

Belarus: Art Project “Door!?”, Minsk, 2005

Objectives

- To advocate for human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.
- To change public stereotypes in relation to people living with HIV and AIDS and to overcome stigma and discrimination.
- To promote involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS into activities helping to resolve private and public problems related to the HIV and AIDS epidemics.



The life story of Anastasia Kamlyk was in the focus of the photo exhibition.

Partners involved

The programme is an initiative of the NGO “Positive Movement”, implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Belarus with the financial support of the Joint United Nations Programme (UNAIDS) in Belarus. Other Belarusian partners involved are as:

AIDS Prevention Department of the Republican Center for Hygiene, Epidemiology and Public Health; Svetlogorsk Municipality; Soligorsk Municipality; NGO “Mothers against drugs” (Soligorsk); NGO “Parents for the Future of Children” (Svetlogorsk).

Overview of the situation

The epidemic process in Belarus intensified by the end of 1996 when the number of registered HIV infected persons (1021) exceeded the cumulative data by 9.9 times for the previous 9 years (1987-1995).

By the year 2002, when the programme was launched, the cumulative number of registered HIV cases reached 4,772. The estimated number of HIV-infected people amounted up to 15,000. Currently, the epidemic enters a new phase, characterised by increased number of infections transmitted through heterosexual contacts and active spreading of infections among female population. By end 2005 the total number of HIV registered cases reached 7,014. The overwhelming majority of HIV cases (81%) are registered among young people aged 15 - 29.

The sociological survey (2003) shows good knowledge of (modes) means of HIV transmission among the population and stigma and discrimination (low level of tolerance) towards HIV infected and affected people: 46.8% of respondents wouldn't even engage (communicate)

with HIV infected people “to avoid risk of infection”.

Description

The idea behind the programme is to dispel stereotypes in attitudes towards HIV infected people and to promote healthy behaviour. The exposition tells a real life story of Anastasia Kamlyk, who was diagnosed HIV positive: her life episodes and emotions, obstacles and failures, winnings and feelings, attitudes of her friends and people in general. “*Love wins over death, love makes us alive!*” - the key slogan of the exhibition opening a door to a crossroad of our understanding of HIV positive people, our feelings and their emotions.

The “Door!?” was called “*Best 2004 project on fighting stigma and discrimination on HIV and AIDS*” at the meeting of UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States HIV/AIDS Focal Points in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

Deliverables

9 exhibitions in Belarus and 4 in the neighboring countries were attended by 33 000 people. The project continued its mission and was invited to Lithuania (Vilnius, September 2004), Russia (Moscow, December, 2004) Latvia (Riga, September, 2005) and Ukraine (Kyiv, December, 2005).

The exhibition in Kyiv, held in December 2005 at the “Ukrainian House”, one of the most prominent galleries, was attended by more than 3 800 people. Many of them changed their attitude towards HIV and people living with HIV, as about 2 200 of notes in the guest book suggest.

Next steps

After successful demonstration of the exhibition in Kyiv more Ukrainian cities like Odessa and Lviv expressed a wish to show the exhibition.

The exhibition will also be nominated for a Red Ribbon award in 2006.

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