

# PARC-Project – Prevention of AIDS with the Resources of Communities

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### INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan African migrants (SAM) are among the most affected migrant communities in Vienna. Of all HIV positive diagnosed participants of the Austrian Cohort Study, about twelve percent were born in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, they are about five times more at risk to get a late diagnosis.

### OBJECTIVES

To raise awareness among Sub-Saharan African migrants on five defined key messages

- HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence!
- Know your status – get tested!
- Using a condom prevents you from getting HIV!
- Social contacts with HIV+ people don't put you at any risk!
- Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver – get vaccinated!

### METHODS

A participatory outreach project was implemented in order to raise awareness amongst SAM. Participation was essential for the outcome of the project. The communities were involved through the training of nine peer educators from different sub-Saharan African countries and their involvement in planning, conducting, and evaluation of the project. The prevention project focused on above mentioned key messages which were developed after talks with community representatives and after the conduction of three focus group discussions.

Peer educators reached out to African shops, hairdressers, bars, nightclubs, and various events taking place in the African communities in Vienna; talking to their peers, handing out information materials, male and female condoms as well as vouchers for free HIV rapid testing and Hepatitis B and C screening at Aids Hilfe Wien.

### RESULTS

Within a three months project period peer educators kept record of 5.195 contacts (3.099 male, 2.096 female).

Observed particularities:

- HIV = AIDS = DEATH
- Interest on testing, especially Hepatitis, its costs and anonymity
- Demand for condoms was high, also for female condoms
- Big discussions on sex before marriage and how to deal with that in church
- The general feedback from the community was very positive
- But also scepticism: HIV was brought to Africa by Europeans

### FINDINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF TESTING

From 1st of August 2011 to 29th of February 2012 48 Sub-Saharan African migrants went for testing at Aids Hilfe Wien. Three quarters were male, one quarter female. Eleven people were younger than 25 years. The majority of clients came from Nigeria (16), followed by Kenya (4) and Ghana (3). Nineteen people have never been tested for HIV before; eight people have been tested the last time more than three years ago.

One of 48 HIV antibody tests was positive and 15 out of 39 Hep B antibody tests showed a positive result (among these six were HBs-Ag positive).

### CONCLUSIONS

- African communities are not so hard to reach as often supposed
- The right people are needed to be able to access the communities
- It needs a lot of time in project management if you really want to “hear” your peer educators
- Some settings are harder to approach than others
- Payment is essential
- There is still skepticism in African communities

