



SUCCESS STORY

HIV/AIDS – Reducing Stigma and Discrimination



Photo: Elena Shevchenko

Using a network of master trainers and instructors, USAID is supporting an anti-stigma and discrimination training course to provide supervision to peer educators.

Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID support has allowed for the teaching and preparation of 62 master trainers, 1,006 trainer instructors, and 11,510 peer educators, who have reached more than 38,000 people in targeted communities.

Ukraine is a young country that has inherited many old stereotypes and prejudices since the breakup of the Soviet Union. One is the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, which presents a major hurdle in Ukraine for all programs that focus on prevention, treatment, or care of people living with HIV/AIDS.

In 2004, USAID through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, implemented a program on "Reducing the Stigma and Discrimination Associated with HIV/AIDS" in Ukraine's Crimea and Donetsk *oblasts*. Since its inception, the program has supported more than 140 events for more than 50,000 people to foster a more tolerant and accepting attitude toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

USAID and its implementing partner International Relief and Development (IRD) use a community-based approach to fight stigma and discrimination. To date, IRD has trained 62 master trainers, 1,006 trainer instructors, and 11,510 peer educators, who have reached more than 38,000 people in targeted communities. IRD collaborates with the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, medical personnel, educators, social workers, and lawyers to recruit local volunteers to serve as master trainers, instructors, and peer educators.

Peer education training is strengthened by events that draw on people's compassion by showing the human face of the HIV epidemic. The play *I Love Life* and the mini-musical *Understand! Assist! Support!* teach audiences about HIV transmission while showing how it can affect everybody. The interactive drama *Time of the Innocents* teaches about the rights of people who have HIV/AIDS by allowing spectators to play the role of jury. The photo exhibit "Look into the Eyes" emphasizes human values and the roles people living with HIV/AIDS play in society, regardless of HIV. The summer camp program "Intersection" brings people with and without HIV together, to live under "one roof," overcome fears, and make friends based on personality, not HIV status. In addition, school debates, dramas, and contests reduce stigma and fight stereotypes.

The impact of these activities has been significant. In 2002, 82 percent of parents said they would transfer their child to a different school if an HIV-positive child were enrolled; today, less than 50 percent would do so. In 2002, 80 percent of Ukrainians thought that HIV-positive people should be quarantined; today, in the program target regions, only 27 percent think so.

July 2007

U.S. Agency for International Development
www.usaid.gov