

PRESS RELEASE

***Hold my Hand* - Premiere of a feature film produced by young artists in Kosovo**

The feature film on young drug users was produced by young artists and supported by UNICEF, the US Embassy, and the Swedish SIDA

16 January, 2009, Prishtine/Pristina – Even though there are no accurate data, some recent studies show an increased number of young people using drugs in Kosovo. What is more disturbing is the fact that the number of drug users who are injecting, mainly heroin, has significantly increased. It is also observed that children start injecting drugs for the first time at an increasingly younger age.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Kosovo is considered to be low, however the injecting drug users are at a particular risk of HIV contraction due to risky behaviour such as needle exchange and unprotected sex.

UNICEF supported the initiative of a group of young artists at Prishtina Film to produce the film which aims to raise the awareness of the public on the issue of drug abuse. The young producers hope that the film *Hold my Hand* will be a call for more consciousness and action by the Kosovo society to tackle the issue of drug abuse and stop stigmatisation.

Hold my Hand is addressing the relevant institutions which need to develop comprehensive programmes for prevention, treatment and care for drug users.

The film also urges parents to talk to their children in order to prevent them from becoming drug users. It helps parents understand that they need to overcome the denial and seek assistance for the children who are already using drugs.

The film tries to inspire the audience to stop the marginalisation of young drug users and offer them a second chance in family and society.

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