



**Strengthening of HIV/STI interventions  
in sex work in Ukraine and the Russian Federation**

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This project is funded by  
The European Union

**GOOD PRACTICES MANUAL**

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**On Sex Work**

**Projects**

**in Ukraine and the Russian  
Federation**



This manual is based on contributions of Humanitarian Action and SALUS Charitable Foundation, partners of the CONECTA project. It was compiled within the framework of the **CONECTA project** (January 2012-December 2013), under the coordination of:

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The '**Good Practices Manual on Sex Work Projects in Ukraine and the Russian Federation**' is part of a series of other resources produced by the CONECTA project:

- **CONECTA Website** | A tool for networking and sharing of information available in three languages: English, Russian and Ukrainian
- **CONECTA Mapping Reports on Sex Work** | Sex workers' working and living conditions in Ukraine and the Russian Federation | National reports and Regional trend report
- **Policy Paper** | Laws and Policies Affecting Sex Workers' Vulnerability to HIV/STIs in the Russian Federation
- **Educational Materials** | Leaflets and information for sex workers in Russian and Ukrainian
- **Booklet on Violence** | Analysis of the typology of violence affecting life and work experiences of sex workers in Ukraine and the Russian Federation

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AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
GO	Governmental Organization
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organization

## ABBREVIATIONS

**T**he **Manual of Good Practices on Sex Work Projects in Ukraine and the Russian Federation** was drawn up within the framework of CONECTA - *Strengthening of HIV/STI*

*Interventions in Sex Work in Ukraine and the Russian Federation* - a project financed by the European Union as part of the EuropeAid Programme of the European Union.

The CONECTA project originated from the need to improve the capacity of sex work projects and interventions targeting sex workers in the two countries, as well as the need to strengthen networking between existing projects and initiatives.

As a result, the project aims to promote human rights among sex workers by empowering them and those who work with and for them.

**This manual touches upon some initiatives carried out in the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the past few years – and encourages and inspires anyone working with or for sex workers to develop targeted and creative programmes to address sex workers’ needs.**

It is primarily intended for the development of those who work in the field of sex work services, particularly in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Furthermore, it reinforces the need for well-developed coordinated response to the actual situation of sex workers. It provides practical points, ideas and successful models to consider when designing and implementing projects aimed at sex workers. This collection of good practices, created by CONECTA or related to ongoing experiences, is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

By revealing different experiences, perspectives, initiatives and strategies, this manual, as part of the CONECTA project, seeks to develop and present the efforts and experience of sex work programmes in the promotion and defence of the health, well-being, safety and rights of sex workers.



The **Good Practices Manual** has three main objectives:

- 1.** To present examples of good practice for health and social service providers offering care for sex workers, leading to adequate health and social promotion activities carried out with a non-prejudiced attitude, and operating from a human rights' perspective.
- 2.** To present examples which systematises different experiences on HIV/STI prevention strategies, introducing and facilitating implementation of different targeted methods.
- 3.** To increase and spread good practice actions targeting sex workers in Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

**The manual explains what good practices on sex work projects are and exemplifies some selected initiatives in Ukraine and the Russian Federation.**

**The selected good practices come from a wider range of initiatives collected through a questionnaire, which was nationally distributed among organizations working with and for sex workers in both countries.**





## WHAT IS GOOD PRACTICE

**G**ood practices are activities, projects or ways of action that can be considered successful in dealing with problems or phenomena, thus making a positive contribution to the issue at hand. The framework of good practices is a useful tool, not only as a way of learning and disseminating knowledge but also it supplies practical ways of partnerships between communities, governments and the private sector. They provide a much-needed link between research and policy-making by inspiring decision-makers with successful initiatives and model projects that can make an innovative and sustainable contribution to actually solving problems in society<sup>1</sup>.

- Best Practices **are innovative**: develop new and creative solutions to problems that are consequences immigration, poverty and social exclusion. **According to UNESCO**<sup>2</sup>
- Best Practice **make a difference**: demonstrates a positive impact on the living conditions of the individuals, groups or communities concerned.
- Best Practices **have a sustainable effect**: contributes to eradicate social exclusion, by involving the participants.
- Best Practice **have the potential for replication**: are models for generating policies and initiatives elsewhere.

## Good practices in sex work

Good practices in the context of sex work have its specificities, as the needs and demands of this group vary.

According to the **WHO's toolkit for targeted HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in Sex Work**<sup>2</sup>, good practices in sex work projects mean:

- Adopt a non-judgemental attitude;
- Ensure that interventions do no harm;
- 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;

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<sup>1</sup> *Good Practices on Health and Migration in the EU*, Document of the Conference: "Health and Migration in the EU: Better health for all in an inclusive society", September 2007

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, in *Good Practices on Health and Migration in the EU*, Lisbon, September 2007

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.who.int/about/copyright/en/> for conditions of use.

© World Health Organization 2004. WHO Toolkit for targeted HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in Sex Work Settings, [www.arvkit.net](http://www.arvkit.net)

- Involve sex workers, and, where appropriate, other community members in all stages of the development and implementation of interventions;
- Recognize that sex workers are usually highly motivated to improve their health and well-being, and 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 i.e., target the whole sex work setting, including clients and third parties, rather than only sex workers;
- Recognize and adapt to the diversity of sex work settings and of the people involved.



**In seeking to build the capacity of service providers it is essential to ensure that sex workers are consulted and empowered to participate at all levels. Community building, sex worker involvement, and empowerment should be at the heart of all activities.**

According to the **CONECTA project**, good practice in the context of sex work should consider the following four core values:

1. Promoting the empowerment of sex workers and increasing their knowledge on rights and choices
2. Recognising the necessity of involving sex workers into the design and implementation of projects
3. Acknowledging the legitimate self-representation of sex worker-led organisations and their spoke persons
4. Accepting the diversity of sex work sectors, settings, and working situations which impact differently on sex workers' safety, rights, and well-being

For the good practice selection, the following **components of comprehensive services** in the context of sex work were considered:

- Accessible and acceptable non-discriminatory services to all sex workers, including the most marginalised
- Provision of comprehensive and responsive HIV/STI services for sex workers, considering their diversity and needs
- Provision of information for male, female, and transgender sex workers on HIV, STIs, TB, Hepatitis, human rights, sexual and reproductive health, consistent condom use, safer working conditions, and health services

- Provision of information on HIV, STIs, and safer sex for clients and third parties in the sex industry, including sex business owners and staff, taxi drivers, police, and local authorities
- Involving peer educators and supports into outreach activities to better disseminate information
- Favour access to appropriate condoms, lubricants, medication, and contraceptives
- Favour access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services for men, women, and transgender sex workers, including diagnosis, treatment, and care of HIV/STIs, as well as pregnancy examinations and post-abortion care
- Promote rights awareness and reduce violence, abuse, and discrimination
- Promote and/or protect the right to privacy and family life of sex workers, including child-care
- Capacitate health and social services on the needs of mobile and migrant sex workers
- Create MSM-friendly services and drug and alcohol harm reduction programmes
- Support sex workers to access justice and combat violence
- Promote cultural, educational, and community activities that help sex workers build solidarity
- Provide psychological support, including sexual assault counselling
- Involve sex workers into activity design and implementation

The manual presents **39 examples of good practice** reflecting the components of comprehensive services. Each good practice is a summary of specific initiatives carried out within a wider range of services offered to sex workers in Ukraine and the Russian Federation.



**It is important to underscore that the description of the good practice examples is not the full-range of services provided by each organisation, yet an outline of specific initiatives, which were able to successfully address challenges faced by sex workers.**

The examples reported in this manual acknowledge the available knowledge and capacity of organisations working with and for sex workers in the two countries; yet they also clarify the need of building up further the capacity of quality services for sex workers, particularly addressing the gaps and barriers in service provision. They provide examples of how comprehensive services can be combined and formulated as a response to the actual needs of sex workers.



## Responding to the needs of sex workers

**S**ex workers are not a homogeneous group. In addition sex workers need to go beyond ensuring that they have access to sexual health prevention, care, and treatment. In order to develop effective programmes within sex work settings a holistic and person-centred approach to health, rights and well-being must be adopted which respond to the diverse and complex needs of sex workers.

Sex work projects must provide comprehensive services that encompass:

- **Promoting dignity** – dignity, defined as ‘a high opinion of oneself’ and ‘self-esteem’, is critical to achieving an integral health and social structure. This requires a non-judgemental and supportive environment, promoting sex workers rights and challenging the stigma and discrimination experienced by sex workers.
- **Promoting empowerment** – within a community development and participation framework and defining empowerment as the process of gaining confidence, self-esteem, understanding and power to articulate concerns, ensure actions are taken to address them and more broadly to gain control over one’s life.
- **Promoting peer education** – involving current and former sex workers at every level and in particular encouraging sex workers to share health promotion and personal safety information with other sex workers.
- **Providing support** – within a person centred approach, responding to needs presented and providing support through the provision of appropriate in-house services and referrals to external agencies.

## Sex workers knowledge

Having knowledge about how to reduce the risk of HIV/STI infection and the steps to take if one has been at risk does not necessarily mean that individual sex workers are able to put that knowledge into action. In addition to the difficulties that face us all in negotiating safer sex within sexual relationships, sex workers ability to protect themselves and control the sexual services they provide is directly affected by the choices they are *able* to make, the *control* third parties have over them and for some their *dependence* on substances.

Attention has been focussed primarily on increasing sex workers knowledge of safer sex and correct condom use; however, clients who

are critical stakeholders in successful HIV prevention in the sex industry, have been for the most part ignored. Outreach activities also focus greatly on outdoor sex workers, whereas indoor-based sex workers are often left out of some prevention programmes and services.

Legal context and unsafe working environments affect negatively sex workers ability to negotiate consistent condom use. The more choice, the less control and dependence, the greater sex workers' ability is to put knowledge into practice.

The promotion of safe legal and working environments are fundamental in preventive work. It is recognised by several specialised United Nations agencies<sup>3</sup> that stigma, discrimination, and violence are severe barriers for sex workers accessing health care and social support. It is also recognised that criminalisation of sex work increases sex workers' vulnerability to HIV/STIs.

**It is essential to negotiate with the gatekeepers – both controllers and managers – to encourage them to promote, but not coerce sex workers to access services.**

## **World Health Organization | 2012**

### **Prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections for sex workers in low- and middle-income countries**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH**

- All countries should work toward decriminalization of sex work and elimination of the unjust application of non-criminal laws and regulations against sex workers.
- Governments should establish antidiscrimination and other rights-respecting laws to protect against discrimination and violence, and other violations of rights faced by sex workers in order to realize their human rights and reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection and the impact of AIDS. Antidiscrimination laws and regulations should guarantee sex workers' right to social, health and financial services.
- Health services should be made available, accessible and acceptable to sex workers based on the principles of avoidance of stigma, non-discrimination and the right to health.
- Violence against sex workers is a risk factor for HIV and must be prevented and addressed in partnership with sex workers and sex worker led organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Report of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights & Health, July 2012; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, A/HRC/14/20, 2010; UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work, 2012.

## Diversity of sex work settings

It is fundamental to acknowledge that there is a wide range of diversity of sex work settings, being them *outdoor* or *indoor*, when addressing projects to sex workers.

Projects must take into consideration that many sex workers remain temporarily in certain setting, and that some are mobile and migrant. Mobility is also encountered between sex work settings, some work for a period indoors and another outdoors.

### OUTDOOR-based sex worker

This term has been used for sex workers who establish contact with clients in outdoor settings. Outdoor sex work settings are not advertised, but are areas where it becomes known that sex workers frequent. Outdoor work includes streets, highways, parks and other public places. These areas vary greatly from town to town; some are in residential neighbourhoods, some are in industrial areas.

### INDOOR-based sex worker

This term has been used for sex workers who establish contact with clients in an indoor setting or over the Internet. Indoor sex work is often advertised in the media or on the Internet. The visibility of indoor sex work may vary with the laws and their enforcement in different areas. Establishments at which sex workers do business with their clients are: brothels and private clubs, saunas, massage parlours, bars, night clubs, apartments, and escort Agencies.

## Outreach methods

The methods of reaching *outdoor* and *indoor* sex workers vary according to the place of work of sex workers.

### Outdoor-based sex workers

Outdoor based sex workers are often the most visible and straightforward to reach group within the sex industry, their working environments are public places that can be accessed relatively easily. However, in some cities where law enforcement actions target outdoor based sex workers they tend to work in isolated areas and at times that are often considered 'dangerous' and which are outside the normal working hours of many service providers.

**Street outreach services** are mobile – undertaken either on foot in small well defined outdoor sex work settings or by car or mobile unit in

dispersed and transient outdoor sex work settings. Some mobile units include medical outreach where clinical health care is provided.

**Low threshold drop-in centres** have been established in fixed premises in or near sex work areas.

## Indoor-based sex workers

Indoor-based sex workers work in a wide range of settings – the vast majority of which are not automatically and directly accessible to service providers – apartments, saunas, bars, brothels, escort agencies, hotels, independent Internet escorts, and nightclubs. The challenges of working in indoor sex work settings are primarily related to accessibility, trust and the degree of control that gatekeepers have in allowing or forbidding service provider's access to sex workers.

Because running sex work business is illegal, the situation can and often does attract criminal elements. Where there is active law enforcement actions targeting the indoor sex industry venues are often transient and gatekeepers suspicious of service provider's collusion with law enforcement agencies.

For sex work projects who are having to develop services for indoor-based sex workers because of the shift to indoor sex work, it can seem daunting to identify indoor sex work settings and even more daunting to negotiate access with the gatekeepers. The identification of indoor sex work venues is relatively easy as sex work businesses like other businesses must attract clients and therefore will almost always advertise in the public domain and can therefore be found.

Specific forms for reaching indoor-based sex workers are:

■ **Establishment outreach services** – where outreach workers visit indoor sex work venues, some include medical outreach where clinical health care is provided, but great care is needed in providing clinical services to protect the confidentiality of sex workers medical care and test results. The method of arranging establishment outreach varies depending on the local context and resources available. Regardless of the method used all establishment outreach requires negotiation with both gatekeepers and sex workers and should include consent from sex workers.

■ **'Drop-in' centres** – where sex work projects often provide a diverse range of both health and social support services in a community based setting which will depend on the local context.

■ **Clinical services** – where sex work projects are based within a clinical setting, usually within a sexual health clinic, AIDS Centre, and provide a dedicated clinic for sex workers.



## Sex worker-led organisation

## KEY ELEMENTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

**O**ne of the most effective ways of reaching out to and engaging with sex workers has been where organisations have been set up by and for sex workers and continue to be run by sex workers. However, given the continuing stigma and marginalisation of sex workers this is neither an easy or simple process to initiate due to criminalisation laws and policies.

## Peer support

The most effective method of promoting services to sex workers is word of mouth within the sex industry itself. Once services have established a good reputation among sex workers for providing confidential high quality services that respond to the needs they identify for themselves, sex workers will recommend the services to their colleagues.

Peer supporters are members of the sex worker community who have experiences and backgrounds that reflect those of the broader community of sex workers. Their involvement provides not only interpretation of community codes but provides a role model for sex workers, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence amongst sex workers. Their base within the community enables them to articulate the interests of sex workers to service providers and policymakers, to raise awareness, to organise and conduct workshops on various themes related to health promotion and safer sex practices and to empower sex workers through solidarity, support and understanding.

## Safer sex, condom use, HIV & STI prevention

Sex work projects can develop accessible knowledge and skill amongst staff, volunteers and peer educators in the areas of safer sex, condom use, STI and HIV prevention. In-house training programmes, as well as accessing specialist external training to ensure a high quality service for sex workers, are recommended. Those projects that have such expertise are therefore a valuable resource for other service providers that are seeking to develop support services for sex workers or improve the quality of support and services provided to sex workers.

## HIV & STI counselling, testing & treatment

Sex work projects can develop knowledge and skill amongst staff and volunteers in relation to providing information to sex workers about access to HIV counselling, testing and treatment. Good working relationships with HIV treatment clinics and AIDS centres should be promoted. Where such relationships have not been developed it is essential that sex work projects are supported in developing such protocols.

Sex work projects that provide clinical services must follow the established voluntary, counselling and testing good practice guidance.

- Professional code and ethical guideline related to the conduct with service users
- Guarantee respect and confidentiality with regard to personal information
- Services are provided voluntarily and anonymously, by respecting and protecting sex workers' right to bodily integrity and anonymity. Follow-ups can be carried out anonymously through new data systems
- Accessible and free of charge social, educational, and health services

## Drug harm reduction

The reported levels of drug use, and in particular injecting drug use and drug dependency, amongst sex workers varied considerably across both indoor and outdoor based sex workers and between cities across the two states.

Sex work projects providing services to injecting drug users should develop knowledge and skill amongst staff, volunteers and peer educators in relation to drug harm reduction, including drug treatment options, and working with drug users. Working relationships should be established with specialist drug services and drug harm reduction networks providing specialist training and support to sex work projects. Where such relationships don't exist it is essential that they are established.

## Personal safety and crime reporting

Violence affects sex workers' vulnerability to HIV/STIs and threatens sex workers' safety and well-being. It hampers their equal enjoyment to human rights. Sex work projects can and should provide information and advice on how to reduce the risk of violence, particularly from the part of police and people posing as clients.

Sex work projects can work with sex workers in developing tips for staying safe. The manual highlights some practices carried out mostly by sex worker-led organisations, which have contributed to reducing risk to violence and improving sex workers' access to justice in cases of violence and abuse. Monitoring and documenting cases on violence are fundamental components of sex work projects.

## Advocacy and lobbying

Advocacy is any action directed at changing the policies, positions or programmes of any type of institution.

There are many forms in which NGOs working with and for sex workers can develop advocacy and lobbying activities. The following highlights some important elements for good practices, which can inspire sex work projects and contribute to sex workers' participation and empowerment.

Developing and delivering messages of advocacy, building coalitions, making persuasive presentations, mobilising policy change, community mobilisation, partnership building, and mass media and social marketing.

Examples of advocacy actions could be raising the public profile of sex work and building support for tackling sex workers' principal needs. Advocacy and lobbying efforts are sometimes overlooked when planning awareness-raising campaigns, but can be vital to ensuring ongoing support from governments and civil society organisations.

Examples:

- Forming strategic alliances and partnerships with government, civil society and international organisations
- Meeting with politicians at all levels of government, but focusing on ministers and other officials with the authority and power to provide resources
- Cultivating political activists in successful campaigns
- Identifying audiences: advocacy must be directed at people with decision-making power, and to people who influence decision-makers, including the media
- Using updated data and research is essential for making decisions, devising solutions, and setting realistic goals. Good data can be used in persuasive arguments, which is fundamental in the discussion of sex work within a human rights framework
- Changing perspectives and attitudes of service providers



**N**GOs and governmental institutions generally have the capacity to implement quality and comprehensive services for sex workers in both countries. In spite of that CONECTA identified gaps and needs in service provision. Specific barriers for the Russian Federation were highlighted considering the actual trends and political context.

### Lack of geographic and sex work settings coverage: HIV prevention services focussed in major cities and/or street-based sex work

■ **Barriers** | Lack of resources, however, also lack of national mapping of sex work and assessment of local sex work scenes

■ **Recommendation** | National mapping should be undertaken on a regular basis, preferably annually as sex work and sex work settings are fluid and mobile. Services for sex workers should operate at times and in locations where they will be accessible

■ **Example** | The Ukrainian organisation '*International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine*', the main recipient of the Global Fund in Ukraine, through several local projects has reached a wider coverage of sex work settings. The manual highlights two good practices from the organisation, which contributed to further increase HIV prevention services across different regions and sex work settings.

#### **Additional barrier for Russia**

Due to the actual political scene the situation of sex work projects has aggravated. Service providers have limited capacity to intervene positively in sex work projects and respond to sex workers' needs. The withdrawal of external donors limited amount of investments in health and outreach programmes for sex workers.

### Lack of integration of services between public service providers and civil society

■ **Barriers** | A fundamental barrier is the lack of broad cooperation and referral practices between public service providers and civil society. Integration of social, health, and legal services is imperative for tackling the diverse needs of sex workers. Service providers working alone are incapable of rendering realistic social support and empowering of the community of sex workers.

■ **Recommendation** | When seeking to offer proper HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, it is vital to work in an integrated manner. An open and non-judgemental partnership of cooperation and



referral, focused on the common goal is essential for ensuring comprehensive support and services for sex workers.

■ **Example** | The Russian organisation ‘*Anti-AIDS Siberia*’ implemented an integrated system of service provision addressing health and social needs of sex workers in the Russian city of Barnaul. The model of this initiative is described as a good practice in this manual.

## Lack of access for undocumented/uninsured (migrant) sex workers to health care services

■ **Barriers** | Being undocumented for most means not having the possibility to obtain insurance under the public social security scheme, which the state offers to its citizens and to foreign residents with a regulated residence situation. Undocumented migrant sex workers have limited or no access public health care system in the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

■ **Recommendation** | Governments in their policies must address these exclusion scenarios and the health risk issues derived from having in their territory groups which are in fact not covered.

### Additional barrier for Russia

The legislation on migration in the Russian Federation is strict and often limits migrants’ access to public services and enjoying of basic rights, such as health care. Evidence shows that undocumented migrants have been deported when they became aware of their HIV positive status.

■ **Example** | The Russian ‘*Botkin Hospital*’ opened a drop-in centre for all sex workers, independently of their national status or situation. Migrant sex workers benefit greatly from these services, since they are not offered free-of-charge and bureaucracy-free in other hospitals. The example of including migrant sex workers into hospital services was highlighted as a good practice in this manual.

## Lack of access for male and transgender sex workers to health care services

### Additional barrier for Russia

The impacts of legislation against LGBT persons in Russia need to be considered as an additional barrier for male and transgender sex workers.

■ **Barriers** | Male and transgender sex workers are hardly reached by service providers in both countries, as they are normally not covered and targeted by health services.

■ **Recommendation** | Services can and should be tailored to address the specific needs of male and transgender sex workers in both

countries. Services need to be accessible, as most male and transgender sex workers advertise their services through the internet.

■ **Example** | The Russian organisation ‘*Krasnaya Lenta*’ in Saint Petersburg developed an online outreach and information platform for male and transgender sex workers. In Ukraine, the organization

'*Convictus Charitable Foundation*' started to provide services targeted to transgender sex workers after needs assessment. These initiatives are highlighted as good practices in this manual.

## Lack of comprehensive and integrated personal safety and crime reporting schemes for sex workers

■ **Barriers** | Sex workers experience violence at disproportional levels in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Violence is experienced mostly from the part of people posing as clients and law enforcement officials. In both countries the illegality of engaging in sex work means sex workers will be fined if they report a crime of violence or exploitation relating to sex work. Comprehensive personal safety and crime reporting initiatives are only developed by some sex work projects.

■ **Recommendation** | Violence against sex workers needs to be addressed as a main priority in service provision, protocols need to be developed with policymakers and law enforcement agencies (appropriate to the realities and possibilities in each country), law enforcement officers need to be trained and corruption among law enforcement officers needs to be addressed by establishing a police liaison and complaints procedure before human rights institutions. Violence experienced by sex workers must be observed as a relevant factor of health risk and of vulnerabilities. What is also needed are measures against the different levels of violence effecting the susceptible population.

■ **Example** | The sex worker-led organisations '*Silver Rose*' in the Russian Federation and '*Legalife*' in Ukraine are responsible for implementing good practice efforts in facilitating sex workers' access to justice. Other organisations also provide legal advice and assistance to sex workers. These examples are underscored in this manual.

### Additional barrier for Russia

Defending human rights of sex workers has become increasingly difficult for non-governmental organisations in Russia; the role of civil society in advocacy efforts has been reduced due to political pressure.

## Lack of representation and involvement of sex workers organisations

■ **Barriers** | There are practical barriers to the sex workers' involvement, such as their illegal status, discrimination, social attitude, judgemental look upon. These factors limit the empowerment of sex workers and minimise possibilities of leadership among sex workers. Good practices need to be better supported.

### Additional barrier for Russia

The sex worker-led organisation *Silver Rose* requested an official registration to the *Ministry of Justice*, yet the request was denied. The organisation is appealing the decision which restricts sex workers' right to association.

■ **Recommendation** | Community involvement in prevention and care efforts must recognise as priority the community development and must address the issue of intervention in specific communities. It is important to recognise the significance of empowering the community members, create leadership models, and implement peer education. Moreover, there should be direct involvement and representation of the sex workers in the development and creation of policies.

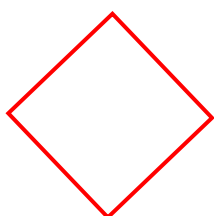
■ **Example** | The sex worker-led organisations '*Silver Rose*' in the Russian Federation and '*Legalife*' in Ukraine are responsible for training sex worker leaderships and developing specific programme with and for sex workers.

## Stigma and discrimination against sex workers

■ **Barriers** | Professionals in many public services continue to treat sex workers in a judgemental and discriminatory manner. Many sex workers lack trust in service providers, and have a lack of accurate information about services and their rights.

■ **Recommendation** | Develop anti-discrimination training programme (in collaboration with sex work projects) for the sensitisation of policy makers and professionals working with sex workers. Develop and disseminate promotional and educational materials about services available and sex workers rights to access services and be treated with respect.

■ **Example** | The Russian organisation '*Svecha*' in Saint Petersburg has developed taskforce and capacity building for service providers and is one of the good practices presented in this manual.

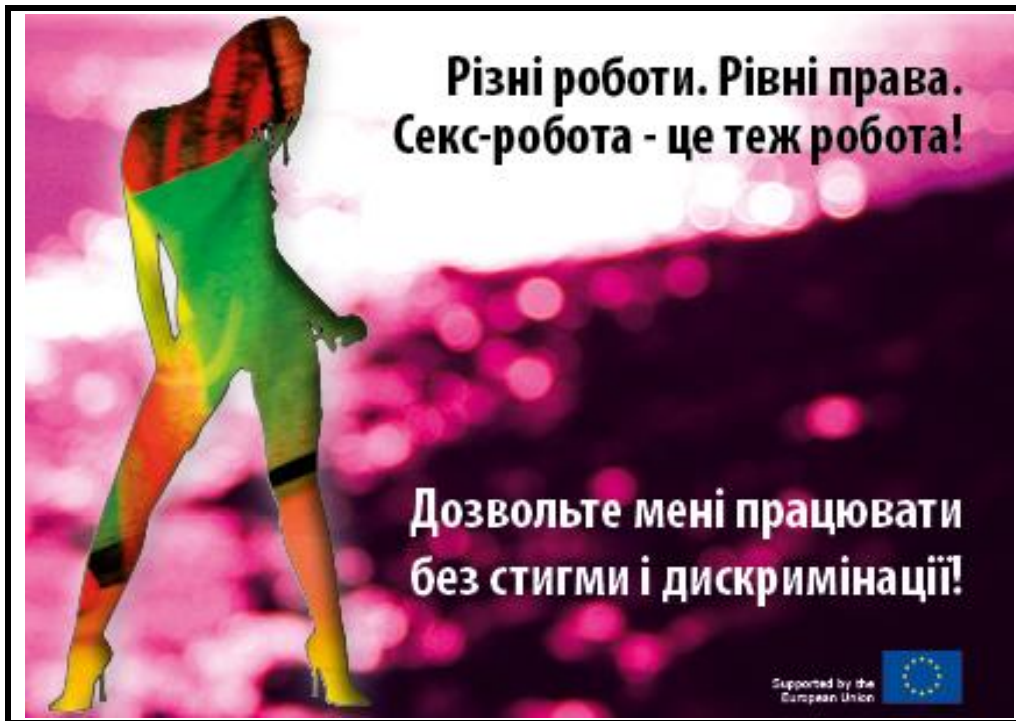


## THE COLLECTION

**The good practices selected in this manual are successful and creative examples of how some NGOs and governmental organisations build up strategies and cooperation in order to overcome the adverse environment for HIV programmes in the two countries.**

**Albeit funding is limited and gaps are many, these organisations contribute efficiently to tackle the different needs of sex workers. In total there were 19 good practices selected in Ukraine and 20 in the Russian Federation.**





## Good Practices | U K R A I N E

### 1. Stalist | VINNYTSIA | Ukraine

## Parental rights of sex workers

### CHALLENGE

There was increased termination of parental rights among sex workers and people who use drugs in recent years.

### ACTION

In 2009 the NGO *Stalist* created a community-based project focused on preventing termination of parental rights of sex workers, by avoiding that their children are assigned to orphanages. The project is aimed at reducing stigma that affects sex workers who are mothers. Stigma against sex workers often leads to the termination of their parental rights in Ukraine.

The project supports sex workers in caring for their children and accessing social benefits from the state, as the majority of sex workers are single mothers. Twice a week the project organizes activities for the children of sex workers. These activities range from preparing homework to games and art classes. The organisation also invites sex workers to regular workshops in which they are informed about legal

issues, particularly regarding parental duties and rights, and are involved in mother skills training.

The project benefits both sex workers and their children. Sex workers found a space where they can discuss about parental rights and duties with other sex workers and were trained to enhance adequate support from the state. Concurrently, their children enjoy a supportive and non-discriminatory environment in which they socialise with other children.

By the beginning of the project 19 children and 8 sex workers were supported by the organisation, yet the group has been growing since then.

## **STEPS**

- Needs assessment and activity planning
- Creating self-help groups for sex workers who are mothers
- Training social workers on the needs of sex workers
- Fund-raising

## **OUTCOMES**

Sex workers participate actively in the project and support each other by taking care of their children through a mechanism of self-help community and family planning. Since the beginning of the project there were no terminations of parental rights of sex workers observed.

## **LESSONS**

- Engage with sex workers who are at risk of losing their parental rights and support them in caring for their children and accessing social support
- Respect to family life of sex workers is a basic human right and needs to be supported by service providers
- Create an environment of solidarity among sex workers who are mothers, by supporting them to develop self-confidence and become active in the organization as volunteers
- Sensitize social workers and public officials about the need of de-stigmatizing sex workers and increasing their ability to uphold parental rights



## Crisis centre

### CHALLENGE

Sex workers are often victims of violence due to adverse legal and social environment in Ukraine. Criminalization of sex work, stigma, and discrimination negatively impact on sex workers.

### ACTION

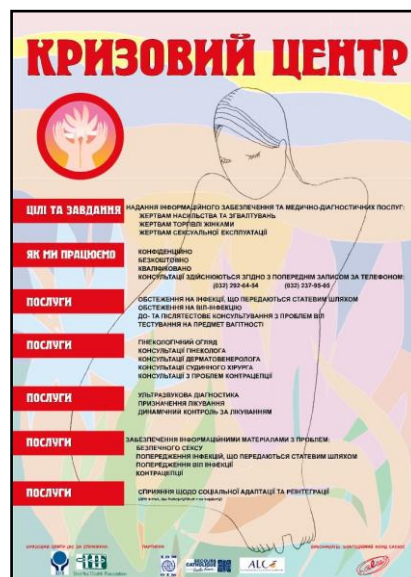
The NGO SALUS has established a *Crisis centre* for women who report violence and seek support in a crisis situation. A comprehensive package of multi-sectorial free-of-charge services are offered for women who have been victim of violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, and economic exploitation. The centre provides medical, psychological, social, and legal services and support for victims. Services are offered to all sex workers.

The *Crisis centre* was created in 1995, but only in 1999 it started to address the needs of female sex workers. A multi-professional team (gynaecologist, dermatovenerologist, nurse, psychologist, and lawyer) was trained on how to work specifically for sex workers and address their needs in a crisis situation. Services range from sexual and reproductive health (voluntary testing, examination, and information) to counselling (monthly follow up) with a psychologist. Medical referrals to local hospitals are also provided. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Legal information and social support are also included in the package of services.

The *Crisis centre* is a room for support but also for documenting cases on violence against sex workers. Violence is addressed as a serious violation of sex workers' rights and sex workers are encouraged to denounce those who abuse and commit crimes against them. It complements the outreach and mobile unit work of SALUS.

### STEPS

- Setting up the Crisis centre
- Selection and training of a multi-professional team
- Setting up agreement for cooperation within the medical and social institutions (memorandum of understanding)



- Dissemination of information on services provided through networks, outreach activities, and peer supporters
- Provision of targeted services, according to the needs of sex workers
- Anonymous documentation of cases of violence
- Provision of legal counselling with specialized lawyers

## OUTCOMES

The *Crisis centre* has been articulated with the work of other NGOs and state institutions. It is involved in a referral system that guarantees successful interventions. Addressing the diversity of needs of female sex workers in crisis situation has proven to be an efficient strategy to overcome negative effects of violence.

## LESSONS

- Guarantee free-of-charge and anonymous services as a precondition
- The clinic must be accredited, follow medical protocols, have control over the private data, and follow up the patient's clinical situation
- Institutional cooperation and protocols for provision of quality and sustainable medical services is fundamental

**2.b** SALUS Charitable Foundation | LVIV | Ukraine  
[www.salus.org.ua](http://www.salus.org.ua)

# Services targeted to adolescents who provide sexual services

## CHALLENGE

Many persons who sell sex are adolescents, and these are particularly vulnerable to HIV/STIs infection, as well as to violence and abuse. This key population is often excluded by HIV prevention programmes among sex workers, since people who sell sex below 18 years old are not considered sex workers and should not be. Targeted services need to address the needs of those adolescents who engage in sex work.

## ACTION

In 2011 the NGO *SALUS* created a project focused on adolescents who provide sexual services in Lviv region. It has been supported by UNICEF and implemented locally in cooperation with state institutions: *Lviv Regional AIDS Centre, Lviv Regional Centre of Vocational Education, and Friendly Youth Clinics. Lviv Regional Centre of Vocational Education*



refers to the project groups of adolescents in vulnerable situation and *SALUS* organizes empowerment trainings for groups of adolescents who sell sex. Reproductive health and interpersonal relations were the most actual themes of the trainings. Several targeted leaflets on HIV/STIs prevention, pocketbook with useful telephones and addresses of organizations were developed for distribution among participants of the trainings.

The project also counts with the collaboration of six *Friendly Youth Clinics* (3 in Lviv and 3 in small towns of the Lviv region). Adolescents have facilitated and specialised access to health care in these clinics. *SALUS* mobile unit was used to identify places and settings where adolescents who sell sex are providing services.

## STEPS

- Develop a local network of institutions providing multi-sectorial services to adolescents and a targeted cooperation model
- Perform training for adolescents in vulnerable situation, including those who sell sex, supporting them in all their needs
- Provide multi-sectorial services to girls and young women in age from 14 till 19 (medical examination, testing of HIV and STIs, psychological, and legal counselling)

## OUTCOMES

The project covered more than 100 girls in age of 14-19 and provided them access to multi-sectorial services: medical, diagnostic, social, and legal. During one year of project implementation 600 girls were involved into the trainings organized by *SALUS*.

## LESSONS

- It is fundamental to develop a cooperation network, particularly with state institutions, in order to efficiently address all needs of adolescents in vulnerable situation and those who sell sex
- Services need to be targeted to this specific group, as the needs are very specific-oriented and due to the fact of high vulnerability of adolescents who sell sex

## Expanding outreach to different sex work settings

### CHALLENGE

Illichivsk is a harbour with intensive road-rail traffic. Due to its economic development, the city also attracts many visitors and seasonal workers. There are increasing numbers of sex workers in the city, yet few outreach activities and targeted prevention programmes are available.

### ACTION

In January 2012 the NGO *Way to Home* organised a targeted outreach project aimed at reducing sex workers' vulnerabilities to HIV/STIs infection. Service providers were trained to identify and reach different groups of sex workers in the city. Previously, the organisation provided services only for sex workers who inject drugs, as part of a harm reduction project.

After setting up a drop-in centre specific for sex workers and regular indoor and outdoor outreach activities, different groups of sex workers could be reached and covered by medical, as well as psychological counselling and support services. Expanding outreach activities to indoor premises was fundamental for providing comprehensive services for sex workers working in bars and clubs near the port area. This group was never reached before.

In the first eight months more than 200 sex workers were reached by free-of-charge and anonymous multi-sectorial services. The number of contacts is progressively increasing.

### STEPS

- Assessment and mapping of the different forms and location of sex work settings
- Outreach methods developed in order to reach different sub-groups of sex workers and sex work settings
- Organise access and agreements with gatekeepers of indoor premises
- Gatekeepers are informed and sensitised regarding prevention programs
- Needs assessment carried out in dialogue with sex workers
- Multi-professional staff engaged and trained for the project

- Establishment of ethical guidelines for the services and procedures for professional conduct of the outreach team
- Special informational material produced
- Creation of a follow-up system of registration that respects service users' anonymity

## OUTCOMES

The project resulted in a broader coverage of sex workers in the city, as well as in the development of successful outreach methods being able to reach indoor-based sex workers among other groups.

## LESSONS

- Continuously evaluate and monitor the need of targeted services, as well as the method used by outreachers, taking in view that the situation of sex workers is always changing
- The drop-in centre and outreach activities in indoor and outdoor settings enabled sex workers that are highly mobile and who work for different clients in different settings to have access to informational materials, medical and hygienic items, HIV/STIs testing, assistance in registration as PLWH in the AIDS Centre, treatment, psychological support, and counselling
- Open dialogue and cooperation with sex workers diminished barriers in trust and resulted in better outreach methods

**4.** **Victoria, Khmelnytsky Regional Association for Overcoming Addiction and AIDS | Police | KHMELNYTSKY REGION | Ukraine**  
[www.victoriya.km.ua](http://www.victoriya.km.ua)

## Involve police as agents of social changes

### CHALLENGE

**Law enforcement officials need to be sensitised on sex workers' vulnerabilities to HIV/STIs infection and collaborate with prevention programmes.**

### ACTION

The cooperation between the NGO *Vitoria*, which provides multi-faceted services for sex workers since 2007, and the railway police is an example of efforts to sensitise law enforcement officials on HIV prevention.

The purpose of this cooperation is to involve police as agents of social changes by training them to respect sex workers' human rights and refer sex workers to the services of the organisation.

Hence, police officials were trained to act as partners in HIV prevention programmes among female sex workers. They respect and promote the right to health of sex workers. The partnership resulted in an efficient public health strategy that increases sex workers' access to services and rights. The Ministry of Internal Affairs supports the initiative.

## **STEPS**

- Setting up agreements between NGOs and state institutions providing support for women in crisis situation and/or working on the field of HIV/AIDS
- Preparation of service providers on the needs of sex workers (trainings, workshops)
- Provision of multi-faceted services for sex workers
- Creation of a follow-up system of registration that respects service users' anonymity

## **OUTCOMES**

The major achievement of this project was the capacity of creating a common platform for NGOs, law enforcement institutions, social services and AIDS centres (GOs) to jointly counteract sex workers' vulnerability to HIV/STIs. The positive impact is the commitment of law enforcement institutions to collaborate in HIV prevention strategies in partnership with civil society.

## **LESSONS**

- Collaboration with state officials in HIV programmes is fundamental to reduce the impact of HIV on sex workers
- Creation of protocols are needed to further develop sensitisation programmes and trainings

## Magazine Lilith by and for sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Sex workers' voices are often excluded by the media and their experience and knowledge are rarely shared and available.

### ACTION

The NGO *Legalife* is the only sex worker-led organization in Ukraine. In 2012 Legalife's Kirovograd branch created the magazine "Lilith"<sup>4</sup>, which tells life stories and strategies of sex workers. The magazine is aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination against sex workers. It is an opportunity for sex workers to share their different experiences with other sex workers in the country and build up a sex worker movement committed to increasing solidarity and access to rights and health. It also sensitises the general public and social workers on issues that are important for sex workers.

The topics of the magazine range from health issues to safety and human rights of sex workers. It is a resource committed to underscoring the diverse voices and experiences of sex workers and their communities and spreading the message: *sex work is work!* Currently, the magazine is distributed among sex workers throughout all regions of Ukraine.



<sup>4</sup> <http://legalife.com.ua/gazeta-lilit/>

## STEPS

- Select those topics that are far-most interesting for sex workers
- Give space for discussion and sharing of opinions
- Raise visibility and voices of sex workers and promote community empowerment
- Mobilize different communities of sex workers

## OUTCOMES

*Lilith* has reached popularity among different sex worker communities, since it is produced by and for sex workers. It is a successful example of community mobilization, empowerment, and awareness-raising.

## LESSONS

- Sex worker-led NGOs are the most efficient channel of communication with sex workers, as the language used in their publications and materials are accessible and interesting to sex workers
- To empower sex workers it is necessary to give visibility to the diversity of sex worker communities and promote solidarity among the different groups

**5.b** Legalife | KIROVOGRAD, MARIUPOL, VINNYTSIA | Ukraine  
[www.legalife.com.ua](http://www.legalife.com.ua)

# Sex workers' rights are human rights!

## CHALLENGE

Sex workers experience high levels of violence, including murder, in Ukraine. Advocating for human rights of sex workers is fundamental to overcome violence, as well as illegal detentions and intimidations on the part of the police.



## ACTION

The sex worker-led NGO *Legalife* (Mariupol and Vinnytsia branches) developed a targeted awareness-raising campaign to assert sex workers' rights and freedoms. The campaign took place in two cities of Ukraine, Mariupol and Vinnytsia, during 17 December 2012 commemoration. 17 December campaigns – the *International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers* – are memorable for involving different members of *Legalife* in street demonstration against violence.

In 2012 sex workers demonstrated with their red umbrellas against violence and demanded their human rights before public authorities. The red umbrella demonstration took place in the park where some sex workers work.

Currently *Legalife* is conducting a project to document human rights violations against sex workers, including those that are perpetrated by law enforcement officials. They collect and prepare video and audio evidence of the violations, as well as assists sex workers in filling complaints against unlawful arrests and detentions. Sex workers are trained to claim their civil and fundamental rights.

## STEPS

- Mobilise communities of sex workers
- Set up an organised advocacy campaign
- Choose a date for the event, preferably an international day of sex workers
- Integrate campaigns to a wider national advocacy strategy

## OUTCOMES

The advocacy activities organised by *Legalife* have impacted on the behaviour of the police once they became aware of the well-articulated strategy to combat violence. The combination of awareness-raising campaign with a system of documentation of abuses has led to police sensitisation and reduced violence.

## LESSONS

- Advocacy needs to be promoted at the community level, by empowering sex workers to know and claim their rights
- Street demonstrations need to be well-articulated with a broader national advocacy strategy



## Increasing outreach coverage: mobile units

### CHALLENGE

In 2007 only an estimated number of 9% of sex workers were covered by a comprehensive package of HIV prevention services. To overcome low coverage of services an efficient outreach method had to be developed and implemented.



### ACTION

Since 2008 the NGO *International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine* – the main recipient of the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria* in the country – created a project for strengthening the capacity of local outreach organisations by implementing mobile unit outreach projects. 12 regions of Ukraine benefit from this initiative. The coverage of outreach projects was broadened up and quality of services provided to sex workers improved.

The mobile units run daily in Kyiv, Lviv, Poltava, Donetsk, Kherson, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Tcherkassy, Vinnytsia, Lugansk, Mykolaiv, and Crimea. All mobile units run with multidisciplinary outreach teams, providing hand-out materials, information, diagnostic and harm reduction services for vulnerable populations, including sex workers. The project also counts with social accompaniment, psychological, and legal support for sex workers.

### STEPS

- Preparation of agreements between *International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine* and local NGOs providing services for sex workers
- Mobile units were equipped with clinic and support materials
- Formation of multi-disciplinary
- Development of social and legal support services, not only medical ones
- Involvement of sex workers in the project – peer to peer system



- Creation of a follow-up system of registration that respects service users' anonymity
- Visibility of the action is given by HIV/AIDS websites in the country

## OUTCOMES

By means of this project, the number of sex workers' reached increased to 40,3% in 2012, about 28.636 female sex workers. The project increased the coverage of sex workers, but also the quality of services provided.

## LESSONS

- HIV programmes need to expand and diversify their coverage and outreach activities in order to reach different groups of sex workers
- To better spread information and materials outreach staff need to train and integrate peer supporters
- Involvement of peers into the project increased participation and trust of sex workers

**6.b** International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine | NATIONAL  
PROJECTS | Ukraine  
[www.aidsalliance.org.ua](http://www.aidsalliance.org.ua)

# Peer driven intervention

## CHALLENGE

Peer interventions in sex work projects are proven to be the most successful way of spreading information and materials among hidden groups. This method needed further implementation in Ukraine, particularly in HIV prevention programmes.

## ACTION

In 2010 the NGO *International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine* developed and promoted a national peer education programme called: "Peer Driven Intervention (PDI)" project on HIV prevention among sex workers. The model was developed by American sociologists in 1980 and proved its efficiency by reaching people who inject drugs. The organisation uses this model for:

- reaching new groups of sex workers
- studying the group's different characteristics
- collecting information on sex workers' needs
- analysing behaviour patterns of the target group

- raising awareness for HIV among sex workers reached by the organization
- providing quality services on HIV/STIs counselling and testing

The program was successfully implemented by the NGOs implementing partners in Kyiv and Simferopol in 2010, and in 2011 the program was scaled up to seven other projects. Implementing NGOs in Kyiv, Kirovograd, Kharkiv, Sevastopol, Rivne, Poltava, and Nikopol provided prevention services, quality education, information materials, and HIV/STIs testing for sex workers. The activities reached 2.701 female sex workers. In January 2012 five new PDI projects were launched for implementation in the current program year.

### STEPS

- The model was developed among people who inject drugs
- Pilot projects were launched in Kiev and Simferopol
- In 2012 it reached several other regions of Ukraine
- Community involvement in the development and implementation of the project

### OUTCOMES

This project assisted local NGOs to reach new sub-groups of sex workers, including indoor-based sex workers (from apartments) and other hard-to-reach groups; girls aged 14-18; and also sex workers working through the Internet. More than half of the project's clients were under 25 years old. This sub-population is one of the most vulnerable to HIV/STIs. Peer driven interventions were successful in increasing the coverage of hidden groups in the country.

**7.** Narativ | INTERNATIONAL PROJECT  
[www.narativ.com/consulting/advocacy](http://www.narativ.com/consulting/advocacy)

## Storytelling for advocacy

### CHALLENGE

**Given the lack of visibility of sex workers in society, initiatives that raise sex workers voices are necessary for advocacy goals.**

### ACTION

In 2012 *SWAN Foundation* members, such as sex workers from *Legalife*, participated in "Storytelling for Advocacy" training, developed by *Narativ* and *Open Society Foundations*, between 10-12 October, 2012, in Bodrum, Turkey. Sex workers were trained on how to use their own

experiences and stories for advocacy goals, such as fighting against violence coming from the police, stigma, and discrimination.

The main aim of this event was to reveal personal stories of sex workers and create a powerful dialog with representatives of mass media, governments, and other stakeholders. This strategy was an efficient way of raising the voices of sex workers and presenting their points of view. It empowered sex workers to advocate for their civil and fundamental rights, as well as combat stereotypes, stigma, and discrimination.

### STEPS

- Development of an advocacy methodology
- Selection of participants from different countries
- Involvement of target groups in the organization of the trainings
- Document stories and use them for advocacy goals

### OUTCOMES

The project of *Narativ* is a 15 year-old strategy to advocate for human rights of marginalised groups. It has proven to be an efficient method of raising awareness and promoting community protagonism and leadership. The training with sex workers in Turkey has led to the empowerment of the sex worker-led group in Ukraine, and contributed to further development of advocacy strategies in the country.

## 8. Faith, Hope, Love | ODESSA | Ukraine

# Corporate social responsibility

### CHALLENGE

**Getting companies to fund sex work programmes and interventions is not an easy task. To call on corporate social responsibility to the negative impacts of HIV/AIDs in the country demands a well-articulated fundraising strategy.**

### ACTION

The NGO *Faith, Hope, Love* guarantees the sustainability of services and supplies for sex workers by evoking corporate social responsibility. Efforts were done to call on corporate social responsibility on humanitarian issues such as HIV prevention, care and treatment among vulnerable populations. After defining a target and a strategy, the next step was the preparation of letters of collaboration with business enterprises, according to this plan.

During meetings the NGO sensitised representatives of commercial enterprises by providing them information on the severity of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country and the need of action.

Due to these efforts a network consisting of 17 partner-companies was formed. They provide a variety of products for sex workers, such as food, toys for children, sweets, clothes, medicines, as well as free services in private medical and diagnostic centers. Social responsible companies benefit from the advertisement done through the products and media.

## **STEPS**

- Defining a framework in which corporate social responsibility can be used for humanitarian assistance, by means of civil society and private sector partnerships
- Set up priorities and target group for fundraising
- Prepare a list of enterprises that could be contacted
- Preparation of letters of collaboration
- Arrangement of in-site meetings at the enterprises head offices
- Signing agreements on cooperation
- Enterprises provide goods and resources for the implementation of the NGO's projects
- Provide feedback to the enterprises on the use of the products that they donate
- Media are informed on the partnership

## **OUTCOMES**

This collaboration increased goods and resources for over 120 female sex workers and their children, as well as defined a framework under which corporate social responsibility interests fit into fundraising of sex work programmes.

## **LESSONS**

- It is important to continuously involve the corporate sector in social responsibility and develop partnerships to combat HIV/AIDS
- The media attention and coverage is essential in this strategy
- Exposing business enterprises in support of sex work programmes has a positive impact against social stigma on vulnerable populations

## Magazine Podorozhnyk

### CHALLENGE

There was a need of having an interactive tool to disseminate information for sex workers, which is attractive and accessible for sex workers.

### ACTION

Since February 2005 the NGO *Unitus* prints a magazine called “*Podorozhnyk*”. It is developed with and for sex workers. The aim of this magazine is to empower sex worker communities and inform them about legal, health, and other matters that interest them. It is also a space for telling stories of sex workers and sharing their experiences.

The magazine is published every month, with circulation of 6,000 copies, and is distributed among sex workers and other vulnerable groups in all regions of Ukraine. It is a successful example of sex worker involvement in editorial work of the magazine, which highly contributes to the community empowerment.

### STEPS

- Develop the concept of a magazine
- Establish a board of editors
- Select topics that interest sex workers
- Produce monthly editions
- Dissemination strategy

### OUTCOMES

*Podorozhnyk* resulted in a very popular publication among sex workers, particularly because sex workers were involved in its design and edition. Through the magazine information on health, social, and legal issues become accessible for sex workers, as the publication can be shared with different members of the community. It increases sex workers’ self-esteem and empowers them to take measures to safeguard their safety and well-being.

### LESSONS

- The magazine was designed for sex workers, yet it is useful tool for service providers working in HIV/STI prevention, care, and treatment in the country

■ It is fundamental to involve sex workers in the design and edition of the magazine, as they know better the demands, language, and codes of the community.

**10.** Hope | ZAPORIZZHIA | Ukraine  
[www.spodivannya.sittool.net/index](http://www.spodivannya.sittool.net/index)

## Pocket-size calendar for sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Sex workers are not always aware of the available services they can access free-of-charge, as well as working time and who to contact in the organisation.

### ACTION

In 2012 NGO *Hope* developed a pocket-size calendar for free-of-charge distribution among sex workers. The aim behind this good practice is to increase sex workers self-esteem, give visibility to the community of sex workers in the city and promote reproductive and sexual health among sex workers. The calendar was also used to motivate sex workers to participate in other activities of the organization. It has all practical information about the NGO's work: address, working time, contact persons, and services available (medical, social, and psychological). For the development of the calendar, different focus groups were organized with sex workers. They were consulted in which way this calendar initiative could suit better their needs. It is an example of involvement and participation of sex workers in project development. As a result, the calendar was written with accessible language avoiding medical terminology. It is illustrated by original thematic drawings.

### STEPS

- Question sex workers about what kind of printed materials they prefer to have
- Develop and design of the calendar
- Print and free of charge distribution

### OUTCOMES

This pocket-size calendar is a helpful tool for sex workers. They could find in the calendar not only dates of services, but useful information about institutions providing services to sex workers, as well as their telephone numbers, addresses, routes of mobile unit. The calendar serves as diary of services provided but also promotes sex workers' access health services and support.

## LESSONS

- Sex workers must be consulted before developing tools for them
- The calendar needs to be small, easy to carry

## 11. Sevastopol city Centre of Women Initiatives | SEVASTOPOL | Ukraine [www.rcsev.org.ua](http://www.rcsev.org.ua)

# Woman to Woman empowerment centre

## CHALLENGE

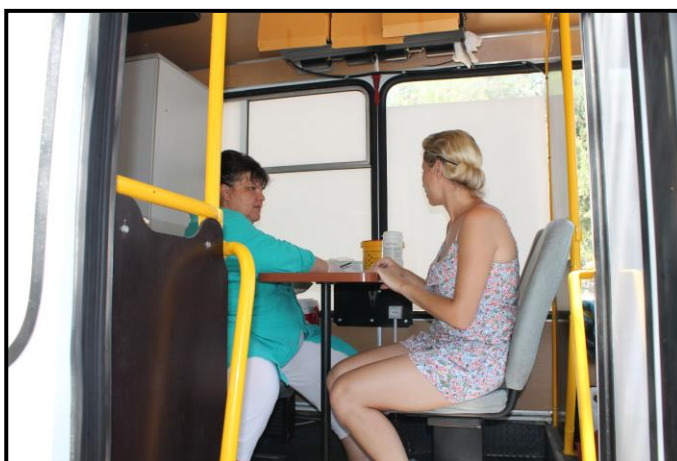
Many sex workers in the city are injecting drug users, and targeted services were necessary.

## ACTION

The *Woman to Woman* centre has been created with the support of UNODC in March 2012 in order to address the needs of sex workers who inject drugs. It provides them with counselling, legal advice, medical, social services, and leisure activities. The project's team is multi-professional.

It is located in an already existing community centre. A set of services are offered once a week. Female sex workers are provided with access to counselling services with specialists, including gynaecologist. The organization also refers them to medical institutions, when necessary. Educational activities are mainly informational meetings with sex workers, volunteers, and peer educators. Different topics are discussed with the groups. Artistic activities are also developed and involve sex workers, such as the art exposition "The city of Masters". Sex workers can also voluntarily take courses on hairdressing and manicure.

The centre builds community solidarity and promotes participation and exchange of experiences of sex workers throughout their activities. It seeks to increase well-being and empower sex workers.



## STEPS

- Developing the idea of a specialised centre
- Involving volunteers and peer educators into the activities
- Providing sex workers with medical services and counselling
- Teaching sex workers additional skills
- Involving sex workers in artistic workshops

## OUTCOMES

The project increased the quantity of sex workers receiving HIV prevention, care, and treatment services. It also empowered female sex workers, not only by addressing their health needs. Because it is a women-focused project, female sex workers have access to targeted services which are normally not available in Sevastopol. Most projects in the city are harm reduction addressing injecting drug user in general.

## LESSONS

- It is relevant to have a gender-specific community centre, being able to address female sex workers' needs
- Innovative range of services can be developed by community centre, including recreation and artistic activities, if the community demands it
- The community involvement is essential, both for the development and implementation of the centre

**12.** Charitable Foundation Unitus | MYKOLAIV | Ukraine  
[www.unitus.mk.ua](http://www.unitus.mk.ua)

## Services targeted to adolescents who provide sexual services

### CHALLENGE

According to a survey, Mykolaiv has one of the highest rates of HIV among youth (15-24) in Ukraine. There are officially registered 5753 PLWH in Mykolaiv, and 438 of them are adolescents (131 adolescents have AIDS).

### ACTION

Since 2009 *Unitus* with support of UNICEF provides social accompaniment for adolescents who sell sex in the city of Mykolaiv, and supplies them with condoms and informational materials. The initiative



seeks to support and empower adolescents that sell sex to protect themselves from HIV/STIs infections, as well as from violence. According to the WHO, adolescents are considered highly vulnerable to HIV/STIs infection due to their development face, and other factors such as lack of knowledge and skills on reproductive and sexual issues, violence, alcohol/drug use, etc.

The project is very effective and innovative because it provides outreach (with mobile unit), case management, medical (sexual and reproductive health), social (accompaniment), psychological (counselling), and legal services, as well as a telephone hot-line. Leaflets targeting this specific group were also developed. Finally, *Unitus* integrated its services with state organizations providing services for youth (*Centres of Social Services for Youth*).

## STEPS

- Organisation and training of staff members for working with youth under vulnerable situations
- Setting-up multi-faceted services and multi-professional teams
- Preparation of informational materials for adolescents who sell sex (3 booklets were prepared)
- Setting-up cooperation between the NGO, UNICEF, and governmental institutions
- Outreach and involvement of youth in the project

## OUTCOMES

The project is effective in addressing the needs of this specific group of adolescents who sell sex and has created a snow-ball effect within this community.

## LESSONS

- Cooperation between NGO and state institutions focused on youth has proven to be an effective method of guaranteeing support for this target group
- Involvement of youth in design and implementation of the project is desirable, in order to better meet their needs and create a trust relationship

## Social Center ORION

### CHALLENGE

**Specialised community centres are necessary for sex workers' integration and socialisation, creating a safe and friendly environment for counselling and service provision.**

### ACTION

In 2009 *Kharkiv Charitable Foundation Welfare* created *Social Center ORION*. The Center targets female sex workers and men who have sex with men (MSM) in crisis situations. It seeks to provide support and assistance to these two vulnerable groups.

By means of collaborative work of partner organizations (working as a referral system), sex workers and MSM receive professional psychological, legal, social, and medical services. In 2011 catalogue of services provided by *ORION* has been published, and was distributed among participants of the project. Sex workers of the *Center ORION* have possibility to leisure (use internet, watch films, etc.), and receive informational materials, prophylaxis materials (condoms, lubricants), and other materials. Because the Center targets MSM, it is an important reference point for male and transgender sex workers as well.

### STEPS

- Establishment of the specialised centre
- Creation of a platform of collaborating organisations for referrals
- Promotion of services and resources distribution
- Promotion of peer education
- Training staff on the needs of sex workers and men who have sex with men

### OUTCOMES

Daily *ORION* is visited by 10 sex workers. *ORION* was able to create a safe and friendly atmosphere, build upon the principles of autonomy and self-determination of sex workers.

## LESSONS

- Professionalism of staff members, as well as their good attitude to sex workers increased the level of trust to the *ORION* centre
- The project for MSM attracts also male and transgender sex workers, being an important meeting point for the community

## 14.a Convictus | KYIV | Ukraine

[www.convictus.org.ua](http://www.convictus.org.ua)

# Artistic workshops for sex workers

## CHALLENGE

**Sex work programmes need to diversify the ways of building community contact and support.**

## ACTION

Since 2010 *Convictus* has been organising artistic workshops for sex workers. These workshops are therapeutic ones, focused on the disclosure of artistic potential and women's empowerment. Sex workers who participate in the workshop develop different artistic skills: graphics, quilling, decoupage, glass painting, felting toys, and jewelry.

In 2012 new volunteer – a master of Kvilinh – began to cooperate with this workshop. Kvilinh is art of making plain or volumetric compositions out of paper stripes. Kvilinh is also called “paper filigree”. This kind of art comes from Korea and is very popular in eastern European countries. Such art activities promote sex worker community contact, support, and mobilization. Sex workers spend time with each other, share experiences, and still develop their artistic thinking, fantasy, and creativity.

## STEPS

- Exchange of workshop ideas
- Active participation of sex workers during the workshops
- Use of educational information
- Materials and recourses are distributed
- Workshops are designed on a weekly basis

## OUTCOMES

Artistic activities promote sex worker community contact, support, and mobilization. Kvilinh develops creativity and improves sex workers' self-esteem. Besides during the workshops sex workers are able to socialise and to share their experiences with other sex workers. During the artistic workshops educational materials and resources are distributed among the participants.

**14.b** Convictus | KYIV | Ukraine  
[www.convictus.org.ua](http://www.convictus.org.ua)

## Services for transgender sex workers

### CHALLENGE

It is estimated that around 10,700 sex workers are active in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> Male and transgender sex workers are not included in this estimation. There is a gap in information and service provision for these groups of sex workers.

### ACTION

In 2012, during regular online and street outreach activities, *Convictus* approached a group of about 30 transgender sex workers. The organisation then conducted a pioneer survey with the group. The analysis of the results revealed that prevention programs have been available for only 2 transgender sex workers; most of the group did not have adequate knowledge on preventive measures, nor did they have contact with service providers. Most respondents were taking hormone therapy according to their own concern, without medical support. Information about reassignment surgeries was available informally within the community, without specialist advice or counselling. Most of the respondents declared to have performed sexual services without a condom and much information was needed by the group. After such assessment, *Convictus* started to provide an adequate and targeted package of services that meet the needs of transgender sex workers.

### STEPS

- Assessment of number of transgender sex workers, place of work, and situation
- Capacitate staff and develop targeted services to address the specific needs of the group

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<sup>5</sup> International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine, 2012

## OUTCOMES

The survey process also established a trustworthy relationship between service providers and transgender sex workers, being able to reach today about 78 persons through outreach activities, including online counselling. Transgender sex workers were also incorporated in the project as peer educators and community leaders. This pioneer project seeks to overcome the gap in service provision for transgender sex workers in Ukraine and can be used as a model for other organisations.

## LESSONS

- Building trust of the community is imperative for carrying out targeted services
- Peer education is fundamental for engaging with transgender sex workers

**15.** Charitable Foundation Orchid | MYKOLAIV | Ukraine  
[orchideja@ukr.net](mailto:orchideja@ukr.net)

## Self-help group of Female sex workers

### CHALLENGE

It was necessary to set-up a sex worker-led platform for debates and self-representation.

### ACTION

Since 2000 the organization *Orchid* created a project for establishment of a network of non-governmental organizations that work with sex workers, which was set up by the *Ukrainian Institute of Social Research* and *UNAIDS* Ukraine office, and supported by the *British Council*.

It is a self-help group led by female sex workers. Several leaders have distinguished. They had an idea to create "Union of female sex workers", which lead to the development, creation, and registration of a (sex worker-led) NGO. Orchid was registered on June 27, 2003 after sequence of failed tentatives due to legal barriers and limited right to association.

Being part of Orchid means that sex workers can increase community participation, solidarity, build up movement, strengthen their demands, as well as increase their level of awareness around personal health and safer sex. It is a possibility for community exchange and sharing of experiences.

Since 2003 the group meets regularly with small breaks in the summer, when the participants go on vacation or for work in a resort area. There are trustful relationships between the members of the group.

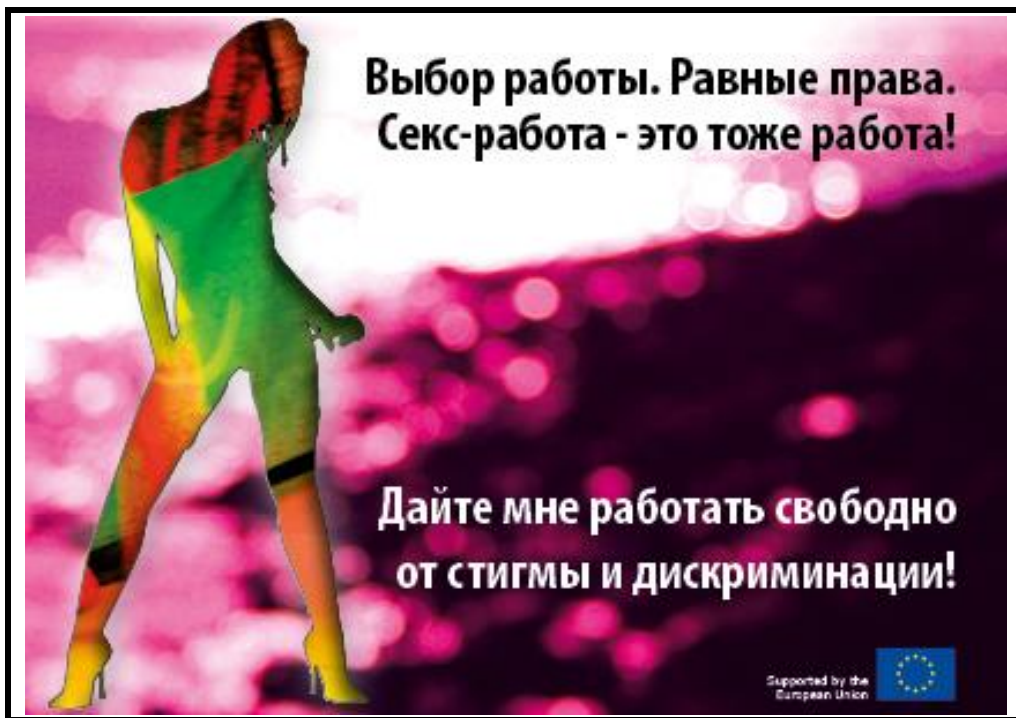
### **STEPS**

- Creating of idea of establishment of NGO by sex workers themselves
- Registration of Orchid as a sex worker self-help organisation
- Developing activities of the Orchid

### **OUTCOMES**

Orchid created a local platform for sex worker organisation and self-representation.





## Good Practices | R U S S I A

### 1. Humanitarian Action | ST. PETERSBURG | Russia <http://haf-spb.org/en/>

## Crisis shelter and services for sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Some sex workers have needs that cannot be covered by outreach services, particularly those who are more vulnerable. It was necessary to set up a project for providing temporary housing and targeted services for sex workers in a crisis situation.

### ACTION

In 2007 the NGO *Humanitarian Action* started project called "Temporary safe housing for sex workers with social accompaniment (*"Crisis shelter"*). The project aims at overcoming sex workers' crisis situation and providing professional support, particularly those who are homeless, victims of violence, and persons threatened with deprivation of parental rights, and people who use drugs.



The *Crisis shelter* provides:

- accompaniment and subsistence
- health care and treatment
- psychological, legal, and social support

The professional team assist sex workers in building up a (financial) life plan, which is developed by a multi-professional team (psychologist, social worker, and lawyer). As a result, sex workers have increased access to justice, parental confidence and skills, as well as quality of life and well-being. The organisation of the space is run by sex workers, including domestic work and child care.

The shelter also has a special agreement with the local children's polyclinic, which provides paediatrician care for children of sex workers. HIV-positive female sex workers have facilitated access to treatment and care.

The period of stay ranges from three to six months; yet the complexity of each crisis situation is analysed individually and period of stay could be extended.

## **STEPS**

- Decide together with the staff of the organisation the need of having the *Crisis shelter* and analyse of the best way for its implementation
- Analyse sex workers' case management and identify needs
- Carry out a survey with sex workers about the desired services to the *Crisis shelter*
- Decide the location of the shelter in order to guarantee the safety of sex workers
- Elaboration of all administrative papers for running legally a shelter
- Establish cooperation and protocols with other organisations and public institutions
- Create a safe and comfortable environment
- Develop and run targeted service programmes for vulnerable sex workers hosted by the shelter
- Select and train staff allocated to work with vulnerable sex workers who have been victim of violence and who are in need of counselling and psychotherapy
- Make the project visible for all sex workers in need and promote the services through outreach and peer support
- Create a selection criteria and guidelines for those who will receive the accommodation and services
- Fundraise for further running the crisis shelter

## OUTCOMES

The model of *Crisis shelter* is an efficient method of responding to the diverse needs of sex workers who are living a crisis situation. It was specially developed to combine legal, social, and health services with a safe place to stay. This successful strategy is currently run by *Humanitarian Action* and should inspire other projects from different cities of the Russian Federation.

## LESSONS

- A comfortable and friendly atmosphere increases solidarity among sex workers
- Sustainability and continuity of the shelter and services must be planned and guaranteed since the beginning
- A well-organised security system safeguards integrity and safety of sex workers

**2.a** Silver Rose | ST. PETERSBURG | Russia  
<http://www.silver-rose.org>

## Creating sex worker leaderships and self-organisation



## CHALLENGE

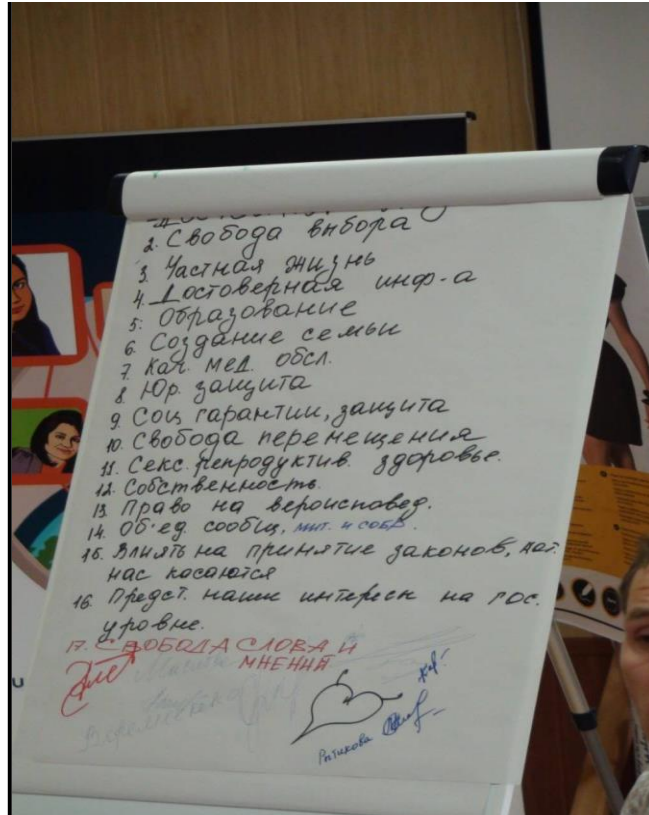
This was necessary primarily due to the fact that Russia's major donors began to leave the country and HIV programmes for sex workers were reduced considerably. Additionally, self-representation of sex workers was necessary to increase sex worker leaderships and make them visible.

## ACTION

The first association of sex workers in the Russian Federation "*Silver Rose*" was established in 2010. The organisation is committed to promote health and rights services to sex workers in the country. It is

self-represented by sex workers and addresses sex workers' main needs, including combating criminalization of sex workers, unsafe working conditions, violence, discrimination, and stigma that affect sex workers' lives. It supports the capacitation of sex worker leaders in different regions of Russia and trains them to effectively advocate for their human rights.

Currently, the activities are run in eight regions of Russia in spite the fact that the government does not grant them a legal status of association, or financial means for carrying out their activities.



## STEPS

- Improve sex workers' community motivation and peer education programmes in different regions of Russia
- Identify of interested and active sex workers
- Develop of a plan for participation and involvement of the community in peer education and sex work activism
- Build the capacity of staff, including peer supporters and new leaders
- Conduct trainings for sex workers with the support of UNFPA
- Prepare sex worker community representatives to deal with media and represent the interests of vulnerable groups in health-related matters
- Develop cooperation with NGOs in the field and other stakeholders
- Develop a communication and visibility plan, including website and social media
- Advocate for the rights of sex workers at the national and international levels
- Fundraise

## OUTCOMES

The sex worker-led organisation *Silver Rose* is a successful example of community mobilization with national representation. By means of capacity building activities and targeted services, *Silver Rose* was able to mobilize the community, as well as involve sex workers in advocacy strategies. The programme responds to sex workers' main needs and strengthens the efforts in combating HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation. It also helped to monitor human rights violations committed against sex workers.

## LESSONS

- Developing capacity for information/communication, counselling, advocacy, and lobbying activities leads to better strategies against criminalization laws and policies affecting sex workers
- Empowering and training sex worker leaderships is fundamental for strengthening sex worker activism across the country
- By involving sex workers from different sex work settings (outdoor and indoor), the organisation is able to access and address the different needs of sex workers

**2.b** Silver Rose | ST. PETERSBURG | Russia  
<http://www.silver-rose.org>

## Protecting the rights of sex workers

### CHALLENGE

In Russia sex workers are prosecuted under administrative laws. Due to criminalisation laws and policies, law enforcement authorities refuse to open criminal cases when sex workers are affected by violence. Criminalisation of sex work also increases sex workers' vulnerability to violence and HIV/STIs infection.

### ACTION

Since 2011 the sex worker-led organisation *Silver Rose* has been advocating for the rights of sex workers at national and international levels. One of the projects of the organisation is focused on providing legal assistance and support to sex workers in Saint Petersburg and other 28 regions of Russia. Sex workers who have experienced violence have access to legal information through the website of Silver Rose, and have access to legal counselling with specialised lawyers. Recommendations on how to deal with police upon arrest is also provided. All cases of violence are collected and documented.

As part of their legal services, the organisation requested an official registration of *Silver Rose* to the *Ministry of Justice*, yet the request was denied. They appealed the case in the district court. Still *Silver Rose* was not able to register as other NGOs. The right to association is guaranteed by international and European human rights law; therefore legal instruments will be used for appealing sex workers' collective right to association.



## STEPS

- Train lawyers on legal cases common to sex workers
- Provide specialised legal services and support to sex workers
- Provide psychological assistance to victims of violence
- Advocate against the administrative code's penalisation on prostitution at national level
- Request official registration of the organisation before the Ministry of Justice
- Appeal at district court against the denial to the right of association
- Use human rights to further claim sex workers' right to association

## OUTCOMES

As a result of the project, sex workers are more aware of their civil and human rights and have been active in filing complaints against violence and abuse. Information is available to all sex workers through the website of the organisation. From the 29 cases against the administrative code offenses, 18 were successfully favourable to sex workers. The organisation will further try to officially register in Russia.

## LESSONS

- Trained lawyers better address legal barriers for sex workers to access justice
- Awareness about sex workers' human rights need to be promoted among general public, not only among civil society
- It is necessary to increase the number of allies of sex workers, both in private and public sector
- A legal protection strategy needs to be set up to collect cases, evidence, and file complaints against violence and abuse
- Legal reform needs to be continuously promoted by the community

## 3. Krasnyi Iar | KRASNOYARSK | Russia

# Hotline for HIV prevention and sex worker involvement

## CHALLENGE

Reaching sex workers is not always possible or easy. Outreach programmes need to diversify their methods of reaching sex workers and engaging with the community.

## ACTION

In 2010 the NGO *Krasnyi Iar* created a hotline for HIV prevention and information. This was a way of expanding sex workers' access information and better reaching hidden groups of sex workers and raising awareness among them.

Through the hotline sex workers are informed about HIV voluntary counselling and testing services, as well as reproductive and sexual health services available in the city of Krasnoyarsk. The organisation also invited sex workers reached through the hotline to participate in a sociological research project and needs assessment survey, which resulted in active engagement of more sex workers into the services and activities offered by the organisation.

## STEPS

- Create a hotline for HIV prevention and information
- Train staff members to provide telephone counselling
- Inform sex workers about the hotline service (eg. brochures)
- Use the hotline to engage sex workers with organisation's activities and services
- Involve trained health specialists to provide services for sex workers

## OUTCOMES

The hotline project was able to open a channel of communication between the organisation and sex workers, enlarging the coverage and the number of sex workers who benefit from reproductive and sexual health services. It also improved their participation capacity building activities. Sex workers know that they can always call for advice, since the hotline number is highly advertised in the brochures of the organisation and information is transmitted from peer to peer.

## LESSONS

- By training service providers on how to provide information and counselling through the phone the organisation increased the trust of sex workers to its services
- The new tools developed enabled service providers to reach indoor-based sex workers
- Hotlines better be available 24 hours, as sex workers working time vary

## **4.** Kovcheg-AntiAIDS | ROSTOV-ON-DON | Russia

# Comprehensive services and referrals

### CHALLENGE

During the period of 2009-2010, a research done in Rostov-on-Don revealed an alarming prevalence of Syphilis, HIV, and Tuberculosis among street-based sex workers.

### ACTION

Considering the situation of street-based sex workers in the city, the NGO *Kovcheg-AntiAIDS* started to offer comprehensive free-of-charge programme for voluntary testing and counselling for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The organisation also prepared agreements with cooperating medical institutions to accompany sex workers in medical care and treatment. This referral system was established with trusted doctors who carry out non-discriminatory medical health care and support services.

### STEPS

- Carry out a survey on the incidence of HIV/STIs among sex workers
- Organise of a programme for voluntary testing and counselling for HIV/STIs
- Set up a referral system with trusted health professionals and public institutions
- Provide health and social support for sex workers together with specialists from the organisation or cooperating institutions
- Develop and distribute informational materials
- Engage volunteers to participate in the project

### OUTCOMES

The project was able to raise awareness among the community about the alarming health situation of street-based sex workers, as well as highlighted the need of targeted services for this group. By means of providing medical examinations, counselling, and support, the organisation increased sex workers access to medical services, including to HIV/STIs and Tuberculosis care and treatment. Cooperation with public health institutions was essential for organising a referral system of support.

### LESSONS

- To guarantee the sustainability of this project, the organisation has been developing an ongoing funding negotiation with the municipality's administration office



## Online outreach and information platform for male and transgender sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Male and transgender sex workers are hardly reached by service providers in the country, reason why information needs to be easily accessible and disseminated where they are – online. These groups are also highly discriminated and stigmatised in Russia.

### ACTION

In February 2012 the NGO *Krasnaya Lenta* developed an online outreach method for prevention and information services for male and transgender sex workers. It is an online discussion forum for sharing information and empowering the community.

The forum is an open space for sex workers. There they can talk about their life stories, services, migration experiences, activism, and health, to name a few. They can also give feedback on the quality of services received by the organisation.

Visibility to the forum was given by placing an advertisement in a Russian escort website<sup>6</sup>. Online advertisements increase service providers' chances of having a first contact with male and transgender sex workers through the internet.

### STEPS

- Monitor online sites/networks that are attractive for male and transgender sex workers
- Learn from other European experiences of online outreach and counselling
- Develop an online multi-professional outreach and counselling strategy through internet forums
- Create a banner for advertisement
- Develop targeted forum for male and transgender sex workers
- Advertise in websites where sex workers offer their services

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<sup>6</sup> <http://bbs.gay.ru>

## OUTCOMES

The forum increased outreach coverage of male and transgender sex workers. It is an effective tool for reaching these communities which normally work indoors and face high discrimination and stigmatisation. The tool also empowers sex workers, since it is not only based on health and preventive information, but also on issues that increase sex workers' self-esteem and solidarity.

## LESSONS

- The forum is a way of building up solidarity and reducing isolation of sex workers
- The tool maintains anonymity of the users while they have access to information and support from service providers and the community
- The tool increases outreach coverage with limited funding
- Advertising the forum in escort websites increased visibility and participation of sex workers



## 6. Botkin Hospital | ST. PETERSBURG | Russia

### Drop-in centre at Botkin Hospital

#### CHALLENGE

It is estimated that there about 8.000 female street-based sex workers in Saint Petersburg. Most of them work near the main train station, major hotels, and entertainment centres. Due to the fact that Botkin hospital is located in this area, it was thought that an accessible drop-in for sex workers would be ideal.

#### ACTION

In 2003 the *Botkin Hospital* located in the central district of St. Petersburg opened a drop-in centre for sex workers, particularly for street-based sex workers who inject drugs. The centre ensures discrimination-free medical assistance. Sex workers have regular contact with trusted doctors who provide them quality health services, including HIV/STIs voluntary testing and counselling. The centre is specialised in sex workers' health needs, vulnerabilities, and promotes the right to health among the community.

Moreover, it guarantees sex workers without documentation and/or municipal registration equal access to health care services and support.

Migrant sex workers benefit greatly from these services, since they are not offered free-of-charge and bureaucracy-free in other hospitals.

The centre works in collaboration with the NGO *Humanitarian Action*, as they carry out outreach services for sex workers in the centre of the city. During outreach sex workers are often referred, or accompanied by a social worker to the centre. Appointments with trusted doctors are also arranged and facilitated.

## STEPS

- Establish and train a multi-disciplinary team
- Open a low threshold centre inside the hospital
- Create and distribute informational materials for sex workers
- Establish cooperation with already existing outreach teams in the city and organise a referral system
- Promote trainings and seminars
- Adapt the experience of NGOs to hospital settings
- Safeguard a human-rights based approach to sex workers
- Provide targeted health services, prophylactic materials, medical care, and social support

## OUTCOMES

The centre has a human rights-based approach to sex workers' health, particularly to the most vulnerable street-based sex workers who inject drugs. Due to its collaboration with the NGO *Humanitarian Action*, the centre was able to cover good number of sex workers which are normally not reached by harm reduction services in the city. The centre is well-visited and has a good reputation among the community. Thus, follow-ups and case management were possible and fundamental for improving health and well-being of sex workers.

## LESSONS

- Due to the location of the centre many sex workers who work near the hospital were easily reached, referred, and this has also favoured the creation of a follow-up system of accompaniment
- Cooperation with outreach teams is fundamental to contact sex workers and promote quality services among the community
- Capacitation of health care service providers enables them to better respond to sex workers' needs, particularly the most vulnerable ones

## Involvement of taxi drivers in HIV prevention

### CHALLENGE

Involving sex workers into preventive programmes demands creative ways of engaging with the community and different stakeholders can be used for reaching sex workers.

### ACTION

February 2012 the low-threshold *Island-2 centre* was created by the public organization *Prevention and Initiative*. At first the involvement of sex workers into the centre was not easy, which forced staff members to look for innovative ways of reaching and involving the target group into the services of the centre.

Taxi drivers are important stakeholders as they are in direct contact with sex workers. The centre decided to involve taxi drivers as volunteers in prevention activities among sex workers. Thus, taxi drivers were trained and invited by the outreach team to cooperate with them in preventive work by referring sex workers to the services of the organisation and distributing informational materials.

### STEPS

- Search for new methods of reaching and establishing contact with sex workers
- Train volunteer taxi drivers on preventive work and defining their responsibilities as volunteers, such as providing informational materials and referrals to the organisation

### OUTCOMES

The programme improved the distribution of preventive materials and increased the trust relationship between sex workers and service providers. Due to referrals of taxi drivers, the organisation increased the coverage of health and support services provided for sex workers.

### LESSONS

- It is clear that a trust relationship needs to be built with sex workers in order to improve contact with the community members
- Taxi drivers are aware of the situation of sex workers and can be helpful for building up effective strategies to support them

- Taxi drivers need to be well-trained in order to fulfil their task of volunteer for the organisation and promote preventive programmes and services of the organisation
- The partnership with taxi drivers could be further explored by other organisations and projects in Russia

## 8. Anti-AIDS Siberia | BARNaul | Russia

# System of multi-lateral support for sex workers

### CHALLENGE

The organisation carried out a needs assessment to better address prevention programs to sex workers. The results pointed out diversity of needs and services for sex workers. It was clear that a multi-sectorial and coordinated approach to health services must be set up and further promoted.

### ACTION

In 1999 the NGO *Anti-AIDS Siberia* started to work with sex workers in Barnaul. Later governmental bodies were involved with coordinated and multi-lateral prevention programmes, as it was clear the need of cooperation among different stakeholders. Through this cooperation, sex workers were supported as follows:

- Outreachers target street-based sex workers and provide them with informational materials, condoms, carry out counselling on HIV prevention, and referrals to medical institutions and *AIDS Centre*. Preventive work is mainly carried out in indoor settings (hotels, saunas). Sex workers that need additional support are referred to other social and health services, including a *Crisis centre for women victim of violence*.
- In cooperation with the NGO *Positive development*, sex workers had access to support groups for people living with HIV.
- The HIV prevention programme was connected to the *Centre for social assistance* and the *Centre for the temporary residence for persons without a permanent place of residence* for social support and housing.
- The programme engaged with *law enforcement* officials and the prosecutors' office. Twice a year the executors of the programme carried out meetings with police officials (about 500 police participated) on the goals and objectives of the programme.

- The *media* was contacted and informed about the realisation programme and different journalists were interested on the process and outcomes of this multi-lateral action.
- In 2006 a reference centre for sex workers was created and hosted by *Anti-AIDS Siberia*.
- Agreements were established with the *anti-drug Commission* of the region, in order to safeguard rights-based responses to sex workers who inject drugs.
- An agreement with the *Job Centre*, in Barnaul, facilitated sex workers access to information on other occupations and vacancies.

## STEPS

- Identify the needs of sex workers in the region
- Promote cooperation with state institutions and sign agreements
- Develop quality services for sex workers
- Train and engage law enforcement officials
- Create a referral system for addressing sex workers different needs

## OUTCOMES

The multi-lateral plan for supporting sex workers, organised by *Anti-AIDS Siberia*, resulted in an integrated system of service provision addressing health and social needs of sex workers. Visibility to the plan was given through the media. In 2012 a surveillance study revealed a reduction of HIV/STIs among sex workers covered by the programme.

## LESSONS

- Engaging with state institutions (from different departments) with civil society and community increased the efficacy of the action
- The sustainability of prevention programmes largely depends on the availability of state support
- Comprehensive and responsive services to sex workers depend on the support of state institutions
- Resources and services can be shared between organisations, increasing referrals and support to sex workers
- In order to understand how HIV/STIs affect sex workers, services need to involve sex workers into HIV programmes

## Capacity building and training of health care professionals

### CHALLENGE

The region of Barnaul is heavily affected by the HIV epidemic. Sex workers are particularly at risk of HIV/STIs infection. After research done among sex workers in the city, the NGO *Siberian Initiative* encountered sex workers' low-knowledge regarding sexual and reproductive health. 60% of the interviewees do not practice consistent condom use. Additionally, it was found negative attitudes of health care professionals towards sex workers were hampering their access to health care services.

### ACTION

To counteract this situation, the NGO *Siberian Initiative* created a package of comprehensive services tailored for sex workers and parallel developed trainings for health care professionals on how to work with and for sex workers. The organisation developed informational materials (on health, rights, and violence) to be distributed among sex workers and training manuals for health care professionals. Cooperation was firmied between civil society and governmental institutions (medical and legal). The main objective from 2010 to 2011 was to inform sex workers in the city about HIV transmission, prevention, and care and create a tolerant public health environment where sex workers can access non-discriminatory health and psychological services. Today the organisation still works with sex workers, but on a different project.

### STEPS

- Assess the situation and needs of sex workers in the city
- Develop and disseminate informational materials on sexual and reproductive health (including HIV/AIDS) and violence prevention strategies and rights
- Prepare and conduct training for health professionals on i) counselling for sex workers ii) medical treatment and care for sex workers
- Prepare and conduct training for peer supporters on i) sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/STIs prevention, care, and treatment and ii) how to reduce violence at work and increase access rights



## OUTCOMES

The project increased collaboration between governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations which are interested in safeguarding sex workers access to non-discriminatory health care and treatment. By means of this initiative, the organisation also increased coverage and the number of quality services offered to sex workers. It also increased the capacity of health care professionals working in the field of HIV prevention, treatment, and care among sex workers.

## LESSONS

- It is fundamental to gather resources and experience from public and private sectors and rationalise a coordinated service provision methodology
- Capacitated health care professionals encourages sex workers' acceptance to health care services

**10.** Svecha | ST. PETERSBURG | Russia  
<http://svechaspb.narod.ru/>

# Taskforce and capacity building for service providers

## CHALLENGE

Trainings were elaborated due to a lack of working experience of public service providers in relation to sex workers and their health needs.

## ACTION

In 2011 the NGO *Charitable Fund Svecha* started implementing training programmes for governmental institutions. Increasing the capacity of public service providers in responding to the needs of sex workers has proven to reduce negative impacts of HIV/STIs among sex workers.

Different professionals are trained both theory and practice (outreach). Case management is part of the training and has proven to be essential when services target sex workers. Building up a trust-relationship between service providers and sex workers depends on how sex workers are treated and how their needs are addressed.

The organisation also organises roundtable meetings (taskforce) for the implementation of best methods of working with vulnerable populations at the municipal administration level. Sex workers are involved into the debate. There is an ongoing need to raise awareness of public service providers on the specific vulnerabilities of this target group and adequate their work to internationally recognised best practices.

## STEPS

- Create a project team of concerned specialists
- Identify problems and needs in training for specialists of social and health services
- Formation of a training programme and composition of the trainers
- Carry out specific trainings on how to work with sex workers
- Organise and set up roundtables at the municipal administration level
- Search of human and financial at the state level for the viability of the project

## OUTCOMES

Training service providers from the public health sector on how to address sex workers needs is fundamental for an effective local HIV/STIs response. The project has helped to increase sex workers' trust on service providers and therefore reduced their vulnerability to HIV/STIs.

## LESSONS

- Cooperation between civil society and governmental institutions is an important step to learn different approaches and support sex workers in overcoming barriers to access public services
- There is a need of continuous monitoring and integration of services
- Participation of sex workers in the roundtables enabled their voices to be heard at municipal administration level

**11.a**

**Positive Dialogue | SAINT PETERSBURG | Russia**

<http://www.positivdialog.ru/>

# Peer support in HIV prevention among MSM sex workers

## CHALLENGE

From 2007 to 2008 *Positive Dialogue* carried out a needs assessment on MSM sex workers' access to information and health services. It was found that many sex workers were living with HIV and had limited or no access to services and information due to marginalisation and repression against them.

## ACTION

The NGO *Positive Dialogue*, in cooperation with peer supporters from the MSM sex worker community, including those who live with HIV, visited several settings including Saint Petersburg's central station, gay clubs, and specific gardens/cruising zones, mostly on Fridays and Saturdays.

Peer supporters were selected and trained to work in those settings. In clubs, for instance, a quiz on HIV prevention and sexual health were carried out. It is an interactive technique to motivate the group and engage them into the prevention activity. On top of that, information on rights was provided during outreach.

## STEPS

- Carry out research to identify MSM sex workers needs
- Prepare a targeted prevention programme for this specific group of sex workers
- Set up a professional team, including volunteer peer supporters
- Train peer supporters to carry out preventive work among the community
- Set up self-help groups with the community of MSM sex workers
- Development of materials on health and rights (e.g. leaflets, flyers)
- Develop a network of trusted doctors
- Accompany sex workers to trusted doctors

## OUTCOMES

Due to involvement of peers into the project, counselling could be developed at the workplace of sex workers, increasing their access to preventive information. MSM sex workers needs were assessed and services for them need further development. The project resulted in increased awareness about health and rights among the community, and scaled up access to health services, including HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

## LESSONS

- Activities must respect the working time and working environment of sex workers and counselling must be agreed with the community
- Preventive materials are essential for printing and distribution by peers
- Sex workers' knowledge on safer sex must not be underestimated
- Current changes in the law regarding MSM demands special attention of services provided to the community

## HIV prevention among MSM sex workers in Vyborg

### CHALLENGE

In Vyborg there is a high mobility and concentration of MSM sex workers. MSM sex workers are not easily accessible, as their communities face double institutional and societal repression for being MSM and sex workers. Fear of stigma and discrimination worsens their access to health and rights services.

### ACTION

The NGO *Positive Dialogue* reaches and provides comprehensive services for sex workers, including MSM sex workers, in the border city of Vyborg with Finland. The objective of the organisation is to render health, legal, and psychological support to sex workers, and develop further outreach methodologies to reach the most hidden groups, such as MSM sex workers. The organisation is located in a hospital and its premises are used for free-of-charge service provision.

An assessment aimed at mapping situation and location of MSM sex workers was carried out and revealed that their access to health and rights services is limited. Due to double marginalisation, service providers had to be trained on how to carry out services targeting this group.

The project was carried out from 2009-2012, particularly in the highway that goes to Finland, in Leningrad region. Many MSM sex workers concentrate in the border area with Finland.

### STEPS

- Carry out research to identify MSM sex workers and map the prostitution areas
- Prepare a targeted prevention programme for this specific group of sex workers
- Set up a professional team, including volunteers
- Set up self-help groups with the community of MSM sex workers
- Development of materials on health and rights (e.g. leaflets, flyers)
- Accompany sex workers to trusted doctors

## OUTCOMES

Outreach teams successfully reached the target group due to previous mapping and strategy planning. Specific needs of the community were addressed, including high vulnerability to HIV/STIs. Facilitated access to medical care and treatment benefit highly the community, as they are normally excluded by prevention, treatment, and care services. Informational material can be used and spread from peer to peer.

## LESSONS

- MSM sex workers are undercovered by health and rights services
- Double marginalisation requests trained professionals and targeted materials and services
- Special attention has to be given to cross boarder projects and cooperation

## 12. Lesnitsa | OREL | Russia

# Create and organise a platform for service providers

## CHALLENGE

**In the region of Orel, the vast majority of sex workers are indoor-based (working in apartments and parlours). Criminalisation of sex work is a barrier for reaching sex workers in closed settings. It was necessary to create and organise a platform for strategical service provision, by gathering the experience of several organisations active in the field and developing outreach strategies and methods for contacting indoor-based sex workers.**

## ACTION

The NGO *Lesnitsa* created and organised a platform for service providers active in the field of sex work between 2000 and 2012. The platform gathered the experience and knowledge of 5 specialist organisations from different professional backgrounds. An assessment of the situation of sex workers was carried out by the platform and it was found that many sex workers are injecting drug users, and that violence affects both female and male sex workers.

By working in cooperation with different organisations, *Lesnitsa* was able to organise and sensitise service providers on the diverse needs of sex workers. Medical services were then provided in combination with services addressing violence. Members of the platform also carry out awareness raising and capacity building activities. For instance, outreach teams were trained on how to deal with violence and criminalisation in the context of sex work.

## STEPS

- Create and organise a platform of service providers who are sensitive to sex workers diverse needs
- Train outreachers to work in indoor settings and on issues of violence affecting sex workers
- Develop a fact sheet on violence
- Carry out services in indoor settings
- Organise a referral system with trusted doctors and crisis centre
- Provision of prophylaxis material
- Fundraising

## OUTCOMES

The organised platform of services resulted in the improvement of the number of female and male sex workers accessing health services in the city. Services addressing violence against sex workers increased sex workers' access to justice.

## LESSONS

- Lawyers need to be trained and involved into programmes targeting sex workers
- Assessment of the situation of indoor sex workers is necessary to carry out effective outreach programmes and methods
- Sex workers who inject drugs benefit greatly from referral services, as their needs are complex and demand specialised attention
- Awareness raising among health professional workers is fundamental in the context of sex work

**13.** Compass | CHELYABINSK | Russia  
[www.kompas74.ru](http://www.kompas74.ru)

## Increase sex workers' access to rapid HIV testing

### CHALLENGE

High levels of HIV infection among sex workers means that a rapid HIV testing programme needs to be promoted voluntarily among the community.

## ACTION

The governmental programme *Compass* is the result of a five-year collaboration between the *Administration of Chelyabinsk*, the public organization *Est'mnenie Chelyabinsk Center for prevention and fight against AIDS*, and the rehabilitation centre *Wings*. High levels of HIV infection in the region demanded a serious HIV response from the part of the government.

The programme started in 2007 by carrying out outreach activities to people who inject drugs, and in 2010 it began working with female sex workers. The centre is currently open and visited by sex workers. In special the centre has a mobile laboratory where sex workers can get tested for HIV/STIs. Those sex workers who need further care, social support, and information are referred to the centre's service. Therefore, the centre is a combination of outreach activities, mobile laboratory, and clinical services.

## STEPS

- Organise the rapid testing system with pre- and post-counselling
- Prepare social and psychological services for sex workers
- Develop and disseminate informational materials and brochures
- Provide referrals to trusted doctors
- Carry out diagnosis and prevention activities

## OUTCOMES

The programme resulted in a specialist centre where sex workers can have access to a multi-professional team that provides health, social, and psychological support. Sex workers who are found HIV positive have access to counselling, support, and receive antiretroviral therapy. Sex workers who inject drugs have a special support to overcome addiction and deal with the HIV implications, when found to be HIV positive.

## LESSONS

- Programmes provided to sex workers need continuity, so that service providers can have time to build up confidence and trust with the community
- Medical doctors are trained to facilitate sex workers documentation and filling in necessary forms to be able to access health services and overcome lack of information and bureaucratic barriers



## Social support for female sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Female sex workers are highly vulnerable to HIV in the city of Ufa, particularly due to violence, drug use, lack of social support, and police repression in sex work premises.

### ACTION

From 2007 to 2010 regional public organisation *GolosAntiAIDS* implemented a project aimed at increasing sex workers' access to social services and health care. A taskforce was created in order to identify which social services sex workers could benefit. An agreement was done with more than seven local governmental and non-governmental institutions.

During the period of the project, there were several police crackdowns in sex businesses; however, the organisation managed to still provide sex workers with medical and social support.

### STEPS

- Select and train staff on the main needs of sex workers
- Map the sex work settings in the city and develop outreach routes
- Establish agreements with public and private organisations for medical and social support of sex workers
- Creation of a referral system mechanism with trusted doctors, lawyers, and psychologists

### OUTCOMES

The project was able to reach high numbers of sex workers and involve them into preventive work. Most hidden groups of sex workers, particularly escort, were also reached by the help of peer supporters from the community who spread the information and facilitated the contact. A multi-professional team was formed and sex workers had increased access to services which reduce their vulnerability to HIV/STIs.

## LESSONS

- Cooperation with state bodies is fundamental for increasing sex workers' access to social and health services
- Activities must be ongoing and projects sustainable

## 15. Project April | TOLYATTI | Russia

<http://hivtlt.blogspot.ru/>

# Need assessment interviews with gender-sensitive approach

## CHALLENGE

Due to the reduced funding on preventive outreach programmes, less information on the situation of sex workers was available.

## ACTION

In 2012 cooperation between *Project April* and *Eva network*<sup>7</sup> resulted in a needs assessment survey that was carried out mainly with street-based sex workers and some sex workers who inject drugs. The survey collected information from direct interviews with sex workers who filled in an individual questionnaire. Sex workers had the possibility to suggest in which way their problems and barriers in accessing services could be solved.

## STEPS

- Prepare the methodology for a needs assessment survey
- Develop a gender-sensitive questionnaire
- Capacitate outreach teams for conducting the survey
- Analyse and disseminate the results
- Use results for developing new informational materials

## OUTCOMES

The results of the survey were analysed by *Eva*, and its key findings were used to improve and advocate for sex workers' access to sexual and reproductive health services, among others. It also allowed the organisation to document cases of violence and discrimination against sex workers, which are important factors affecting sex workers' right to health and life.

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<sup>7</sup> This network is specialised in sexual and reproductive health of women.

## LESSONS

- Needs assessment conducted face-a-face allows building a trust relationship, having a deeper overview of the individuals' situation, and scaling up responses
- Cases on violence and discrimination against sex workers could be used for advocacy work
- Sex workers needs are constantly changing, therefore outreach organisations should carry out periodic needs assessment surveys to better respond to the actual needs of the community

**16.** Timur Islamov Fund | NABEREJNYE CHELNY | Russia  
<http://www.ticf.org/>

## Creation of a specific gender-sensitive community centre for marginalised and most-at-risk sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Most of the needs of female sex workers' needs are women's needs. Sexual and reproductive health services targeting women need to be gender-specific and tailored to better approach and attend to the demands of the group.

### ACTION

The NGO *Charitable Fund Timur Islamov Foundation* carried out a needs assessment and found out that female sex workers are often discriminated by health workers. This negative attitude from the part of health workers creates barriers for sex workers to access health services. Thus, the assessed group demanded gender-sensitive and low-threshold services for women.

The project's activities run from 2010 till 2012, and supported female sex workers to address their health needs, including pregnancy. Sex workers who inject drugs received a special attention from service providers, particularly when pregnant. Case management and support is provided to all sex workers. Moreover, the organisation created round tables where women who have been counselled could share with other women their problems and find possible solutions throughout a group discussion.

## STEPS

- Carry out a needs assessment with female sex worker
- Strengthen networking and collaboration with governmental institutions
- Provide medical services with trusted doctors
- Provide gender-sensitive services and information for female sex workers, including counselling and support
- Develop materials on sexual and reproductive health
- Provide basic maintenance (food) for sex workers who visit the project
- Mobilise a community of sex workers
- Advocate for the right to health of sex workers

## OUTCOMES

During the first year of project there was a high coverage of sex workers through outreach services. Female sex workers were also referred to specialised and trusted doctors, and all service users received a package of information and quality services. Due to its gender-sensitive approach the project acquired a good reputation among the community and certainly increased sex workers' access to health, solidarity, and confidence.

## LESSONS

- A gender-sensitive approach and a holistic response to female sex workers' needs had a positive impact on the organisation's preventive work
- All the services of the project were adapted to the women's needs

**17.** Novyi vek | KAZAN, TATARSTAN | Russia  
<http://newcenturykazan.ru/npc-simona>

## Low-threshold Centre “Simona”

### CHALLENGE

Cooperation between governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations is fundamental for addressing sex workers diverse needs.

## ACTION

In 2005 a memorandum of understanding was signed between GKVD, Kazan, RCPF AIDS and non-profit organisations NO *Noviy Vek*, *Association Obnovlenie*. This agreement resulted in the creation of a low-threshold centre for sex workers called *Simona*. The centre was created to counteract HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Tatarstan and facilitate sex workers' access to health services.

The centre collaborates additionally with the *Centre of family planning* and the *Narcological dispensary*, as well as various medical institutions. Sex workers have access to sexual and reproductive health care, including medical assistance for pregnancy. Sex workers with drug and alcohol addiction receive special attention.

The centre has relationship with the *Human rights centre*, the NGO *Vera*, and the Crisis centre *Fatima*. The comprehensive package of social and health services provided by the centre and its affiliated partners is fundamental for meeting the needs of sex workers.

## STEPS

- Set up the goals and directives of the centre
- Capacitate staff to run the services in the centre
- Create a logistical and management structure for running the centre
- Develop cooperation with public and private organisations (MoU)
- Monitor and evaluate services

## OUTCOMES

Sex workers have access to the following services of the centre: dermatology and venereology assistance, laboratory diagnosis of syphilis, HIV, hepatitis, STIs, pre and post-test counselling, treatment, psychological counselling, social support, training, protection, and informational materials on health and legal matters. All services are carried out free of charge, anonymously, and provided quickly. The centre also counts with a mobile unit which provides services for sex workers in other locations, where sex workers work.

## LESSONS

- The creation and organisation of the low-threshold clinics need to consider the needs and peculiarities of sex workers from different perspectives, as well as develop a comprehensive approach
- The effective work of the centre is impossible without the creation of partnerships with other public and private organisations

## Specialised obstetrician services for sex workers

### CHALLENGE

Sex workers in Tomsk had difficulties when trying to receive assistance by public obstetric care. Public services are often not sensitive to the specificities of sex workers and many sex workers complain about negative attitudes from the part of public doctors.

### ACTION

In 2010, *Tomsk ANTIAIDS* started project to engage pregnant female sex workers and to include them into prenatal programs for preservation of reproductive health.

This idea began from meetings with the heads of healthcare centres, who discussed how to eliminate barriers for female sex workers accessing medical assistance when pregnant.

Trainings were carried out for medical staff. The objective was to introduce new methods. Through the introduction of good practices into public services sex workers had an opportunity to receive quality medical obstetrician care. Attitudes of medical workers changed from negative to a more tolerant.

Moreover, women with special necessities such as women living with HIV and/or with drug addiction have a specialised attention focused on improving the women's health and prevention of mother-to-child HIV infection.

### STEPS

- Assessment of the situation
- Development of models of integrated services on the basis of the low-threshold centre
- Training for medical staff on peculiarities of the work with sex workers
- Staff recruitment and training: conducted a series of trainings for employees of the organisation
- Informing sex workers about the services of the project
- Established agreements with the city Maternity Houses, women's counselling, the regional centre of prevention (Cabinet crisis pregnancy, the Cabinet of breastfeeding), the AIDS centre, Perinatal centre

## OUTCOMES

The specialised obstetrician services resulted on an empowerment of female sex workers, particularly due to the fact that many women in difficult situation would look after an abortion. The centre provides medical attention and support for these women, and makes sure that they are aware of the need of medical accompaniment during pregnancy. Female sex workers living with HIV received medication to impede HIV transmission from mother-to-child. Social assistance helped sex workers to overcome basic necessities. This was only possible through the sensitisation of public doctors, who were trained to attend sex workers and look after their needs.

## LESSONS

■ Sensitisation and training of medical specialists are effective to safeguard female sex workers' sexual and reproductive health and reduce stigma and discrimination

