



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Eka's story: Laying the foundation for success to stop tuberculosis in Georgia

Dr. Eka Sanikidze had a tough road ahead of her. Her country—Georgia—has one of the highest tuberculosis (TB) burdens in Eastern Europe. As the advocacy, communication, and social mobilization (ACSM) coordinator for the National TB Program, Eka was determined to make a difference not only by treating patients, but by intervening at the community and national levels to address the social and political roots of the disease.

Her story demonstrates the power of equipping the right people with the right opportunities.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES, COLLABORATING FOR SOLUTIONS

ACSM is a set of interventions that helps communities mobilize political commitment and resources, educate the public about TB and its cure to improve case detection and treatment adherence, combat stigma and discrimination, and empower people affected by the disease. ACSM helps link communities and health facilities.

Like many countries, Georgia lacked a national strategy and the resources to be able to use ACSM to address major barriers to TB prevention and treatment.

Eka's effectiveness as an ACSM coordinator was given a boost at a PATH-led workshop in Belarus, hosted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Stop TB Partnership. These intensive and



PATH/Kay Erdahl

participatory workshops help to deepen participants' understanding of ACSM principles, develop ACSM action plans, and determine how to use ACSM to improve TB control outcomes in their countries. Eka's enthusiasm for ACSM was evident at the workshop, and it made her a top choice for helping PATH conduct a detailed assessment of the ACSM situation in Georgia.

A hard worker, Eka sometimes financed her own travel costs to meet the people who could move things forward, and following the workshop, met with Georgia's National TB Program manager to come up with a strategy for addressing some of the challenges she had identified. Georgia requested technical assistance from PATH to convene a workshop for 13 of Georgia's top TB program leaders from the Ministry of Health, the National TB Program, the Global Fund, the medical university, and



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nongovernmental organizations. By the end of the workshop, participants created a national strategy and work plan for ACSM, instituted a new ACSM working group, and brainstormed innovative ways to further build the capacity of local staff.

A MODEL FOR ACSM

Georgia now has a strong foundation for implementing effective, well-planned, and coordinated ACSM activities that link with national TB program objectives. The progress made in Georgia demonstrates that targeted technical assistance, combined with local leadership, can help align all of the essential elements needed to increase case detection and treatment success.

Georgia is now a model for other countries in the region that are working to utilize ACSM strategies to improve TB outcomes.

PATH'S GLOBAL WORK IN ACSM

With funding from USAID, PATH supports community leaders and government officials in designing, implementing, and evaluating ACSM activities that engage communities in efforts to fight TB. Through targeted technical assistance and training, PATH collaborates with a wide variety of stakeholders and partners to strengthen ACSM strategies and interventions and help meet global, regional, and national targets for TB control. PATH has conducted ACSM trainings in every region of the world. We currently work in Eastern Europe/Central Asia, India, Tanzania, Cambodia, Mexico, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Vietnam, and provide targeted assistance to a variety of other countries.

WANT TO USE ACSM IN YOUR WORK?

PATH and the Stop TB Partnership ACSM Subgroup have developed an innovative and practical training package that includes an interactive ACSM training curriculum, ACSM facilitators' guide, and an ACSM Monitoring & Evaluation guide. Please visit www.path.org/projects/tuberculosis-acsm.php for copies.

For more information

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This document was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau of Global Health Tuberculosis Task Order by PATH.

About PATH

For more information, please visit www.path.org.