

# OMID-E-NOW

Working together for drug users in  
Iran

DRG/2006/122-054



This project has received financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Deutscher Orden International and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

# Islamic Republic of Iran



Flag



Emblem

- 1.648.195 km<sup>2</sup> (18<sup>th</sup>)
- Capital: Tehran
- Population 2006: 71,208,000<sup>3</sup> (17<sup>th</sup>)
- Government: Islamic Republic (declared on April 1, 1979)
- Supreme Leader:
  - [Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](#) (1979-1989)
  - [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei](#) (1989-present)
- President
  - [Abolhassan Banisadr](#) (1980-1981)
  - [Mohammad Ali Rajai](#) (1981)
  - [Ali Khamenei](#) (1981-1989)
  - [Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani](#) (1989-1997)
  - [Mohammad Khatami](#) (1997-2005)
  - [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) (2005- present)



Source: wikipedia

# IRAN and Drugs

- Opium use has a long history in Iran, with the first reports of opium use dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century;
- In 1943 the first official statistics were made which estimated the number of opium users to be 1 ½ million out of a population of 14 million;
- In 1955 Iran introduced the first laws against the cultivation and use of opium;
- In 1969 a nationwide opium maintenance program for people of 60 years and older was initiated. At the time 105'000 opium users were registered with the authorities;
- In 1975 it was reported that there were about 30'000 heroin users in the country with some of them injecting their drugs;

# Recent developments in the Iranian Drug use scenario

- An RSA (Rapid Situation Assessment) in collaboration with UNDCP and MoHME was undertaken in 2004. Dependent drug users in Iran are 1'200'000 – 1'800'000. 12,2% of respondents admitted injecting drugs and 16% admitted occasionally injecting;
- Various studies report the number of drug users in Iran today range from 3.7 millions up to 7 millions, which would be approximately 10% of the entire population;
- Iran therefore is the world leader in drug use among its own population;

# Drugs and HIV/AIDS in Iran (UNAIDS)

- There are currently some 86'000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Iran;
- 68.1% of the total HIV/AIDS cases are due to injecting drug use;
- Prevalence of HIV among injecting drug users is 12-63%
- Prevalence of Hepatitis C (HCV) among injecting drug users is 20-90%

# Response to Drug Use in Iran (up to date)

- In 2007 there were some 72 Drop-In Centers established in Iran;
- In 2007 some 125 mobile Outreach-Teams were operational in Iran;
- The coverage was about 26'828 drug users in 2007;
- Some 4'413 drug users were able to access substitution treatment (Methadone);
- Some 952 Substance Abuse Treatment Centers were operational in 2007;
- Iran has implemented Methadone Substitution Treatment (MMT) in 60 Prisons with approximately 40 after-care clinics when prisoners are discharged from their sentence and attend MMT programmes set up by the MOHME, currently there are some 8048 Prisoners benefiting from the MMT programme;
- There is a definite response that sponsors harm reduction services in Iran: ... *One of interventions has been done by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education includes provision of needles, syringes and other material used individually by drug addicts and AIDS patients as well as methadone maintenance treatment programs as means of combating HIV and Hepatitis infections among drug addicts... Therefore all judicial authorities must consider the lack of malicious intent in the interventions of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education as well as those of other centers and organizations which are active in this field and not accuse the service providers... Seyed Mahmood Hashemi Sharoudi Head of the Judiciary, Jan 24th 2005*

# Omid-E-Now Working together for drug users in Iran

## Overall Goals

1. Scale up service provision to marginalised injecting drug users (**Scope of service provision**)
2. Improve the quality of service provision in Iran and the management capacity of local NGOs (**Quality of service provision and management capacity – Exposure to EU and international good practice**)
3. Develop a system of agreed standard of services among service providers in Iran (**Standard of Service, SOS**)
4. Improve networking among service providers in the project locations in order to provide a continuum of care to drug users (**Continuum of care through networking**)
5. Support the development of a system of data collection for the registration of clients, compatible among the local service providers and that can be further adopted by other service providers in Iran (**Data gathering and analysis**)

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## ARIA

(AIDS Research & Intervention Association)

- ARIA is currently providing 76 clients with methadone maintenance;
- Some 183 people are provided with needles and syringes (NSEP) per week through the drop-in center;
- Some 263 receive health-care assistance in the Drop-In center per week;
- ARIA is conducting per week 3 group-sessions with its clientele at the Drop-In;
- Aria operates an Outreach service and is in contact with some 200 homeless drug users on the streets;
- Some 4'200 clean Needles and Syringes are provided are distributed by ARIA per week though Outreach;



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## PERSEPOLIS

- 160 clients receive daily methadone;
- 25 clients come for NSEP on daily basis;
- 192 clients are registered in the NSEP;
- 45 clients are contacted per day on Outreach. 170 needles are distribute and some 100 clients receive nutrition supplements per day;
- Referrals of clients to the government Welfare org. Komit-emdad for employment are made;
- Referrals are also made to the Farahangsara (cultural organization under Ministry of Islamic Culture)



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## CONGRESS-60

- Congress60 is an NGO which works only through volunteers;
- The number of people treated in Tehran alone is above 6'000;
- The treatment covers a 12 month period and includes former users and family;
- Sports activities are an important aspect of the treatment and rehabilitation process;
- The National Drug Department has referred 1'000 clients to the NGO for follow up on the opium tincture treatment which has recently been introduced in Iran on a pilot basis;
- Congress60 runs centres in Tehran, Arak, Abhar, Esfahan, Pakdasht, Semanan and Marzan Abad



# Omid-E-Now

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## Training in Tehran

- A Training on Outreach was conducted in Tehran by an expert from the Region
- The Training targeted HIV & HCV prevention, behavioral issues when engaging with homeless people, stigma, discrimination and attitude towards drug users



# Networking among the Services

- Outreach Workers of both Persepolis and ARIA arrange days to go on outreach together in order to learn from each other practices and approaches;
- Clients have been referred by Persepolis to ARIA as per Government mandate;
- Regular meetings take place between ARIA and Congress60 for example to train Congress60 clients on issues related to HIV & HCV prevention;
- ARIA refers to Congress60 clients who have been on MMT for some time and desire to reach a drug free status;
- ARIA has assisted the Family Planning Association with issues regarding drugs and drug use;
- Contact and free dental care has been arranged for clients in a Dental Clinic in Tehran;

# The Future

## Reintegration

- After the treatment period it is essential to re-integrate the treated individual as a contributing member of society;
- Only so can the efforts of treatment be sustained;
- This will be done through the Tavaan-E-Zendegi Programme supported by the EC;
- The Programme will use the know-how gained in a previous Asian Programme to develop skills and income for ex-drug users supported also by the EC;



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Thank you !