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Community volunteers receive training on how to prevent tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. They will then be replicating these trainings in their communities. (UNV, 2014)

Community volunteers help to prevent tuberculosis

In February 2014, 25 community volunteers were trained within the UN Joint Programme "Sustaining livelihoods affected by the Aral Sea disaster" to improve awareness on tuberculosis and other chronic respiratory diseases among the population of five districts of Karakalpakstan. This year, 75 such trainings will take place, and 1,500 volunteers will be trained within the programme. The objective of the trainings – organized by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme – is to increase public awareness about diseases related to environmental degradation and climate change, and to promote a healthy lifestyle in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

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**General
enquires**

Email: unv.media@unv.org
Tel: +49-228-815 2000
Fax: +49-228-815 2001

**Partnership
enquires**

Email: partnershipsupport@unv.org
Tel: +49-228-815 2000
Fax: +49-228-815 2001

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Professional medical trainers of the Ministry of Health of Karakalpakstan, and community volunteers coached by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided the latest information on how to prevent tuberculosis, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other respiratory diseases, as well as the latest statistics on the diseases.

The training also included coaching techniques and success stories of volunteering projects around the world.

The volunteers who attended the training are university teachers and students, representatives from village councils, and medical workers, among others. The emphasis of the trainings was on their coaching skills, since these first-line trainers will share this knowledge with their communities once they travel back to their regions.

The skills that they have learned will be put to use during trainings in the districts of Muinak, Shumanay, Karauzyak, Kegeyli and Nukus later this year.

On this Joint Programme, UNV works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the Women's Committee, the Nukus Branch of the Tashkent Paediatric Medical Institute, the "Makhalla" Fund, the Nurses Association of Karakalpakstan, higher education institutions and Hokimiyats (local and district level authorities).

The involvement of community volunteers in health care and basic services activities is a globally widespread approach to address challenges, especially in rural areas.

The United Nations has been involving community volunteers in Karakalpakstan since 2009. With a strong ownership on the part of local government and local NGOs, it is a promising way to reduce the serious effects of the Aral Sea Disaster on the lives of Karakalpak people.

Sustainable Development Goal: