HIV or TB, prison population, drug users.

In September 2015, countries from across the globe embraced a 15-year agenda to ensure sustainable development for all. An integral component of the Agenda for Sustainable Development is bringing an end to the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as well as implementation of end TB strategy.

Role of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

ERNA is the network provides National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the Europe region with a harmonized and comprehensive HIV, TB, Harm Reduction, Hepatitis C program and framework for coordinated, effective and efficient national programs. This approach is about strengthening and making use of the combined capabilities of national and regional Red Cross Red Crescent entities, and fostering network and seeking funding opportunities to support the scale-up of high-quality, community-level action.

Vision of ERNA

Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies of Europe Region has unified and comprehensive contribution to overall efforts of state and non-governmental actors to fight with HIV, TB and hepatitis C among general and disadvantaged population.

Advocacy lies at the core of our approach. The goal is to promote a climate that supports human rights, dignity and gender equality as the means to halt the problems. Building on our auxiliary role, we advocate for revision of repressive laws and policies, and remove the legal, social and economic barriers that impede equitable access to vital HIV, TB, Hepatitis C related services, particularly for disadvantaged population.

The ERNA direction encompasses practical interventions at country level, guided by local needs and national programs. We focus on community-led initiatives, building on the unique advantages of community systems in supporting the scaling-up of services. Through our vast network of volunteers living in remote communities in every corner of the region as well as globe, we are well positioned to promote community-based prevention, care, treatment and support interventions that are evidence-based and mainstreamed wherever feasible, and to seek out the most vulnerable people. None of this though can be achieved without this actively, respectfully and effective engagement with communities

themselves and with the civil society organizations that affected communities respect and trust.

Main 4 strategic directions of ERNA that are agreed by National Societies:

1. Ensuring information sharing between NSs

One of the main opportunities of the network is information and experience sharing between members and partners through different channels of communication.

Indicators:

- Well-functioning Secretariat that shares information on a regular basis;
- NS`s responsibility to share the information to the Secretariat on a regular basis.

2. Consultative and technical support for the NSs

Effective implementation and efficient optimization of HIV, TB and Hepatitis C programs in the respective countries with consideration of situation on local level comprises more technical and expertized support in HIV, TB and Hepatitis C. It gives more opportunity to develop joint programs with greater involvement of disadvantaged population. Under this direction technical expertise as program development, management, resource mobilization, advocacy, human rights, humanitarian diplomacy and pragmatic as TB, HIV, Harm reduction, Hepatitis C included and not limited.

Indicators:

- ERNA provides qualitative and timely consultative/technical support for its members;
- Data base of NS`s experience on placed.

3. Facilitation of regional and global partnership

ERNA contributes in development of unity in preventing and ending challenges through partnership, which is one of the cornerstone of networking with other key stakeholders (UN agencies, e.g., WHO, GFATM, STOP TB partnership), community and civil society agencies, corporate sector etc. ERNA positions itself as common (unified) voice of National Societies to actively participate in regional and international platforms (conferences, forums, online discussions, mass media, social media, etc.).

Indicators:

- Existence of joint programs and projects.

4. Advocacy role to work with decision makers

For ERNA advocacy consist on global, regional and national levels where NSs using their axillary role strengthening work with Governments, Authorities and all relevant stakeholders in raising voices of disadvantage population, improving people's lives and provision of good practices of NSs work in addressing HIV, TB and Hepatitis C challenges, discussion of best models and monitoring of strategic actions to make a decisive difference for people.

Indicators:

- ERNA timely reacts and presents statements and position papers on deferent levels.