



# NEWS

*from International Development Collaboration at STAKES*

September 2001

**Dear Reader,**

*this newsletter contains a fresh collection of latest project news from the **International Development Collaboration Unit (IDC) at STAKES**. This quarterly newsletter is distributed to our experts, partners and other interested parties in order to inform You on our current assignments and projects. The latest news are also available at our website <http://www.stakes.fi/hedec/>*

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## **STAKES takes part in the fight against hiv/aids**

STAKES is actively participating to a network comprised of Finnish actors in the field of hiv/aids. This network brings together national actors who have activities in Finland as well as in the developing countries and Central and Eastern Europe.

STAKES and the Family Federation of Finland initiated the network in beginning of this year as a forum for Finnish NGO's to discuss issues on hiv/aids, especially in

relation to the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session on hiv and aids held in June this year.

The network has since grown and a number of activities have taken place. In August, one week seminar *South in North: Exchanging experiences – Experiencing Finnish Summer* was organised by the Family Federation of Finland, Helsinki Deaconess Institute, STAKES, the Federation of Finnish Midwives and Helsinki Polytechnic.

The week started in Kemiö, where a three-day workshop on sexual and reproductive health was organised. The workshop gathered participants from Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Finland. The aim of the seminar was to enhance collaboration especially between the southern developing countries.

After the workshop, one-day hiv/aids partnership seminar was organised in Helsinki in order to share the results of the workshop. Also, a statement on hiv/aids prevention from community and human rights perspective was published by the participants.

In order to promote co-ordination and develop the working methods of the network, a questionnaire concerning these issues has been sent to 24 organisations this autumn. Networks' next meeting will focus on hiv/aids as a part of the EU's Northern Dimension.

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## **STAKES' success in EU:s Twinning projects continues**

### ***New Phare Twinning project starts in Czech Republic***

The Czech Republic has chosen Finland as partner for the Phare Twinning Project 'Testing the preparedness for the application of EC social security legislation'. The project is coordinated by IDC at STAKES, the other participating Finnish organizations being the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Social Insurance Institution. The Czech counterpart organizations are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Czech Social Security Administration.

The overall objective of the project is to enable the Czech Republic to take the obligations of EU membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. The purpose of the project is to ensure preparedness for implementing the EU social security legislation (Regs. 1408/71 and 574/72) by the time of accession. The project has three components:

1. Co-ordination of social security activities
2. Assessment of performance of the Social Insurance Agency
3. Comparison of EU and CR health care standards

The first planning meeting for the project was held in Prague on October 5<sup>th</sup> and a draft proposal is to be presented to the EU Delegation by November 15<sup>th</sup>. The implementation is expected to start in August 2002. Duration of the project will be 12 months and the Finnish expert input totals about 50 man-months. The budget is 1,2 million Euro.

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### ***Health and Safety at Work in Hungary – news on progress of the project***

The EC Delegation to Hungary has endorsed the twinning covenant (legal document

binding the project's twinning partners), thus giving also the official start to this project. The Preaccession adviser (PAA) of the project, Mr. *Tero-Jukka Kiviharju*, has started his secondment in Hungary in October. In addition to the Finnish PAA, altogether 11 member state experts in the field of occupational health and safety as well as information systems, management and technology are involved. The lead member state (Finland) experts are from STAKES, the Finnish Institute for Occupational Health and Safety and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The partner member state (Germany) experts are from the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BauA) and the Association for Social Security Policy and Research (GVG). The twinning partner in Hungary is the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs. This twinning project strives at achieving two main objectives:

- (a) to develop a plan for occupational health and safety at work information system to enable the effective implementation of the framework directive regulations and provide comparable, related statistical data; to enhance the co-ordination between the three inspection authorities for health and safety at work,
- (b) to ensure an easy access for employers, employees and self-employees to the health and safety related legislation, professional information and briefing materials

The duration of the project is 13 months and the budget Euro 600,000.

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## **Tacis project *Russian Preventive Health Care Systems 1998-2001* completed: encouraging results**

This Tacis Project, concluded in July of the current year, has successfully supported the Russian Ministry of Health and other beneficiaries in reforming the Russian health system. Health promotion and dis-

ease prevention were introduced to become a part of the overall health policy of the Federation and intersectoral collaboration in disease prevention was encouraged. By extensive training the project addressed the problems of increased morbidity and mortality caused by major communicable and non-communicable diseases. Federal, regional and municipal health policy and action programs focusing on health promotion and disease prevention were developed.

There was high level of commitment and ownership among key stakeholders noted both at federal level as well as in the pilot regions. The regional health policy was changed in one of the four pilot regions, Vologda, to focus on prevention rather than expanding curative services. In Tchelyabinsk, the project supported the Medical Academy in establishing an European style School of Public Health. New Pan-European tools for monitoring the health habits of school-aged children are being introduced in Orenburg. Authorities in Electrostal adopted new techniques for carrying out modern financial analysis allowing cost estimations to be divided between curative and preventive care.

The project was a joint effort of EPOS Health Consultants, Germany (lead agency), Netherlands School of Public Health and STAKES. Majority of the approximately 30 international experts were from Finland. The monitoring team of the financing institution considered the project a successful and well-implemented Tacis action, the results of which managed to exceed the project partner's expectations. The project is seen to be replicable in other regions of the Russian Federation and in other NIS.

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## **Moldovan health care improved by Tacis project**

In Moldova, STAKES is taking part in a new Tacis-project '*Support to the Ministry of Health*'. The project started in August and it

is implemented in a consortium led by a German consulting organisation CII. STAKES will provide the expertise in health care, social insurance and capacity building.

Moldova in one of the smallest New Independent States. Since the collapse of the Soviet system when free health care was guaranteed by the State, the Moldovan system continues to disintegrate. Country's health budget decreases regularly while the constraints are becoming more and more demanding. Local health authorities are struggling against several problems when trying to develop a functional health care system for the country.

Due to the poor economic situation in Moldova, the health system and the quality of health services have weakened significantly. Patients as a whole have difficulties accessing the health services, and health indicators show the overall performance of the health system to be ineffective.

At the same time, the evolution of morbidity shows a rise in cardiac illnesses, in infectious diseases (tuberculosis, hiv/aids) and also a rise of respiratory illnesses among children. Among young adults alcoholism and drug abuse are on the rise.

With the support of the European Union the government of Moldova has now adopted the Health Care Reform Programme. Two main laws related to the reorganisation of Primary Health Care services and Compulsory Medical Insurance have been adopted by the Parliament. The ongoing project has two general objectives:

- to provide policy advice to the Ministry of Health, enabling it to draw up a strategy for restructuring and modernisation, and to design implementation of this strategy in certain key areas and
- to support capacity building in the Regional Health System, in the context of regional administration

The duration of the project is 18 months, and the total budget is 1 million Euro.

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## Russian partners get Sexual Health Education in Finland

The ongoing project '*Reduction of Infectious Diseases and their Consequences in St Petersburg and North West Russia*' organised two comprehensive study tours on sexual health for the Russian counterparts of the project. Schoolteachers, rectors and venereologists from Petrozavodsk and St Petersburg participated in these study tours, which took place in Helsinki during the last weeks of September. The goals of the study tour were:

- (a) to provide the participants an overview of the Finnish system on sexual health education at different levels - e.g. at schools, in youth consultancy and in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and
- (b) to give method training in sexual health education to the participants.

The project has earlier arranged training in Russia by e.g. organising study tours in local organisations, organising Finnish-Russian seminars and giving sexual health education in local institutes. The study tours to Finland were the completion stage of the educational programme.

During the study tours the participants also visited the Family Federation of Finland, the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion, STAKES, the Basic School of Jakomäki, The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Youth Centre for girls in Kallio.

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## EU's Northern Dimension gathers social and health sector experts to Lappeenranta

An international forum on the European Union's Northern Dimension will be held in Lappeenranta, Finland, on October 22-23, 2001. The forum gathers together key decision-makers and experts to discuss the EU's objectives and opportunities in implement-

ing the Action plan for the Northern Dimension, adopted at Feira European Council in June 2001.

The leading idea behind the Northern Dimension is to reinforce positive interdependence between the Union and its partner countries, thereby enhancing security, stability, democratic reforms and sustainable development in the region.

The aim of the Lappeenranta forum is to introduce different projects and good practices relating to the implementation of the Northern Dimensions' Action Plan, and also in other ways bring together actors from different countries with the representatives of financial institutions. The forum will be attended by high-level experts from the European Commission, international financing institutions, Russia, the Baltic States and Poland.

The Lappeenranta forum will focus on environment and nuclear safety, information society, challenges to the health and social sector and cross-border investments. *The Unit for International Collaboration at STAKES* is responsible for the co-ordination of health and social sector for the Lappeenranta forum.

In the Northern Dimension region there are considerable social differences between countries, and health problems pose serious threats to public health and social stability. This presents a challenge for the strengthening the public health services and the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases in the region. Therefore the key elements in the plan suggest to concentrate on infectious diseases and especially on prevention of hiv/aids.

The Lappeenranta forum gathers together a wide range of health and social sector expertise, including public institutions, training organisations and NGO's both from Finland and other countries involved in the Northern Dimension. The aim is to address the challenges and possibilities for future development in the sector.

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