

## HIV-testing in a highly visible place – or in a very discreet location What difference does it make to migrant populations?

Cross-Over have tried both;  
HIV-testing from Copenhagen Central Station and from the office of Cross-Over

### About Cross-Over

Cross-Over is an CBO, situated in the heart of Copenhagen. Cross-Over works with people with other ethnic background than Danish - informing, counselling and supporting on issues related to HIV and sexual health. The philosophy of Cross-Over is to work through the various organisations formed by people from different cultures because we believe that they know best how to give the information in an acceptable and effective way on subjects as sensitive as sex and sexuality. Before starting their information projects, the organisations are given small grants and support to ensure that people are updated on the facts about HIV etc. Cross-Over also has a counselling and support department with three staff counsellors one from Turkey, one from Singapore and one Danish.

### About the HIV Checkpoint

Since March 2009 we started offering rapid HIV-testing because migrant populations are disproportionately affected by HIV and also disproportionately many from this group were late-testers. By offering a rapid test with result within an hour we hoped we could reach some of the infected late-testers. As we are aware that HIV is a very sensitive issue we started out by making the offer very, very discreetly. By making appointments we could secure that the client would not run into anyone else. We also offered and still do "flying nurses," meaning that we can come to a place where the clients feel comfortable to receive the counselling and testing. Also we have a special Walk-in day for people less worried about anonymity. Still we felt we needed to reach more people and especially from the groups we knew were most likely to be infected with HIV.

### Going public with HIV testing

We decided to try a new venue – something we hardly believed in ourselves but where we knew many people from our target group were coming: The Copenhagen Central Station! We made a highly visible tent advertising for the Checkpoint about HIV-test but also BMI, blood pressure, blood sugar measurements - the latter more to camouflage the real intent of HIV-testing. So-called Mobilizers – most of African origin – had been trained to hand out our materials in the streets in order to advertise for the Checkpoint in a more personal way. The added value was that the "mobilizers" spoke languages such as French, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Lingali and recently also Thai, Nepali and Hindi.

### Experiences from testing from Copenhagen Central Station

On the opening day 1. November 2010 we performed the HIV test on a well-known politician with Turkish background both on TV and in front of the tent to get some attention to the project. And people were lining up to get tested for HIV only. Despite the hindrance that the actual HIV tests are performed from a venue close by where they have to walk with the counsellor (approximately 300 m. away), people still wanted to test. This made us rethink our project and we decided to continue with the tent at the Central Station once a month as an add-on to our other offers for Checkpoints of a more discreet nature.

### Comparing HIV-testing at the Central Station with the HIV-testing at the Cross-Over office

In this poster we compare the testing activity from 1. November 2010 to 31. November 2011. During this period the tent at Copenhagen Central Station was operating 12 times from 12 to 6 pm (72 hours). The Cross-Over testing was open on a daily basis, with walk-in service once a week from 4 to 7 pm (168 hours). During this period, 93 people were tested at Copenhagen Central Station and 160 people at Cross-Over office. 3 out of 4 testers at both test-places were men.

Are we reaching the right target group? Since people with African background are especially affected by HIV, we have looked at how many we tested from this group at each testing site. 24% of the people who tested at Central Station were from Sub-Saharan

Africa. At Cross-Over 31% were of African origin.

Could the ones we tested not just have used the other "normal" testing sites at hospitals or GPs? One special feature of people being tested at Cross-Over is that we have many first-time-testers and people who express that they would not have been tested if we had not been there. Would it be the same at Copenhagen Central Station?

At Copenhagen Central Station 46% were people tested for the very first time. From the African group this number were 24%.

At Cross-Over 27% were people who tested for the very first time. From the African group these numbers were 32%. No positive results came back from the tests we performed during the survey period.

### Conclusions – Lessons learnt

A highly visible site such as the tent at Copenhagen Central Station turned out to reach more people than the more discreet and stationary offer at Cross-Over. In general more first-time-testers were reached at Copenhagen Central Station, however among the African group more first-time-testers visited Cross-Over.

It is the general perception that that discretion and anonymity play a major role when reaching out to migrant populations with HIV testing, because of HIV-related stigma and discrimination. This is also our experience so far. However it is also important not to make generalizations about all migrant populations. Like with ethnic Danes it is important to offer a variety of services, see the Checkpoint services offered for migrant populations below. By making a very public service we have proven that many from our target group are willing to use such a service.

We cannot show any numbers – but we find that a fair share of the ones we test at Central Station are people who tell us that they have been thinking about it for some time and now when they see us they better do it now!



#### Central Station

24% tested at Central Station were Africans  
23% of the Africans were tested for the first time  
46% of all tests at Central Station were First time testers

#### HIV in numbers (SSI)

2010 according to CDC Denmark:  
274 were newly diagnosed with HIV. Of those 108 were people with other ethnic background than Danish – more than half were late-testers. Of the 45 diagnosed with AIDS 30 were diagnosed with HIV at the same time.



#### Cross-Over

31% tested at Cross-Over were Africans  
32% of the Africans were tested for the first time  
27% of all tests at Cross-Over were first time testers

#### Checkpoint Copenhagen

- Cross-Over
- Copenhagen Central Station
- Café Cadeau,
- Trampolinhuset

#### Odense

- Sex & Sundhed

#### Aarhus

- HIV-Danmark

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# CROSS-OVER

[www.cross-over.dk](http://www.cross-over.dk)

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