

Success stories profile

Serbia

HIV prevalence in Serbia

Serbia has a population of 7.2 million people, with approximately 3,500 people living with HIV (**prevalence 0.1%**). In recent years, new reported cases of HIV amongst men who have sex with men (MSM) have been increasing, likely due to increased MSM testing, whereas new cases amongst people who inject drugs have seen a decrease, likely due to the implementation of extensive harm-reduction programmes.¹



Testing week 2014

In 2014, Q-Club (a HIV patient organisation based in Belgrade) procured rapid HIV testing kits that were used throughout a nationwide testing campaign during European Testing Week. The campaign targeted student dormitories, gay clubs and known cruising spots across eight cities in Serbia. A total of 457 people were tested, 5 of whom tested positive and were referred to the HIV clinic for further care.

The campaign reached the transgender and MSM population, particularly in places not previously covered by rapid testing services, as well as sexually active young people with a limited knowledge of HIV and STIs.



In 2014, a task force was created consisting of public healthcare institutions, civil society organisations and an informal network of teams capable of providing both prevention and treatment. This joint approach between institutions and civil society organisations led to a very successful testing week.

Looking ahead

The lack of knowledge amongst young people about HIV and STIs will shape Q-Club's future work, alongside the ongoing need to improve rapid testing services. With better preparation and more fundraising prior to testing week, a similar campaign of a larger scope will be run next year, using the cooperative task force created in 2014.

References

1. http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/country/documents//SRB_narrative_report_2014.pdf