

INTERNATIONAL
**TESTING
WEEK**
18-24 NOV. 2024

in **we GET
TESTED**

IMPACT REPORT 2023



WWW.COALITIONPLUS.ORG

Join the movement in 2024!

BECOME A PARTNER OF THE FIFTH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TESTING WEEK.

Throughout the year, the partner associations of Coalition PLUS organize testing activities for the key populations most affected by HIV, viral hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections. During one week in November, these actions are stepped up to achieve a peak in the run up to World AIDS Day.

In just four editions, the International Testing Week has become the largest testing operation on a global scale, with some 75,000 tests carried out over the 5 days in 2023.

The event supports the efforts to reverse the curve of infections by focusing media attention on testing through local and global communication campaigns, by advocating for peer education and by ensuring comprehensive care for positive cases detected. The fifth edition, which will be held from November 18 to 24, 2024, will be launched in Cairo (Egypt).

5
days

from 20
to 26
November,
2023

45
countries

4
continents

78
participating
associations

Participating countries

EUROPE:

Belgium, France, Portugal, Roumania, Ukraine

AFRICA:

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo

NORTH AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST:

Egypte, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia

LATIN AMERICA:

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala

ASIA:

Malaysia, Indonesia, India

NORTH AMERICA:

Canada

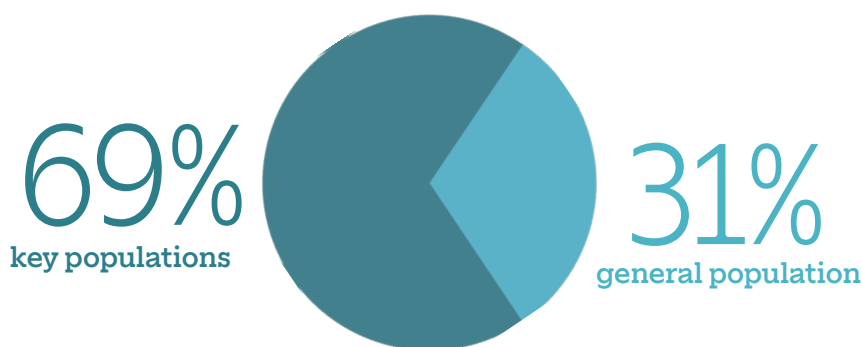
ALWAYS IN TOUCH WITH KEY POPULATIONS

THANKS TO A STRATEGY BASED ON PEER EDUCATION

Over these four editions, the International Testing Week has made it possible to carry out over 195,000 tests amongst key populations.

These populations (sex workers and their customers, gay men and men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, transgender women and their sexual partners) represent 69% of new infections*.

Breakdown of new HIV infections



*Source : Fact sheet 2022, UNAIDS

Community-based testing is key to the success of this International Week

Because they belong to marginalized communities, peer educators are the best placed to reach the groups most isolated from care. Their understanding of specific lifestyles, practices and social codes means that they have a unique ability to effectively approach the populations most vulnerable to the infections tested for. They are therefore able to identify at-risk individuals and convince those who have never been tested before to get tested.

This ensures regular testing and/or early diagnosis, and systematic referral to health systems in the case of a positive result.

THE RESULTS

73,931

tests carried out
(HIV, HBV, HCV, syphilis)

3.23 %

positive tests
for all tests combined, in 2023

+208.5 %

more tests were carried out compared
with the first edition in 2020

91.7 %

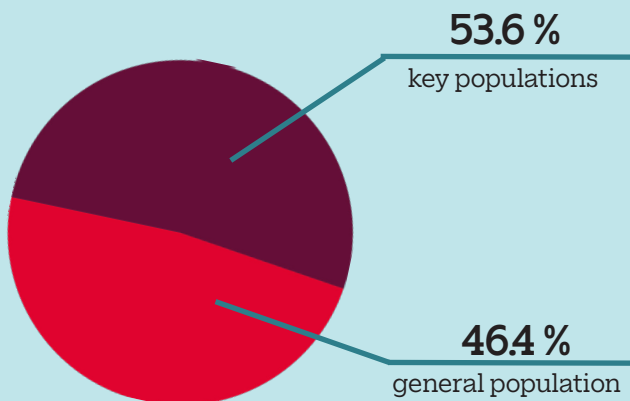
persons who tested HIV positive were referred to
care.

36,581

HIV tests
were carried out during the 2023
edition

2.41 %

tests positive
for HIV in 2023



BREAKDOWN OF TESTS CARRIED OUT AMONGST KEY POPULATIONS

- 41 % men who have sex with men
- 25 % sex workers
- 13 % migrants
- 10 % people who inject drugs
- 11 % others

SPOTLIGHT ON MALAYSIA

40% OF HIV-POSITIVE RESULTS DIAGNOSED IN ADVANCED STAGES

Every year, a Coalition PLUS network association hosts the launch event of the International Testing Week.

In 2023, the NGO Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) in Kuala Lumpur was chosen to organize the launch and officialize the expansion of the Coalition PLUS network in Southeast Asia, and more particularly in India, Indonesia and Thailand.

Coalition PLUS working alongside community-based organizations in Asia: welcome news

Following the official deployment of the Coalition PLUS network in Asia, MAC Head of International Relations, Anu Karunanithy, expressed her enthusiasm surrounding Coalition PLUS' presence in the region: «*This collaboration with Coalition PLUS is a source of great opportunities for community-based organizations.*» As the leader in the region, the Malaysian AIDS Council welcomes the technical expertise of the international network in the HIV response, in the hope of obtaining advice in the use of political advocacy as well as additional financial resources to support essential regional programs to fight the HIV and viral hepatitis epidemics.

95% of new infections in Malaysia are sexually transmitted

Today, 95% of new infections occur during sexual contact, compared with 3% through injection

drugs use. This reflects the tremendous efforts targeting drug users over recent years, who accounted for almost 65% of new infections in 2005.

However, associations in Malaysia have noted that new groups, such as homosexual and bisexual men as well as heterosexual persons, are increasingly exposed to the risk of HIV infection.

This represents a new challenge for the country, which must put in place actions under a government that has restricted sexual education and prevention messages on the grounds of social and religious conservatism. The association also advocates for increased use of PrEP among at-risk populations, an effective HIV-prevention tool that is currently under utilized.

« Around 40% of Malaysians are tested for HIV at a late stage of infection, which means that they do not have the benefits of early diagnosis and treatment».

ANU KARUNANITHY
DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS FOR MAC

FOCUS ON THE DYNAMIC EPIDEMIC

The results of the International Testing Week highlight an alarming trend: transgender people are now widely affected by all the infections tested for. Compared with other key populations affected by the epidemic tested during the week-long event, such as sex workers and drug users, transgender people have a significantly high rate of infection.

4.1 %

tests positive
for HIV

14.6%

tests positive
for HBV

12.7 %

tests positive
for HCV

10.6 %

tests positive
for syphilis

This finding underscores the need to reinforce the range of specific prevention, testing and treatment services for this population. The results also demonstrate the urgent need to tackle the structural determinants affecting transgender people.

The figures speak for themselves: this group represents **4.1% of HIV-positive tests**, i.e. twice the rate among cisgender men and women.

There is also a high level of HBV infection among first-time testers, **with a positivity rate of 14.6%**. All of the transgender people who received a positive test result were referred to treatment services. These results suggest possible shortcomings in terms of immunization coverage or a greater distance of this population from health services.

And HCV testing is no exception to this trend, once again showing the highest rate of infection. Out of the 173 transgender persons tested, **22 received a positive diagnosis, i.e. a 12.7% positivity rate**.

Lastly, the transgender community is also the most affected by syphilis, **with a positivity rate of 10.6%**.

These results reinforce the trends observed on a global scale, where HIV prevalence in the general population is estimated at 0.7% and at 10.25% among transgender people. This underscores the urgent need for concerted and adapted action to respond to the specific needs of the community in the fight against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

PEER EDUCATORS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TESTING WEEK

Peer educators are the cornerstones of the success of the International Testing Week. Their closeness to at-risk populations gives them undeniable expertise when it comes to the needs of communities in terms of access to health services. Their empathy allows them to approach each individual respectfully and assertively, thus building an essential bond for testing and access to care in confidence.

Their testimonies demonstrate that their contribution goes far beyond simply carrying out screening tests - they are a true embodiment of the resilience of the communities affected by the epidemics.

Ibrahim, psychosocial counselor, explains how one young man he helped went on to become a peer educator:

“ I remember it like it was yesterday. This 18-year-old contacted me on Facebook during the COVID-19 pandemic. I could instantly feel his doubts and the discrimination hanging over him because of his sexual orientation. So I invited him to International Testing Week. Despite his fears, he took that step because we had built a relationship of trust. That’s when he got the diagnosis: HIV positive. The anxiety was palpable, but fortunately he wasn’t alone. His friend provided invaluable support. The worst was when his parents kicked him out of their home. I kept up with him and his support until he became a peer educator himself. I’m proud to have been at his side”.

Cameroon

Harold, peer educator, talks about the importance of peer educators:

“When the health system fails, we - the communities - take over and restore the rights of those who have been completely abandoned, forgotten or neglected.”

Bolivia

Marra, activist, recalls one memorable moment of the International Testing Week :

“I remember a woman who found out she was HIV-positive during Testing Week. She was a street seller and when she saw a group of people in the street, she approached them with her fruits. The peer educators invited her to get tested, and she agreed. She didn’t have much information, so their task was to explain to her what HIV is and why it was important to know whether she had the infection. She was in a relationship with a worker in a local gold panning zone who was regularly away for long periods for work. When she learned she was HIV-positive, she was terrified that it would affect her work as a fruit seller because that was the only source of revenue to provide for her family.”

Mali

BECOME A PARTNER OF THE 2024 EDITION

WE HOLD THE KEYS TO ENDING THE HIV AND VIRAL HEPATITIS EPIDEMIC.

AND WITH YOU, WE HAVE THE MEANS TO DO SO.

Since the outset, the International Testing Week has grown significantly in terms of results and profile, as well as in terms of the constant increase in the number of participant associations.

As a partner of this event, you have the opportunity to strengthen your commitment to international solidarity and the defense of human rights, particularly when it comes to access to care.

Your support will enable the International Testing Week to continue to grow and to

provide innovative testing services to the populations most vulnerable to HIV, viral hepatitis and other STIs.

Take an active part in a high-impact and fast-growing event and join the world's largest testing operation. Your role will make all the difference in the early prevention and treatment of these infections.

They took part in the International Testing Week in 2023!

The International Testing Week is jointly funded by:



It is supported by
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It also has the support of:



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Coalition PLUS would like to extend a special thank to its 18,000 donors and to its institutional partner, the World Health Organization (WHO).

COALITION PLUS

Coalition PLUS is an international union of community based associations engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis created in 2008, operating in 52 countries and alongside some one hundred civil society organizations.

Our member and partner associations involve the communities most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and hepatitis in the determination and implementation of prevention, care and advocacy programs.

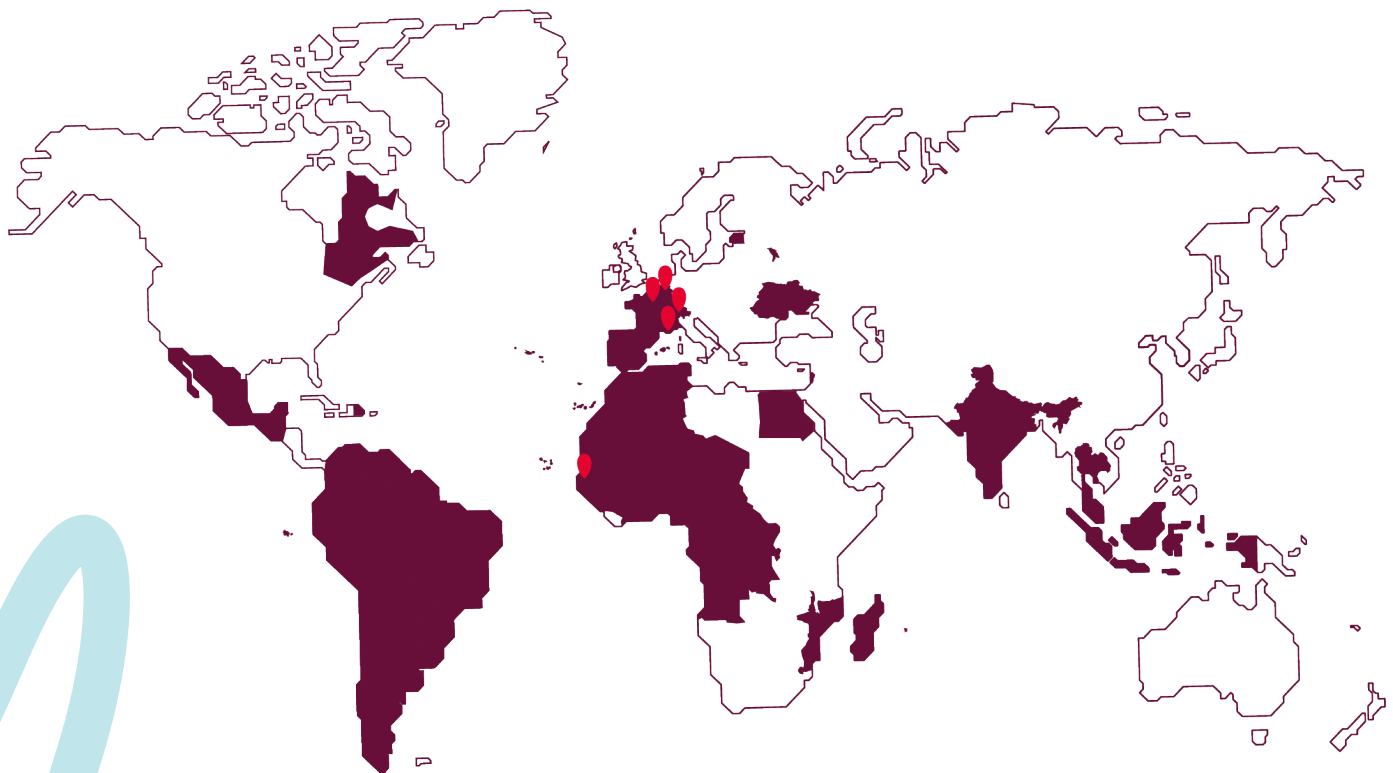
They promote innovative methods adapted to the individuals facing the most discrimination in access to healthcare.

Our principles of action: social change, the community based approach and shared governance.

15
member
organizations

52
countries

100+
partner
associations



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THE COALITION PLUS NETWORK**

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