

Asocijacija DUGA / Association RAINBOW

Case Report from Serbia



1 ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION RAINBOW

Association RAINBOW was officially established in June 2004. Its headquarter is in the city of Šabac, Central Serbia. It was founded by LGBT people with the aim of improving the lives of LGBT people, primarily in small and rural communities.

Association RAINBOW's first programmes focused on work directly with LGBT communities, providing health and social services and reducing discrimination and violence. Most of these programmes are still ongoing.

Association RAINBOW received its first grant from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in 2005; it addressed issues of discrimination towards vulnerable groups in Serbia, including LGBT, people living with HIV/AIDS, disabled persons, Roma and Muslims. After a

survey, which was performed in 15 high schools in Šabac, Valjevo and Loznica municipalities with 9,881 students as participants, Association RAINBOW organized debates on discrimination towards highly discriminated groups in Serbia. In the next few years, Association RAINBOW implemented projects with the goal of reducing the discrimination towards LGBT, empowering LGBT communities, and providing them with health and social services. Also, Association RAINBOW implemented projects with the goal to create positive environments for LGBT inside institutions and organized multi-sector trainings on how to work with LGBT. These trainings were conducted with health institutions, social institutions, Ministry of Internal Affairs, high schools and courts jointly with the Public Health Institute in Šabac.



Promotional material distributed by Association Rainbow

2 ASSOCIATION RAINBOW'S HIV PROJECTS UNDER THE GF GRANTS IN SERBIA

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF) project supported four drop-in centres in Šabac, Kragujevac, Valjevo and Sremska Mitrovica, which were already established before the GF project resources became available for Association RAINBOW.

Association RAINBOW's services for peer education, psycho-social support, info telephone work, online counselling and medical consultations were also supported by the GF. During the GF project, Association RAINBOW had on average 3200 clients. The average number of HIV testing and counselling (HTC) was around 1100 per year.

The most significant success during the implementation of projects funded by GF was the increased number of MSM who used HTC services. Association RAINBOW signed memorandums of cooperation with ten public health institutes and they made major contribution to HTC performed in drop-in centres and as outreach service. Association RAINBOW also reported to public health institutes in Serbia the data about the service performance. Public health institutes also provide help in safety management of medical waste.



Educational material distributed by Association RAINBOW

Table 1: HIV projects of Association RAINBOW funded by the GF during the period November 1, 2003 - September 30, 2014

Project title	Target groups	Level of coverage (national/ autonomous province/district/ municipality)	Start date	End date	Available budget
1. Response to HIV/ AIDS among MSM population	MSM	Nine counties in Western and Central Serbia, including 59 municipalities	01.10. 2007	31.05.2012	\$ 175,386
2. Drop-in centres for MSM population	MSM	Cities: Šabac, Kragujevac, Valjevo and Sremska Mitrovica	02.11.2009	30.09.2014	\$ 338,592
TOTAL					\$ 513,978

3 ASSOCIATION RAINBOW'S NON-GF HIV PROJECTS DURING THE PERIOD 2003-2015

Key achievement of the Association RAINBOW's projects was the increasing of knowledge, skills and number of MSM persons who use the services of HTC

centres and it has been confirmed in bio-behavioural surveys and also in the numbers of tested and counselled persons.

Table 2: Non-GF HIV projects of Association RAINBOW during the period November 1, 2003-June 30, 2015

Project title	Target groups	Level of coverage (national/ AP/district/ municipality)	Start date	End date	Available budget	Source of financing
1. Support to LGBT persons on the territory of Sabac Municipality (First Drop in counselling centre for HIV)	LGBT	Šabac	01.07.2008	01.07.2009	\$ 18,285	Balkan Fund for Local Initiatives & Cooperation of Netherlands Foundations
2. Perspective of cooperation between NGO and Municipalities	Key populations at higher risk for HIV exposure	Nine counties of Western and Central Serbia	01.05.2013	30.06.2013	\$ 4,860	US Embassy in Serbia
3. Response to HIV in Šabac Municipality	Key populations and general population	Šabac	01.07.2014	31.12.2015	\$ 2,282	Šabac Municipality
4. Response to HIV in Raška Municipality	Key populations and general population	Raška	01.01.2014	31.12.2015	\$ 3,294	Raška Municipality
5. Response to HIV in Tutin Municipality	Key populations and general population	Tutin	01.01.2014	31.12.2015	\$ 3,294	Tutin Municipality
6. Response to HIV in Trstenik Municipality	Key populations and general population	Trstenik	01.01.2014	01.07.2015	\$ 2,470	Trstenik Municipality
7. Response to HIV in Arilje Municipality	Key populations and general population	Arilje	01.07.2014	31.12.2014	\$ 1,411	Arilje Municipality
8. Response to HIV in Osečina Municipality	Key populations and general population	Osečina	01.01.2015	31.12.2015	\$ 540	Osečina Municipality
9. Response to HIV in Lapovo Municipality	Key populations and general population	Lapovo	11.02.2015	31.12.2015	\$ 500	Lapovo Municipality
TOTAL					\$ 36,936	

4 ASSOCIATION RAINBOW'S EXPERIENCES WITH ACCESSING FUNDING FOR HIV PROJECTS FROM DOMESTIC RESOURCES

On May 1, 2013, Association RAINBOW launched an advocacy campaign for the access to funding for HIV prevention programmes at the local level. Nine districts in West and Central Serbia were covered, including 59 municipalities. These territories were chosen because Association RAINBOW implemented HIV prevention programmes among MSM in these districts. The advocacy campaign was financially supported by the US Embassy in Serbia, UNAIDS and the GF Project Implementation Unit.

The advocacy process started with a conference in Belgrade, where the representatives from all 59 municipalities were invited. The Attaché for Media of the US Embassy, the Director of the Public Health

Institute of Serbia and the Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights attended among others. After the conference, outreach teams from Association RAINBOW visited all municipalities and performed HTC on city squares, jointly with local partners (public health institutes, Red Cross and hospitals). In addition to the street campaign, meetings with representatives of local self-governments were arranged, where the current epidemiological status of HIV and other STIs, cost benefit analysis for HIV prevention and promotional material were presented. The need of continuation of prevention services after the GF was discussed. Local media reported widely about the campaign activities.



Outreach team of Association RAINBOW during advocacy campaign



A counsellor, a technician and a client during HTC, as a part of advocacy campaign

The impact of the campaign was closely followed up. Seven municipalities (39% of those covered by the advocacy campaign) announced calls for funding. Association RAINBOW submitted 16 applications and seven projects were approved. Association RAINBOW is using current funding from local self-governments (LSGs) for outreach activities. Association RAINBOW also applied for competitive funding announcement of LSGs for civil society organizations and that's how the Association RAINBOW secured resources. There is a so-called 'budget line number 481' inside the budgets of LSGs in Serbia through which civil society, religious and political organizations can apply and Association RAINBOW succeeded to receive funding through this budget line.

Association RAINBOW was not able to apply to almost half of the public calls, because according to policies of these LSGs only NGOs registered in these municipalities can apply although there were no NGOs working on HIV prevention registered in these municipalities.

Funding from LSGs through budget line 481 is not big, so it is necessary to secure resources from a large number of LSGs. For example, if all 59 LSGs give to the

Association RAINBOW \$ 1,750 annually, that amount would be equal to the total amount received from the GF for one year.

Difficulties encountered during Association RAINBOW's work with LSGs include: economic situation and lack of resources in LSG budgets; HIV prevention is not recognized in strategic documents of LSGs; every LSG has its own application form for project proposals; sometimes LSGs announce competition for the running year only in June; resources are not transferred according to schedule, sometimes as late as December for the entire running year; very often the local government changes, so meetings have to be arranged with new decision makers to explain them why it is important to continue with financing; as a result of the rule that only NGOs established within the municipality can apply, the number of LSGs where the Association RAINBOW can apply is limited.

In order to further increase the impact of the first campaign Association RAINBOW will conduct a second campaign later in 2015. The campaign will have a new approach and activities, and it will be implemented jointly with public advocacy experts.

5 LESSONS LEARNED AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Through multi-year devotion for HIV prevention programme sustainability, it was realised that sustainability could not be achieved with only one financing source. That's why Association RAINBOW has three programmes and through these programmes the Association should be able sustain the HIV prevention programmes in the next few years.

The first programme has been financed by the LSGs. The second programme is based on the development of social entrepreneurship, respectively, self-financing of NGO. Under this programme Association RAINBOW established a hostel and 50% of the enterprise income will be invested in Association's prevention services. The third programme builds on the social welfare system. Since HIV infection is not just a health problem, social welfare systems should be involved in

the financing of national HIV responses. Since 2011, Association RAINBOW has a programme which belongs to the system of social welfare and currently Association RAINBOW are advocating that outreach services are being recognized as social services under the social welfare legislation, through changes and amendments of laws and regulations, and that outreach workers and peer educators are recognized as co-workers of professional workers. Serbian law on social welfare recognizes combined services and in this case, the combination of health and social services are the very important. The Social Welfare Law also recognizes NGO as social service providers. If the advocacy process is successful, the Association RAINBOW would provide outreach as combined health and social services, financed from the State, province or local budgets in the next few years.



Mobile medical unit ready for street HTC during advocacy campaign

NGO Social Contracting

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Photo on cover page: Outreach team of Association RAINBOW during advocacy campaign

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