

Mobilisation of MSM communities around the issues of HIV and STIs

Co-authors: Fabrice Renaud, Stéphane Giganon, Michael Goetz, (AIDES, France).

Issues

In France, a new outbreak of unsafe sex among MSM has been confirmed.

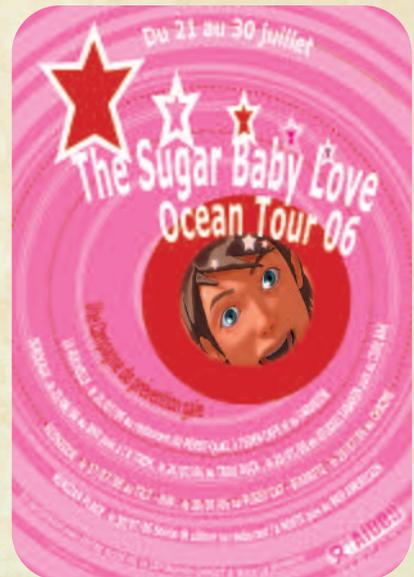
Infections by HIV and other STIs are still at a very high level, showing that past prevention approaches have their limits. Dealing only with the issue of HIV and feelings of being overloaded with information seem to contribute to the detachment of the MSM communities towards HIV and STIs.

Description

Through a comprehensive approach to health, the aim of the project is to mobilise MSM communities. We organised a regional convention, gathering together gay NGO actors and staff of gay commercial establishments to ascertain health issues. We set up local collectives, trained the participants in sexual harm-reduction, organised joint prevention actions and set up periods of exchange on different themes.

Lessons learned

We set up local collectives and gave preference to a joint culture and quality approach. Through our "beach campaign", we ascertained MSM sexual practices, risks taken and the extent of their knowledge. This campaign was done over a period of three consecutive summers, with 700 interviews and 4,000 contacts. We set up regional meetings in which we adapted our prevention actions, created progressive intervention tools and consolidated the bonds between the actors.



Ocean Tour 2006 poster

Next steps

Implementing joint prevention actions allowed us to make gay community-based actors aware again of HIV issues and sexual health in general. Their mobilisation needs to be actively requested and regularly supported by AIDS NGOs.

The MSM encountered throughout the actions, especially on the beach were extremely satisfied by the discussion time offered. The HIV positive gay men met during these actions expressed the wish to talk about their sexual practices, health and prevention. Therefore we organised a therapeutic weekend for 20 HIV positive MSM. They expressed the desire to invite HIV negative MSM in future gatherings on the issues of serodiscordance and prevention.

Program of concerted actions and mobilization of MSM in South West France

