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STRENGTHENING OF HIV/STI INTERVENTIONS IN SEX WORK IN UKRAINE AND IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING MEETING ON SEX WORK

**SAINT PETERSBURG, RUSSIAN FEDERATION
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FIRST DAY

OPENING

The Director of Humanitarian Action, Mr. **Sergey Dugin**, welcomed all the participants to the **National Capacity Building Meeting on Sex Work**.

Considering the harsh political and economical situation of NGOs in the Russian Federation, he referred to the participants as “survivors” and informed them about importance of this meeting in order to strengthen the capacity and skills of NGOs working in sex work projects in the Russian Federation.

In sequence, the Director of TAMPEP International Foundation, Dr. **Licia Brussa**, also welcomed the participants to the meeting. She initially explained why TAMPEP International Foundation is the promoter of Conecta project. The history of TAMPEP, she said, starts with the creation of the European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant and National Sex Workers in 1993. TAMPEP was created in response to the needs of sex workers across Europe. It operates a community development and participation model that is rooted within a human rights framework, and seeks to lay a foundation for equitable access to support and services for sex workers.

As international network and intervention project, focused on assessing the circumstances and needs of sex workers in Europe, as well as in relation to the development of appropriate responses to reduce sex workers’ vulnerability to HIV, she stated: “we have the interest and the need to share with your region the problems related to sex work”. She complemented saying that because vulnerability and mobility of sex workers in the region is so high, to strengthen cross border cooperations, experiences, and tools is an absolute priority.

She stressed again the importance of the meeting, which was drawn to be a consultation moment based on the expertise and cooperation of NGOs/GOs in the Russian Federation. For her, the meeting is an opportunity to “strengthen our capacity to act and react”.

She thanked all the participants for the cooperation on the project’s activities, Humanitarian Action for the organisation of the meeting, Ms. **Irina Maslova** for accepting to bring into the meeting the voices of sex workers, and the international guests for their availability to be at the meeting and share their expertise. Her last wish was of a moment of critical dialogue, openness to discuss common problems and learn from each other.

After that, Ms. **Anna Ivanova** prepared a brief warm-up game where participants

could say their names, the NGO/GO they represent, which city they come from, and the main sightseeing of their city. The idea was to get to know each other better. The agenda and purpose of the meeting were reviewed in sequence.

INTRODUCTION TO CONECTA PROJECT

The main concept of CONECTA project was introduced by Mr. **Dennis van Wanrooij** from TAMPEP International Foundation. He stated that Conecta is a European project financed by the European Union. **TAMPEP International Foundation** is the regional coordinator of this project. **SALUS Charitable Foundation** (in Ukraine) and **Humanitarian Action** (in Russia) are both national coordinators and the implementing organizations. Irina Maslova (from Silver Rose, Russia) and Natalia Isaieva (from Lega Life, Ukraine) are both representatives of the national sex worker organizations and are our very important expert consultants.

He stated that although all actions of Conecta project are based in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation; tools and expertise between the 2 countries are compared and shared. This is possible because the activities of this project happen simultaneously in both countries. After that, he explained the reasons for Conecta project. The first reason is that Russia and Ukraine account together for

almost 90% of all people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In this context, female, male and transgender sex workers are vulnerable to HIV infection because of structural and environmental factors. Criminalization of sex work, abusive law-enforcement practices, violence, stigma, discrimination, and human right violations against sex workers increase their vulnerability to HIV/STI and limits sex workers' ability to access vital health and support services, including medical and social care and harm reduction.

In this sense, CONECTA was created under the official name of '**Strengthening of HIV/STI Interventions in Sex Work in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation**' due to the fact that its main aim is to reduce vulnerability of sex workers to HIV/STI transmission, while developing an example of comprehensive and right-based service approach to HIV and sex workers, based on the experience and knowledge of the sex worker projects and organisations in the region.

The beneficiaries of our activities, he said, are not just the sex workers that our outreach teams are able to reach. If NGOs from Ukraine and Russia are able to strengthen their capacities, we are able to expand our coverage and ways to involve and respond to the needs of sex workers in the region, he said.

For this reason, Conecta is a **participatory project**. All NGOs/GOs with sex work component and sex workers themselves were invited to take part of our several activities. Conecta respects sex workers' self-determination and autonomy.

The specific objectives of Conecta are

- a) to implement comprehensive and multifaceted services for sex workers in **Lviv** and in **St Petersburg**, by developing tools that can be used throughout the region by other organizations; and
- b) to strengthen the capacity and skills of service providers, community based organisations, and policy makers in programmatic approach to HIV/STI in sex work settings in the region.

In order to increase the knowledge on sex work in the region, Conecta developed:

- 2 (two) national prostitution mapping reports (one for Ukraine, one for Russia)
- 1 (one) regional trend report

In order to create a supportive network structure for NGOs that work in cooperation, Conecta developed:

- 2 (two) national capacity building training meetings
- 1 (one) regional conference in the second year of the project
- 2 (two) regional newsletters

In order to achieve a comprehensive model and tools for an interdisciplinary

prevention and care projects based on the principle of outreach work, health and social promotion, Conecta developed:

- Multi-faceted programmes in Lviv and St Petersburg
- Educational materials and resources

In order to develop peer education and good practices, Conecta developed:

- Peer education trainings
- Good Practices Manual

Human rights are also a fundamental issue of this meeting and this project. The idea is to bring in inspirations on **how to advocate for sex workers' human rights**. For that goal, Conecta developed:

- 3 (three) policy papers that analyses the laws and their impacts on sex workers lives
- A booklet on cases of violence affecting sex workers based on the direct sex workers experiences
- Services that address violence against sex workers
- Human rights campaigns

Finally, he stated "we, as Conecta team, **oppose criminalization** of sex work and **condemn violence** against them. Our aim today is to think further and understand better what we can do together."

He then thanked the participants for all efforts done so far, and reinforced the need of working out their knowledge and experience.

SEX WORK IN RUSSIA

The Director of the organization Silver Rose, Ms. **Irina Maslova**, was responsible for introducing the participants to **what is sex work in the Russian Federation**.

Because Silver Rose is the only sex worker organization since 2005 speaking on behalf of sex workers in Russia, Irina was invited to this meeting to share her expertise and field knowledge.

According to Irina, the **main characteristics of sex work in the Russian Federation** are:

■ **Sex work is criminalized the Russian Federation.** According to Articles 6.11 (Law on Administrative Offences) and Articles 240 and 241 (Criminal Law).¹

¹ **Legal framework governing relations to provide sexual services.** Provision of sexual services on a commercial basis in the Russian legislation relates to the concept of Prostitution, which is referred to in Article 6.11 of the Code of (Administrative) Offences (30.12.2011 Number 195-F3 (further referred to as Code). This activity in terms of legislation is an offense, infringe on the health, sanitary and epidemiological welfare of the population and public morality. However, to date, no administrative or criminal law has disclosed the concept of prostitution. The legislator also does not associate this activity with belonging to a particular gender. Responsibility for the undertaking of these activities is also governed by Article 6.12 of the Code – “Receiving income from prostitution” if that income is associated with the occupation of another person in prostitution, article 240 of the Criminal Code (13.06.1996 number 63-F3) “Engaging in prostitution”, article 241 “Organization of prostitution”. The most vulnerable category are

■ **Police raids, inspections and repression take place in several cities.** For instance, during the celebration of the 300 years anniversary of the city of St. Petersburg there was an order to “clean up” the city. Police are actors in institutionalizing discrimination.

■ **Discrimination, violence and impunity miss the norm.** There are multiple forms of perpetrators (government, partners, clients and service providers). In spite of that, there are only a few cases that are dealt with on the juridical level in courts and that end up with the punishment of the violators.

■ **High levels of internal and external migration.** Migrant sex workers don’t have access to the medical health care, nor legal stay permission in the country. Deportation because sex work miss the norm. Russian sex workers that work in other cities (internal mobility) don’t have access to public medical care because they are not registered with the municipality were they work. For both groups, lack of access to public health and care is a big barrier for

those directly providing sexual services for a fee, and often prosecuted under Article 6.11 of the (Administrative) Code. In this case, the case is considered by a magistrate (para 1 of part 1 of article 22.1 of the (Administrative) Code). For the prosecution, it is required to at least provide proof of the fact of service of an intimate nature, and prove that such service was provided for a cash reward.

the affirmation of their rights, especially the right to health.

■ **High prevalence of HIV infection.** The HIV prevalence rate in Russia is still high, one of the highest in Europe. In relation to sex workers, there are **multiple structural factors** that make them more vulnerable to HIV infection.

■ **Lack of information.** Because sex work is criminalized in Russia, sex workers are afraid from charges and police arrests. Under these circumstances, sex workers tend to hide. Moreover, because sex workers are considered a threat to public health in the country, many avoid contact with service providers. If a sex worker is tested positive for HIV, he/she can be charged for spreading the disease.

■ **Lack of HIV prevention programmes.** Not all cities of Russia have HIV prevention programmes for sex workers. There are many gaps in service provision. Moscow, the capital, and also home of the majority of sex workers in Russia, does not have any specific programme for sex workers.

■ **Disappearance of main donors from the region.** With the withdrawal of the Global Funds from Russia, and with the instable political situation in relation to foreign donors, NGOs in Russia have been facing a harsh moment to fund their activities and build up new projects and initiatives.

■ **The increase of the influence of the church and moralization.** Moralization affects sex workers advocacy work and

impedes them to act and react against repressive laws and policies that affect them.

■ **Bad laws.** For example, the issuance of an administrative offence for the clients of the sex workers in Belgorod (a city and the administrative center of Belgorod Oblast, Russia, located on the Seversky Donets River just 40 kilometers north of the Ukrainian border). It was adopted last April.

In relation to this context, the organization Silver Rose was created to **speak for sex workers voices** in the Russian Federation and face this increasingly harsh situation for sex workers. Irina then presented the work of Silver Rose as follows:

■ **We exist and we are all different.** The diversity of sex workers situation, working conditions, settings, income, genders, compose a wider perspective of what sex work is. Because **sex workers are diverse**, their opinions should be taken into account in any level of policy making and service provision interventions.

■ **Sex work is work.** This is the motto of the organization which fights for the **labour rights** of sex workers. The only way to overcome sex worker's vulnerability is to recognise them as workers and grant them good working conditions.

■ **HIV affects us to and we are interested in stopping the epidemic.** Sex workers are **part of the solution**. We want to halt the

epidemics but for that – says Irina – we must overlook sex workers’ experiences.

■ **We (sex workers) are agents of influence concerning the safe sex-conduct.**

Because we perform sexual services does not mean that we are not concerned about our sexual health. Sex workers are actors of their own well-being and wish to take care of their sexual health as any other person.

One of the main objectives of Silver Rose is to identify sex workers’ **main needs**, such as:

■ **Access to health and health promotion**

■ **Access to justice**

■ **Social integration**

■ **Education on matters of HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health**

Silver Rose also carries out prevention activities on the initiative of sex workers via **peer education**. Irina highlighted the importance of peer education and peer support in the development and implementation of HIV prevention programmes. Without involving sex workers, NGOs have fewer changes to achieve their goals, she said.

More than that, she stated that **NGOs should move from prevention to rights-based services**. It is clear for us – sex workers – that we need more than

prevention programmes. “**We want our rights**”, said Irina.

Silver Rose introduced **Leadership Trainings** and other activities which make sex workers agents of influence.

In relation to the meeting, Irina’s main aim was to connect with service providers who work with sex workers in different parts of Russia; to know the different services; and to help them to improve their connection with sex workers.

Irina finalized her speech with the following **claims of sex workers**:

■ **To be heard**

■ **To obtain the recognition of our social and health problems on the governmental level**

■ **To take part in the implementation of the programmes on HIV prevention at all stages**

■ **To be covered by a supportive legal framework**

■ **To have the right for humane treatment, tolerance, dignity and protection**

Finally, she ended her presentation saying that **sex workers know how to do**, and that they just need the support of the NGO/GOs in the country.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Conecta project is an interactive one and the poster section was build up to create some space for organizations in Russia to tell more about their experiences,

knowledge, and problems faced by sex workers in the region.

Before the realization of the meeting, Humanitarian Action collected all posters prepared by the organizations present in the meeting. The posters were a condition for attending the meeting and were based on a same structure. The intention, therefore, was to increase the knowledge of what is available – in terms of service provision, resources, tools, etc. – for sex workers in the country. The posters stayed at the wall during the whole period of the meeting and were a base for sharing knowledge about their work and organizations.

Moreover, some posters provide information about the actual number of sex workers in these cities/regions, where they work (outdoor/indoor), if they are migrants/nationals, and if they are injecting drug users or not. This information is based on the knowledge, coverage and services capacity of the organisations described. It cannot be read as absolute data.



■ RUSSIAN RED CROSS | Irkutsk

The activities of this NGO in accordance with the objectives of the organization, traditionally addresses the following key areas: preparation and response to disasters and emergencies; protection of public health, health promotion; the organization of homecare treatment for elderly, sick and disabled.

Since 1999 the programmes in the field of HIV / AIDS have started. Since 2007, a specific program for sex workers was created.

The services for sex workers provided by this organization include: outreach counseling (this is done by peer educators, nurses and outreach workers); reference to trusted doctors; drug rehabilitation unit; distribution of preventive materials; psychological counseling.

They implement two different projects. The first is called “1st step to health” and the target group are sex workers and drug users. The second is an outreach counseling project. It includes HIV prevention among sex workers and one drop-in centre, with gynecologist services and condoms distribution.

The number of sex workers (outdoor and indoor) covered by this organization in total is approximately 225 per year. Approximate percentage of IDUs among sex workers (who work outdoors) is 90 %.

■ ITPC | Saint Petersburg

International Coalition for medical treatment in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. ITPC stands for universal and free access to AIDS treatment for all HIV-positive people and for a more active involvement of HIV-positive people in the decisions that affect their lives.

As for the services provided by this organization, mostly, this NGO is engaged in advocacy for the access to treatment, and also has a huge number of partner organizations and experts who provide psychological, legal and counselling support to HIV-positive people. Sex workers are a common target audience of their work.

The services provided for sex workers are: i) free access to HIV treatment; ii) education on health issues; iii) referral system; and iv) distribution of informational materials. In addition to that, they prepare several educative video clips for key groups, including sex workers.

■ SILVER ROSE | Saint Petersburg

The mission of this organization is to contribute to the development of state policy concerning sex workers based on human rights, such as health and dignity.

Silver Rose was created in 2005. It is the only sex worker organization in Russia and is connected to international sex work

networks, such as NSWP, SWAN and TAMPEP. Silver Rose mediates the contact between sex workers, governmental authorities and service providers. Moreover, it connects sex workers with organizations in different regions of the country. According to Silver Rose, there are 3 million sex workers in Russia.

Among the services provided by this organization, there are: increased access to health services; legal protection; programmes to improve of sex workers' self-esteem, mutual support and social integration; and representation of the interests of sex workers by participating in several decision-making activities.

The organization stands for i) programmes and services that have been successfully evaluated by international organizations; ii) security and freedom from violence; iii) community mobilization; and iv) cooperation with media and artists.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization is about 2500 sex workers in Saint Petersburg. Many sex workers across Russia are also in contact with Silver Rose.

According to them, approximately 90% of sex workers work indoors. 10% work outdoors. 70% are migrants (often from Commonwealth of Independent States, regions of Russian Federation, Africa).

And the approximate percentage of IDUs among sex workers is 10 %.

■ **Charitable Foundation AINAIDS | Nigniy Novgorod**

The main objectives of the Foundation are HIV prevention among sex workers; reduction of risk behaviors; provide informational services; and improve the capacities of NGOs and government agencies that provide services to women in difficult situations.

The main services provided by this organization are as follows: counseling about risks; distribution of information materials; conduct of seminars for sex workers; distribution of condom; reference to free and anonymous medical examinations; referral system.

The number of sex workers covered by the organization is approximately more than 300.

Due to the lack of funding the organization started to do outreach activities by bike (so called "cycle team"). In spite of all odds, they make use of art and videos to work with their key populations, including sex workers. They do their best to motivate sex workers to participate in their activities.

According to this organization, the approximate percentage of sex workers who work indoors is 70 %. Only 30% work outdoors. Migrants amount only 3 % (mostly from Asia and Africa). About 7-10% of sex workers are IDU.

■ **HUMANITARIAN ACTION | Saint Petersburg**

The main objectives of this organization are the following: prevention of HIV, STIs, protection of sexual and reproductive health of sex workers, overcoming violence, gender inequality and barriers to access comprehensive services, and sharing the methods of behavior with sex workers, based on the principles of human rights.

The directions of the work of this organization include: outreach work to prevent HIV infection and other diseases in the areas with the largest concentration of the target groups; social support the programmes for sex workers; building partnerships between different organizations in the provision of services to the target group; sharing the experience of the work with the target groups; advocacy and legal support for sex workers.

The services provided by this organization included the following ones: counseling on safer sex for sex work, prevention of diseases, identification of needs; referrals to trusted doctors; orientation counseling on health, social and psychological services; rapid HIV testing and testing on pregnancy; emergency psychological counseling, psychotherapy trainings, personal growth trainings, support groups; individual social accompaniment; legal counseling and aid; temporary housing for

victims of violence or persons in other difficult life situations; providing a feasible humanitarian assistance (food parcels, clothing, hygiene products); distribution of quality condoms, lubricants, syringes, and other means of prevention; provision of information materials, videos during outreach work.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization since 2001 is about 7 350, while every year it is 2500.

Moreover, Humanitarian Action is committed to change the attitude of society regarding sex workers by organizing press conferences, by cooperating with other networks such as ESVERO, SWAN, and some UN agencies.

According to this organization, 80% of sex workers work indoors. 20% work outdoors. About 40% are migrants and 30% IDU.

■ **FUND RED BAND | Saint Petersburg**

The main aim of this organization is HIV/STI prevention among MSM.

The services provided by this organization include the following: counseling on HIV/STI prevention; psychological counseling on violence; referral for counseling and testing to HIV / STI doctors and psychologists of the AIDS Center; counseling on alcohol and drug addictions; referral for counseling and treatment to the City Hospital.

The organisation is in contact with approximately 50 male sex workers.

Their main gap is working with immigrants who are not covered. Moreover, outreach work is conducted only in gay clubs and for this reason should be expanded.

According to this organization, 90% of male sex workers work indoors. 10% work outdoors. About 90% of them are migrants (Ukrainians, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Kirghiz) and about 70-80% are IDU.

■ **COMPASS| Chelyabinsk**

This NGO is funded by the government and was created to provide social, informational and psychological services for people affected by HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. The organization is aimed at improving socio-psychological health of target groups conducting effective prevention and timely assistance to them.

The services provided for sex workers by this organization are as follows: providing free medical care; providing condoms; providing literature on preventive measures against HIV/STI; rapid testing for HIV; legal and social assistance; psychological support.

Outreach activities are also provided by this organization, as well as trainings on peer support, which are conducted according to the needs of the sex workers.

The organisation is in contact with approximately 67 sex workers.

According to this organization, 30% of sex workers work indoors. 70% work outdoors. About 8% are migrants and 25% IDU.

■ **FUND CIVIL INITIATIVE| Magnitogorsk**

This organization was created in 2005. The mission of this NGO is the development, adaptation and implementation of innovative models and mechanisms of health, social and psychological support to people affected by the epidemic of HIV and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and other diseases.

In 2011, the Fund has established a rehabilitation center "Guarantor". Therapy programme on drug addiction and alcohol is realized in a suburban hospital rehabilitation center.

The organization runs outreach activities and a social accompaniment for sex workers sex workers (they are accompanied to the local AIDS centers, doctors, by the representatives of the NGO). They have established partnership with the local AIDS center and promote educative programmes for medical staff.

Other services for sex workers include: information and support on prevention of HIV / AIDS, STI; referral to trusted doctors; rapid testing for HIV, STI, and pregnancy testing; motivational counseling for the

treatment of drug addicted persons; rehabilitation at the center "Guarantor".

During the 5 years of work of this organization 1500 sex workers have been covered by its services.

According to this organization, 70% of sex workers work indoors. 30% work outdoors. And 40-60% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

■ **VOICE OF ANTIAIDS| Ufa**

This is a self-organization of HIV-positive persons, which was established in 2005.

The main objectives of this organization include the following: HIV prevention and prevention of other diseases among vulnerable population; improving the quality of life of people living with HIV; prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child.

The services of this organization are as follows: psychological counseling, peer education, social support (document renewal, access to health facilities); distribution of condoms, syringes etc.

There is a possibility to access medical services even when there is no funding for specific projects.

For the past 4 years, 1172 sex workers have been covered by this organization.

According to this organization, 60% of sex workers work indoors. 40% work outdoors.

And about 60% of their service users are IDU.

■ **SIBERIAN INITIATIVE** | Barnaul

Regional public organization "Siberian Initiative" is a non-governmental, non-profit organization whose goal is to build a humane, educated and healthy society through the implementation of information, training and counselling projects.

Currently the organization is working on: primary prevention of HIV infection, development of the non-profit sector and development of civic initiatives. Services are only provided to vulnerable groups.

The services provided for sex workers are as follows: training activities for the sex worker activists on various aspects of preservation of health, personal safety and the basics of defending their human rights; psychological counseling on various aspects of health, safety, interpersonal relationships in the family; social support by specialists; support related to the protection of human rights. All cases of human rights violations are registered. The organization has a database where they register all legal cases of sex workers and such database is monitored.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization is about 200 during the whole period of work of this organization with the target group.

According to this organization, 70% of sex workers work indoors. 30% work outdoors. 15% of them are migrants. And 80% are IDU.

■ **KOVCHEG-ANTI AIDS** | Rostov-na-Dony

The organization started its activities in 2003.

The main aim of this organization is the improvement of the quality of life of HIV-positive persons, as well as the prevention of diseases and their negative effects.

The services of this organization include: rapid testing for 5 diseases; referral to low-threshold medical specialists; and social rehabilitation.

The organization is in contact with an average of 50 sex workers as server users.

■ **PREVENTION AND INITIATIVE** | Kazan

The organization's goals are to bring together specialists in different fields to develop, implement and support initiatives and innovative projects in the field of HIV prevention, social support and labour integration of drug users.

The services of this organization include: provision of protective materials (syringes, condoms, etc.) and distribution of prevention information consultation of peer educators, psychologists; rapid test for HIV, hepatitis C and B, syphilis; direction and assistance in obtaining

services (sometimes direct support) in health facilities - AIDS center and other medical centers; assist in the renewal of documents, registration, provision of temporary housing; provision of services in low-threshold centers (tea, coffee, shower, laundry, TV, DVD); provision of programmes of social support.

Representatives of the NGO do outreach work with a mobile unit according to the needs of outdoor sex workers.

From 2009 to 2012 there were 279 sex workers covered by this organization.

Approximate percentage of IDUs among sex workers is 32%.

■ POSITIVE DIALOGUE | Viborg

Vyborg autonomous branch of the Interregional public organization "Society of HIV-positive and AIDS patients POSITIVE DIALOGUE" was founded in 2011. The aim of this organization is social integration for HIV- positive people and AIDS patients. The objective is also to render legal, psychological and social assistance. The city is situated in the border zone with Finland, where it is known for having many sex workers. The organization is based on a hospital. They use the premises of the hospital free of charge. The coordination council of the organization is under the control of the AIDS center. Consultation and information is given by the medical staff of the hospital.

The services provided by this organization include the following ones: distribution of condoms, information materials, assistance of the psychologists and social workers; support of trusted doctors.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization is 500.

■ ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL STAFF | Chapaevsk

The programmes aimed at HIV prevention within this organization have been realized since 1999.

The services provided by this organization include: consultation of trusted doctors; access to medicines ; testing for STI, HIV, hepatitis, social support of the clients; psychological counseling, peer educators; legal advice; low-threshold center facilities (laundry, shower, tea/coffee). Currently, a fixed group of 20 sex workers profit from the services of the organization.

Approximate percentage of IDUs among sex workers is 70%.

■ PROJECT APRIL | Toliati

This organization operates since 2007.

The mission of this organization is to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS and HIV/STI prevention in Russia.

The objectives of this NGO lie in supporting the people living with HIV and helping

them to improve their quality of life; support the initiatives of individuals and entities, as well as promote action to address the social, educational, cultural needs; promoting disease prevention; development of partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations and entities; facilitate the involvement of representatives of communities affected by these diseases in efforts to protect their rights and interests; attracting media attention and the general public to important social issues; raising funds , facilities, international experience and its adaptation to support international and regional cooperation through intergovernmental, international, foreign and national organizations and agencies, as well as individuals.

The services open to sex workers include these: HIV prevention counseling; redirection to medical, social, legal services; a variety of support groups.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization constitutes approximately 100.

According to this organization, 85% of sex workers work indoors. 15% work outdoors. And 40-60% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

WOMEN'S FUND ASTRA| Saint Petersburg

This organization was created in 2007.

The mission of this Fund is to stop discrimination against women and promote their rights. The principle of the work of this organization lies in the involvement of women in difficult situations and the development of their potential.

The main target groups of this Fund are pregnant women and mothers in difficult life situations and their families; people living with HIV and their families; socially vulnerable people and their families.

The services provided by this organization are the following: administrative services; development of sex workers community; increasing the capacity and access to legal services of the sex workers' community. They work with sex workers, MSM, and HIV positive female drug users and their children. They provide web-seminars on leadership and education via Skype. Moreover, they run a crisis centre in the city of Volhov.

YULA| Kaliningrad

The organization was created in 1998.

The mission of this organization is to promote the formation of personalities that is aware of their dignity and honor, and that are able to develop and defend themselves.

Main tasks of this organization lie in the prevention of HIV / AIDS among young

people and vulnerable groups; support for young people in difficult life situations, including drug users, people living with HIV and those who are in prison; promotion of healthy lifestyle among young people; the involvement of young people in the solution of local community problems; protection of children's rights and human rights; prevention of high-risk behavior among young people; the development of leadership and volunteering skills; advocacy to stop the spread of HIV and TB among vulnerable groups such as drug users and prisoners.

The services provided by this organization include: individual counseling; support and assistance in getting out of difficult situations, especially if it is related to drug use or release from prison service (case management); help to improve access to treatment for people with multiple diagnoses (drug addiction, HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis, etc.); aid in the renewal of documents, protection of their rights and legitimate interests, including in the court; outreach work; low-threshold point "TIME" (tests, questionnaires, information and motivation) based in the AIDS Centre. They have good connections, including governmental support.

Approximately 100 sex workers were clients of this organization.

According to this organization, 95% of sex workers work indoors. 5% work outdoors.

And 40-60% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

■ **CENTER ANTIAIDS | Voronezh**

This organization was registered in 1999 and is a member of a regional social Association Social Council of the Region of Voronezh, in Russia.

The main purpose of the organization is to carry out programmes for the prevention of diseases among injection drug users (IDUs), sex workers, prisoners, lobbying and advocacy for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In 2002, the work started with sex workers, mostly female. They have a mobile unit which allows them to do outreach work for outdoor-based sex workers. Moreover, they conduct interviews with sex workers to identify their main needs. They have conducted a network research in 7 cities. The organization also developed a manual on advocacy and deals with the media. Two ongoing projects are: 1) project on labour and social rights and 2) project on social rehabilitation.

The services provided for sex workers include as follows: group and individual counseling for HIV-positive persons, as well as counseling on reproductive health, legal issues; conduct of trainings, distribution of leaflets; referral to trusted doctors; psychological care; assistance in selecting programs of social integration; assistance

in obtaining social services, document renewal, employment, referral to shelters.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization in the last year is 300.

According to this organization, 70% of sex workers work indoors. 30% work outdoors. And 40% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

■ **TIMUR ISLAMOV FUND | Naberezhnie Chelny**

The purpose of this organization is to fight against HIV / AIDS in the city of Naberezhnie Chelny, Republic of Tatarstan, on different levels. The strategy of this organization lies in implementing small but effective projects that would really make a difference to HIV/AIDS situation and to assess the activities that have been carried out.

The services provided to sex workers include the following ones: counseling and awareness raising during the daily outreach work on the streets of the city. Twice per week the mobile units leave to make new contacts and drop off the necessary preventive materials to service users of the project. Service users are also provided with personal hygienic items. Clients are also provided with the special materials on violence and security. Educational seminars are conducted by professionals every month for service users and volunteers.

In the work of this organization 760 contacts have been established with sex workers.

■ **TOMSK ANTIAIDS | Tomsk**

The objective of this organization is to reduce the spread of HIV, tuberculosis, and other diseases; provide access to comprehensive medical, social, psychological assistance and social integration of street children and young people, injecting drug users, people living with HIV/AIDS, women who provide sexual services, people released from prison.

The services provided for sex workers include as follows: discussions on topics of STIs, reproductive health, unwanted pregnancy, violence, tuberculosis (TB); ensuring the protection and the prevention (condoms, lubricants); the hotline for HIV / AIDS / TB infected people; distribution of brochures and information materials on topics of STI, reproductive health, violence, tuberculosis (TB); education of sex workers on topics of HIV / STI prevention, reproductive health, TB, skills, safe sex behavior, peer education (training and workshops); providing quality care by trusted specialists; free testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis, with pre-and post-test counseling, screening for tuberculosis; integration of sex workers into public programmes on treating HIV infection, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted

infections; help in difficult situations and social support.

The Fund involves groups of managers of sex work and other stakeholders of sex industry in the distribution of condoms, lubricants, syringes to sex workers.

From 2005 to 2011 the number of sex workers covered is 1256.

According to this organization, 20% of sex workers work indoors. 70% work outdoors. And 30% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

■ REGIONAL CENTER ON HIV PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST AIDS | Tver

The purpose of the institution is to provide diagnostic treatment, counseling patients on HIV, the organization and conduct of events on prevention of HIV and other infectious diseases.

The services provided for sex workers include the following: distribution of condoms; prevention information materials; testing for HIV and Hepatitis; referral for examination, psychological assistance, social assistance; training seminars, referrals to the State Institution of Health "House of Mercy" for a short stay and renewal of documents (upon request).

The organization carries out trainings, provides information and counts with peer educators in their work. They have

partnership with a dermatologic clinic and other specialized clinics.

From the period of 01.07.12 to 30.10.12, 86 sex workers have profited from the services of this organization.

According to this organization, 95% of sex workers work indoors. 5% work outdoors. Migrants are mostly from Belarus (1%) and Ukraine (5%). And 60% of the sex workers they contact are IDU.

■ NEW AGE, "SIMONA CENTER" | Kazan

The organization aims at the most vulnerable groups: children and young adults, migrant workers, IDU, SW, and MSM.

The services provided by this organization include the following: provision of comprehensive medical, social and psychological services in one a low-threshold services center "the Simona Center". The services are guaranty to be: anonymous, free of charge and non judgmental. Service users have the opportunity to complete a full range of diagnostic tests for HIV / STI / Hepatitis / TB, accompanied by pre-and post-test counseling and receive quality treatment. Each individual receives social support, emotional support and psychological counseling for the declared problem. The Center is based on the dermatovenerologic clinic and it counts with trustful doctors. Even without funding coverage, the

medical services are provided. The organization involves communities' representatives in the activities and carried out peer education programs. This organization has experience in using the media for mitigating stigma and sensational article on sex workers.

Main barriers: repressive prostitution policy against street sex workers that are often prosecuted and expelled from the streets of the city as for example at the occasion of the celebration of 1000 years of Kazan, there was "cleaning of streets". Need of reform of the administration law against sex work.

At the average 1300 sex workers per year are covered by the services of this organization.

According to this organization, 100% of sex workers work outdoors.

■ NEW LIFE| Orenburg

The aim of this organization is to provide support for people living with HIV / AIDS and their families; lobbying the rights of LGTB at the local and regional level; support people living with HIV in Orenburg region, namely the moral support of LGTB, their families and friends; rehabilitation for LGTB and their families in their daily lives, reducing their social isolation; organization of public education in order to increase tolerance of the population to people living with HIV; activities of educational nature,

lectures to raise public awareness on healthy lifestyle.

The services provided for this organization include the following: peer education; outreach work; hotlines; workshops for HIV positive, MSM, and families; case management; training seminars; round table with the participation of decision-makers in the provision of services to MSM; support to MSM via social networks. From 2007 to 2011, 3500 MSM have been covered on the territory of Orenburg.

The organization started in 2002, as a group for mutual aid. In 2003, it became an officially registered organisation. There was no separate project for sex workers; they were included into the group of IDU. In 2003, they worked with the AIDS center, local representation of the Ministry of healthcare and a dermatovenerologic clinic.

■ STAIRS| Orel

The mission of this organization is to create and support social services for injecting drug users in the Orel region, reducing stigma and discrimination as the main barriers for prevention and care, as well as human rights.

The services provided by this organization is the provision of condoms; counseling and information about health services; redirection to friendly medical personnel.

The number of sex workers covered by this organization is 56.

This organization has been working only for 6 months.

They work with female drug-users.

Outreach work is done mainly on the streets, since indoor-based sex workers are reluctant to contact service providers. They have had round table meetings where we invited doctors from the AIDS Centre; representatives of social center, psychological center were invited. We refer them to other centers and also accompany them.

According to this organization, 70% of sex workers work indoors and other 30% outdoors. And 10% are migrant and 30% IDU.

■ MEGAPOLIS| Saratov

The main aim of this organization is to promote the reduction of growth of alcoholism, drug addiction and HIV infection among young people; the provision of effective psychosocial care for people living with HIV / AIDS; the organization of employment and leisure-time activities, the formation of young people ideas of healthy living.

The organization started in 1999. Outreach is done among sex workers. Most of the

sex workers reached are outdoor-based sex workers.

Services provided for sex workers by this organization are: outreach work; the applied technique of "reference method" ;the method of "peer education" ; use of information materials; distribution of condoms, lubricants etc.; help from trusted professionals, doctors; psychological and legal counseling.

1339 sex workers were covered by this organization during the implementation of the project. 609 of them IDU.

According to this organization, 60% of sex workers work indoors and other 40% outdoors. And 30% are migrant (Kazakhstan, Moldova, Ukraine) and 45% IDU.

■ ANTIAIDS-SIBERIA| Barnaul

The main aim of this organization is the coordination of HIV - infection in the region and the city of Barnaul; assistance in the organization and implementation of measures to prevent HIV - infection in the region. Since 1999 this organization has been working towards the prevention of HIV / STI within the most vulnerable groups: IDU, sex workers.

The services provided to sex workers by this organization are the following: distribution of information; counseling; testing for HIV, hepatitis, STI; consultations

of medical specialists; consultations of lawyers, psychologists, social workers; stationary and mobile unit.

1200 sex workers annually receive services from this organization.

According to this organization, 40% of sex workers work indoors and other 60% outdoors. And 25% are IDU.

■ PATIENTS IN CONTROL| Saint Petersburg

It is an organization for HIV positive patients. It is based on treatment and self-support. All members speak openly about HIV and advocacy is one of the main goals of this organization.

INTERIM RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL MAPPING ON SEX WORK IN RUSSIA

In the framework of CONECTA project, Humanitarian action has conducted a mapping on sex work in the Russian Federation. The interim results were presented by Ms. **Polina Girchenko** from Humanitarian Action.

In total, **37 organizations** that work with sex workers directly or indirectly have taken part in creation of the national map of sex work.

The majority of organizations that participated in the mapping are situated in

North-West Federal District (11), Siberian Federal District (8), Volga Federal District (6) and Central Federal District (5). Ural and Southern Federal Districts are represented by only two organizations, while Far Eastern Federal District is not represented in the mapping.

Due to repressive state policies against sex workers and because of suspension of financing of preventive programs for sex workers from the Global Fund resources in the Russian Federation, there have remained only a small number of organizations that work with sex workers. That is why the results of mapping are not exhaustive, they rather indicate the main trends, characteristics and problems in the field of sex work in the Russian Federation.

The main areas of difficulty while carrying out mapping of sex work in the Russian Federation were the following:

■ **Lack of reliable information about the total amount of sex work and its structure.** It was possible to make a more or less complete picture of sex work only in cities, where there are several types of programs for different types of sex workers functioning (St. Petersburg, partly Orel and Barnaul).

- a) In cities where there were no programs for sex workers, there were also no sources of information about the processes going in the field of sex work,

including their vulnerability to HIV infection and violence;

- b) In cities where work with sex workers is carried out by a single organization, the organization had a picture of the group of sex workers that they work with only, most often they were outdoor sex workers, which are involved in drug use. In this case, work with them was carried out within programs of work with drug users.
- c) Very **few organizations provide services to indoor sex workers**. There is also no information on sex workers who provide escort services.
- d) There is practically **no information about male sex work** – there were found only three organizations that work with men engaged in sex work, two of them are located in St. Petersburg and Leningrad region.
- e) There is complete **absence of any information on transgender sex workers**.

On the whole, one can say that the structure of sex work in the Russian Federation is very complicated and it varies even within a single region. In big cities (megapolises) a certain percentage (50%) of sex workers is represented by **migrants**. The main countries from which sex workers

come to Russia are former Soviet Union republics, both European (Ukraine, Belarus) and Central Asian (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan). When it comes to the far abroad countries, countries of Africa are the represented most largely. In towns that are situated close to the state borders there is generally a certain percentage of sex workers who come from a bordering country.

In megapolises, migrant sex workers work mostly indoors. In cities with a population of less than a million and in cities far from the borders of Russia, migrant sex workers are generally not presented in the structure of sex work.

In cities where street sex work is present, the majority of sex workers are drug users. In cities, where drug use and sex work are under control of law enforcement authorities, drug using sex workers tend to work outside the city centres, mostly in highways, parks and indoors.

The main factors of outdoor sex workers' vulnerability are:

- **Drug use**
- **Stigma and self-stigmatization**
- **Violence**
- **HIV and STIs**
- **Outrage of law enforcement authorities (e.g. Police)**
- **Unfavorable and unsafe working condition**

- Legal vulnerability
- Social vulnerability
- Unsafe sex and/or not consequent condom use

The main factors of indoor sex workers' vulnerability are:

- Violence
- Outrage of pimps
- Vice Squad (moral police)
- Lack of protection from the police
- Lack of awareness in relation to safer sex and working place and rights
- Dependence on the organizers of sex work
- Absence of documents
- HIV and STIs

The following actions for **overcoming vulnerability of sex workers** to the above described factors were mentioned:

- Carrying out training programs for sex workers to raise their awareness about HIV, STIs and their legal rights
- Organization of low-threshold care centers, delivery of quality commodities, including high-quality condoms, water-based lubricants, and contraceptives and sterile needles/syringes
- Development and improvement of existing services for sex workers: both male and female

- Advocacy activities to increase sex workers' activism
- Creation of supervisory bodies to monitor actions of law enforcement authorities
- Creation of judicial precedents to protect the rights of sex workers
- Information campaign for clients

Vulnerability of sex workers

Nearly all organizations, that work with SWs directly, provided information that a **large group of SWs don't control the conditions of their work**. However, the data on the proportions of SWs, which control their working situation, is very different: from 0% to 70%, depending on a city and awareness of the problem. Besides, since the vast majority of organizations are implementing programs for street SWs, the data provided on the percentage of street SWs, which control their working conditions, can be considered more reliable than the data on the percentage of indoor SWs, who control their working conditions. A common feature for all respondents is their recognition of the fact that at least 50-60% of SWs (according to the worst estimate, 100% of SWs) has no control of their working conditions.

Moreover, **almost all of the respondents have admitted that 100% of SW gives a part of their income to third parties and**

they generally keep no more than 50% of their earnings (from 30% to 80%). The data on who which group of SWs is more vulnerable to "giving up income" to the third parties (indoor or outdoor) is contradictory.

The data on SWs' vulnerability in terms of lack of condom use is also contradictory. In general, the trend is that **outdoor SWs are more vulnerable to the lack of condom use, than indoor SWs.**

There was noted an **extreme vulnerability of SWs to physical, psychological, economic, and other forms of violence**, as well as to the **use of alcohol and non-injecting drugs**. Street SWs are also extremely vulnerable to injecting drugs. There was also noted an extreme legal vulnerability of SWs and social exclusion. These factors of vulnerability are especially characteristic of outdoor SWs.

The majority of respondents acknowledged that, although the **level of education** of outdoor SWs is usually lower than that of the general population, the level of education of indoor SWs does not differ from that of the general population.

On the whole, one can state an extreme vulnerability of sex workers to many important social, medical and psychological factors, which definitely affects the spread of HIV infection and STIs.

Conclusions and recommendations

■ In the Russian Federation **the coverage of SW by prevention programs is extremely low**. There is need to develop a network of programs and projects aimed at reducing SWs' vulnerability to many factors, including HIV infection and STIs.

■ The Russian Federation has **almost no programs for indoor sex workers, as well as male and transgender SWs**. There is a need to start developing programs for these categories of SWs.

■ **SWs are extremely vulnerable to all kinds of violence**. Outdoor SWs are more vulnerable to violence from law enforcement authorities, and indoor SWs are more vulnerable to violence from their clients. There is a need to work towards reducing violence against SWs, both with security forces and clients (including potential clients of SWs).

■ **SWs are highly insecure from a legal point of view**. There is a necessity of work towards establishing precedents of protection of SWs' rights and promotion of the idea that SWs have all the rights and freedoms of humans and citizens, in accordance with the Russian Constitution and international conventions.

■ **SWs are highly vulnerable to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections**. Is necessary to create a vast network of health care programs that are friendly to the needs of SWs, including outreach programs. It is necessary to

conduct advocacy work in order to bring message to the government structures, that there is a need of their participation in financing of such programs.

VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS IN RUSSIA

During Conecta project, Humanitarian Action interviewed 102 outdoor sex workers, who work in the street to determine the types and frequency of violence that the latter have to face in their daily lives.

Nearly all of the respondents were injecting drug users, 50% were working on their own, 50% of them for a pimp. 100% of respondents have reported (directly or indirectly), that they suffer from violence, while assessment of the role of violence in their lives was often inadequate: the option "rarely" was selected by women who have been beaten up to 10 times in the previous 12 months, and women who reported being exposed to economic, verbal and psychological violence answered "never" to a question of how often they suffered from violence. It means that sex workers understand "violence" as causing physical damage and sexual coercion only, while all other types of violence are not perceived as such, what points at a very serious level of self-stigma. 90% have reported that they had to practice vaginal or anal sex without a

condom, and the main reasons for that were client's demand and the fact that sex without a condom is paid better. Thus the initiators of unprotected sex are, first of all, customers.

82% of respondents have reported being physically abused during the last 12 months. The most frequently encountered type of physical violence is beating (80% of respondents were beaten 2.8 times at the average during the last 12 months, from 1 to 15 times). 43% of respondents suffered from coerced sex, 1.4 times at the average during the previous year (from 1 to 5 times). 15% of respondents reported, that they were threatened with weapons.

100% of the respondents have been exposed to economic violence. The most frequently encountered type of economic violence is unpaid or underpaid sex - 100% of respondents faced this type of violence 8.3 times during the last 12 months at the average (1 to 30). 56% of the respondents faced theft of money or other valuables while working- 1.3 times during the previous 12 months at the average (from 1 to 8 times). 43% of sex workers experienced coercion to work without payment - this happened 3.2 times in the last year at the average (from 1 to 18 times).

Verbal and psychological violence are the types of violence that sex workers face every day. These forms of violence have

become common for them and are already perceived as a routine.

100% of sex workers have been subjects to insults, 54 times a year at the average (from 10 to 365 times), 88% of sex workers have heard threats against them, 12 times a year at the average (from 1 to 100 times), 84% of sex workers have been subjects to humiliation, 48 times a year at the average (from 1 to 100 times), 100% of sex workers work in a risky environment, 126 times a year at the average (from 50 to 365 times). Additionally, 35% of sex workers were deprived of documents during the last 12 months.

100% of respondents have reported that the subjects of violence are generally clients and policemen, and the frequency of violence towards sex workers from their clients and from policemen is approximately the same.

And even so 75% of respondents have stated that they are in control of their working conditions, 97% can decide when they will work, 100% can decide what kind of clothes they will wear, 89% can leave their job at any time, 98% can make decisions about what clients they will work with.

Extracts from the interviews with sex workers:

“Last November, I was standing in the Prosvescheniya prospect when two police

cars drove up and two men dressed in uniform rushed out of them. They grabbed me and pushed me into a car. Inside the car there was one more girl and three others were in the neighboring car. We were taken somewhere outside the city, beaten, forced at gunpoint to undress and were driven into a river. The air temperature at that time was about zero degrees. We were forced to stay in ice-cold water for a very long time, and then they left, having taken our clothes. It is better not to remember how we got home. All five of us have got our kidneys and appendages frostbitten, we all were ill for a very long time after that. One of the girls died.”

“I had a regular client, I trusted him, and he was good client with no problems. One day he invited me to his birthday party in a country house, so that after the celebration I could serve him. I knew him well, so I agreed. There were about 40 men, all of them were slightly drunk. I went with my client to his room, but he was drunk and nothing worked out. He told me to serve his friends, I refused. Then he dragged me to the common room and said to his friend that they could do with me whatever they wanted. As a result, almost all of them exposed me to violence. When I was released, I almost could not walk. A car stopped, there were two men inside, they asked what has happened to me and offered a ride. I could not walk, so I agreed.

The upshot was that the three of them raped me, too.”

“My friend was “pastured” by some men from the highway patrol service for more than a year: she had to stand in a specific place during strictly defined hours. They controlled all of her clients, all her earnings and took greater part of her revenues.”

We can assume that sex workers who work indoors are exposed to violence more often than sex workers who work outdoors because they have fewer possibilities to select clients, and a closed space provides even more opportunities for violence.

Conclusion:

Sex work in Russia involves an extremely high level of violence, including physical and sexual abuse. The factor of violence plays an enormous role in the vulnerability of sex workers to infection and the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, one can't but note a high mortality rate of sex workers that is precisely caused by violence. The situation points at the need of urgent interference, primarily through establishment of integrated low-threshold programs for sex workers, as well as changes

COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED SERVICES FOR SEX WORKERS

This section of the meeting was devoted to understand the **basic elements of a comprehensive human rights-based service for sex workers**.

Ms. **Irina Maslova** briefly spoke about the need to taken into consideration the expertise of sex workers and their specificities in the development of sex work projects. For her, **evidence-informed advocacy** component has to be present in any sex work intervention project. This demands **collection and elaboration of data**.

Participants highlighted the lack of investigation about the situation of male and transgender sex workers. According to them, sex work projects should take into consideration the fact that not only women work in sex work.

In sequence, Dr. **Licia Brussa** presented the experience of TAMPEP International Foundation in the development of specific methodology for sex work project interventions.

SEX WORK IN EUROPE: SITUATION, TRENDS, POLICY AND COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED SERVICES FOR SEX WORKERS

LICIA BRUSSA

Dr. **Licia Brussa** initially stated that CONECTA project advocates for **enabling**

policy environments for an increased access to health and rights for sex workers. But, according to her, to move on to the basic principles of quality services, it is extremely necessary to first understand the current reality of sex work.

For this reason, Conecta carried out the national mapping and collected posters about sex work projects across Russia. To elucidate the importance of understanding the context where sex work takes place, she shared with the participants a picture of the actual situation of sex work across Europe. The intention was to provide some **comparison elements** of the **extreme flexibility and complexity of the sex work businesses and the sex workers' situations**. According to her, many findings in Europe correspond to the national situation of sex work in the Russian Federation.

Key findings in Europe

TAMPEP mapping results: situation and needs

- Increase of persons entering sex work as well as of the number of nationalities
- About 70% of those working in the West European sex industry are migrants
- About 70% of these migrant sex workers come from Central and East European countries
- 65 different countries of origin were found

■ Regarding the migrant population, 65% are non-EU citizens

■ Sexual services are predominately by women; only 7% male and 6% are transgender

Repressive migration laws and policies affect heavily sex workers in Europe, since 2/3 of them are migrants from non-EU countries. This also increases barriers to access health and social care.

Moreover, the **gender** of the sex worker population must be taken into consideration in the development of any health promotion programme. Particularly for sexual and reproductive health issues ones. **The integration of the sexual and reproductive health in the HIV/STI services is extremely important.**

The gap of service provision targeting male and transgender sex workers in Europe was also mentioned.

■ Mobility

Sex workers are a very mobile population.

About 70% of them said they have already worked in the sex industry in at least two other countries before.

Sex workers' migration is often directed to neighboring countries, either by periodical moving or going frequently back and forth. Within countries there is also a high mobility. About 50% have already worked in other cities in the country they were residing at that point.

Clients have become more mobile. There has been an increase of sex work venues in the border areas to the new EU countries. There is, however, not enough coverage of adequate services in those border areas for sex workers, she said.

■ **The shift from outdoor to indoor settings**

Due to increasing repressive policies towards sex work, mainly towards street-based sex workers, Europe has seen, in the last years, a tremendous shift from outdoor to indoor forms of prostitution. Nowadays, about **2/3 are indoor-based**. This fact has made it much more difficult for service providers to establish and maintain contact to these sex workers. TAMPEP estimates that about 30% (only) are covered by information, prevention and care measures. Licia added that, in the Russian Federation, there has also been a shift from outdoor to indoor settings. **The consequence is a big gap in terms of service provision.** She recalled the need to involve sex workers in **peer education** activities in order to reach better sex workers working indoors.

■ **Vulnerability**

The most significant factor regarding sex workers' vulnerability is the **high level of violence** and abuse by multiple perpetrators.

Violence can be:

- **Institutional** | Police, state authorities
- **Related to exploitative and unsafe working conditions** | Pimps, traffickers or clients

Reasons for vulnerability are: the level of dependency and the weak legal position of many sex workers.

'Sex workers that are independent workers and which are in a relative safe working environment are more able to insist on condom use or refuse abusive clients.'

However, only about 60% among national sex workers and 40% among migrant sex workers have control over their working conditions. This is a strong indication of a high level of vulnerability regarding HIV and STI, mainly among migrant sex workers.

Escalating state repression of sex work has made sex workers more vulnerable to STI/HIV in several ways. It has forced them into working in clandestine spaces, reducing their access to health care and prevention measures. Societal homophobia, laws against homosexuality, and the absence of legal protection from discrimination are serious barriers for transgender and male sex workers to access sexual health services and

information. These problems are usually heightened for migrant sex workers, particularly if they are undocumented.

In some countries of Europe, **mandatory HIV/STI testing and breaches of confidentiality are common**. Laws that criminalize sexually transmission of infections pose a particular threat to sex workers as they can be charged to public health offences. One of the biggest barriers over the last years is the lack of political commitment and governmental responses focused on reducing sex workers' vulnerability to STI/HIV and the absence of adequate public health approaches that are appropriate for this highly marginalised population.

The need of quality services

To be effective, programs for sex workers must be:

- Dynamic and grounded in **human rights** and what sex workers want. They must address the diverse realities of human sexuality and sexual expression and not moralise or try to push sex workers into other occupations.
- Addressing broader issues such as an **equal access to HIV treatment, social and medical care** and **access to justice**.
- Involving sex workers in their design and implementation, and the integration of sex workers as **peer educators** and **community leaders** as staff members.

■ **Non-discriminatory**, and **accessible** to female, transgender and male indoor and outdoor-based sex workers, including those who are HIV positive.

■ Accessible **harm reduction** services are needed for drug users.

'Strengthening the capacity of multi-sectorial services is imperative for reducing the vulnerabilities of sex workers to HIV/STI.'

Licia recalled that there is no single model for reducing STI/HIV among sex workers and clients.

But there are some successful initiatives carried out by TAMPEP network organizations:

- Information for male, female and transgender sex workers about STI/ HIV, human rights, sexual health, condom use, working safely and health services. This information is usually best delivered by peers, although media and health professionals can play an important role.
- Accessible information about HIV, STIs and condoms for clients and others in the sex industry including establishment operators and staff, taxi drivers, police and local authorities.
- Access to a variety of appropriate condoms, lubricants, medication, contraceptives, hormones, nutrition.

- Access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services for men, women and transgender people including diagnosis, treatment and care of HIV and STIs, and post-abortion care.
- Programmes to promote rights awareness and reduce abuse and discrimination.
- Support to locate safe places to work, live, and care for children.
- Health and social services for mobile and migrant sex workers.
- Sex worker and MSM-friendly drug and alcohol harm reduction programmes.
- Support to access justice and combat violence.
- Cultural, educational and community activities that help sex workers build solidarity and realise personal and collective goals.
- Psychological support, including sexual assault counselling.
- Voluntary access to STI/HIV testing and follow-up social support, care and treatment for HIV positive sex workers.

Recommendations

The extremely high vulnerability of sex workers to HIV/STI is accompanied by a growing social exclusion and barriers to accessing social and health care support services.

In order to strengthen HIV/STI prevention in sex work settings across Europe, it is critical to understand the social

determinants and the working conditions of sex workers in the region.

TAMPEP therefore recommends:

- To develop a holistic, coordinated and integrated approach to sex work and STI/HIV. We need the cooperation of all stakeholders to create a framework that makes this possible, including sex workers.
- To develop national referral mechanisms: a structure that makes recommendations for national policy concerning the reduction of vulnerability among sex workers to HIV/STI. To ensure that sex workers have access to the services they need, and that their human rights are respected.
- To create national platforms that includes civil society, GOs, and international agencies.
- To create an impact assessment monitoring system regarding policies affecting the health and safety of sex workers and their working environments (e.g. the criminalisation of sex work and impact in public health and prevention policies). In this context, any form of compulsory or mandatory STI/HIV testing for sex workers must be abolished.
- To strengthen the networking and sharing of knowledge across countries.
- To ensure universal access to health, and the right of migrants and ethnic minorities to HIV/STI prevention, treatment and care.

Relevant networks for an effective transnational cooperation and effective advocacy:

NSWP | The Global Network of Sex Work Projects

www.nswp.org

ICRSE | International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

www.sexworkeurope.org

SWAN | Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

www.swannet.org

TAMPEP | European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers

www.tampep.eu

EHRN | Eurasian Harm Reduction Network

www.harm-reduction.org

GERMANY: PRACTICAL WORK WITH AND FOR INDOOR-BASED SEX WORKERS

VERONICA MUNK

As a moment of inspiration for quality services, Ms. **Veronica Munk** presented her experience with almost 20 years of practical work with and for indoor-based sex workers, mainly **migrant sex workers**, in Hamburg.

Due to the harbour, as you can imagine, Hamburg has a very old and famous red light district, called St. Pauli.

Hamburg has, however, about **80% of its sex industry indoors**, that means:

- **Apartments or private flats**, where normally two women work together
- **Brothels**, where about five women work together.
- **Laufhaus**, bigger houses where women just rent a room on a daily or a weekly basis.
- **Massage salons**, where 3 to 5 women work together, mostly from Thailand.

INDOOR - The majority working indoors are migrants, mainly from the European Union – Bulgarians, Romanians and Polish – but we find also a big group coming from Thailand, Russia and Brazil. The majority work on an independent basis.

OUTDOOR – On the streets of Hamburg can be found Germans and migrants, drug users and not.

She stated that there are some differences between the Russian and the German sex work context, but one of them, she thinks is the decisive one:

The fact that in Germany sex work is legalised and recognised as work.

Despite the difference of legalisation, the situation of sex workers in Germany is not so far from the Russian one.

Before the legalisation in 2002, sex work was considered immoral, sex workers were controlled, deported, had to hide and work under very bad and risky conditions.

After the legalisation, sex workers are able to close work contracts, or work as self-employed, and they have the right to all social security benefits. However, in some points the law did not change their working conditions:

- Non-EU citizens cannot ask for a residence permit based on the purpose of working in the sex industry.
- Sex work is still stigmatised and discriminated within society, mainly among civil servants or authority's officials.
- Street prostitution has been systematically repressed. This repression has two main reasons: the first one is an economic one, with the intention of raising the price of rents or properties of certain urban areas, and the second is a moralistic reason, with the intention of 'cleaning up' the cities streets.

"When we started our work with and for sex workers, back in 1993, we had to deal with the situation before the legalisation, which meant the lack of rights and an immense migration wave. Nowadays, we

have to deal with the lack of information and an enormous mobility", she said.

In sequence she shared her experience regarding the **strategies to contact and work with indoor-based sex workers**.

■ Aims of our outreach work

- Spread information on legal issues regarding sex workers' rights as migrants and as sex workers
- Spread information on health issues and safer sex
- Refer them to trustful and respectful services providers
- Empower and increase sex workers' professionalism.

■ How we reach sex workers

Many sex workers do not leave their workplaces, either out of fear of losing clients in their absence or because they are forbidden to. Therefore, **the only way to contact them is by going where they are, where they work**.

There are three ways of getting addresses of indoor venues, she said:

- **The Internet** – this is the most common one. We search and collect addresses through specialised websites where sex workers announce their services.
- **Daily newspaper and magazines** – they are more expensive than the internet

and therefore just a minority used them, but they are still a good source to find addresses.

- **Through other sex workers** – that is the best one because it is linked to trust, but it only works when sex workers are within a network.

■ Structure of the outreach

The outreach activity is based on two specialised operators - cultural mediators, who have also the function of social workers, and nurses - and one activity: workshops.

- **Cultural mediation** | due to the number of sex workers of different nationalities. They are responsible for making contact, and distributing information on health promotion and legal matters.
- **Nurses** | using nurses during outreach work has had extremely positive results. The sex workers can raise different issues or questions that the nurses can then deal with immediately, and sex workers feel much more at ease, as they are in their own surroundings.
- **Workshops** | the workshops are carried out on a spontaneous basis, without previous appointments, “because we learned that sex workers are not always able to commit themselves to specific times”, she said. Workshops can take from 15 to 60

minutes, depending on the time sex workers have available, and are offered to one or more sex workers.

Workshops are run by nurses and cultural mediators, on legal and health issues. The topics discussed arise always from the sex workers’ questions and comments. The health topics range from HIV and STI prevention, safer sex, hygiene and contraceptives, to negotiation skills with clients and the demand for unprotected sex.

■ Materials used

- Distribution of leaflets and brochures developed specially for sex workers.
- Distribution of condoms and lubricants
- The ‘**Nurse’s Bag**’, a bag filled with different objects like different sorts of condoms, lubricants, sponges, dildos, tampons, sealed syringes or needles, intrauterine devices (IUDs), diaphragms, birth control pills, small cards with the names of STI. This bag is used to involve sex workers in conversation and deepen existing knowledge, or tackle unknown topics.

She then presented a one day routine of services with and for sex workers in Hamburg to the participants. The idea was to bring them to her reality and share better the daily experiences of her organization.

In conclusion, she presented what is essential, in her understanding, for sex work projects.

■ What is essential to consider

There are many factors that we have to consider when pretending to offer human rights-based services for sex workers.

- **Network** – develop a wide, trustful and cooperative network of organisations and institutions offering different kinds of services for sex workers. Services that are respectful towards sex workers, that are acquainted and understand their reality. Such services are very important as referral reference points.
- **Documentation** – maintain an organised documentation of the outreach work carried out, in order to follow the changes within the scene and be able to act or react.
- **Continuity** – develop regular and continuous outreach activities to create new contacts and maintain old ones, build up trust and sympathy.
- **Flexibility** – be able to adapt to sex workers' realities and needs, respect their spaces and accept their choices.

GOOD PRACTICES

Another relevant feature of Conecta project is the collection of good practices across the Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Because the concept of good practices is so wide, Veronica Munk was invited to tell more about the principles of good practice for sex work projects.

THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

VERONICA MUNK

After greeting the participants, she said that we call '*good practices*' those actions that have already been carried out, have been evaluated, and proved to have brought positive results for the target group.

Briefly, she spoke about the importance of the attitude applied towards the target group. This attitude has to stand for **non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising and non-criminalising** ways of dealing with sex workers.

It is essential, for her, to **adapt to sex workers' realities and needs**. At last she claimed that **respect** is the fundamental value in service provision.

■ How is good practice defined?

According to the **WHO**, the **World Health Organisation**, the definition of what is a

good practice includes attitudes and actions. They are as follows:

- Adopt a non-judgemental attitude;
- Ensure that sex workers' rights to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity are respected;
- Respect sex workers' human rights and accord them basic dignity;
- Respect sex workers' views, knowledge and life experiences;
- Involve sex workers, and, where appropriate, other community members in all stages of the development and implementation of interventions;
- Recognise that sex workers are usually highly motivated to improve their health and well-being;
- Recognise that sex workers are part of the solution;
- Build capacities and leadership among sex workers in order to facilitate effective participation and community ownership;
- Recognize the role played in HIV transmission by clients and third parties. That means: to target the whole sex work setting, including clients and third parties, rather than only sex workers.

UNESCO, the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*,

defines good practice from a more practical point of view:

- Good practice are innovative activities that create solutions to problems that are consequences of immigration, poverty and/or social exclusion;
- They demonstrate a positive impact on the living conditions of the individuals;
- They contribute to the eradication of social exclusion by involving the participants;
- They are models for generating new policies and initiatives.

According to **TAMPEP**, the criteria that consider activities for sex workers as being a good practice are:

- Respect the diversity of sex workers' environment;
- Include the participation of sex workers in the design, implementation and evaluation of the activity;
- Assure that the intervention has been fully evaluated;
- Assure that the intervention is transferable to other situations and countries.

■ What are good practices for?

Firstly: activities which are considered being a good practice can be a useful tool

to learn new methods and consequently, to improve our work and services offered to sex workers.

Secondly: activities considered as a good practice can disseminate knowledge and positive experiences, as well as offer the practical means for building up partnerships between communities, organisations or institutions.

Two examples of activities defined as 'good practice' were then presented by her.

Club Underpass | An example from Slovakia

WHAT – The **Club Underpass**, an initiative of the NGO Odysseus, was created in 2003 within the red light district of Bratislava. The club was a low-threshold space for female street-based sex workers. It was a room on the ground floor of a small building, like a shop, but without any sign of what was inside. It offered a safe space where sex workers could spend time the way they wanted, before, during or after work.

WHY –The aim of the Club was to respond to sex workers' needs, to use it for advocacy activities and to encourage the development of self-help groups.

HOW – Two sex workers were involved as peer educators and employees. Different types of activities were carried out through the participation of sex workers: the selling

and exchange of second-hand clothes, shoes and cosmetics; self-help groups for sex workers; computer training; English courses; and the preparation of information materials which included a monthly magazine for sex workers.

POSITIVE – The Club was the only place where they could talk freely about positive and negative experiences in their work. It increased their self-esteem and the solidarity among them. A place where they could also buy condoms, get something to eat and drink. The Club made a significant contribution for the promotion of sex workers integration into society.

Cultural asset | An example from Germany

WHAT – An art exhibition of writings, drawings, collages and photos done by female street-based drug-using sex workers in Hamburg. The exhibition ran for one month, in an art gallery within the red light district where the women worked. It was organised by the NGO ragazza, in 2008.

WHY – There were two reasons to carry out this activity. The first one was to empower sex workers by giving them the opportunity to express themselves in different forms. The second reason was to inform the residents of this area about sex work, in order to change their perceptions and their attitudes to drug-using sex workers, because the local residents often

complained and carried out very negative campaigns against the sex workers.

HOW – Sex workers were fully involved in the project. It gave them the opportunity to reflect about their lives, and to share their feelings through different mediums.

POSITIVE – At the opening night, the artists – the sex workers – were at first quite shy. However, when they saw the interest and the admiration people had for their work, they very proudly presented themselves and interacted with the public. This project gave a stigmatised target group space, credibility and empowerment. It was also a very successful strategy to raise local awareness of the situation of sex workers, in a neighbourhood which had a very negative view of them.

■ Applying good practices

She finished her presentation by summing up that, in order to provide human rights-based services to sex workers, organizations and institutions should consider using the following good practice principles:

- **Promote dignity** – because dignity is a basic requirement to combat stigma and discrimination, and to achieve health and social conditions to develop efficient HIV and STI prevention.
- **Promote empowerment** – because empowerment is the process of gaining confidence, self-esteem, understanding, and power to articulate

concerns. Empowerment foresees actions that ensure that people gain control over their own life.

- **Promote peer education** – because peer education encourages sex workers to share health promotion and personal safety information with other sex workers.
- **Provide support** – because support guarantees the response to sex workers' needs and the provision of appropriate services and/or the referring to other services.
- **Promote campaigns to advocate for sex workers rights** – because advocacy work supports sex workers in the defence of their human and civil rights; their access to justice and health. To advocate for sex workers' rights challenges the society, policy makers and the media to change their views and attitudes towards sex workers.

GOOD PRACTICES IN RUSSIA

SERGEY DUGIN

Sergey started with naming the very basic facts about the organizations' work in the field of providing services for sex workers. Thus, he stated that projects on services for sex workers have started in Russia since the years 2000-2001. Then he named the common services for all the organizations in Russia.

In general, NGOs dealing with services for sex workers provide a basic package of services that includes counseling on HIV/STI; distribution of materials (condoms etc.); providing rapid test for HIV; the availability of a hotline for sex workers. After listing the basic services, Sergey mentioned the positive goals that the organization need to aim for.

■ **Promotion of dignity** is educational work aimed at reducing self-stigma among sex workers. During description of the best practices by organizations-participants, it was stated that the activities where sex workers can feel their importance from their involvement in the project (the status of peer counselors, raise of their legal literacy, development of information materials and expressing expert opinions) contributed to the increase of sex workers self-esteem, rehabilitation and dignity as well as raised the value of their profession in their own eyes and supported them to see it as a job, not an offence of law. This approach facilitated forming of a high level of confidence in the organization professionals and attraction of new community members to the project. However, the focus of work with the target community was aimed first of all at greater access to health care services. The socio-psychological component of services, however, is still underdeveloped in the regions. At the same time, being in close cooperation with the medical community,

we have managed to achieve a tolerant attitude of doctors towards sex workers, to create the conditions for sex workers to be accepted at least by this part of the community, which is already important. In the majority of cases, organizations have found ways to work closely with government agencies at the local level, to create a partnership network of trusted professionals, who provide services to sex workers basing on the principles of tolerance and low threshold. Many organizations signed cooperation agreements with official structures, included discussion of the problem of sex workers at various administrative levels and changed the legal framework for the prevention of HIV among sex workers at the local level.

■ **Encouragement of peers.** The organizations that attracted sex workers all stages during development and implementation of the best practices, achieved good results with a possibility of further development of services for sex workers in the region. With the reduction or suspension of funding, a practice was still implemented, based on the enthusiasm of staff and by peer counselors. In cases when sex workers were not full participants in an activity, but sooner passive recipients of services, the results were more modest. Such organizations noted low motivation of sex workers to preserve their lives and health

and low readiness to changes among disadvantages of the best practice. Apparently, a described practice did not correspond fully to the needs of sex workers and they did not consider it as part of their lives, because it was created by other people without their personal contribution. Also, activities of such organizations were interrupted at a stop of funding. In general, organizations recognize the importance of involving sex workers in the programs, but from the analysis of posters it becomes clear that not all of them have the knowledge about how to do it, that is why there is a need in trainings, dedicated to this subject in the regions.

■ **Promotion of campaigns supporting rights of sex workers.** Regions have indicated that among the results of the best practice there was raise of awareness of mass media about the situation in sex industry, as well as the rights of sex workers and their needs. In order to educate the professional community, regional organizations have carried out round tables, workshops and trainings. Many of the survey participants indicated the empowerment of sex workers' access to information about their rights and legal protection. To do this, sex workers were given legal booklets, provided legal advice, legal assistance in court, psychological support and opportunities for independent actions in defense of their rights.

■ **Provision of support.** During implementation of the best practices, the range of services was extended according to the changing needs of sex workers. There was a broad involvement of other organizations in the system of service provision for sex workers. During implementation of the best practices, professionals of different levels were involved: from the federal authorities and representatives of local administrative districts to narrow profile doctors (gynecologists, mammalogists, andrologists). There was formed a trusted community of like-minded professionals who recognize the rights of sex workers and provide them a variety of services. Together there was created a referral system. It is important to note, that among the selected best practices we can state that organizations were more prone to establishing cooperation with government and public organizations, rather than the community of sex workers itself. However, such interaction with a number of institutions has indirectly contributed to the expansion of sex workers' access to friendly services, as well as to the improvement of mutual understanding between representatives of the community of sex workers and representatives of government structures. It has also returned trust of sex workers to the official structures and contributed to their greater medical aid appeal ability, as well as the

raise of the quality of services in such institutions.

Sergey ended his presentation with expressing a hope that all NGOs will learn a lesson from each other's experience and then cooperate all together to improve the situation of sex workers in Russia.

CLOSING OF THE FIRST DAY

The first day of the meeting was concluded by Ms. **Anna Ivanova** from Humanitarian Action. She thanked everyone for the participation and closed the meeting.

SECOND DAY

The second day was an opportunity for participants to deepen their knowledge on specific sex work issues and develop together an advocacy strategy for sex workers in the Russian Federation.

To start discussing the advocacy strategy, Humanitarian Action analyzed thirty seven posters, as presented by organizations that have expertise in sex industry from different Russian regions. Posters were presented by their authors at the national meeting in accordance with the event program.

ANALYSIS OF THE POSTERS PRESENTED BY NATIONAL NETWORK MEMBERS

1. Compliance of the services to the needs of sex workers in Russia

National capacity of Russian organizations is represented by a wide range of services for sex workers that mainly comply with the existing needs of this target community. However, the scope is mixed when comparing the range of services in different regions. Some services are available to sex workers in one the city, but are not available in the other. More services meet the needs of sex workers in those organizations that are actively involving peer counselors from the sex work environment. Services for sex workers in Russia are more focused on

access to health service, and to a lesser extent on social, legal support, as well as services that contribute to the formation of self-organizations of sex employees. Also, currently the services are not gender-sensitive to transgender and male sex workers (MSM).

2. Organizational needs

The most pressing needs of the Russian organizations to provide quality services for sex workers to the extent necessary at the present stage are:

- Financial and technical support
- Regular improvement of professional competence of staff
- Development of peer counselors from the community of sex workers
- Legal support to organizations and program clients
- Change of the legislation against sex workers and NGOs
- State support for prevention programs for sex workers

These requirements are based on priority and importance on the national level. The existing hierarchy of needs is a reflection of the financial and political crisis of NGOs that provide services to sex workers in Russia.

3. Effect of legislation

The expert opinion of the involved representatives of organizations indicates the main legislative and related

vulnerability factors relevant to sex workers in Russia:

- Criminalization of sex work (prostitution is an administrative offense and shall be punishable by a fine or arrest for 15 days).
- Legislative initiatives to strengthen the criminalization in Russia (adoption of the law in some areas to ban promotion of homosexuality, lawmaking for the punishment of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, reporting by health professionals about the sex work involvement of their patients to the police)
- Institutionalization of discrimination by law enforcement agencies (raids detentions in workplaces of sex workers, involvement of sex workers as witnesses against their equal counterparts)
- Impunity for perpetrators of crimes against sex workers
- Lack of laws on the integration of migrants in Russia
- Lack of public prevention programs among sex workers
- Moralizing influence of religious leaders on legislation against the interests of sex workers.

The most acute discrimination laws affect the most vulnerable groups of sex workers: those working on the streets, drug users, migrants. Often these groups are used by law enforcement agencies to implement the plans to apprehend and punish the perpetrators, exclusion (removal) of these groups beyond city limits. Since the proof

of prostitution work is difficult to find, sex workers are punished for the actions they did not commit: disorderly conduct, possession of drugs, crossing the roads in the wrong places, etc.

It is clear that the Russian legislation is discriminatory as it negatively affects the position of sex workers in the society. Purpose of the Law for which they were created - protection of public health, public safety, reduction in the number of sex workers was a disaster. However, the State continues to be guided by ineffective laws, exacerbating the vulnerability of citizens, contributing to damaging the public health, spreading stigma and having no effect on the reduction of the number of sex workers. Preventive laws morally belittle the sex workers and prevent them from doing what they like while being accepted in society, prevent them from accessing comprehensive medical services and thus indirectly support spreading the infectious diseases in the population.

Positive results of advocacy consist of the inclusion of sex workers as a target group in the state programs of HIV prevention in a number of regions along with the release of funding for public institutions that provide services to sex workers. Official permission by local authorities to carry prevention programs allows to freely conduct outreach in the community of sex workers. The existing law criminalising

liability for sexual and physical abuse provides grounds (for NGOs) to request the state compliance with these guarantees, when sex workers are victims. The same goes for government guarantees to provide free HIV and STI treatment.

4. Recommendations of national experts

Recommendations of national organizations' representatives are focused on decriminalization of sex work, from easing the penalties for engaging in prostitution to full legalization. It is evident that the prohibitions have clearly negative consequences for the people of this profession. It would be an effective alternative solution to direct the government's efforts to develop programs that create safe working conditions for sex workers including crisis centers, prevention measures, and specialized agencies offering health services for sex workers.

As noted by the respondents, positive results would be achieved by education of the sex workers community representatives as well as the development of activism by peer counselors. The authors of the posters recognize the importance of capacity development of the community of sex workers in order to defend their rights and confront the epidemic of HIV infection among equals.

On the other hand advocacy with law enforcement agencies will help reduce cases of illegal detention and fines.

At the same time it is important to ensure the direct dialogue with public authorities, to seek not only the divisive but also the combining aspects of relationships between politicians and NGOs that conduct advocacy for the rights of sex workers, to provide options for mutual cooperation, to share expertise, make evidence-based suggestions for improving the legal framework that affects the well-being of sex workers.

Representatives of national organizations consider consolidated advocacy for the rights of sex workers as an integral part of the way forward. Due to the lack of public funding for comprehensive prevention programs, it is necessary to attract international donors to financially support the cooperation and expansion of services for sex workers.

According to the experts, developing and maintaining a single national database for the cases of HIV infection among sex workers, registration of the cases of violence, violations of rights and the services provided will allow for reliable information across the country and strengthen the evidence base to improve remote communication between partner organizations.

Detailed consideration is required for the legal framework and policies concerning sex workers, and documentation of its impact on the sex industry with further intervention at the legislative level.

Features of the prostitution scene

All of the organizations represented at the training cover at least 28363 sex workers (some organizations provided data only for 2011, while others for several years). The number of sex workers in Russia is estimated at about one million. Thus the percentage of coverage of the target group by the organizations represented is at 2.8%.

There is an active migration of sex workers from the countryside to the city.

There is transition from heroin to a large number of alternative drugs manufactured on the basis of medical drugs.

Most of the sex workers are working indoors or in an escort service.

In-door sex workers can go to work on the street, if there is lack of orders or for whatever reason they leave the workplace and began to work independently.

Migration from the premises to the street and back is constant. In the Siberian region such movement of sex workers is related to weather conditions in the area. Because of the cold winter, a part of sex workers from

the streets goes to work in saunas or hotels.

Street-based sex work is dominated by locals - non-migrants, who use drugs.

Sex workers are a very diverse group by gender, sexual orientation, level of education and age composition.

Sex business also takes over the internet. Sex workers receive requests for services through the internet; they organize themselves in groups, rent apartments and service the customers.

Conclusions

There is evidence of very low national capacity of reaching the sex workers with the prevention programs. Nevertheless, even in a small group it was possible to work out effective models and best practices, which is a strong advocacy resource.

Most organizations do not possess the expertise of the complete scene of prostitution, and have fragmentary data on the groups they can reach. This study allowed making the picture much more transparent and improving the national network members' competence.

Because of the changing scenes of prostitution (sex workers moving indoors, use of pharmaceutical drugs), the access to the prevention programs' target groups worsened. It is required to develop

adequate tools covering those hard to reach sex worker groups, and disseminate best practices across the Russian regions, where the experience can be applied.

The described regional needs fully meet the regional action plan of the Conecta project: best practices manual development, manual for training of equal (peer) consultants on, national mapping of the prostitution scene, trainings for the network members, and a unified advocacy strategy. This suggests that the results of the project are in demand by the regional organizations; upon implementation of the national plan the capacity of the Russian organizations will be greatly strengthened, and the ability to provide services for sex workers will be taken to the next level.

NGO AND SEX WORKER ACTIVISM & ADVOCACY

The role of NGOs and sex workers is different when considering advocacy strategies but equally relevant for both. NGOs as part of civil society may be composed by sex workers and even be directed by sex workers; however, this is not the case of the large majority of NGOs in the Russian Federation. Most of the NGOs contacted provide services to sex workers and some include advocacy activities as part of their regular work.

‘Supporting sex worker organizations such as Silver Rose in their advocacy actions

should be an imperative for overcoming the actual barriers for sex workers.’

Conecta seeks to connect NGOs and sex workers in a same platform where interests are shared and decision-making strategies are taken in an equal footing. For this reason, Ms. **Irina Maslova** was invited to present the work of Silver Rose, and specifically their claims.

THE WORK OF SILVER ROSE

IRINA MASLOVA

The group initially discussed together with Irina the **definition of sex work** and analyzed the possibility of using such a concept for advocacy purposes in the Russian Federation.

Although the group was not unanimous regarding the acceptance of the term ‘sex work’ as it is defined by international organizations and sex worker movement, Irina recalled that: **sex work is work**. For her, acknowledging this is fundamental. Moreover, she stated that **prostitution** is only used when discussing legal frameworks, and **sex work** for advocacy goals.

For her, the term sex work should always be used in preference to prostitution, since sex workers prefer to be called in this way.

Moreover, she stated that even if the laws in the Russian Federation prohibit prostitution, this does not impede them to claim for sex workers' human rights.

Some participants asked whether the term sex work embraces or not under aged persons. Irina clarified this question saying that no. By definition sex work only refers to adults above 18 years old.

The discussion moved on to the topic of **high levels of violence against sex workers** in the Russian Federation. The links between violence and sex workers' right to health were also explored. Where violence takes place, vulnerability to HIV, for example, is higher. Irina recalled that all advocacy work of NGOs in the Russian Federation should be done in the sense of reducing violence by decriminalizing sex work and improving their working conditions and situation of sex workers. Discrimination and stigma against them should also be fought.

Regarding advocacy work in the Russian Federation, Irina asked for the **cooperation** of the present organizations in the campaign against violence in the **17th of December the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers**. She is aware about delicate political situation in the Russian Federation, and that NGOs cannot individually promote sex workers' rights but, according to her,

'they can support sex workers that wish to fight for their rights.'

In relation to Silver Rose, Irina mentioned briefly that:

■ **The general aims of Silver Rose are**

- To promote human rights
- To provide trustful contacts for sex workers (referral system)
- To promote peer education and peer support
- To promote access to justice

■ **The main barriers are**

- Low motivation of sex workers to protect their own health
- Financial instability | donors and funds are leaving Russia and the government rarely supports projects for sex workers
- Lack of human resources
- Repressive legislation towards key populations

Irina finalized her presentation on **how to work with governmental officials**. For better results, she asked for the cooperation and networking among NGOs in the Russian Federation.

ADVOCACY WORK AND SERVICE PROVISION IN THE MIDDLE OF CRIMINALIZATION-FRIENDLY POLICY ATMOSPHERE

JAANA KAUPPINEN

Still in track with the main goal of this section that is: to discuss the roles of NGOs and sex workers in advocacy strategies, Conecta project invited Jaana Kauppinen, the Director of Pro-Tukipiste, which is based in Helsinki, Finland.

She first described the political situation in Finland and in the Scandinavian region:

Situation

In Finland sex work is restricted in many ways in different laws and the possibilities to work legally are very limited. This far Finland has not adopted the general ban of purchasing sexual services but the debate on it has started again last spring. The Minister of Justice has started a process by opening the public discussion about the functionality of the current legislation and need for adopting the Swedish model. The Minister of Internal Affairs has supported her initiative.

At the same time the increased pressure “to do something to prostitution problem in Helsinki” is going on. The public concern has focused on the street and on the sex bar scenes. It has meant intensified police operations in the area and the tightened

license practices and opening hours for the bars. The most common arguments is that controlling the most visible forms of the sex work is efficient way to prevent and to fight against trafficking in human beings. The target is to reduce prostitution by making the business for the bars and working conditions for the sex workers so difficult that they are no more lucrative options.

Increased control has promoted restrictive policy and punitive attitudes especially towards migrant sex workers. The whole scene has reorganized and become more clandestine. The outreach work has become more difficult. Finnish police used to have good reputation among migrant sex workers but nowadays women are reluctant to report any serious crimes against them.

After that, the Finish guest described in which way advocacy work is done by Pro-Tukipiste. Moreover, she called for the **need of strengthening cooperation between sex work projects in Finland and in Russia**, especially because high numbers of Russian sex workers migrate and work in Finland.

She also invited Russian participants of Conecta project to visit Pro-Tukipiste’s headquarters in Helsinki. In sequence, **she explained the role of advocacy in Pro-Tukipiste.**

Advocacy

About the increased police control in Helsinki Pro-tukipiste has collected information about the situation and made a complaint behalf of the concerned women. Even if the women didn't want to give out their names the complaints were accepted and it proceeded as a civil society activity and advocacy work. The complaints were sent to the Counselor of Justice, to the Ombudsman of Minorities and to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The legal department of the Ministry of Interior has requested for a clarification from the Governing Board of the Police Force about how (the ways in which) Helsinki Police has interfered and act upon prostitution. The Ministry has also requested specification about the measures for identification of the potential victims of trafficking. The answer to the complaints is expected to come before the end of this year.

The promotion of general ban has required broad and active advocacy activities as well. Because the Finnish sex workers organisation Salli terminated its activities at the end of 2010, Pro-tukipiste has been a kind of a coordinative link between different activists and allies who oppose the general ban. The advocacy activities have been like writing blogs, publishing articles and links to information about the consequences of restrictive prostitution policy, lobbying the policy makers and

organizing public events to promote sex workers rights instead of increasing criminalization. We have also encouraged different activist groups and human rights organisations to join the activities. Among the activists there are individual sex workers and we share information between us and inform each other about the becoming activities and the events. We have also given some tips how to cope with the media and what to consider when sending the opinion writings to newspapers and other print media. There are also a long Nordic cooperation tradition and we invite sex workers from other Nordic countries to attend the events and seminars in Finland.

In relation to service provision, Jaana pointed out the necessity of service providers to adapt to sex workers' several working situations, diversifying forms of doing outreach.

Service provision

Restrictive prostitution policy and strict immigration policy have meant that the new and innovative service provision practices are needed. The whole sex work scene has shifted mainly to indoors and the general attitude especially among the migrant sex workers is suspicious towards the Finnish authorities. The possibilities to do outreach work have become harder and gaining trust takes more time. More and

more people have started to work (also) in the Internet.

The basic services Pro-tukipiste has are drop-ins, outreach work (in the streets, bars and massage parlours, internet chat rooms), e-counselling automat Probotti24/7 and special support services for victims of trafficking. The services are available in Finnish, in Russian, in Estonian, in Thai, in English and in Spanish. The website is in Finnish, in English and in Russian. (www.pro-tukipiste.fi; Pro-tukipiste's services can be found in www.pro-helsinki.fi and www.pro-tampere.fi).

Jaana thanked all the participants and welcomed them to Helsinki.

SEX WORK AND HUMAN RIGHTS

DENNIS VAN WANROOIJ

This presentation dealt with the topic of 'Sex work and Human Rights'.

Dennis started asking: why should we be here today discussing human rights laws? The answer is very simple: because laws matter. Laws can regulate and protect but they can also dispossess people of their dignity. Laws matter in a way that they can have serious impacts on certain groups of the population, especially the most vulnerable.

He then introduced the participants to the relation between the topics of sex work and human rights. Sex workers are well-known for being a vulnerable group, which means that their risk to violence and HIV infection is higher than in the general population. Moreover, discrimination and lack of access to health services are other factors that increase this group's vulnerability. Due to their greater vulnerability in society, they are also more vulnerable before the law. Any law against them has potentially higher impacts on their safety and well-being.

Throughout the years sex work has been framed in the context of human rights by sex worker advocates and allies. The story of this movement is not recent and it can be traced back to the 70s.

In 2005, during a European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration in Brussels, Belgium, 120 sex workers and 80 allies from 30 countries came together to formulate the claim: *Sex Workers' Rights are Human Rights*.

But which human rights do sex workers claim? Which are the violations of human rights against them? How can NGOs address this issue? These are all questions were addressed by his presentation.

To start this discussion, first it must be understood that sex work is by definition consensual sex. Non-consensual sex is not sex work; it is sexual violence or forced labour.

“We are talking about a profession, even when it is not recognized as such by national laws”, he said.

This is particularly important for the Russian Federation, as well as the following questions that were answered by him.

■ **But why are sex workers entitled to human rights? Is it because they are workers?**

No. Because they are human! All human beings are entitled to human rights, no matter their status in society.

■ **Are sex workers entitled to human rights anywhere?**

In principle they are, but states must ratify human rights treaties first. **Governments are only bound to the international treaties that they have ratified.** Most states have ratified the major human rights treaties, such as Russia and Ukraine. If they have ratified these treaties they must respect, protect, and fulfill the rights that are in that treaty, for example the right to health or the right to be protected from violence and arbitrary arrest or detention.

In spite of all these international laws, he said, sex workers are often victims of human rights violations; this is due to unsafe working conditions, bad laws, among other reasons, and not because of

the profession itself. Sex workers should never be seen as passive and helpless victims, they should be empowered to claim for their human rights as any other citizen. They are capable to act for change and for self-determination.

‘Violence and discrimination can lead to human rights violations’, he said.

Violence against sex worker takes several forms which are physical, economic, verbal and psychological. Discrimination often affects sex workers private life and increases stigma attached to the profession. Not all forms of violence and discrimination, however, may constitute a violation to human rights.

Moreover, although there are multi-forms of perpetrators (client, relatives, friends, co-workers, owner/manager of the setting, traffickers, police, public authorities, service providers, etc); human rights violations against sex workers can only be claimed against states.

The state is responsible to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights in the treaties they ratified. In other words, by ratifying these treaties they made promises and they can be kept accountable to keep these promises. This means that the state may not take measures that violate or undermine the human rights of sex workers. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the state that the police or other state

authorities do not violate sex workers human rights, but also to protect people from human rights violations by others.

■ **What are the most important international documents that can be used on behalf of sex workers, in order to ensure their human rights?**

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)
- European Social Charter (ESC)

He continued saying that each one of these treaties has a **supervisory committee**. States have to report to these committees on how they are putting the rights in the treaty into practice, but also NGOs can report to these bodies, for example by writing a comment on the state report. This is called a '**shadow report**'. Human rights committees are very interested in these reports as states tend to present things more rosy than they are in reality. NGOs can inform the committee on how things really are. In some cases one can

also make a complaint about human rights violations to these bodies and ask them to investigate this complaint. The European Convention on human rights even has its own court that can make binding judgements in individual cases.

Depending on the form of violation, one can advocate that specific human rights norms are violated.

For example, the lack of counseling for HIV tests would be a violation of a) Right to Equality and Non-discrimination; b) Right to Information; and c) Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health. These rights are all prescribed by human rights treaties. The content of each of these rights deserves special attention of those who advocate for such rights. Advocating for human rights is not an easy task, for different reasons.

The main one is that it is not easy to force states to uphold these rights, even when they are recognized by the state. This means that the process might take long and not all human rights violations will lead to reparation of victim's rights but, in a long-term term, it contributes to change the situation of those who are more affected by violence, stigma, and discrimination.

The role of the NGOs in this process is to support the empowerment of sex workers in order to make them more aware of their human rights, to keep their

governments accountable for the human rights promises they made and sometimes directly represent sex workers in human rights bodies that admit forms of investigation. NGOs can also play an active role in reviewing the government's reports on the implementation of the treaties they have ratified. Shadow reports are often issued by NGOs in response to the real situation faced by certain groups in relation to specific human rights.

He ended his presentation with a wish of improving the situation by promoting human rights among sex workers in Russia. In sequence, the video **EQUAL RIGHTS** was screened for the participants.²

The video was screened in Russian, but it is available in 16 languages.

The video EQUAL RIGHTS is a rights-based empowerment tool for sex workers and, at the same time, a tool to raise community awareness for sex workers' rights. By protecting sex workers' human rights we are supporting the improvement of the working and living conditions of sex workers.

It was developed to have a positive message that would go against current misconceptions of sex work, misguided with violence, victimization or trafficking.

² A full access to the video is available through the link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R2VEIkTHo&feature=plcp>.

The main idea of this video is to present a parallel between sex work and another work, socially accepted, addressing features that were similar and advocating for the need to respect sex work as work too. Sex workers should be entitled to the same rights as other workers. 'The right to work, to good working conditions, to be respected, to fair pay, to choose and refuse clients and to safety' are inspired by the principles of human rights and for this reason we call sex workers rights to be respected, protected and fulfilled just like in any other profession.

So, EQUAL RIGHTS was constructed within the framework of a rights-based and justice-based sex worker empowerment purpose.

EQUAL RIGHTS aims to combat discriminatory, victimizing, condescending and stigmatizing attitudes towards sex workers, which do not reflect sex workers' reality and voice. At same time, it increases sex workers' confidence, self-respect, pride and self-determination, as basic conditions for the exercise of their full citizenship.

EQUAL RIGHTS is the result of a process in which sex workers, health and social workers, as well as people that have no relation to sex work, were involved, persons living in the nine European countries that constitute the INDOORS project.³

³ See: www.indoor-project.eu

After this brief discussion on the key message of the video, Licia was invited to present the last contents of the day.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RIGHTS FOR SEX WORKERS – TAMPEP'S PERSPECTIVES

LICIA BRUSSA

This was the first statement of Dr. Brussa: violence against male, female and transgender sex workers is universal. It occurs in different ways and to different degrees everywhere. It is worst where commercial sex is heavily criminalised, police are ill disciplined and government fails to respect the rights of its citizens.

The scope of violence against male, female and transgender sex workers includes physical violence, rape and extortion by criminals, police, and other uniformed men; arbitrary confiscation of property; structural violence such as registration and mandatory HIV testing; torture including unlawful incarceration and detention, forced medical procedures, deprivation of medications and other extra judicial killings. Lack of protection means that sex workers are more vulnerable to robbery, domestic and other kinds of violence.

■ Vulnerabilities

The most significant factor regarding sex workers' vulnerability to HIV is the high and disproportionate levels of violence

and abuse identified across the region.

The spectrum of police violations reported by sex workers in the region is impressive, ranging from verbal abuse and compulsory testing to illegal detentions, sexual exploitation and torture, including rape and multiple assaults. One other common practice of the police, which was reported by sex workers, is the legal and illegal confiscation of condoms. **Condom confiscation is a grave repercussion on sex workers' lives and health.** At times when more police raids are carried out, sex workers opted not to carry condoms because they were afraid it would mean problems with police, she said.

Sex workers often believe the authorities are only there to hurt or harass them, regardless of the circumstances. Therefore, although rape is a crime, many sex workers do not seek justice or otherwise pursue their accusations through the national judicial systems. The police practically do not register raping or robbery reported by sex workers, because by [their] definition sex workers cannot be raped. And be murder is, in many cases, also considered as a risk which is part of the job. The high majority of sex workers reported experiencing physical and psychological violence from their clients.

Violence against sex workers must be understood in a wider context of gender and stigma and as gender based violence.

The main reasons for that vulnerability are the level of dependency and the weak legal position of many sex workers.

Because of that, she stated that, escalating state repression and criminalization of sex work has made sex workers more vulnerable to STI/HIV in several ways. It has forced them into working in clandestine and unsafe spaces, reducing their access to health care and prevention measures and undermining their dignity. Societal homophobia, laws against homosexuality and the absence of legal protection from discrimination are serious barriers for transgender and male sex workers to access sexual health services and information. These problems are usually heightened for migrant sex workers, particularly if they are undocumented. The discourse merging sex work and trafficking has been used to justify restrictions on migration and prostitution.

Injecting Drug Users sex workers and sex workers with HIV faced the highest level of discrimination when contacting health care providers. Examples of reported discrimination included negative and obstructive attitudes on the part of providers, negligence, high prices, and denial of provision of necessary health care services.

Cases of mandatory STI/HIV testing and breaches of confidentiality are also common, she said. Laws that criminalize sexually transmission of infections pose a

particular threat to sex workers. Sex workers found to be HIV positive can be charged for public health offences.

One of the biggest barriers in the last years is the lack of political commitment and governmental responses focused on reducing sex workers' vulnerability to violence as an important factor affecting the vulnerability of sex workers to HIV/STI and the absence of adequate public health approaches that are appropriate for HIV and violence prevention programmes.

Ms Brussa finalized her presentation presenting experiences of sex work projects that worked out and reached successful goals and some recommendations of international organizations and experts in the field of HIV prevention among sex workers.

What works?

- Train and sensitize police and other law enforcement officers on human rights of sex workers, violence prevention, rights of transgender people and men having sex with men, and proper documenting and processing of cases of violence. They need to be transformed into 'agents of change' who protect sex workers from violence.
- Support sex worker organizations in their capacity building and organizational development in order to ensure mutual support and solidarity between sex

workers and sharing of information and effective strategies.

- Set up drop-in centre for female, male and transgender sex workers that provide trainings on human rights and violence prevention, including practical self defense methods and tips and provide support to address violence. Preventing violence at the personal level requires, first and foremost, that sex workers believe they do not deserve violence and that they can help prevent it.

- Support sex workers who have faced violence, to move from 'victim' to 'survivor' through harm and trauma-reduction strategies including sexual assault counseling, first aid, emotional support, practical support (such as shelter, child care), and support to document, report or take legal action.

- Document cases of violence against sex workers and use them for awareness rising with other civil society organizations, liaison with law enforcement officers, and advocacy.

- Organize warning system of aggressive and dangerous clients is an effective information sharing strategy that sex worker-led projects use to prevent and document violence. Sex workers draw up descriptions of violent clients that are posted at prominent places so that other sex workers can avoid such clients. In some case the list is shared with the police for further action.

- Train outreach workers on how to prevent and deal with violence.

- Sensitize and mobilize agents in the sex industry (managers, taxi drivers) in violence prevention.

- Complementary programme that target clients of sex workers, through mass media campaigns and targeted behavior change communication activities to address violence prevention. These programs need to be designed to include men and boys in advocacy to end violence against sex workers. They can be funded through allocations for general program addressing gender based violence.

- Is also crucial also to form partnerships and review policies and laws that keep sex workers from accessing HIV services and sexual and reproductive health services. Sex workers must be part of this process.

Final recommendations

- Governments should publicly speak out against violence against sex workers, including from state actors, and include the elimination of violence against sex workers in all HIV prevention programme and include sex workers' vulnerability to violence and HIV in all violence prevention programmes. In all cases, such programmes need to be strengthened and scaled up.

- Sex work interventions must be central to scaling up the HIV and anti-violence

responses and listening to sex workers is crucial. Sex workers experience firsthand the effects of laws and harmful enforcement practices that violate their human rights and hamper progress on HIV.

■ Enabling sex workers to openly access prevention services with dignity must be part of every national HIV programme. Revising and renewing laws and policies and addressing structural response to prevent violence will enhance the effectiveness of HIV prevention, improve access to health services, including reproductive health, and reduce violence against sex workers.

STEP 1 - WORKSHOPS ON SWOT METHOD

After carrying out several presentations, Mr. **Sergey**, from HA, together with Mrs. **Jaana**, from Pro-Tukipiste, discussed with the group about the possibility of developing a SWOT exercise with the participants in order to understand better the actual situation of sex work projects in Russia and how to develop together strategies to overcome barriers that impede sex workers' access to health and social services.

WHAT IS MEANT BY SWOT ANALYSIS?

General definition

SWOT analysis (Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats) is a strategy analysis tool. For example, it combines the study of the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, a geographical area, or a sector, with the analysis of the opportunities and threats to their environment. As such, it is instrumental in development strategy formulation. For strategy, this approach takes into account internal and external factors, with a view to maximizing the potential of strengths and opportunities, while minimizing the impact of weaknesses and threats.

RATIONALE OF SWOT ANALYSIS

	<i>Positive aspect</i>	<i>Negative aspect</i>
Internal factors	Strengths	Weaknesses
External factors	Opportunities	Threats



Participants and SWOT exercise

steps for a better joint advocacy strategy for sex work projects in Russia.

STEP 2 – Results of the SWOT exercise and workshop

After this exercise, the group came up with a broader picture of the weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and advantages for the further development sex work projects in Russia.

The items listed by the participants were used to compose the group's advocacy plan that was presented and discussed in the third day of the meeting.

CLOSING OF THE SECOND DAY

The second day of the meeting was concluded by Mr. **Sergey Dugin** from Humanitarian Action. He thanked everyone for the participation in the meeting and recalled that, on the third day, participants will be part of a joint discussion about the

THIRD DAY

STEP 3 – Strategy for Advocacy in the Russian Federation

In the final day of the meeting, Mr. **Serguey**, presented the main results achieved with the SWOT exercise. As a result, the group came up with the following main goal for the Russian Platform of Sex Work Projects:



Remove stigma and discrimination on the part of the professional communities in relation to sex workers.

According to the group, stigma and discrimination pose severe barriers for sex workers' access services in the country.

The group, however, recognised that this is a long term strategy. In order to scale up the main goal, the group proposed establishing and strengthening partnerships and collaboration with health-related experts and specialists in various fields, heads of public health agencies and policy makers.

The main barriers for this common goal were listed as follows:

- Negative attitude to NGOs as to foreign agents, from the part of the government
- Negative attitude to NGOs from the part of decision-makers (distrust)
- Overload of specialists from professional communities
- Lack of support of officials working in the executive authority and directors of core establishments, who are directed to help the targeted group

The group is aware of the difficulties to set up an operational platform for sex worker projects in the country, but this initiative is believed to provide them the necessary tools to overcome the actual situation of sex worker projects, sex work, and sex workers in the Russian Federation. For the goal of removing stigma and discrimination on the part of the professional community in relation to sex workers, the group is committed to reflect upon the following strategies:

The main strategies that the group came with are:

- Use the trust, experience, and skills acquired throughout services for sex workers to build up cooperations with the professional community, experts, and expand the contact and coverage with sex workers.
- Identify the problems that arise from the experts from the professional community to work with the target group and develop a component of work, including the preparation of a customer to a contact and interaction with the specialist.
- Carry out permanent monitoring activities on the quality of the services provided from all parts: NGOs, and Governmental Institutions. It is fundamental to prepare and professionalize those who work with the target groups in the field, including outreachers, peer educators, etc.
- Strengthening a systematic cooperation and communication system between the NGO directors and specialists from governmental institutions (GOs).
- Recognize the overloaded capacity of NGOs and GOs specialists and create a model to support each other in a more effective manner. Make visible the needs and the methods to overcome the service provision barriers.
- Organize and improve the evidence-informed (legal) documentation and scientific works in order to build up a trustful dialogue with governmental institutions and agencies.
- Develop training programmes for the professional communities' regarding the peculiarities of sex work and sex workers. Other activities should also be developed such as informational and educative campaigns for professional communities.
- Strengthen the regional capacity by building up partnerships, referral systems, expertise, and possibly develop cross-regional cooperations among multiple stakeholders, including specialists, head of NGOs, and institutions.
- Permanent monitoring of the needs of the target group.
- Development of trainings for advocacy methods, collect good practices, and implement and adapt these tools according to the different regions/contexts of the country, and relevant stakeholders.
- Creation of tailored-made informational resources and materials for sex workers and for professional communities.
- Establishing a national and organizational diversified fund-raising strategy in alternative to the Global Funds. Other foreign funds should be accessed instead.

■ Strengthen the visibility and credibility of NGOs' programmes by making use of existing cooperations and partnerships among policy makers and heads of institutions to promote the inclusion of sex worker issue and services in the regular budget line on the municipal, regional, and federal levels.

■ Promote and establish self-organized sex worker communities and representatives on the local level for strengthening the partnership with service providers.

■ Create a digital platform for the exchange of resources and knowledge among organizations in the country.

Furthermore, for the better structuring the organizations (NGOs), the group recommended the following:

■ Advocacy trainings must be carried out among staff members of NGOs

■ A glossary with the internationally recognised concepts related to sex work should be better studied, as well as culturally and region-specific terminology should be developed

■ NGOs in Russia should develop their organisations with sustainable funding methods

■ NGOs in Russia should be aware of the political situation of the country and

develop activities and strategies which are in line with the current legislation

■ Professionalization of NGOs' staff members should be sought and recognised by the State; moreover, staff members should be trained on how to deal with the governmental institutions and authorities

■ Staff members should be trained to attend the specific needs of the target group and new approaches and methods should be developed and tested

■ Organisations should plan and conduct regular administrative and project meetings

■ Organisations should develop referral and reporting systems in all levels

CLOSING OF THE LAST DAY

The meeting was closed by Dr. **Licia Brussa**.

In conclusion, she stated that the main structural problems faced by sex workers are identified and recognized by the participants such as: stigma, violence, arbitrary arrest, illegal confiscation of money and other arbitrary practices from the police. High level of mobility and additional vulnerability of the migrant sex workers without papers were also acknowledged by the group.

She said that participants agree upon the fact that police attitude and legal provisions that criminalize sex work are the

major threats that increase sex workers' vulnerability and create barriers to access of services and legal protection.

The characteristics of sex work presented by the different regions showed various forms of sex work, and it was reported that the HIV prevalence rates are high, particularly, in relation to IDU street sex workers.

Moreover, she said that the participants recognize the many gaps existing in the prevention and support services, particularly by male and transgender sex workers and the low coverage in prevention and care due to the difficult financial situation of the majority of the organizations with sex work components. However, according to her, prevention and support services provided by these projects include development and distribution of IEC materials, medical and social services, treatment for drug dependence, outreach work and in some situation peer education and others community-based educational activities.

Sex workers' needs are in relation to four main areas of service provision: medical, social, legal and working situation (unsafe working environments). The participants recognize the needs of involving sex workers and the need of creating a safe working environment that supports self-determination and self-organisation of sex workers.

Dr. Brussa finalized the meeting affirming that the aim of this meeting was to strengthen the cooperation and enhance informal networking between the participants and organizations involved. The results of the SWOT exercise can be seen as a first step for an effective advocacy strategy for the country.

The closing ceremony was done by a common commitment of the group to use the tool of CONECTA website⁴ in order to strengthen the capacities of the organizations in the country.

Mr. Sergey and Dr. Brussa handed in the certificates of attendance and later they filled out an evaluation form about the meeting.



⁴ www.conectaproject.eu

ANNEX

1. The Programme

2. The Profile of International Speakers

3. The List of Participants

4. Evaluation of the Participants

Annex 1 – The Programme

CONECTA

National Capacity Building Meeting on Sex Work

Final Programme

7 November to 9 November 2012, St Petersburg, Russia

Vedensky Hotel ■ 37, Bolshoy prospekt Petrogradskaya storona ■ +7 (812) 332-42-22 ■ <http://www.alrosa-hotels.ru/en/hotels/st-petersburg>

Tuesday / 6 November 2012

18.00 – 20.00

Arrival day. Informal welcome, 1st round registration for external participants (outside St Petersburg).

Humanitarian Action staff will assist you.

Wednesday / 7 November 2012

TIME	Activity	Content	Facilitators & Speakers	Place	
CHAIR FOR THE DAY: Anna Ivanova					
9.00 – 9.30	Second round registration day 1	Second round of registration for local participants (from St Petersburg)	Anna Chihacheva, Humanitarian Action (HA)	Entrance of the plenary room	
9.30 – 9.50	Opening	Welcome to the participants	Licia Brussa, TAMPEP Sergey Dugin, HA	Plenary room	
9.50 – 10.10	Warm-Up		Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room	
10.10 – 10.20	Introduction to the meeting	Review of the agenda and purpose of the meeting	Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room	
10.20 – 10.40	Introduction to CONECTA project	Overview of the contents of the project	Dennis van Wanrooij, TAMPEP	Plenary room	
10.40 – 11.10	Sex Work in Russia: from the sex workers' perspectives	Overview of the Russian sex work situation and main issues	Irina Maslova, Silver Rose	Plenary room	

11.10 – 11.30	Break			
11.30 – 13.00	Poster presentations on local situations	Oblast exchange - participants discuss each other's posters and resources	Polina Girchenko, HA Anna Chihacheva, HA	Plenary room
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch			
14.00 – 14.40	Presentation Interim results of the national mapping on sex work	Intermediary results of the national assessment on sex work	Polina Girchenko, HA	Plenary room
14.40 – 15.10	Consultation Debate on the results and conclusion	Free debate	Polina Girchenko, HA	Plenary room
15.10 – 15.30	Break			
15.30 – 16.30	Presentations Comprehensive human rights-based services for sex workers	Diversity within the sex industry (gender, working conditions, working places, human rights abuses, etc)	Licia Brussa, TAMPEP Veronica Munk, TAMPEP-Germany Irina Maslova, Silver Rose	Plenary room
16.30 – 17.10	Presentations Good Practices in Russia	Presentation on the principles of good practices (TAMPEP) Presentation of the results collected (HA)	Veronica Munk, TAMPEP-Germany Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room
17.10 – 17.40	Consultation Debate on the presentations and	Free debate	Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room

	conclusion			
17.40 – 18.00	Closing comments	Sum up of the day	Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room
18.00	Dinner together			

Thursday / 8 November 2012

TIME	Activity	Content	Facilitators & Speakers	Place
CHAIR FOR THE DAY: Polina Girchenko				
9.00 – 9.30	Registration of day 2		Anna Chihacheva, HA	Entrance of the plenary room
9.30 – 9.40	Introduction	Review of agenda and purpose of each session	Polina Girchenko, HA	Plenary room
09.40 – 10.10	Discussion on the differences and common features of sw projects in Russia	Discussion based on the analysis of the contents of the poster presentations	Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room
10.10 – 11.10	Identification of the gaps in the services and barriers to access: legal, services capacities, sex work environment	In 3 items workshops participants will analyse and identify the main gaps in services provisions and the barriers for equal access relate to: legal, services capacity, sex work settings	Anna Ivanova, HA	Workshop in 3 groups

11.10 – 11.30	Break			
11.30 – 12.15	Results of the workshops			Plenary room
12.15 – 13.40	NGO and sex worker activism & advocacy	Experiences and lesson learned from Pro-Tukipiste, Finland: methodology, initiatives, and impacts of the laws (45min) National experiences Silver Rose: community mobilization, sw activism, and priorities for advocacy (40min)	Jaana Kauppinen, Pro-Tukipiste (Finland) Irina Maslova, Silver Rose	Plenary room
13.40 – 14.40	Lunch			
14.40 – 15.40	Sex work and Human Rights	Basic principles, legal instruments Open discussion Presentation of the video 'Equal Rights'	Dennis van Wanrooij, TAMPEP	Plenary
15.40 – 16.40	Addressing violence against sex workers	Implications of violence to HIV vulnerability Open discussion	Licia Brussa, TAMPEP	Plenary
16.40 – 17.00	Break			
17.00 – 18.00	Final conclusions on advocacy in Russia	Scaling up of the effective strategies	Anna Ivanova, HA Irina Maslova, Silver Rose	Plenary
18.00	Dinner			

Friday / 9 November 2012

TIME	Activity	Content	Facilitators & Speakers	Place
CHAIR FOR THE DAY: Anna Chihacheva				
9.00 – 9.30	Registration of day 3		Anna Chihacheva, HA	Entrance of the plenary room
09.30 – 09.40	Introduction	Review of agenda and purpose of each session	Anna Chihacheva, HA	Plenary room
09.40 – 10.00	Warm-up		Anna Ivanova, HA	Plenary room
10.00 – 11.30	Advocacy training section	How to create an advocacy strategy to meet the actual national challenges on sex work issue and role playing	Panel of expert opinion HA, TAMPEP, Silver Rose	Plenary room
11.30 – 12.00	Break			
12.00 – 12.30	The price of silence	Video screening and discussion	Sergey Dugin, HA	Plenary room
12.30 – 13.40	Objectives and principles of network cooperation	Create a platform for capacity building for sex worker projects and strategies of communication	Anna Ivanova, HA	Workshop in 3 groups
13.40 – 14.40	Lunch			
14.40 – 16.20	Action plan	How to work in a cooperation networking structure in Russia	Anna Ivanova, HA Sergey Dugin, HA Irina Maslova, Silver Rose	Plenary room

16.20 – 16.40	Final Remarks and Closing ceremony		Anna Ivanova, HA Sergey Dugin, HA Licia Brussa, TAMPEP	Plenary room
16.40 – 17.00	Feedback from participants + evaluation forms		Anna Ivanova, HA	
17.00	Departure			

Annex 2 – List of International Speakers

Licia Brussa

Italian, PhD sociologist, active since 1980 in research and project management for sex workers in different regions in the world. She is the general coordinator of TAMPEP (European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers), a networking project aimed at carrying out and implementing multi-faceted strategies for health promotion and social support for migrant and mobile sex workers. TAMPEP relies on a network in 25 countries. She is also the director of TAMPEP International Foundation (the Netherlands), which carries out projects for the protection of the human and civil rights of sex workers.

Dennis van Wanrooij

Brazilian, lawyer, and LLM in International Human Rights Law. He has been researching and working, since 2009, in the field of Human Rights, having experience with reporting human rights violations in juvenile detention centres, and mental health institutions in Brazil. He has worked for the United Nations Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD), and, lately, in TAMPEP International Foundation (the Netherlands) in several European projects on the issues of migration, sex work, trafficking, HIV prevention, and human rights.

Veronica Munk

Brazilian, graphic designer, and project manager. Co-founder of the TAMPEP project in 1993, and since then she is responsible for the coordination of different European projects in Germany dealing with sex work and migration. Through these projects and the involvement in German and European networks, she was able

to participate in different advocacy campaigns and activities regarding the recognition of sex workers' and migrants' rights.

Jaana Kauppinen

Jaana Kauppinen works as executive director in Pro-tukipiste, which is a non-governmental organisation running low-threshold legal advice, social, healthcare and outreach services for sex workers in Finland. She works also as a clinical supervisor and she is specialised in health and social work, crisis intervention and in the field of trauma care. She is a member of the governmental expert group appointed to prepare a proposal for new legislation on Trafficking in Human Beings and a member of expert group preparing a new national HIV-strategy in Finland. She has also been the chair of the Network of Professional Outreach work in Finland since 2009.

Annex 3 – List of Participants

No	Name	Name of the organization	Telephone	Email contact
1	Licia Brussa	TAMPEP, Netherlands	00 31 615407459	tampep@xs4all.nl
2	Dennis van Wanrooij	TAMPEP, Netherlands	00 31 655927739	d.v.w@hotmail.com
3	Jaana Kauppinen	Pro-tukipiste, Finland	0035 850 5643947	jaana.kauppinen@pro-tukipiste.fi
4	Veronica Munk	TAMPEP, Germany	0049 176 65718982	tampep.germany@gmail.com
5	Valeria Cherednichenko	TAMPEP, Netherlands	380675057139	tampep@xs4all.nl
6	Sergey Dugin	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9434099	sergey@haf-spb.org
7	Anna Ivanova	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9423747	anna@haf-spb.org
8	Polina Girchenko	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 960 2566256	polina_girchenko@yahoo.com

9	Oxana Chernenko	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9096869	oxana@haf-spb.org
9	Anna Chikhacheva	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9193323	anna_chihacheva@mail.ru
10	Irina Maslova	BOO «Sodeistvie», Saint-Petersburg	7 911 9288531	club.silver.rose@gmail.com
11	Anna Kryukova	Foundation «Open Medical Club», Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9564104	akryukova@mail.ru
12	Julia Divnenko	«Humanitarian Action» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg	7 952 3871857	Julia.zvezda@yandex.ru
13	Julia Godunova	NP E.V.A, Saint-Petersburg	7 964 3215624	godunovajuli@gmail.com
14	Ekaterina Zinger	Foundation «Svecha». Saint-Petersburg	7 911 7888844	zinger.katerina@gmail.com
15	Irina Detkova	«Astra» Foundation, Saint-Petersburg		astrarussia@gmail.com
16	Oxana Ryabtsova	Silver Rose, Saint-Petersburg		club.silver.rose@gmail.com
17	Nikolay Panchenko	«Pozitivniy Dialog», Saint-Petersburg	7 812 7177098	aidsspb@pochta.ru
18	Andrey Skvortsov	Public Movement «Patient Control», Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9520789	packontrol@gmail.com
19	Julia Dragunova	ITPC, Saint-Petersburg	7 921 9174774	julia.dragunova@itpcru.org
20	Pavel Kostin	Foundation «Krasnaya Lenta», Saint-Petersburg	7 906 2792933	kosta80gnb@gmail.com

21	Svetlana Malysheva	Botkin Hospital, Saint-Petersburg	7 812 7178977	zhenya-vk@yandex.ru
22	Nailya Vinogradova	NP «ESVERO», Moscow	7 906-7999446	Nailya_Vinogradova@esvero.ru
23	Evgeniy Pisemskiy	Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), Moscow	7 920 2848484	orelaids@gmail.com
24	Angelika Melnickova	GBUZ TO OC AIDS, Tver	7 920 693 02 05	Melnickova.anje@yandex.ru
25	Svetlana Fedina	AKOO «AntiAIDS-Siberia», Barnaul	7 385 2334570	altaids@mail.ru
26	Aleksey Starostenko	ROO «Sibirskaya Iniciativa», Barnaul	7 385 2254903	sibin@alt.ru , alestaro@mail.ru
27	Olga Blinova	ANO «Centr AntiAids», Voronezh	7 910 3486851	antiaids@comch.ru
28	Ekaterina Dvorak	OOO «Red Cross», Irkutsk	7 395 2401242	hivirk@mail.ru
29	Endge Shagieva	NPO «Profilaktika I Iniciativa», Kazan	7 917 2823803	initiative-rt@inbox.ru
30	Svetlana Kochneva	ABNO «Novii Vek», Kazan	7 843 5228685	noviivek@gmail.com
31	Olga Glybishina	«Unaya Liderskaya Armiya», Kaliningrad	7 401 2758806, 7 401 2644649	ula@resist.koenig.ru
32	Alexander Degtyarev	Foundation «Grazhdanskaya Iniciativa», Magnitogorsk	7 912 8052066	fondgi@mail.ru
33	Liliya Gurenkova	Charity Fund of Timur Islamov, Naberezhnye Chelny	7 855 2597413	ld@ticf.org
34	Margarita Shutenko	ANOSP «Lestnitsa», Orel	7 953 813 05 28	margarita.orel@gmail.com
35	Vyatcheslav Tsunic	ROO «Kovcheg AntiAIDS », Rostov-on-Don	7 960 4694888	arga_antispid@mail.ru

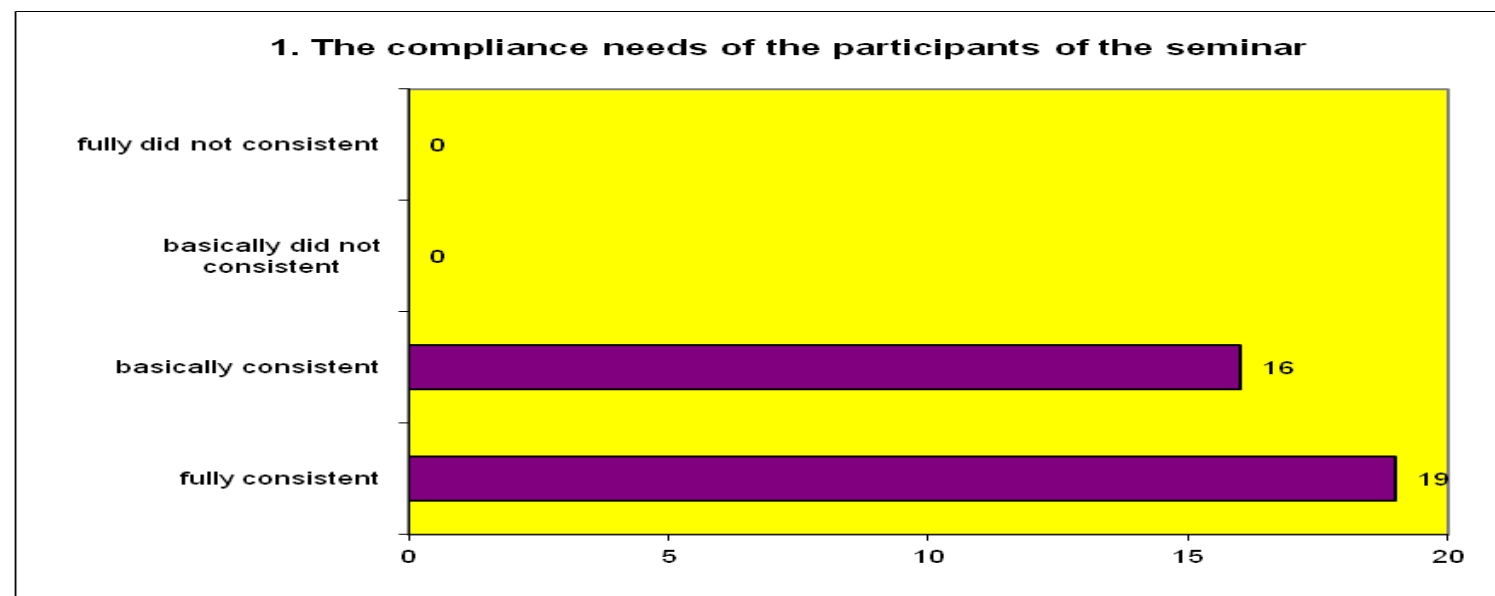
36	Natalya Vershinina	ANO «Project April», Toliatty	7 927 0224718	vernats55@gmail.com
37	Andrey Sasarov	Foundation «Tomsk AntiAIDS», Tomsk	7 960 9742747	t_aids@mail.ru
38	Anna Dubrovskaya	POO «GolosAntiAIDS», Ufa	7 917 7887337	gosolantispid@bk.ru
39	Olga Kuzmina	Association of Medical Workers, Chapayevsk	7 846 3924761	chapmedass@samtel.ru
40	Aleksandra Chepanova	Municipal Budget Institution Center for Preventive support "COMPASS", Chelyabinsk	7 351 2614242	centr@kompas-chel.ru
41	Ludmila Borisenko	SOOF «Megapolis», Saratov	7 927 2212750	l_borisenko@mail.ru
42	Aleksey Rozhkov	ANO «Novaya Zhizn», Orenburg	7 905 8904690	aleksey_rozhkov@bk.ru
43	Andrey Amirov	Foundation «ANTI-AIDS», Nizhniy Novgorod	7 831 4364135	tuktuktuk@yandex.ru

Annex 4 – Evaluation of the Participants

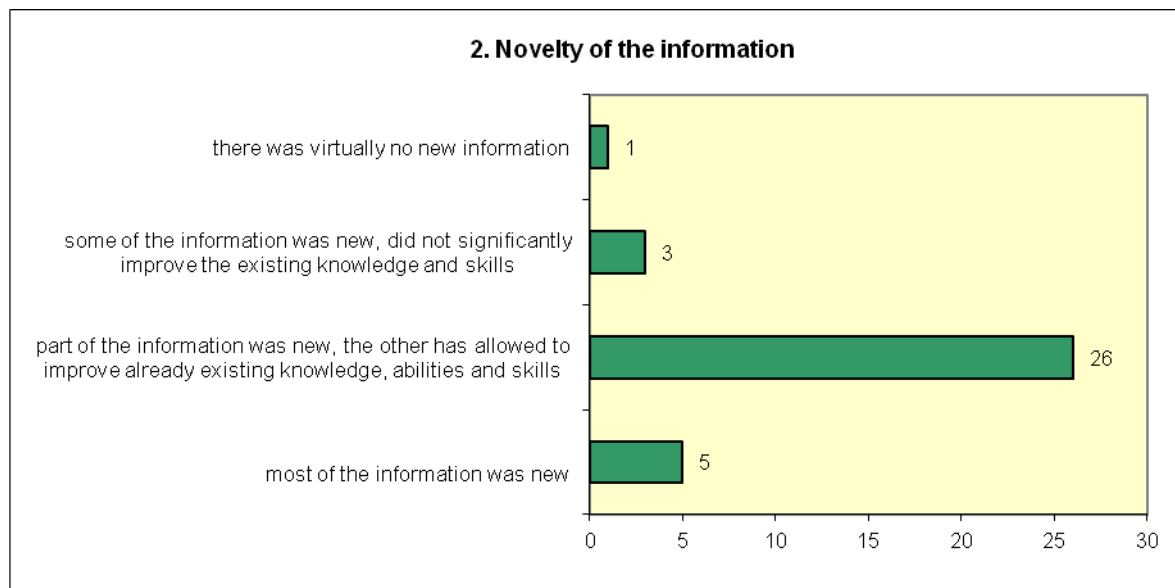
Number of participants:	40
Number of participants responded to the questionnaire:	35

Participants were requested to answer the following questions:

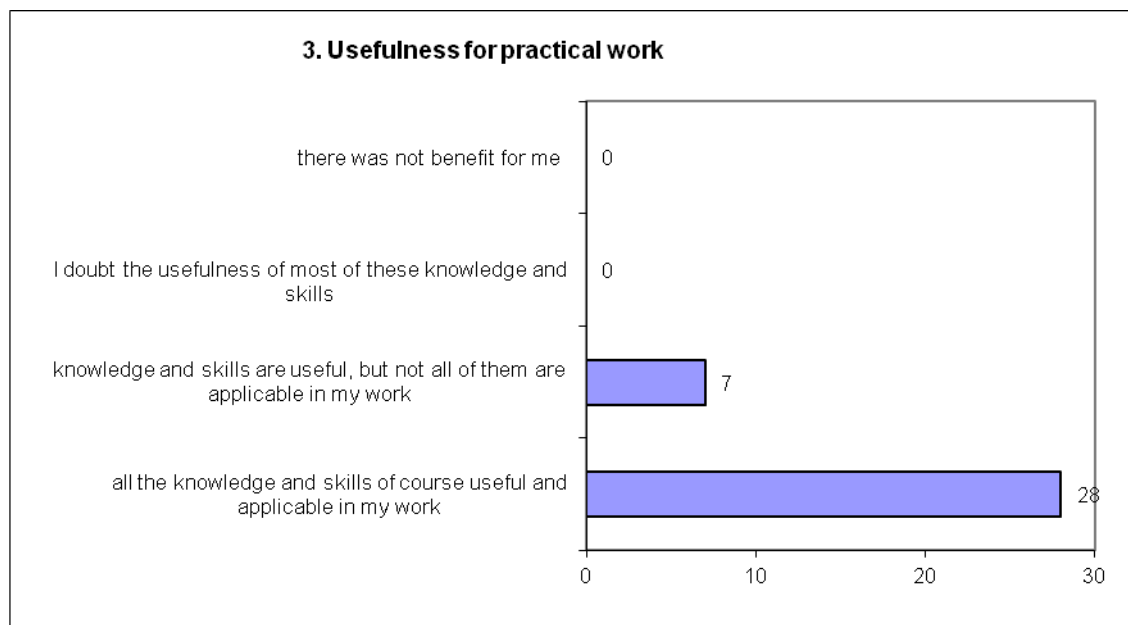
1. Please rate the extent to which this training meet your needs.	Number
fully consistent	19
basically consistent	16
basically did not consistent	0
fully did not consistent	0



2. As far as the information obtained during the training was new for you	
most of the information was new	5
part of the information was new, the other has allowed to improve already existing knowledge, abilities and skills	26
some of the information was new, did not significantly improve the existing knowledge and skills	3
there was virtually no new information	1



3. As far as the knowledge, skills and abilities that you have received during the training, are useful for your practical work?	
all the knowledge and skills of course useful and applicable in my work	28
knowledge and skills are useful, but not all of them are applicable in my work	7
I doubt the usefulness of most of these knowledge and skills	0
there was not benefit for me	0



4. Please rate each of the following aspects of the seminar (1 - the lowest point, 5 - highest):	
4.1. Relevance of the theme of the seminar for you	
1 point	0
2 points	0
3 points	2
4 points	10
5 points	23
4.2. Usefulness of the seminar from the perspective of practical application of the information that you've received	
1 point	0
2 points	0
3 points	0
4 points	7
5 points	28
4.3. Work of the lecturers/trainers	
1 point	0
2 points	0
3 points	1
4 points	5
5 points	29
4.4. Usefulness of working/collected materials of the seminar	
1 point	0
2 points	1
3 points	4
4 points	19
5 points	11
4.5. Understandability of working /collected materials of the seminar	
1 point	0
2 points	2

3 points	4
4 points	16
5 points	13
4.6. How justified your expectations from the seminar	
1 point	0
2 points	0
3 points	1
4 points	12
5 points	22
4.7. Organization of the training / seminar in general	
1 point	0
2 points	0
3 points	0
4 points	8
5 points	27

5. Please rate the overall quality of the conducted training/seminar:	
excellent	29
good	6
satisfactory	0
not satisfactory	0

6. Remarks and wishes. What, in Your opinion, can improve the quality of conducted activities? What would You like to change in this training?
More practical training. Thank you!
More structure.
Thank you for the days spent. Gave (fueled) new ideas. Helped to change the angle of view.
The training is excellent.
To include in trainings more practical exercises. Both group and individual.
More clearly build the program and interact with each other.
Seek the agreement with the plans of all the participants.
At present the experiences of other countries have to sound how reached such results, what actions. Advocacy tools in other countries.
Experience presented by external experts could be presented more interesting.
If you are building the organization with extensive experience in that topic should be allowed to define the strategy of joint action that happened spontaneously on the second day. Thank you very much Sergey Dugin. He's well done