

Presentation delivered during the Technical Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS/STI

Boca Chica, República Dominicana
22-24 January 2005





Experience in Integrating Injecting and other Drug Users Projects with HIV attention in Brazil

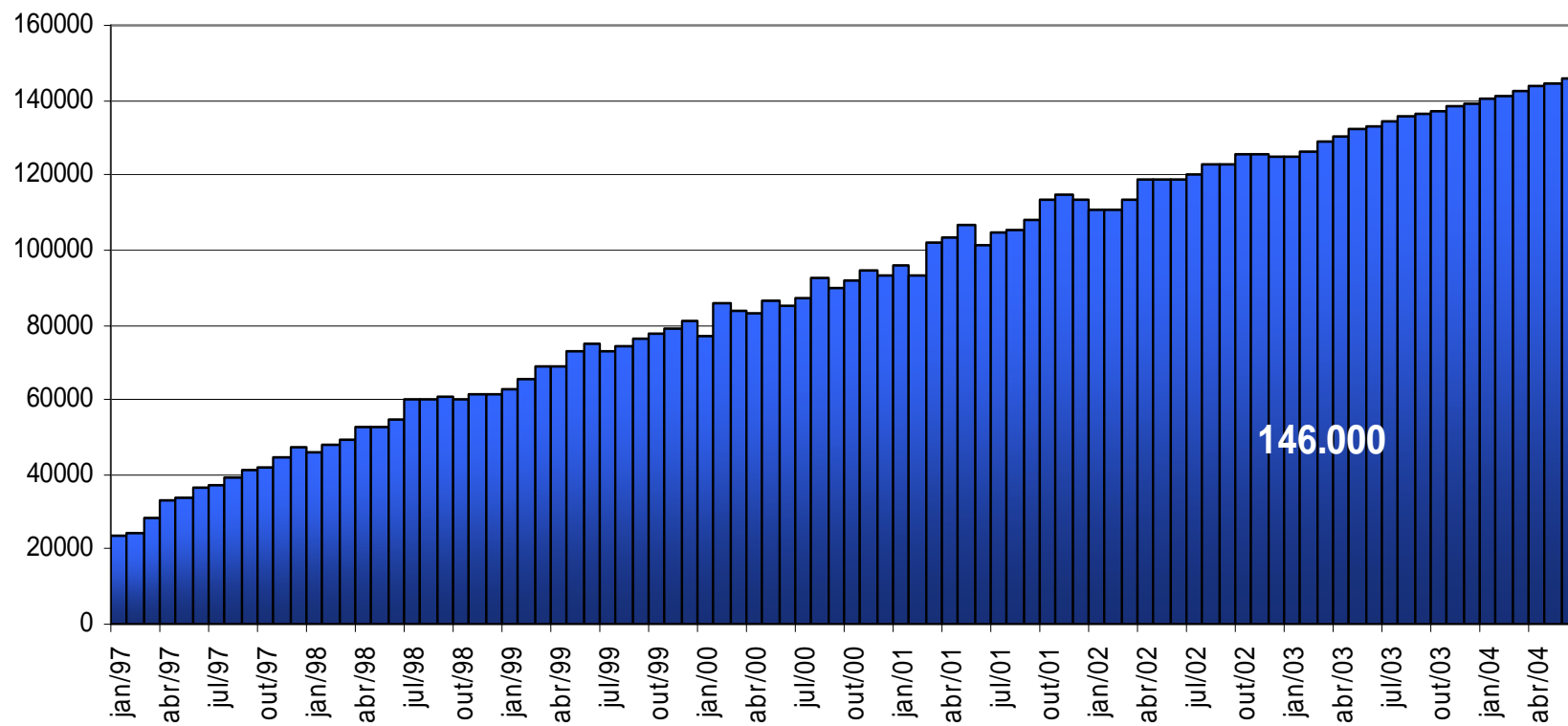
PAHO - January, 2005



-
- ✓ **Federative Republic**
 - ✓ **States – 27** **Municipalities - 5,561**
 - ✓ **Population (2001) - 172,500,000**
 - ✓ **Per capita GNP (2003) - US\$ 2,789**
 - ✓ **Accumulated AIDS cases (2003): 310,310**
 - ✓ **Estimated number of PLHA (2004): 660,000**
 - ✓ **New cases per year - around 25.000**



PLHA on ARV use Brazil, 1997 a Jun/2004



Dados preliminares



Harm Reduction in Brazil

When it began?



- ✓ 1989: started in Santos (a large port), where IDUs accounted for approximately 60 % of the total AIDS cases
- ✓ 1994: the MoH (National AIDS Program) organized a Harm Reduction Strategy, mobilizing international experts, in partnership with UNODC and the World Bank

IDU Profile



- ✓ 18 to 30 years old
- ✓ 90% inject cocaine, with recent increased use of crack
- ✓ started injecting drugs at age 16
- ✓ 82% are unemployed
- ✓ 80% have already been arrested at least once

Fonte: AJUDE-Brasil I , 2000 e AJUDE-BRASIL II: Aval. Epid.Ações Redução de Danos realizadas pelos PRD , PN DST/AIDS – UNODC, UFMG / GPE, set. 2003

IDU Profile



- ✓ 13% have had a STD in the last 6 months
- ✓ 85% report they use drugs in groups
- ✓ 23% have sought treatment for dependence
- ✓ HIV + – 36.5%
- ✓ Hepatitis C + - 56%

Fonte: AJUDE-Brasil I , 2000 e AJUDE-BRASIL II: Aval. Epid.Ações
Redução de Danos realizadas pelos PRD , PN DST/AIDS –
UNODC, UFMG / GPE, set. 2003

HR Programmes - 2004



- ✓ 279 HR programmes
- ✓ 146,000 IDUs reached - almost 20% of the total estimated IDUs in Brazil
- ✓ where HR programs have been implemented, access to these users reaches 80%

still a small coverage
13% of all AIDS cases are IDUs

Characteristics



-
- ✓ work with **Harm Reducers** - former drug users trained as outreach workers among their peers, re-qualifying them as health agents

Characteristics



- ✓ development of Laws to secure the local implementation of HR programmes
- ✓ currently - 15 state or municipal Laws
- ✓ included in the Anti-Drug Policies
- ✓ a presidential decree regulating HR (about to be signed)

Characteristics



- ✓ development of outreach strategies – free distribution of syringes, needles and condoms, free HIV and hepatitis testing - free treatment

Characteristics



- ✓ governmental response in close partnership with civil society – defending the rights of users and performs interventions
- ✓ development of serologic and behavioral surveys to establish health impact indicators - local and national studies are carried out, funded by the MOH

Characteristics



- ✓ promotion of participation of drug users in health policy decision making forums
- ✓ organization in networks and associations and their participation in other civil society organizations

2 national associations and 16 state associations of harm reducers and 1 association admittedly of drug users

Harm Reduction Programmes

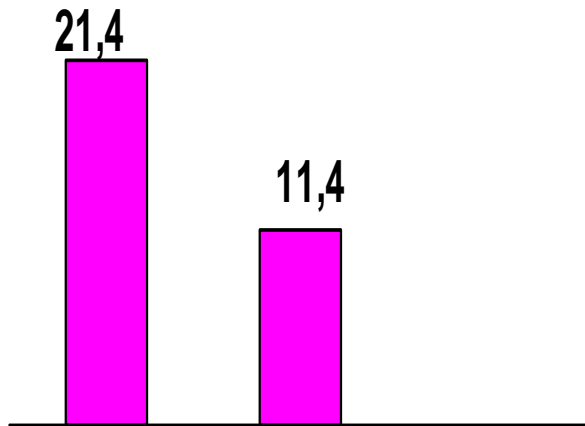


- ✓ HR projects report reduction of drug abuse and search for treatment (**23%**), as well as attempts to return to school by drug users reached

HR Programs - some results

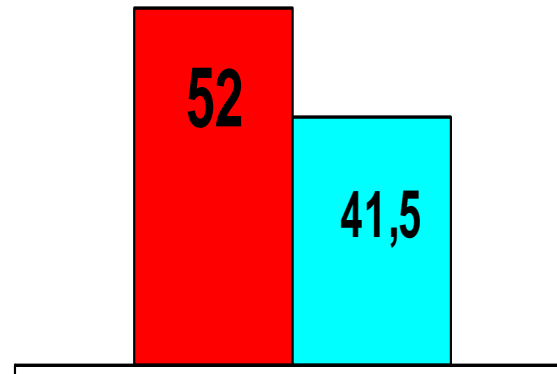


BEHAVIOR



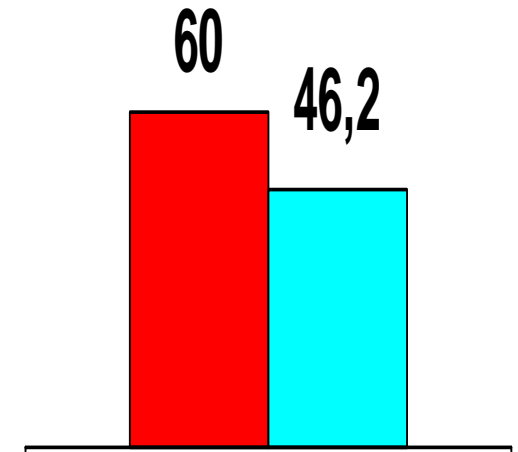
■ reduction of needle sharing

HIV



■ 1999 ■ 2001

HCV



■ 1999 ■ 2001

Harm Reduction Programmes



- ✓ reduction of AIDS cases can be attributed to:
 - ✓ **harm reduction program actions**
 - ✓ change in the pattern from use of injecting drugs to use of crack
 - ✓ death of many users due to violence
- ✓ the impact of harm reduction actions is directly linked to the inclusion of drug users in the public agenda

A New Project



Mortality rate amongst IDU is not decreasing as in other vulnerable populations

- ✓ Pilot project – 33 health services in 16 cities
 - ✓ Workshops and trainings on HR related to IDU
 - ✓ Design of action plans – participation of 3 major Civil Society Organizations, with drug users and harm reducers

Challenges



- ✓ design a new national policy – aimed at increasing health care for injecting and other drug users - a special prevention committee composed of two national HR organizations, REDUC and ABORDA, and a HR movement representative
- ✓ capacity building of NGOs, specialized in HR, to develop communication skills to register their work and edit a series of 13 videos, to be useful for advocacy and raise awareness

Challenges



- ✓ advocacy and the preparation of a document to provide the media with guidelines on the approach to drugs and drug users
- ✓ HR has been included in the Preventive Policy for the Youth (Ministry of Education and MOH) - it is still necessary to improve the universal prevention approach - a harm reduction perspective, relating drugs to Sexually Transmitted Infections