

# THE BENEFITS OF NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAM ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN TANZANIA:

## A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN TEMEKE DISTRICT, DAR ES SALAAM

### THE STUDY

#### The qualitative study aimed at:

- Determining perceived benefits of Temeke's Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) on the quality of life of people who inject drugs (PWID) in Temeke, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania;
- Investigating motivation, facilitating factors, and experience of PWID in taking part in an NSP program; and
- Documenting and describing challenges and good practices to inform policy making for PWID in Tanzania.

#### Methods:

- 33 in-depth interviews with PWID enrolled: 14 enrolled in NSP and 19 in Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT)
- 10 in-depth interviews with NSP program staff
- The research was approved by the National Research Ethics Committee.

### RESULTS

#### RESULT 1: Global High satisfaction with the NSP

Beneficiaries declared being very satisfied with the NSP and the services provided:

- The services respond to the needs of the people who inject drugs (PWID)
- The NSP provides a feeling of belonging and acceptance
- It provides attention to female needs

#### RESULT 2: NSP is a motivator to health-seeking behavior, including joining OST

Beneficiaries noticed an improvement in their health since they engaged in the NSP. Staff noticed that too.

- General health improvement
- Motivation to enrol in MAT
- Reduced the harms of drug use

#### RESULT 3: NSP helps with family support, but stigma and violence against PWID still challenges care

- Improved family relations
- Police and community stigma and violence challenge PWID care

#### RESULT 4: Perceived improved quality of life, but limited regarding socio economic context

- Life has improved
- Economic conditions are not satisfactory
- NSP has limited influence on improving economic conditions

#### RESULT 5: Need for additional health, legal and economic support

- Need for legal support for PWID
- Need for other specialized health care workers as staff
- Needs for program and services expansion

### CONCLUSIONS

- The NSP improves the health and life of the PWID it assists
- It motivates PWID to engage in care and change risky behaviour, protecting them from HIV and other STDs, as well as HCV
- It motivates PWID to engage in MAT
- It helps PWID better control and reduce (the harms of) drug use
- Additional support is needed for poverty reduction and social integration of PWIDs
- Expansion of NSP services and coverage is recommended