

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



Dragan Djordjevic with CRDA voluteer



Young parents at NISOMNIA '04

NIŠ, SERBIA – Dragan Djordjevic is a 21-year-old from Kragujevac and is currently serving in the Army of Serbia and Montenegro. His interests are similar to those of his peers worldwide - girls, music, and fun. After five months of service in Nis, he attended the NISOMNIA '04 music festival - his first such entertainment since he became a soldier. He is crazy about concerts. But he was surprised to have the opportunity to learn about healthy lifestyles near festival's main stage, too.

Through respected modern youth communication channels, the USAID/CHF Family Planning and Reproductive Health Program (FP/RH) team cooperated with NGO "Mreza" Nis and peer educators from southeastern Serbian CRDA communities to educate concert-goers and promote healthy behavior at NISOMNIA '04.

Nis Municipality reserved space for NGO sector promotion in Nis Fortress at the concert. The most visited stand was the one focusing on reproductive health and family planning issues. The stand's staff distributed leaflets, T-shirts, caps, and caps.

The 2004 FP/RH subprogram "Youth at risk" recruits volunteers from Pirot, Jablanica, and Nisava districts. The best peer educators from first round of peer training sessions, 22 young people aged 17-22, were selected as Summer School Oblacina participants. Through four two-day seminars in July, peers received training on basic techniques and skills for "knowledge transfers" in FP/RH. Their first chance to share this new knowledge was at the NISOMNIA music festival.

The volunteers were separated into three groups. One group was near the main entrance, distributing leaflets and brochures. The other two groups conducted surveys about general FP/RH knowledge among concert attendees. The strategy was for people first to receive leaflets, and later to fill out a questionnaire for the chance to win a ticket for a prize at the final stand, which handed out promotional material and correct questionnaire answers. There young people could discuss their questions, exchange information and experiences, and learn new facts from the volunteers.

USAID/CHF donated over CSD 850,000 for these activities through the FP/RH Program, and NGO "Mreza" contributed over CSD 290,000. The message delivered to the 2000 NISOMNIA '04 attendees was "DON'T BE ASHAMED TO ASK about contraception, sexuality, and STIs.

On the first day of the music festival, Dragan Djordjevic visited all 12 NGO stands. Over the next 3 days of the festival he continued to stop by the FP/RH booths. "Your girls are so pretty. I am here every evening because of them," he joked. "I tried to be sexually responsible before NISOMNIA '04, but after receiving new information from CRDA volunteers, I'll be even more careful," said Dragan.

With the help of youth volunteers in healthy lifestyles promotion, more than 2000 T-shirts, 500 caps, 300 cups and 10,000 leaflets were distributed. It is common to see peers, even complete families, wearing these items in CRDA communities.