



Podgorica, 4 December 2011

ACTION "It's not hard to be positive"

On the occasion of the International AIDS month, the Youth Group of the Centre for Civic Education (YGCCE) organized campaign titled "It's not hard to be positive". In that framework, on Monday, 5 December 2011, members of the YG will pass the testing process at the Counseling for voluntary and confidential counseling and HIV testing. Afterwards, they will organize screening of the movie "Philadelphia", and panel discussion with representatives of the Institute of Public Health, Dr. Biljana Bajic, so that young people can get a chance to inform themselves about this issue in quality and objective way.

Youth Group of the CCE wants to draw attention to existing problems and with active participation to contribute to their solution with the aim of improving the level of education of youth about the importance of quality information about this issue, fight against stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, their families and friends and creating a supportive environment for HIV prevention.

YGCCE warns that it is not enough to deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS only once a year, on the World AIDS Day, and that it is necessary to demonstrate continued commitment to this problem. YGCCE believes that, in the near future, Montenegrin society will provide a supportive environment and take a positive attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

In Montenegro, there is still a stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Stigma is referring to the discrediting of individuals in the eyes of other people with labeling, humiliation, defamation. Stigma arises from fear, ignorance and prejudice that still surround HIV/AIDS. Lack of understanding of the disease, myths about the emergence of the virus, ignorance on HIV transmit, the fact that AIDS is currently incurable, irresponsible media coverage (use negative or inaccurate terminology, inappropriate comments) and social fears in relation to sexuality, are the main causes of this condition. This is supported by research on the attitudes of the citizens of Montenegro, which entirely or partly deal with this issue. So, the research from 2007 testifies about the low level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS among young people (22.1%), and this year research about the high level of social distance toward people living with HIV/AIDS (even 54.1% of the respondents would not like to have as neighbor person infected with AIDS). The general lack of information and lack of supportive environment result with low confidence in the anonymity of testing, and a small number of people decide to take this step, which often causes detection of the disease only in the late stages when serious symptoms are already visible.

Youth group members are hoping that with their example they will encourage many sexually active young people to pass the testing process.



Centar za građansko obrazovanje
Centre for Civic Education

Screening of the movie and follow up panel discussion will be organized on Monday, in the premises of the Centre for Civic Education, Njegoseva 36 / I, starting at 6 p.m.

Note: Youth Group of the Centre for Civic Education, founded in May 2010, is part of the regional programme “Education for Human Rights Education and Active Citizenship in the Western Balkans”. YGCCE is composed from students of faculties of Montenegro, who are working, through the implementation of various activities, to improve respect for human rights and the development of youth activism and the spirit of volunteerism in Montenegro.

Additional information:

According to UNAIDS estimates, about 34 million people worldwide are living with HIV. During 2010 some 2.7 million people became newly infected with the virus, including about 390,000 children. Despite the trend of reducing the number of deaths in the last five years, in 2010 it was still about 1.8 million deaths associated with AIDS.

Montenegro has the status of a country with low growth rate of HIV infection. According to data from the Institute of Public Health, from 1989 to the end of 2009, the total number of registered HIV/AIDS cases was 103 (50 with AIDS and 53 with HIV). By 2010, 330 persons died from AIDS.

According to official data, today in Montenegro 23 persons live with AIDS and 50 are HIV positive. In terms of age, the highest registered are in the group of 30-34 years, and then in the group 25-29 years. However, as with most diagnosed HIV set in the period when with them already developed AIDS, it means that they have been infected earlier, **indicating the need to put in the focus on the specific needs of young people, especially adolescents**.