



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UKRAINE

CASE STUDY

Promoting HIV/AIDS Awareness

A photography exhibit brings the story of HIV/AIDS to light in Crimea



Photo: IRD

The “Look Into Their Eyes” exhibit in Symferopol, Crimea, featuring photographs and text telling the story of HIV/AIDS in Crimea and beyond.

“We often set lofty global goals, fight against something or try to change the world, but we forget that everything starts with changing yourself,” Natalya Yegorova, Director of the Crimean branch of the All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.

Telling Our Story
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Challenge

Fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS requires both awareness and action: people must be educated about the disease and willing to act to prevent its spread. Equally important, people infected by the disease can only achieve a better quality of life when the communities they live in are understanding and supportive. In Ukraine, many communities lack this level of awareness and understanding about HIV/AIDS.

Initiative

USAID supported a local group’s awareness campaign for World AIDS Day through an unusual medium: a photo exhibition. The event was organized by the All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS. Entitled “Look Into Their Eyes” it was held in Symferopol, Crimea. Through 50 photographs and 40 text frames, the exhibit exposed the viewpoints, opinions, and attitudes of different people towards HIV/AIDS. The Crimeans showcased in the exhibit ranged from individuals who had never met someone with HIV to people who know the disease well from first hand experience. The exhibit also displayed stories from people from all over the world affected by the disease, as well as thoughts about the HIV/AIDS epidemic from politicians, governmental officials, business leaders, and celebrities.

Results

More than 2,000 people visited the exhibit in just one day. The faces, stories, and thoughts the event brought to light proved so compelling that other cities asked to host similar exhibits. As a result, additional exhibits have been organized for Yalta, Feodosiya, Belogorsk, Donetsk, Mariupol, Slavyansk, and Dimitrovo. After visiting the exhibit, Crimea’s Minister of Health, Sergey Donich, said, “We should start by changing people’s attitudes, and by giving more information about HIV prevention, ways of transmission, and protection.” Although the battle against HIV/AIDS is far from over, the event’s popularity shows that Ukraine is making progress in increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and understanding. In coordination with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID is helping Ukraine’s efforts.