

Success Stories Profile

Gay-Alliance, NGO in Ukraine

HIV in Ukraine

HIV awareness and prevention in Eastern Europe has remained a top priority for many international health organisations. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has particularly affected Ukraine within recent years and is observed as the second biggest epidemic among the Eastern and Central Asian countries, constituting 19% of the total number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the region.¹ The current epidemic in Ukraine is affected by the “hidden component” of the epidemic process: undetected HIV patients.¹ As the number of PLHIV continues to grow, so do efforts in Ukraine to improve awareness and prevention.



Workers and clients of the NGO "Gay-alliance", show off their impressive display sign for European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week 2015

Testing Week 2015

In 2015, in order to rally a local effort in Kyiv, Ukraine, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) named Gay-Alliance participated in European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week (ETW) and had huge success. Gay-Alliance, in partnership with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Ukraine, identified their target groups to reach during ETW and identified that men who have sex with men (MSM) were the most vulnerable group in their community. They organised a widely successful effort to promote and conduct HIV testing in collaboration with AHF Ukraine, who provided Gay-Alliance with test kits, condoms, and information materials, as well as a handy mobile clinic, to give them a huge boost in accessing hard-to-reach populations in their community.

Gay-Alliance held three different events throughout ETW to spread awareness and get people tested. They used a “peer-to-peer” approach in order to reach MSMs:

1. At their NGO community center
2. Through street outreach with their mobile clinic
3. At a local gay sauna

¹ UNAIDS country report – Ukraine, 2015

They identified that there were many closed MSM groups in their community that would be difficult to reach, yet they managed to successfully test a remarkable 135 people with their ETW activities. Within those numbers, they were able to identify 13 MSM who tested positive for HIV and link them to proper care.

Looking Ahead

Gay-Alliance aims to reach even more people for ETW 2016 and plan to test not only for HIV, but also Hepatitis B, C and syphilis. Gay-Alliance has set their sights on reaching more closed off populations within their community and ensuring their determination to tackle the HIV and viral hepatitis epidemics is impactful locally, as well as internationally.

Taking part in ETW not only gave Gay-Alliance the opportunity to engage with their community, it also gave them a sense of being part of the pan-European movement on HIV/AIDS. Their motivated efforts are what drives ETW to continue to promote HIV and/or hepatitis testing, especially for hard-to-reach communities throughout Europe, in order to get more people aware of their status and the link to care.

The hardworking efforts from community centers like Gay-Alliance help make European Testing Week a huge success.



Conducting rapid HIV Testing at a Gay Sauna for European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week 2015



Conducting rapid HIV testing in their mobile clinic for European HIV/Hepatitis Testing Week 2015