Serbia

Overview

Serbia is a diverse country characterized by population and health issues that are part and parcel of slow reforms and reflect the difficult journey Serbia faces toward European Union integration. An aging nation with a median age of 41.3 years, Serbia has a population growth rate of negative 0.464%.

According to UN estimates, approximately 500,000 Roma live in Serbia and their rights as equal citizens are yet to be fully realized. Serbia also has the largest refugee population in Europe; refugees and internally displaced persons comprise between 7-7.5% of the total population presenting unique challenges for population programming and policy development.

According to non-official sources the highest numbers of abortions in Europe are performed in Serbia - approximately 150,000 - 200,000; a particularly striking figure given that the population is around 7.5 million.

UNFPA Country Programme Focus and Priorities

The government of Serbia lacks data and official reproductive health and family planning strategies, thus, the UNFPA country office prioritizes supporting the Ministry of Health and other institutions to strengthen capacity in this field. The main areas of focus include family planning and HIV/STI prevention among young men and women and vulnerable groups.

The UNFPA country office works to address reproductive health issues across Serbia, particularly focusing on underserved regions and vulnerable populations. The UNFPA partners with the Republic Institute for Social Protection to advance awareness of the ageing process and its’ implications on population development. In addition, the UNFPA provides a valuable contribution to joint initiatives with other UN agencies in the country in the fields of HIV and Roma Inclusion.

Partnerships

The UNFPA country office has well-developed partnerships with Ministries, NGOs, faith based organizations, Parliamentarians, Academia and local governments. The UNFPA seeks to cultivate private sector partnerships to address national priorities within the UNFPA’s mandate in an effort to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Serbia.

In close cooperation particularly with the Ministry of Health, as well as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, a long-term initiative to develop the capacity of Roma Health Mediator personnel has achieved excellent results, particularly for young Roma. The UNFPA also works with the Primary Health Center in Niš, to implement reproductive health research of public health policy interest and carry out online reproductive health education for medical doctors. The Youth Office in Priboj in south-west Serbia, another underserved region, receives capacity development support in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Serbia, similar to many other European countries, is experiencing population ageing and low fertility rates.

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Data Source: UNDESA Population Division
UNFPA works with young people in Serbia using youth-friendly methods to improve sexual and reproductive health.