



# SUPPORT TO UKRAINE FOR DEVELOPING A MODERN PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

A project funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium consisting of GFA Consulting Group GmbH, Hamburg, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki. The project supports consolidation and empowerment of the Public Health Centre of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (UPHC) and supports the establishment of a modern blood safety system in Ukraine.

Project Newsletter  
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## Dmytro Koval, Ukrainian center for transplant coordination (UTCC) Director General

coordination of medical care with the provision of services for transfusion of donor blood and blood components. Additionally, UTCC contributes to the implementation of state policies in the field of blood donation and blood components.

The development of a system of uninterrupted, safe, and operative supply of blood and its components from the donor to the recipient is one of the UTCC priorities. To implement the state policy in this area, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine assigned UTCC the function of a National Transfusion Center, mainly responsible for consolidation and support of blood systems in the regions throughout coordination of their work and establishing a blood safety system in Ukraine.

However, the outdated Ukrainian legislation regarding the safety and quality of donated blood didn't meet EU requirements and standards which was quite challenging. In 2020, the bill #3648 "On safety and quality of donor blood and blood components", submitted by the Committee on the Nation's Health, Medical Care and Health Insurance members in cooperation with MOH, was passed by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and signed by the President. It marked the

The newly established state institution "Ukrainian center for transplant coordination" (UTCC) under the MOH governance is the public health institution in charge of transplantation and activities related to transplantation, as well as blood donation and blood components. UTCC oversees the transfusion activities as well as the processes related to the functioning of blood system entities, circulation of blood and blood components, compliance with safety and quality standards of donor blood and components,

first change of the legislation in this field in 25 years. The new law provides the following updates: donor blood will be tested and controlled in accordance with the standards of European legislation; and the development of the blood system will be based on voluntary non-remunerated donation. In addition, not only citizens of Ukraine will be able to donate blood. The law allows foreigners and people with a temporary residence permit to become donors. Another crucial point of the new law is that the export of blood and blood products will only be possible after meeting the national need for blood and its components.

To bring this law into force, several secondary legislations must be developed and provided by the UTCC in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Thus, the support of international partners to speed up this process is much appreciated. We have recently signed a Memorandum of understanding with the EU funded Project "Support to Ukraine in developing a modern public health system", and we believe that the technical expertise of the international colleagues will contribute significantly to improving the blood safety system in Ukraine.

The cooperation priorities were defined at the Project Steering Committee in October 2021. To lead the procedure of the blood safety system transformation successfully, we expect the Project to provide technical assistance with the secondary legislation development, along with support for transforming of the health care unit's transfusion departments into hospital blood banks. Another significant support concerns the establishment of the National Transfusion Committee and the development of the standards for technology of procurement, processing, testing, storage and distribution of donor blood and blood components to the subjects of the blood system. We also look forward to working closely with the Project

experts in donor selection and exclusion criteria in terms of COVID-19 vaccination, as well as in the training of inspectors for the competent authority.

Currently, the UTCC and the Project have a joint focus on development of licensing requirements for blood system operators to ensure safety for both donors and patients. We are working on the method of calculating the service costs for procurement, testing, processing and storage, distribution and transportation of blood and blood components. The standards for blood components transfusion and stock management are also being discussed.

We are convinced that with designing the National Blood Donor register, a significant step towards better management of supplies and needs in the field of transfusiology will be made. This will ensure a quick access to the information about the donors, showcasing the indications that affect their status of the temporary or permanent exclusion from donation while protecting donor privacy and confidentiality at the same time. At the same time, promotion of voluntary non-remunerated blood donation (VNRBD) and donor recruitment is another priority of UTCC. In cooperation with many stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Ukrainian and international partners, NGOs, foundations, we aim at establishing the donor movement in Ukraine in line with European principles, highlighting that blood donation should become popular and common among Ukrainians. Currently we are working on the concept finalisation and launch of the communication campaign for VNRBD promotion. We believe that with the EU Project support the approximation of the Ukrainian blood safety legislation to the EU standards will be accelerated, and the public attention to the issues of the blood donation in Ukraine will be raised.

# Regular Project Steering Committee meeting: what was discussed and agreed upon between the partners



The Project Steering Committee meeting was held on October 12, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Project stakeholders, namely the Ministry of Health

of Ukraine headed by the Minister Viktor Liashko and Deputy Minister and Chief Sanitary Doctor Ihor Kuzin, Deputy Minister of Health on European Integration Oleksiy Yaremenko, the Head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Nation Health, Medical Care and Health Insurance Mykhailo Radutsky, Public Health Center of Ukraine and Ukrainian Center for Transplant Coordination Leadership, EU Delegation to Ukraine, GFA and the Project team met online.

The meeting was aimed at discussing the progress, status, and planned activities of the project in the area of public health, communication, and blood safety components. In particular, the beneficiary parties of each component stressed the importance of focusing on the current needs of the public health and blood safety system of Ukraine, and the series of meetings were agreed at the PCS meeting.

It was highlighted by the EU Delegation to Ukraine, that after the Project closure, the legislation should be as approximate as possible to EU requirements and the system reform goals should be achieved.

## The non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and risk factors related activities were conducted by the Project

Following the Task Force meeting between the Project experts led by Nataliya Korol and the stakeholders from UPHC and regional Centers for Disease Control (rCDCs), the main goals of the NCD related activities within the EU funded Project were presented and discussed:

- ← Review of the existing monitoring of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Ukraine;
- ← Presentation of proposals aimed at developing the system;
- ← Distinguishing the legal basis, defining the responsible institutions and overview of the funding opportunities for the various components of monitoring;

- Determining the disadvantages of NCD monitoring;
- Carrying out a SWOT-analysis and development of a road map.

Later in October, two master classes on NCDs were conducted on the topics "Predicting and preventing cardiovascular diseases" and "Effective and inclusive approach to health and wellbeing promotion among vulnerable groups". The Project experts in NCDs – Mr. Erkki Vartiainen and Tomi Mäki-Opas – presented the overview on how to improve predictions and prevention of cardiovascular diseases and, additionally, on how to develop effective and inclusive policies and programs among disadvantaged population groups to promote their health and wellbeing.



# The set of educational activities on strategic planning and management were performed for the healthcare workers and leadership

In October 2021, two master classes for senior managers and middle managers of PHC and newly created regional CDCs were conducted on the topics "Organisational analysis" and "Strategic analysis of competitive positioning of an organisation". The educational activities were designed and held by the Project expert in financial and administrative capacity building support Mr. Dejan Ostojic.

The core goal of these educational sessions was to

introduce the participants the resource-based approach to internal analysis and application of methods for internal analysis (the value chain, SWOT framework) as well as to present some tools for strategic analysis of competitive positioning of an organisation. The significant attention was paid to the analysis of competitive environment and strategic group analysis with the set of recommendations on how to assess the public health institutions in terms of competitive strengths and market attractiveness.

# Training modules on copywriting and writing for social media effectively in the era of COVID-19 communications: important tips for public health professionals



In November 2021, 3 modules of the training in copywriting and writing for social media for UPHC non-communication departments professionals were held. Designed and led by the Project communication experts Mr. Dmytro Konyk and Mrs. Saana Ihamäki and upon request of UPHC, training segments were aimed at improving the skills of UPHC specialists in writing news and information materials for various communication

platforms, including social media. The topic is extremely relevant for modern public health professionals to assist them in forming their brand identity on the news or social media platforms to deliver their messages in the proper way. Particular attention was paid to the topic on how to maximise the impact of social media channels for COVID-19 communications with analysis of the best international practices.

The training was conducted in the hybrid format including theoretical offline classes, online-webinars, and practical exercises with homework. Project experts provided participants with extended feedback and support during the course, while covering the following topics:

- ✦ Storytelling, writing skills development;
- ✦ Writing for social media, defining the target audience, rules of conduct for planning and publishing posts;
- ✦ Attracting attention to the text with particular attention to the headlines, lead sentences and the context of the publication.

The list of useful tools was provided to the participants on each of the topics. The most active participants received the certificates of successful course completion.

# Dr Farouk took part in several conferences on blood transfusion and transplantology to present the Project cooperation with UTCC in this area



On October 8 and 21, Project Key Expert on blood safety Dr Mohammed Farouk was invited to participate in the conference on practical issues of blood system entities activities and practical issues related to transfusiology care at healthcare facilities under the aegis of MoH and UTCC. The presentations were dedicated to the topics of establishing a reliable blood transfusion system for Ukraine and role of hospital blood banks; and the introduction of standards in blood transfusion activities

according to best practices.

The emphasis by Dr Farouk was put on the distinctive nature of blood transfusion systems including the required elements for a modern national blood legislation, blood system in Ukraine and its development, and the support the EU funded Project is providing to UTCC and MOH in terms of development and approximation with relevant EU requirements.

## Olaf Horstick,

Project Senior Expert in  
Training and Qualitative studies,  
Consultant in Public Health  
Medicine, Director of Teaching,  
HIGH, Heidelberg University,  
Germany

YOU HAVE RICH EXPERIENCE IN DESIGNING CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS AND TRAININGS FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS. COULD YOU PLEASE DESCRIBE MORE OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND?

Before coming back to University almost 10 years ago, I have been working for 20 years in practical public health in different places globally and different agencies, including WHO. Some time ago, the university I have been studying at - Heidelberg University (Germany), invited me to run the training programmes in public and global public health at Heidelberg Institute of Global Health (HIGH). Given that our teaching unit has a lot of experience in global health, with our flagship Master Course in this topic for 30 years, mostly with international course participants, we also had a high demand for international collaborations on Public and Global Health courses. There is and has been high demand for regular counseling on designing of the new programs or adapting the existing ones. With that background, I started advising not only in universities, but also public health institutions on how to develop and improve continuous professional development programmes.

AS THE PROJECT SENIOR TRAINING AND QUALITATIVE STUDIES EXPERT, YOU CONTRIBUTED A LOT TO THE TRAINING/CAPACITY BUILDING COMPONENT OF UPHC. WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE YOU LEADING DURING 2021? WHAT ARE CTNA AND KAP SURVEYS AND WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS?

There were four elements being developed. The first one was the capacity and training needs assessment (CTNA) of the Public Health Center of Ukraine, led mostly by the Project colleagues from Finnish Institute for health and welfare, while I contributed to methodology and analysis. Another part was about interviewing public health professionals, aimed at defining their training and professional development needs.

I was also engaged in reviewing of the existing Public Health courses in Ukrainian universities. After the detailed gap analysis on needs we made a list of recommendations.

One of the key points underlined by this analysis was the need to broaden from a particular focus on communicable diseases into foundations of health including health promotion, methods, and health research. And, obviously, the four elements of analysis revealed that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health topics should also be considered. We considered it as very positive that existing BA and MA programmes and courses in Ukraine provide sufficient knowledge to expand those training needs among public health professionals. Therefore, the collaboration of all the stakeholders in public health education could be very efficient for designing continuous professional development programmes and skills updating.

Another crucial part is to train trainers throughout Ukraine, also using electronic means, with the aim to contribute to regional network development by delivering courses/updating programmes in non-metropolitan areas.

# Interview

TOGETHER WITH OTHER PROJECT EXPERTS YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON A FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR PROFESSIONALS DURING THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC IN UKRAINE. COULD YOU PLEASE SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE RESEARCH CONCEPT, TARGET GROUP, OBJECTIVES?

With this analysis we want to explore how the personal and professional work experience of the PH, UPHC and rCDCs personnel was with COVID-19. This aims to get a comprehensive idea and some lessons learned for the response to the current epidemic, but also for future epidemics. Therefore, to support the UPHC, MoH in the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic an analysis is suggested, for four different subgroups of people working in the health sector, using mostly interviews and targeting:

- ▶ carers and patients' COVID-19 experience from the point of view of health care workers;
- ▶ COVID-19 experience of personnel working in laboratories of rCDCs and on the national level;
- ▶ COVID-19 experiences of PH personnel working in national PH institutions and in regional/district CDCs;
- ▶ COVID-19 experiences of communications personnel working for regional CDCs and their views of national and regional COVID-19 communications.

The overall analysis is foreseen to be conducted through quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (in-depth interviews). The questionnaire is meant for the communication part only. With the information from the analysis, it is expected that the activities of the overall project can be adapted and focused, particularly for the training concept to be developed for and by the Educational Programmes Coordination Department of the UPHC, but also for the current response for COVID-19 in Ukraine and for future pandemic preparedness.

WHAT TRAINING ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED FOR THE NEAREST FUTURE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES?

A Task Force for training has been initiated about a year ago. We are currently discussing the new capacity building programs with Mr Dmytro Stoliarenko, the Head of UPHC educational programs and professional competencies development department to have some targeted courses and activities in 2022. We are currently suggesting to focus on health promotion, nutrition and food safety, management of the four main Non Communicable Diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes) and outbreak control and management training.

Another significant and ambitious task is the institutionalisation of continuous professional development for the regional CDCs by extending up the existing UPHC online courses to include public health and other related topics. The activities on this area are currently being discussed with UPHC.





## Dmytro Konyk

Project national expert in communications, Consultant in strategic communications, PhD in Sociological sciences, Kyiv-Mohyla University Professor

my practical experience in strategic communications, in planning, conducting and evaluating communication campaigns in various fields, including public health communications. The campaigns I was engaged in took place at both the national and local levels, had different target audiences and used a variety of communication - both traditional media and social networks.

YOU HAVE BEEN SUPPORTING VARIOUS PROJECTS AND COMPANIES WITH STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND MEDIA RELATIONS. COULD YOU BRIEFLY REFLECT ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND HOW THIS IS HELPFUL FOR THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES?

Indeed, for the last 10 years I have been working with various international organisations (EU, World Bank, USAID and many others), advising national and local authorities, as well as NGOs and business associations on various projects on the formulation of communication strategies, and training of personnel for communication. I was holding various events for the media and the public. I assume I have the opportunity to share my experience, considering that before becoming a consultant, I was in charge for communications for over 20 years in the offices of international organisations (IFC, UNICEF), and was also the director of the Ukrainian office of the international communications company On Board. This highlights

ONE OF THE DOMINANT PROJECT COMPONENTS IS SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CENTRE OF UKRAINE (UPHC) IN CAPACITY BUILDING AND TARGETED EDUCATION. LAST YEAR, YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SET OF TRAININGS FOR THE PHC COMMUNICATION PERSONNEL. WHAT WERE THE KEY TOPICS OF THE TRAINING MODULES? AFTER HAVING EVALUATED THE TRAINING OUTCOMES, DID YOU INVESTIGATE ANY FURTHER NEEDS ON EDUCATION IN COMMUNICATION FIELD FOR PHC PERSONNEL?

During Autumn 2020, our Project developed and conducted a series of communication trainings to cover all major communication issues in the field of public health. Prior to that, the Project conducted a comprehensive study of the communication capacity of regional PHCs, and we found that one of the challenges was the need for improved knowledge of communication by both the heads of regional



# Interview

centers and communication specialists. That is why we actually developed a mini-course of 5 modules: "Communication process and communication strategy development", "Communication campaigns", "Communications in social media", "Media training" and "Crisis communications". At the same time, while the regional PHCs communicational specialists participated in all five modules, the regional centers' top managers also joined the last two, which was extremely useful for conducting the practical classes on the preparation of media interviews and crisis press conferences in the teams.

TO SYSTEMISE AND SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON AFFECTIVE PR TOOLS, YOU DRAFTED THE TOOLKIT ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS. IS THIS MANUAL HELPFUL FOR COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH RELATED FIELD ONLY? OR ANY PR-SPECIALIST CAN REFER TO IT? COULD YOU PLEASE HIGHLIGHT THE MAIN POINTS OF THE MANUAL TO BE CONSIDERED BY PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS?

During the seminars we found out that there is a demand for educational and methodological materials in the field of communications. Considering that most communication manuals are published in English, which might be an obstacle for Ukrainian communication specialists, including those working in the field of public health, in terms of language barrier for some of them. Moreover, the guidelines in public health communications are quite unique in the world. For this reason, the Project decided to develop a practical guide, which we call a toolkit, given that we provide effective tools for planning and implementing campaigns in addition to outlining the basic theories of behavior change, and describing what to do in identifying target audiences whose behavior needs to be changed, developing communication campaigns and recommendations on the communication campaigns implementation. The manual is entitled "Communication campaigns for behavior change" and is the first manual in Ukrainian on behavioral communication. Even though it was designed for our

PHC partners, the toolkit contents can be used by public relations colleagues working in other fields, both in the non-profit and in the commercial sector, considering that the rules and patterns of behavior change communication are similar regardless of whether we are aimed to change the person's behavior in public health related field (for example, to encourage him or her to undergo regular medical examinations), or it is a matter of acquiring positive behavior in other areas (for example, financial literacy).

ONE OF THE MAIN ACTIVITIES WHICH REQUIRES YOUR EXPERTISE AND ENGAGEMENT IS THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR UPHC. WHY IS THIS DOCUMENT IMPORTANT? WHAT MAKES UP A GOOD COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE HEALTHCARE INSTITUTION?

It is important to emphasize that our Project assists PHC in developing a communication strategy. However, the final document is supposed to be produced by the PHC team based on their internal core agreements, still with our guidance and advice on the best strategy structure. The decision to draft the communication strategy is a significant step demonstrating the leadership's responsible and systematic approach to communication. The strategy has to be realistic, relevant, measurable, and to define specific tasks of communication. It is also important to note that tasks are to be achieved within the specified time. This set of elements, including the correct segmentation of the main target audiences, the definition of optimal communication channels and effective key messages, will be useful for improving the communication in the field of public health. An important and supportive background for NCDs' prevention and control, including planning the public health policy steps. In addition, the law 4142 adoption and implementation will support the development of a new comprehensive Epidemiological State Service in accordance with best international practices.

WITH THE REFORM IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM OF UKRAINE, THE NEW ROLE OF THE MAIN EXPERT INSTITUTION TO COORDINATE THE ACTIVITIES OF

# Interview

THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDCS) NETWORK IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE AND HAZARD RESPONSE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE UPHC. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WOULD THAT IMPACT ON THE GENERAL UPHC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION?

Obviously, the communication strategy should help in the implementation of the main PHC tasks. It is worth noting that the public health system is constantly improving, and we expect communication to take the proper place in this system.

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The overall project's objective is to support the modernisation and development of a sustainable Public Health System that is able to ensure disease prevention and control standards in line with EU legislation, requirements, and practices. The project shall contribute to strengthening national leadership and capacity in Public Health policy programming and implementation. The project supports the consolidation and empowerment of the newly created Public Health Centre of Ukraine (UPHC) and supports the creation of a modern Blood Safety System in Ukraine.



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