

The role of the association Solidarité Sida in HIV/AIDS prevention and consciousness-rising among young people in France - (a double look: outside and inside the group) –

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Résumé :

Background: Solidarité Sida was created in 1992 by two communication students. In the context of a french field characterized by demobilization after the arrival of tri-therapies in 1996, this organisation is marked out by its almost continuous growth, by its ways of intervention, like by its particular link with youth. Thus, “SolSid” intervenes in a direct way with young people for prevention and consciousness-rising through big events or proximity actions in schools, community-homes and other “youth places” (by promoting mainly peer-education strategies). But in a more indirect way, we can also ask ourselves about the relation of its volunteers towards sexuality and HIV/AIDS and try to understand what their commitment in the AIDS fight changes in that relation.

Methods: Our analysis leans on a fieldwork led for 4 years which includes participating notes, the distribution of a questionnaire and realization of about fifty biographical interviews.

Results: The study of grounds, determining factors and biographical consequences of the commitment shows that, while the interest in event activities has often a major influence on the willing to join in the group, the organization manages to arouse a long-lasting attachment to the AIDS cause as well as it gives young volunteers means for a better self-prevention.

Conclusion: Several recent surveys seem to indicate a degradation of knowledge, a more diffuse fear of risk and the beginnings of a slipping of preventive behaviours among youth in France. Our research emphasizes the leading role that associations can play, while the HIV/AIDS prevention policy remains defective (cf. Conseil National du Sida Report, November 2005). In the case of Solidarité Sida, we can only regret it has never really set up evaluation tools to determine the effectiveness of its actions with young people. Whatever the quality of associative work is, it's time public authorities stop shirking their responsibilities...