

**TIPS, TRICKS AND MODELS OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR SERVICE
PROVIDERS CONSIDERING, PLANNING OR IMPLEMENTING SERVICES
FOR MALE SEX WORKERS**

COMPILED BY EUROPEAN NETWORK MALE PROSTITUTION

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NETWORK
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Manual

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Preface

In 1997 the AMOC/DHV Foundation launched the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP), with partners from 19 different countries, financed by the European Commission and the Dutch Aids Fund. The ENMP started its second phase in November 2000. The network now consists of eighteen different agencies, engaged in the fields of HIV and STI prevention with male sex workers.

OUR BACKGROUND

- In the majority of countries, male sex work is a non-issue, ignored by policy makers, funders and service providers. Influencing factors such as migration (especially from Eastern Europe) and mobility make it increasingly necessary to exchange information across the borders and to develop specific strategies and services which target the specific needs of male sex workers.
- Male sex workers are confronted with specific problems and various forms of discrimination. The taboo on homosexuality and prostitution leads to further marginalisation.
- Experience shows that specific service provision for male sex workers is the exception rather than the rule. Many services have contact with male sex workers, but do not recognise their specific needs or even acknowledge their identity as sex workers. The perceived small number of boys and young men selling sex to men, and the taboos on male sex work, combined with the difficulties of receiving funding, discourage agencies from developing specific services in this field. Therefore agencies need to be informed in order to become more aware of the needs of male sex workers, who might use their services as well.
- Each country and region has specific issues and problems unique to its location. Prostitution itself, as well as service provision, is influenced by the socio-economic context of each country. This makes it necessary to develop specific methods, focusing on the national and local needs.
- Networking needs to be developed at national and regional levels in order to stimulate mutual support and improve service provision for male sex workers.
- Male sex workers are a heterogeneous group with different needs. Agencies need to develop different services in order to reach different groups. Cooperation at local and national levels is required and other services should be involved and informed as well (e.g. gay organisations, services for people living with HIV and AIDS, services for young people, drug users, homeless people, etc.).

OUR AIMS

- Further development of the National, Regional and European Network within the field of male sex work
- Development of a European platform of knowledge and expertise within the field of male sex work
- Development of specific HIV and STI prevention strategies and models of good practice, conforming to the needs and lifestyle of the target group
- Sensitising service providers, policy makers and funders concerning male sex work (on National, Regional and European level)
- Development and support of better access to medical and social services for male sex workers
- Development of specific activities at a National, Regional and European level
- Development of political statements for service providers and National and European governments
- Development and implementation of 'model' projects and activities, bench marking good

HOW IS THE NETWORK ORGANISED?

The division into Regional groups is one of the most important changes within the Network. By changing the structure of the Network, we hope to increase the involvement and the commitment of each individual partner. The similarities between the countries will create intensive and effective ways of cooperation and mutual support within the regions. Each group will develop specific working plans, based on the specific needs within their region:

Southern Europe:

Regional coordination: Panagiotis Damaskos (Greece)

Participants: Spain, Portugal, France, Italy

Central and Eastern Europe:

Regional co-ordination: Rene Akeret (Switzerland)

Participants: Austria, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Romania and Poland

Northern Europe:

Regional coordination: Justin Gaffney (United Kingdom)

Participants: Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden

ACTIVITIES

The network carried out different activities in the past two years¹:

¹) Parts of the activities are described in this Manual

Conference Sex Work and Health in a Changing Europe

Organised by the European Network for HIV/STD Prevention in Prostitution (EUROPAP) together with the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP) and held in Milton Keynes, UK, from 18 – 20 January 2002.

One hundred and seventy three people attended from 39 different countries and with many different backgrounds including sex work, health care, social work, research and activism. We were delighted that so many people were able to attend from outside the European Union, including 15 from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, sponsored by the International Harm Reduction Development Programme, and a further eight from outside Europe sponsored by the British Academy, UNAIDS and MamaCash.

The result was a lively and interesting meeting, which we hope will have stimulated ongoing debate and discussions. Some of the presentations were based on chapters from a book that EUROPAP hopes to publish at the end of this year. We plan to include links to abstracts and papers on the EUROPAP website to ensure even more people have access to the work that was presented.

Internet Survey

Different organisations offering services to male sex workers have noticed an increasing number of young men selling sex to men through the Internet. Service providers have no experience with this new phenomenon and do not know how to approach this group of male sex workers. This issue has been discussed several times within the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP). For this reason the Central and Eastern European group of the ENMP agreed to carry out a survey to gain an insight into this new development. A detailed description of the survey can be found in this Manual.²

Needs assessment

Specific services for male sex workers are the exception rather than the rule, especially in Southern Europe. France has developed several services, focusing on sex workers in general and one project in Asturias (Spain) is targeting male sex workers. Greece, Portugal and Italy do not have any experience in working with this group.

The Southern European Region focused on the development of activities in the field of male sex work. The following issues were discussed:

- Ways of funding
- Development of campaigns, to inform policy makers, funders, media and the general public

- Informing other agencies, to become aware of the needs of male sex workers
- Development of a national network of services, dealing with male sex workers
- Needs assessment
- Methodologies
- Evaluation
- Mutual support within the region

A questionnaire for service providers was drawn up and sent to the different agencies. Furthermore a situation analysis was compiled by each National coordinator. A detailed description of the needs assessment can be found in this Manual.³

Training

The European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP) identified the needs of male sex workers and service providers in the different countries and regions. A lack of experience and specific service provision has been observed in southern Europe, where only a small number of organisations offer services to male sex workers.

Training for service providers was organised in order to support projects in their (future) work in the field of male sex work. The training was organised and carried out by the Southern European region of the ENMP. A detailed description of the training can be found in this Manual.⁴

Pilot Survey

The initial European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP 1997 - 1999) identified migration as a little understood and under-researched phenomenon amongst young men selling sex across Europe. The Network suggested three strands of migrant male sex workers:

- Men who migrate from one European country, and end up selling sex in another European country (e.g. East to West).
- Men who arrive from outside the EC (extra continental) and find themselves involved in selling sex within the Europe.
- Men originating within Europe, and migrating within the continent in order to find or vary their sex work or working environment.

It was felt that a strategic approach was required to learn more about each of these groups of sex workers, 'chart' their progression and try to establish factors and co-factors contributing to this phenomenon. Greater understanding would facilitate services to work with the specific problems and potential cultural challenges of these young men. This need was highlighted as an outcome of the original Network. During the first general meeting of the ENMP 2000 (Feb 2001) the concept of a survey approach was agreed and partners discussed the

2) Internet survey in Central and Eastern Europe, ENMP, Pjer Vriens & Bart Vandenbroucke, 2002

3) Needs assessment in Southern Europe, ENMP, Panagiotis Damaskos, 2002

4) Skills building for health workers in the field of male prostitution – Lessons learned from some European training workshops, ENMP, Georg Bröring, 2002

types of information and data which needed to be collected, and the methodology to be used to acquire this data. It was agreed that a survey style questionnaire would be developed.

The questionnaire has since been developed and discussed within the regional working groups, and the Regional Coordinators have agreed that it would be of academic value to involve a research institute at this early stage, to validate the questionnaire as a survey tool, advise on the process of data collection and analysis, and assist with its administration. City University in London has been approached, and Dr Anthony Pryce, Reader in the Sociology of Sexual

Health, has agreed to act as independent academic and research adviser to the Network.

Based within the Department of Applied Behavioural & Biological Sciences at City University (one of the UK's oldest and most respected academic institutions), Dr Pryce has already advised the Network that the questionnaire should initially be piloted on a smaller scale trial, using 3 countries within each region (Germany, France and UK). The results will be analysed and evaluated within a new project phase, by employing a part time researcher, so the survey might be conducted across the whole Network.⁵

5) Pilot survey, ENMP, 2002 – for more information: Justin Gaffney, Regional coordinator Northern Europe, UK

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Many organisations, projects and individuals have contributed to the production of this Manual.

First of all, thanks to the enthusiastic members of the ENMP, who collaborated and provided knowledge, useful remarks and comments. They gathered information, contacted other service providers and participated in the different network activities.

In particular I would like to thank those who contributed to this Manual with at least one article: Justin Gaffney from the Working Men Project in London,
Pjer Vriens from the Municipal Health Service in Amsterdam,
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*Katrin Schiffer
Amsterdam, October 2002*

Introduction

The ENMP consists of partners in 19 different countries, all of them with some degree of experience in the field of male sex work. In the past 5 years we managed to gather information and knowledge, based on the practical work and experience in each country. On the other hand, colleagues often contact us with a request for advice and support. We therefore planned to summarise some of our experience and make it useable for others who might be interested in implementing similar strategies

This Manual is compiled by different members of the ENMP or colleagues of other organisations and networks. The different articles should be seen as models of good practice, which worked well in the country/city/organisation in question. We do not claim that the methods/models described are the only ones, which work. On the contrary, we need to be aware of the specific situation in each country/city/organisation. The social, cultural and political infrastructure of each country will strongly influence what does and does not succeed. However, we hope that the different contributions will be seen as an inspiration and will stimulate the implementation of new ideas and methods.

We do not cover all the different aspects of the work, but we have tried to gather different key issues, such as:

- Starting activities in the field of male sex work: needs assessment, guidelines
- Methods and services (Medical services, Migrant male sex workers, drop-in, outreach, new methods: Internet)
- Training
- Networking
- Data collection

The Manual is aimed at all those who are considering, planning or implementing services for male sex workers. This means that we focus on experienced and less-experienced colleagues in the field. Some of the information is quite detailed and specific, while other articles describe general guidelines for carrying out a method.

The manual does not claim to be complete. We hope to receive many reactions and remarks, to allow us to continue our work and to fill in the gaps with experience from other countries or projects which are willing to share it with a broad network within Europe.

I. General Guidelines

Guidelines for Development Outreach Work with Men who Sell Sex

★ JUSTIN GAFFNEY ★ WORKING MEN'S PROJECT (LONDON)

The phenomena of young men selling sex is increasing, both on the street scene (O'Connor, 1997⁶) and off-street (Hickson et al, 1994⁷), yet in many countries across Europe, specific services or targeted work with male sex workers is the exception, not the norm. While many services may have contact with male sex workers, this is often unknown, not recognized or not acknowledged (Schiffer, 2001⁸).

However, through the involvement of service providers with the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP), the specific issues of this group of young men is now beginning to be addressed on a practical level. A number of partner's within the Network are motivating and companioning the development of specific services to meet the needs of the group, or through awareness raising, challenging existing service providers to acknowledge that within their range of usual service users, there may be young men selling sex, who have different needs, which contextually may only be met through acknowledgement of their involvement in prostitution.

It is also a reality for many of the partners within the Network that many of the young men involved in selling sex within their country may be migrant, with a noticeable and significant movement especially with men from Eastern European countries, of the former Soviet Union, towards Central and Western European destinations.

The reality is that while young men involved in prostitution are often not recognized, so their specific needs for information on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV, remain largely unmet in many EC member states, and access to social and welfare care/support may be reduced because of the addition stigma's of homosexuality and migrant status. In order to reduce this marginalisation, and either

develop specific services for male sex workers, or sensitise existing services to better meet the needs of this population, these guidelines have been produced to assist with the initial contact, and development of continued engagement with male sex workers, through the process of outreach.

Definitions of outreach can vary. It may mean the taking of information and services from a project base 'out' to a target audience (in this case male sex workers), with an attempt to encourage contacts to access or utilise the services of the project base. However, it may be that the significant part of the health promotion aspects of the work occur while 'reaching out' and that you may not have a project base which is offered any relevant services to refer back to. Either definition is valid within the context of these guidelines.

The guidelines have been adapted from the UK's former Health Education Authority's 'MESMAC Guide' (Adams et al, 1994⁹), a UK based guide for community based service providers undertaking HIV prevention with gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men. In order to avoid being accused of plagiarism, where text has been taken directly from the MESMAC guidelines, it will be represented in *italic* text. Whilst, it is acknowledged that the MESMAC guide is somewhat dated now, the principles contained within its guidelines still hold true even within the present day. Some of the guidelines are may also be seen to very anglo-specific, but again efforts have been made in their adaptation to make them relevant on a pan European scale, although local sensitivity and adaptation will be necessary to ensure their full transferability.

PHILOSOPHY

Men who have Sex with Men – Action in the Community (MESMAC) represent an attempt to reconcile health education theory with practice. Based upon French and Adams (1986)¹⁰ "triphase map" which highlights behavioural change, self-empowerment and collective action as the three models of health education, it takes community development as the starting point for activity. MESMAC therefore takes a collective action approach to health education/promotion. Community development has its heart a belief that it is important to start from where people are, and from a basis of expressed needs.

6) O'Connor AM (1997). *The MP Project – Men in Prostitution. A study carried out by the Gay Men's Health Project (EHB), Dublin, Ireland*

7) Hickson FCI, Weatherburn P, Hows J and Davies PM (1994). *Selling safer sex: male masseurs and escorts in the UK*, in P Aggleton, PM Davies and G Hart (1994) editors, *AIDS: Foundations for the Future*, London: Taylor & Francis

8) Schiffer K (2001). *European Network Male Prostitution – Interim Report: December 2001; Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

9) Adams L, Spirou K, Bodell D, Gordon P, Deverell K, Lynch F, Miller D, Price P, Prout A, Slavin H, Smith T, Talor J and Doyle T (1994) *The MESMAC Guide: A practical resource for community based HIV prevention with gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men. The Health Education Authority; London, UK*

10) French J and Adams L (1986) *From Analysis to Synthesis: Theories of Health Education. Health Education Journal* 45 (2)

MESMAC acknowledges personal experience as a form of expertise and seeks to facilitate group development. From the outset, MESMAC has acknowledge the profoundly homophobic context in which men who have sex with men live their lives, and the potential impact of this upon both their sexual behaviour and their perception of HIV infection. A commitment to equal opportunities and to combating prejudice and discrimination was a fundamental feature of the project from the beginning. This commitment mirrors objectives of the ENMP, hence why the adaptation of MESMAC to the Network is appropriate and meaningful.

MESMAC was one of the first HIV-related projects to be based explicitly upon such principles. Before MESMAC began, the interventions that had been targeted at gay men consisted mainly of educational materials (for example leaflet and posters) and one-off events such as safer sex promotional evenings in pubs and clubs, together with safer sex workshops. The majority of these initiatives were undertaken by voluntary organizations, often staffed by gay men, with limited financial and technical resources. These early initiatives tended to focus almost exclusively upon those men who identified as gay.

The reality is that most men across Europe, who sell sex, are selling sex to other men¹¹. The MESMAC principles focus on the nature of sex and sexual acts, not sexuality, therefore the health promotion theory which underpins the principles is applicable to male sex workers, even if they do not identify as gay or even bisexual (which many of them are not, especially many of the migrant sex workers).

The patriarchal judicial and legal systems, which regulate or govern prostitution and the right to freedom of movement across borders within the European community, also create additional taboos, relating to the employment or migration status of many of these young men. Many of these factors contribute to the 'hidden' nature of male sex industry workers, and increase isolation from health promotion activities.¹²

As a result, the methods often adapted for use to work with and engage these young men are inconsistent with the apparent aims of projects. For example, many initiatives are concerned, understandably, with changing people's sexual behaviour; however, the methodologies were drawn from a self-empowerment model of education, and as such are incompatible with this aim. This does not mean that these initiatives are unsuccessful, but simply that their success would not be most accurately measured in terms of behaviour change.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MESMAC AND THEIR LINKAGE TO THOSE OF THE ENMP

The aim and objective of the MESMAC project are reproduced below. It was essential to choose objectives that were specific, measurable and achievable within the short time span allotted to the project (initially this UK based initiative was founded for two years subsequently extended to three). External evaluation by external researchers was integral to the life of the project.

In 1997 the Foundation AMOC/DHV launched the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP), with partners from 18 different countries. During these first two years, the project focused on first an inventory and assessment regarding male sex work issues within the different countries, identifying problems and needs. The European Commission and the Dutch AIDS Foundation approved a renewed request (for a further two years), so the ENMP started its second phase in November 2002. During this phase, the Network has divided into three Regional groups (Northern, Southern and Central & Eastern Europe). Each country and Region has specific issues and problems unique to its location. Prostitution itself, as well as service provision is influenced by the socio-economic context of each country, which makes it necessary to develop specific methods, focusing on the national and local needs. However, these methods can be underpinned and informed by an agreed and shared set of objectives, and these guidelines also act as a tool to help develop 'best practice' in a consistent and uniform way.

MESMAC AIMS

- *To establish local community initiatives with men who have sex with men, which will explore felt needs in relation to safer sex, and work towards meeting these needs.*
- *To produce a training package to equip a core team of facilitators to develop this work as a general resource for safer sex work with men who have sex with men in various localities in England.*

ENMP AIMS

The ENMP offers support, advice and assistance to policy makers, funders and service providers. Networking has been developed to on a local, Regional and Network wide basis in order to stimulate mutual support and improve service provision for male sex workers.

MESMAC OBJECTIVES

- *To recruit and train a group in the facilitation skills necessary for HIV- related safer sex education.*

¹¹ Schiffer K (1999). *Resource Book: a European wide reference book*. AMOC/DHV (ENMP); Amsterdam, Netherlands

¹² Gaffney J & Beverley K (2001). Contextualising the construction and social organization of the commercial male sex industry in London at the beginning of the twenty first century. *Feminist Review* 67; Spring 2001; 133-141

- *To set up support for the facilitators in each of the local sites in order to achieve the above.*

The ENMP focuses on HIV and STI prevention in partner countries where contact with male sex workers has been established. Different approaches and methods have been developed and implemented, and these experiences are shared within the Network, and are used to inform emerging work in countries where partners are beginning to develop services.

- *To use community development methods in order to:*
 - *Assess the needs of the local gay community.*
 - *Work with individuals and group.*
 - *Enable choice and action on safer sex.*
 - *Put groups in touch with one another to develop models of good practice.*

Information exchange is an important part of the ENMP network activities. Information to support community development methods is distributed in different ways:

- Information folder
 - Newsletter
 - Website
 - Electronic mailing list
 - Presentations via (inter) national conferences and symposia
- *Assist in the development of individual and group action plans.*

An essential part of the work of the Network involves support on a practical level. Bilateral visits strengthen the co-operation between different member countries and are used to allow experienced partners to support the development of services for other partners, through sensitising or training of staff and other services.

- *To evaluate the various methods used within the project, and the project as a whole.*
- *To provide information about HIV prevention, local and national referral points, and other services.*

This manual aims to highlight and share models and examples of good practice from within the Network. By sharing of good practice it is hoped that other services are able to implement them as well. Outcome evaluation is used to measure activities within the Network, report through a series of interim reports, and the final report, but also through on-going process evaluation with the development of the newsletters, website and this manual.

- *To enable men who have sex with men to bring their needs to the attention of the appropriate organization.*

The Network is focusing more on the political issues regarding male sex work. Political statements regarding the fundamental human rights of sex workers is to be development, but also the ENMP is seeking support the involvement of male sex workers in service development and implementation.

WORKERS AND ROLES

Whilst it is important to recognise that there is a wide diversity amongst young men that sell sex, so it should also be recognised that there is a wide diversity amongst workers engaged in outreach work with these young men. The context of the worker will often be related and specific to the needs of the employing organisation, and workers may be drawn from a wide range of professional backgrounds or experiences, again depend on the context of their outreach role.

However, some simple guidelines pertaining to the appointment and day-to-day management of outreach workers can be considered from a wider perspective. Development of clear and specific job descriptions and person specifications will ensure that workers are clear of what is expected of them and the tasks in which they are to be involved. In developing such, managers should be mindful of the long term aims and potential developments of the project, there is a delicate balance to be struck between a job description so specific it stifles potential service development, as opposed to one that is so non-descript that workers are unclear of their role and functions.

Whether there is a need to employ only male staff, only gay male staff, and perhaps only former male sex workers is a contentious issue within this specialist field of work. *The MESMAC philosophy states that it is essential to recruit from the communities with whom you intend to work.* However, within this field of work, that may not also be possible, or even practicable or desired. Example, for a group of young heterosexually identifying sex workers, who, although they sell sex to men, often present with an overt homophobic attitude¹³, a homosexual outreach worker might not be the most ideally suited worker for engagement with that group of sex workers.

The use of female workers may also be appropriate on occasion, especially where young gay men may be engaged, who may find it difficult to relate to gay male outreach workers without such interactions being sexually charged and flirtatious. The young gay men's involvement in sex work tarnishes their ability to relate to other men in non sexual ways, limiting meaningful outreach engagement with gay or all male teams, which female team members may be able to overcome.

¹³ McMullen RJ (1987) Youth prostitution: a balance of power. *Journal of Adolescence* 10; 35-43

Further, it may be desirable to recruit an outreach worker from a specific cultural or ethnic background, especially if trying to work with diverse populations of ethnic minority sex workers. For example, in Amsterdam, in recent years AMOC have seen an increase in young men arriving from Eastern Europe, in particular Poland and therefore recruited a Polish outreach worker, who specifically engages with these young men, because he is culturally sensitive to the needs of this group of men. However, within the UK, many West End based services working with male sex workers have found that they are accessed by young second or third generation UK Asian men, who mostly live and sell sex within their own community in the East End of London. These men are seeking engagement with services as far removed from their ethnic and cultural roots as possible, for fear of disclosure. Employing an outreach worker from a similar background could be fraught with problems, as their community is well networked and they may fear connectivity and potential exposure from should a worker.

Use of current or previously working male sex workers may also be problematic. The nature and social construct of the commercial male sex industry, especially that which is off-street is highly structured, complex and competitive. For these reasons, it may be difficult for a current or well-known former sex worker to be accepted by and trusted by other sex workers. Professional (non sex working) outreach workers are often afforded greater respect due to their 'professional' status, which facilitates a degree of distance and creates a professional boundary, which supports the development of trust. A former or current sex worker may be seen as too much of a peer, which can create a tension related to mistrust or competitiveness, which may inhibit meaningful engagement. On the overhand, an experienced and skilled current or former sex worker may be able through effective communication to reassure sex workers of their professionalism and their 'shared' experience can often be powerful and enabling for the sex workers with who they engage, especially with regard to health promotion related to the actual act of selling sex (safely).

It is essential that whatever workers are employed to meet the specific needs of the organisation, they should not work alone (any form of outreach work in what ever setting or venue is best undertaken in pairs – no worker should ever work in isolation). Where two workers or more are undertaking sessions together, *differentiation between the workers in terms of seniority and level of responsibility on the one hand, and areas of work on the other, should be made. Where no such differentiation occurs and workers share a common role, the division of work should be discussed in full.*

It is essential that workers' roles be clarified in terms of the overall management structure of the project. In this way, concepts such as accountability and consultation can be fleshed out, and areas in which workers can expect to be consulted and involved in decision making (or not, as the case may be) can be delineated.

Decisions will need to be made regarding general skills possessed by all workers and specific skills relevant to particular areas of work. Decisions also need to be made about which skills would be expected of a worker on appointment, and which they can develop via in-service training. The ENMP has some experience of facilitating outreach training, and details of this can be found elsewhere within the manual and on the website.

The following checklist of skills and personal qualities offers a range of possibilities, by no means exhaustive. It should go without saying that no single person could possibly embody all of these skills and qualities: equally, the suggestions are subjective at times. Nevertheless, they may serve as a useful starting point for debate:

SKILLS

- Interpersonal communication
- Counselling
- Group work/facilitation
- Education/training experience
- Liaison and networking
- Time management
- Evaluation/record keeping/report writing
- Graphics and design
- A knowledge of community development techniques
- Experience of outreach or detached work
- Experience of working with sex workers/ young people/people with disability/men from black communities or other potential target groups
- Strategic planning/knowledge of funding and policy issues
- An overview of health education strategies and structures
- A knowledge of the commercial gay scene, commercial male sex industry, HIV and gay issues
- Information technology skills, including use of the Internet, and web design

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Persistence
- Sense of humour
- Enthusiasm and a commitment to the work
- Feeling comfortable about one's sexuality, and that of others
- A commitment to equal opportunities
- The ability to reflect on ones' own actions
- The ability to work with minimal supervision
- A non-judgemental approach

- *The ability to relate to a wide range of men who have sex with men, which can incorporate young male sex workers, young MWHWSM, men who don't identify as gay or bisexual, SM gays, gay Christians, older men, men who have been abused, and so on*
- *The ability to cope with stress*
- *A clear understanding of professional and personal boundaries, and the experience, responsibility, professionalism and stability to respect such boundaries*
- *Versatility and adaptability*
- *The strength to say no, and the ability to make appropriate referrals*

CODES OF CONDUCT

Just as it is important to recruit and select suitable personnel to undertake outreach, which meet the needs of your service, organisation or project, so it is also important to have in place policies and procedures, which will guide their practice once in post.

Such policies and procedures should clearly state the objectives of the role and set a framework for professional conduct against which the objectives will be achieved. Where possible, for example within a new project or service which is developing, the outreach staff should be consulted with and involved in negotiating these documents, therefore allowing them some ownership of the boundaries against which their practice will be assessed.

The following is an example, based upon the MESMAC Code of Conduct, of the key areas, which should be covered by such policies and procedures. They may be contained within a single guiding document, or, as will be the case in larger projects or organisations, may draw upon elements of pre-existing employment policy. Where outreach staff are employed, drawn from an existing professional discipline (such as nursing or medical), it should be noted that professional codes of conduct specific to their profession might also apply.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR OUTREACH WORKERS WITH YOUNG MEN SELLING SEX FROM A STREET LEVEL

The purpose of this document is to establish and maintain good standards of work when working with young who sell sex at a street level. This is a Community Development project, and as such is based on the principles of equal opportunities:

- *Men who have sell sex should be involved in the planning, consultation, management and implementation of the project.*
- *Workers will be encouraged through support, supervision and training to develop ways of working which maximize this participation.*

- *The project should begin by working with people to identify their needs and concerns, and support them in developing appropriate action.*
- *The particular perspective of different communities of interest of men who sell sex to men should be respected and represented in planning, policy and decision-making forums, and their life experience acknowledged as form of experience.*
- *The role of the outreach worker is to:*
 - *Make contact and work with individuals and groups.*
 - *Work with them to explore their needs as they see them in relation to safer sex.*
 - *Put groups in touch with one another to develop models of good practice.*
 - *Assist in the development of individual and group action plans.*

RESPONSIBILITIES

- *While most of the work undertaken will be of an informal nature (for example, on the streets or in pubs and clubs), as representatives of a project or organisation, project workers have a responsibility to conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism at all times. This applies to dealings with other agencies, including the press.*
- *Workers should aim to respond to the need of their client. If a working relationship becomes impossible for any reason, appropriate referral to another worker/agency must be negotiated.*
- *Workers must be respected the autonomy and dignity of their clients, irrespective of their age, race, class, sexual orientation, capabilities or HIV antibody status.*
- *Workers are responsible for negotiating and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with their clients and must not use their clients to meet their own social, emotional or sexual needs. It is not acceptable for workers to have sex with clients.*
- *Workers must not impose any standards, values or beliefs upon clients. Nor should they encourage any course of action, which is harmful to the client or others. It is acceptable to disclose one's own values or belief.*

COMPETENCE

- *Workers will be provided with opportunities for training throughout the life of the project or according to their role, and should make use of available supervision to identify further training needs.*
- *Workers must monitor and keep a diary of their work, being able to account to colleagues and managers for what they are doing and why. Access to the diary by the evaluator should be negotiated with the workers.*
- *Workers should recognize their limits and become familiar with appropriate referral agencies.*

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Confidentiality must be maintained with regard to any information of a personal nature concerning clients and colleagues, including name, address, biographical details and any other information, which might result in a client's identity being disclosed.
- Workers must not reveal confidential information pertaining to clients or colleagues except to those upon whom they rely for support/supervision, and in this instance the identity of the individual(s) concerned must be thoroughly disguised. Should ethical dilemmas arise (e.g. possible danger to a third party), the situation should be discussed as soon as possible with the supervisor, manager or project co-ordinator.

SUPERVISION

- Workers must undertake to make full use of available supervision, which is provided with the aim of facilitating their personal and professional development. Supervision should be of a contractual nature, and the following should be agreed:
 - The time, place and frequency of meeting
 - Whether the supervision is to be one-to-one or group; arrangements for access to supervision outside normal working hours.
 - Boundaries between supervision and personal counselling.
- The supervision is likely to change in nature as the worker and the project develop, and there should be opportunities for worker and supervisor to review the process. Access to an external member of the project team should be available if necessary.
- It may sometimes be necessary to distinguish between 'management' supervision (the supervision of the worker in relation to their role performance by a superior or manager) and professional or case supervision (the discussion by the worker of issues arising from the performance of their role, often related to direct client work). Some organisations find it easier to clearly distinguish between the two by having the professional or case supervision conducted by other supervisor (often external to the organisation), who is not the direct line manager of the worker.

Supervision and Support

Supervision is vital to all outreach workers and can take many forms:

- Structured and offering clear direction
- Loosely defined, more of an opportunity to let off steam, without necessarily having a clear outcome
- An opportunity to stand back from the work and view it more objectively or from a deferent perspective
- A safe environment in which to discuss person

issues, and hopefully prevent them from adversely influencing performance

- Allows the manager an informal insight as to how workers are coping

PEOPLE WHO OFFER SUPPORT

Managers
Steering Groups
Management Committees
Co-workers
Clients
Paid professional supervisors
Partners & lovers
Friends

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Success
Positive feedback
Good time management
Holidays/recreation
Money

PEOPLE WHO OFFER A SUPERVISORY ROLE

Manager
Steering Groups
Management Committees
Paid professional supervisors

SOURCES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Self
Co-workers
Clients and the wider sex working community
Managers
Partner agencies/organizations
Funders

Prerequisites for good supervision/support:

- It should be regular, and the person offering support should take responsibility for scheduling it into the outreach workers work. Staff should always receive supervision/support in paid work time.
- It should be a time for that individual alone (or possibly with co-workers, if group supervision, but opportunity should be provided for individual staff to access solo support if required), and should take place in a tranquil environment with no interruptions.
- The person offering the support should be acceptable to the outreach worker.
- People providing supervision should offer different perspectives, and should be able to criticise constructively.
- In projects whose structures may be complex, it is important to clarify exactly who is providing supervision, and where this role may be shared, or different support offered by different persons for the different aspects of the workers role, that consistency to approach is agreed by the supervisors, to prevent a clash and potential confusion for the outreach worker.

Problems with Supervision/support:

- Some people/groups (especially managers in

smaller projects/organisations) have a responsibility to offer both support and an overview (sometimes critical). These roles can conflict.

- There may be a knowledge gap between managers and outreach workers, especially if this is new work and many managers may have little experience of the issues. Unless workers spend vast amounts of time briefing managers, this may lead to managers seeming a little superfluous, or their input may be deemed inappropriate, and in such a situation managers can become deskilled and demoralised. However, it could be agreed that a good manager does not need to know about the work in detail as long as s/he is familiar with the overall aims and objectives and has negotiated expected outcomes. General management skills should be transferable from one area to another.
- If workers feel unsupported, or that their manager does not fully understand the issues, their friends, lovers or colleagues may end up fulfilling the support role. That these people should provide at least some level of support is inevitable, but they should not act as the min reference point. It is worth underlining here that this type of work is bound to have a profound impact on the personal life of the outreach worker, perhaps the crux of the matter is keeping this impact within reasonable limits. To achieve this workers should feel compunction about stating what kind of support they need.
- If adequate support is not forthcoming, strategies might include taking this up with the manager and or his/her superior, discussing the issue at a management committee or advisory group meeting, calling in an outside management consultant to undertake a review, or employing someone to offer monthly professional supervision.
- Specific supervision or support issues may arise if the manager/supervisor has limited experience of working with young men who sell sex, or the gay scene. One option might be to arrange for additional support from another agency or colleague undertaking similar work, whilst acknowledging the manager skills the line manager brings to the job.

Getting Started

Once outreach workers have been appointed, policies, procedures and management/support systems are in place, and the overall philosophy of the project has been agreed (e.g. to target young men selling sex and offer a range of support and health education/promotion activities), some other practicable elements of the work need to be considered:

- Is the work detached outreach?
- There is much professional debate about constitutes

'outreach' and what constitutes 'detached work', and while there are many published definitions, there is no one authoritative definition. For the purposes of this section of the Manual, detached outreach will be considered outreach during which all interventions will occur with the target population in the outreach setting, that is that workers are not referring clients back to a project base for more in-depth/detailed one to one client work. While they may give details of other agencies or projects where specific interventions may occur, the detached outreach worker will conduct their role, achieve their aims entirely on outreach assignments. Whereas an outreach worker from a project base, which encompasses a drop-in or client based service facilities will be using outreach primarily as a way to establish contact and 'refer' clients into their project.

OFFICE/PROJECT BASE

If only detached outreach is to be undertaken, then considerations for an office base or perhaps not as significant as if clients are likely to be visiting the premises. Where work is purely to be detached, then the location and type of office/project base, offers a little more flexibility. The location should be as near to the potential target client group as possible, ideally outreach workers will start and finish sessions and periods of outreach work at the office/project base, therefore it needs to be accessible to the commercial sex working scene, but that does not necessarily mean it has to be integral to that scene.

Where clients or service users may be visiting the office/project base for drop-in or one to one appointments, greater consideration needs to be given to the location of the facility. It should ideally be located within or near to the commercial sex working scene, and well serviced by public transport, facilitating easy access for sex workers. Access to the office/project base should be direct, where entrances to the facility are shared, clients and service users should not have to ask a succession of persons unrelated (and potentially unsympathetic) to the needs of these young men.

Consideration should also be given to space requirements. Outreach workers will require desks and office space, access to equipment should as PCs, photocopiers, faxes, the Internet, telephone lines, etc. A private space will be required for supervision/support (it could also double as a counselling room for clients if the facility is being used for drop-in, client work). Offices should be alarmed, and the premises secure. Notes and client held records (including session reports from outreach) should be stored in lockable files due to their confidential nature and to meet with the requires of Data Protection regulations. Where clients are using the project, the facility should be

welcoming, and have adequate space for drop-in or group work. Toilet and changing facilities should be available for both staff and service users, and tea/coffee-making facilities should be available.

ORIENTATION

It is essential for outreach workers to be briefed and fully prepared before starting any new areas of outreach work, especially if it is with a new client group such as young male sex workers. Orientation to the commercial gay scene should be developed through the use of observation visits, and by liaison with services that may already be undertaking work with the client group.

Briefing can also be developed:

- *By talking to the people who set up the project, together with other general outreach workers in the locality.*
- *By visiting other projects working with young male sex workers.*
- *By reading reports, articles and evaluations of other projects.*

Other relevant services who work with or have experience of the client group may be able to offer a wealth of information or organise an orientation package for workers new to the field, but it should be noted many agencies may charge for this. There is little or no formal recognised training to prepare for outreach work with young male sex workers, however, attending generic outreach seminars and courses for targeting hard to reach populations may help workers to develop some insight basic skills. Attendance at conferences and symposiums may also help with initial knowledge base development.

NETWORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS

It is crucial to make contact with other workers in this field, and also with youth workers, drug workers, trainers, social workers and so forth, where appropriate. Networking is a prerequisite for good and appropriate referrals.

The local HIV prevention scene may be very confusing, it is important early on to identify and established workable links with the key players. Your project may be offering specific services, but no one project can meet the all the varied and complex needs of the client group, and therefore it is essential that you are aware of who, what, where and when directory of other available resources within your vicinity. It also provides an opportunity for you to inform these other services of your project, and may help they be in a position to refer clients in your direction.

Many organisations work and are structured in different ways, and the individuals working in this field are drawn from a variety of professions and

backgrounds. This can sometimes create a degree of hierarchy, which on occasion may be frustrating or intimidating, however, the best way to avoid this insecurity is to embrace the diversity.

ESTABLISHING CONTACT

Once your service is set up, staff are in post and fully trained, and other appropriate local agencies/services are aware of what you are offering, you will need to begin to introduce your project/service to the key stake holders within the local commercial male sex work scene, including with sex workers themselves.

Marketing of your service is important, but will be dependent on budgets available. However, it is worth noting when costing the production of service/project brochure or leaflets, that this point of reference may often be the first impression that many service users and other professionals may receive about your service/project, especially if received via a third party and not directly given by your staff on outreach. It is therefore essential that it gives a strong message and appears professional, not a tatty piece of folded paper, which has been run off a photocopier. It should state clearly the aims and objectives of your project/service, a simple mission statement, services offered, appointment or drop-in times (if appropriate), and give the location with useful travel advice like a map or public transport links. Most importantly, it should have a contact telephone number for people to contact to gain further information.

The size and amount of information contained within marketing resources may vary, and some projects/services may have the need for a variety of styles and designs to suit the target population. For example, projects working mainly with the street scene may want a flyer, that is pocket sized and does not necessarily mention the selling of sex (if stopped and searched by the police, this might identify the young man as a sex worker). Where the sex selling scene is mostly bar based, workers might find it useful to develop innovative resources, such as bar mats with their project/service details on, or wristband condom cases for use in saunas, etc. Most sex working scenes have 'gate keepers', that is individuals or groups of persons who to some degree control or manipulate entry into the sex working scene. This could be other sex workers (gang leaders within a street scene), bar or brothel owners, or even webmasters and gay media where sex is sold off-street via advertisement in the gay press or listings on websites. It is a good idea for new projects/services to try and identify who are their local gate keepers and try to establish some degree of contact, as these individuals will be influential in allowing access (or easier access) to the sex working young men your service will want to be targeting.

However, a word of caution, the relationship with the local gatekeepers should be a tentative one. It is important to maintain a professional distance from them, do not become over familiar, it is not good for a third party to perceive that you have been bought over by them. It is also not good for the sex workers to perceive that you are too familiar or friendly with the local gate keeper, especially in brothel, club or pub settings, this could create feelings of mistrust, that the information they impart to you project/service may not wholly be confidential, and that personal or health status information may be shared with the owners, perhaps to the detriment of the young man. A professional relationship of mutual respect is best to be maintained, and an acceptance that most gate keepers are involved with the sex industry for their own personal gain, and that your outreach work should not be to the detriment of this.

Networking with established agencies is another good way of breaking in on the scene. If another relevant project or service has contact with young men selling sex on a regular basis, it might be worth negotiating some joint work with them, especially in the initial stages of establishing your project/service. Being introduced by a fellow professional who has some engagement and rapport with men selling sex is a powerful and effective way to sell your project/service, and establish contact. Likewise, introduction by other sex workers is very effective, and if you have contact with some influential young men involved in the commercial sex scene, invite them to introduce you to their friends and colleagues. If you are offering a good, needed and appropriate service, word of mouth will soon facilitate uptake of your services.

Ways of Working

The following section of this chapter will outline some of the different ways and context in which outreach work can occur. Your project/service may engage in one or many types of outreach, spanning specific or multiple environments/settings. The following advice and guidance is given to ensure that this work is effective and safe, for all concerned.

ONE TO ONE WORK

Outreach which contacts group of sex workers collectively is an effective way to deliver safer sex messages, however, in any given outreach environment/setting there is a need to work with these young men on an individual basis. Some of the benefits of this are:

- *Sexual identity (defining oneself as gay, bisexual, transgender or heterosexual) is a very personal issue, and some male sex workers may be reluctant to use services/projects which are perceived as being solely aimed at men who identify as gay. This may be especially true if working with immigrant sex workers, from*

cultures/ethnic groupings, where homosexual is not accepted. Although these young men may be selling sex to other men, many of them would not identify as gay or even bisexual.

- *Some individuals need one-to-one supportive discussions before they are ready to be incorporated into a group.*
- *One-to-one discussions can be a good way of assessing sex workers needs, since individuals will often be more candid in a private discussion.*
- *Individual discussions can help to gauge the need for new groups.*
- *There is often no other available or appropriate service offering individual counselling. It can be difficult to turn sex workers away in such situations.*

There are a number of male sex workers who may benefit especially from one-to-one counselling. Those who have been raped or previously sexually abused, for these young men, it may be difficult to discuss such issues in the presence of other sex workers, for fear of disclosure or ridicule. Entry into sex work maybe a way that some young men try to deal with this abuse, for others, involvement in the work may trigger previous experiences and memories. It is important to establish trust and reassure confidentiality. Referral to more specialist counselling and services should be established, if the young men requests this – it is important to recognise that this is a specialist area of therapy work.

Young men may use sex work as a means to experiment with their sexuality. This can often be complex, as the majority of their paid contacts will be older men, who in reality they would most likely not chose as sexual partners. This can sometimes cloudy or confuse the young man's impression of homosexuality, and it may be necessary with such young men to use the one-to one as way of identifying gay role models or preparing the ground for intervention into group work, or to meet other young gay men.

Some good practice tips with one-to one work:

- *Good time management so that one-to-one work does not dominate.*
- *Honesty about the limits of individual work; clients and other agencies should not be led to expect something that cannot be delivered.*
- *Appropriate referrals should be made were possible (workers should be prepared to let go of clients). If there is no scope for referrals, existing organisations should be sensitised to the needs of male sex workers, or funders should be lobbied so that new services can be provided. It is important for workers to acknowledge the limitations of their practice, unless trained therapists or counsellors, one-to-one counselling should be limited to the remit of their role (e.g. HIV prevention) – one*

project/service cannot hope to successfully *plug all the gaps left by other services.*

- *Workers should have some training to improve their one-to-one techniques.*
- *Counselling situations may be very draining, and may raise specific supervision and support needs.*
- *Individuals should be encouraged to attend specific projects or services aimed to meet their needs.*

GROUPWORK

There are many occasions when it will be necessary outreaching to young men who sell sex, to work with groups of young men collectively. On the streets or in bars, often, young men selling sex will be friends or peers with one another, and during outreach situations it may be necessary to engage with a small number of individuals at the same time. Off-street, in brothels or saunas, the young men are limited by their working environment to being together. It may not always be possible within such settings to find a confidential and private 'space' in which to conduct one-to-one counselling. Even when this may be possible, it may be that by utilising the opportunity to talk one-to-one with workers may suggest to the sex workers colleagues and peers that he has a problem, and may therefore limit uptake of workers initiatives.

The benefits of group work are:

- *It brings individuals together, and people can break their isolation.*
- *People share experience*
- *It is possible to get support and advice from other group members.*
- *Group discussion can lead to a more profound examination of often-complex issues.*
- *People can be relieved to find they are not the only ones in the work who have had this happen to them/who think like that.*
- *Groups can be a forum for challenging perceived notions and for promoting equal opportunities.*
- *People get to meet each other; they have a social function.*
- *Group can be springboard for community action, lobbying, further groups and activities – development of a peer network.*
- *Groups can build confidence and self-esteem.*

PREREQUISITES FOR SUCCESSFUL GROUPWORK

It may be necessary if your project/service operates a drop-in facility to more formally facilitate group work in such a setting. It will be necessary to have a *properly trained and supervised facilitators, who are suitable for that particular group, well briefed and well prepared for the activity/discussion.*

Facilitators also need to be comfortable with each other if working in pairs. Dual facilitation may be

time consuming, but it is especially beneficial in the early days of a project when workers may be under-confident, or when tackling a very complicated topic. The other facilitator can also ensure that his or her colleague doesn't stray from the point, and that time limits are observed. Dual facilitation can also enhance continuity if one of the facilitators has to withdraw.

Restricting the group to an appropriate size (depending on the topics, number of facilitators, etc.). This might be difficult if undertaking group work within an outreach setting, but then it may be about negotiating with groups of sex workers, for example, on a street scene, splitting the larger group up, offer to take half for a coffee and chat, and the second half later. The group must be manageable.

If undertaking the group work within your project/service's drop-in space, think about a *good venue. Unfortunately, good venues are the exception rather than the rule. Important points to consider are access, the level of comfort (especially seating), heating, ventilation, refreshment facilities, lighting (soft rather than fluorescent), and décor and toilet facilities. Inadequate venues have a very negative effect, whereas carefully selected and prepared venues can give you a boost before the group has even begun.*

HOW GROUPWORK CAN BE MADE SUCCESSFUL

- *Never underestimate the importance of image, especially in a world where sex workers are sceptical about "fuddy-duddy" social/outreach workers and are used to the gay scene, which tends to focus on youth, beauty and sex. Your project/service will need to look inviting, welcoming, well organized and lively. Publicity should be well produced, use strong and attractive images.*
- *Facilitation needs to be professional and able. There should be thorough planning, and workers must avoid being cliquey, without alienating regular contacts/service users. There should be clear guidelines for the workers about promoting equal opportunities.*
- *There should be regular evaluation of the work and a willingness to change unsuccessful strategies.*
- *Activities should be varied, interesting and accessible to all.*
- *Newcomers to the drop-in or met during outreach, should be made to feel welcome; this can be achieved by meeting them individually beforehand, briefing them on the background to whereby other service users take particular responsibility for welcoming new people. Any marginalization should be nipped in the bud.*
- *Accessing any hard to reach group successful is no easy task, and male sex workers can seem especially difficult to encourage into drop-ins.*

PUBLIC SEX ENVIRONMENTS (PSE) & STREET WORK

Outreach in public sex environments (PSEs) is important because it is a way of reaching some male sex workers who do not use the commercial sex working scene or other social networks. Some cruising areas offer opportunities for unsafe sexual encounters, so it may be necessary to try to change peers norms and expectations in relation to safer sex. It is also useful to hear about additional issues facing sex workers in PSEs and on the streets, such as "queer bashing" or police harassment.

Examples of PSEs include toilets in parks, lay-bys, shops, theatres, town centres and rural communities; back alleys near gay bars and clubs; paths by rivers and canals; beaches; car park and truck stops; saunas and swimming pools; trains and train stations; backrooms in bars and porn cinemas, and of course the street. In short, the list encompasses any location, which offers willing participants and opportunity.

■ *The nature of activity*

Young men who work in PSEs or on the street are often opportunistic. They may be specifically in the PSE to sell sex, likewise they may have gone there to obtain casual anonymous sex with non-paying partners, and found that a paid sexual encounter has occurred. In the same way, PSEs and the street are often used by younger gay men, and gay/bisexual men who are coming to terms with their sexuality and using such environments as places of experimentation. In so doing, such young men may be approached by older gay men who are seeking to buy sex, who may offer this younger men money or favours in exchange for sex. The young man may capitalise on this opportunity, and realise that he has the ability to sell sex, thus begin to develop sex selling skills. Street scenes may have a local reputation for being places where sex is sold, which may be the initial draw of the young men.

■ *Who uses PSEs?*

Students, unemployed men, young men, men selling sex, married men, men who identify don't identify as gay, older men, men with learn difficulty, men is relationships – potentially anyone.

■ *Why do men go there?*

For sex, companionship, because they can't afford pubs, because they want an element of danger, because it can be anonymous with no strings attached, because this is the only access to another men, because of the unpredictability and excitement, because it's fun, because they're drunk, because they have a compulsive need for sex, because it's a no-nonsense way of getting sexual fulfilment, because they are bored... as stated previously, young male sex workers may be there specifically to sell sex or cruise, usually a combination of the both!

■ *Ways of working in PSEs and on the street:*

Moral judgements & superiority – many sex workers, gay, bisexual, transgender and men who have sex with other men who don't identify as gay, consider PSEs and street scene to be sordid places, exclusively inhabited by 'dirty old men', that give the gay community a bad name. This may be the opinion of outreach workers also. Such attitudes need to be challenged and it should be expected that for many men, selling sex in such environments is a positive decision, which affords them choice and opportunity.

It follows that workers must also strive to be non-judgemental when they are working in a PSE and on the street. Workers are unlikely to endear themselves to a sex worker in a PSE if they give them the impression that they are disgusting perverts, and it will be necessary to adopt a positive attitude towards PSE use, working on the street, which nevertheless addresses issues of safety from attack and police arrest, sexual violence and safer sex practice. It may be also useful to look at the question of choice: for instance, it may be fine that some young men may actively chose to sell sex on the street or in PSEs, but not if they'd prefer to go elsewhere, but don't have the courage, money or experience to do so.

Who should not be worked with in PSEs or on the street – violent situation are best avoided at all cost, and workers should ask themselves what possible benefit they can get from attempting to talk to a sex worker who is very drunk/ or intoxicated from illegal substance misuse, who is engaged in sex (you may spy a worker having unprotected sex with a customer, but is it wise to tackle them then and there about it)? The question of age is problematic. Some people consider that distributing condoms to a 17 years old is tantamount to encouraging an illegal sexual act or enticing them to sell sex. You need to give this matter very serious consideration, and to have a clear rationale about how you would manage a younger or under age sex worker, and what the substance of your intervention will be. There is an obvious difficulty in assessing age accurately, especially if it's dark. An appropriate strategy with some young men may be to ask other sex workers to have a word with them on your behalf; they may be more than willing to do this, since there can be a strong sense of community on the streets, and in PSEs. Many old sex workers are also keen to discourage very young men from using the location, since their presence is likely to heighten police activity. In extreme cases where it seems that a very young man is in vulnerable position you may feel morally or even contractually bound to report what is happening to a third party, such as the police or social services (in the latter instance this would especially apply if you were employed within a Governmental Organisation (GO) and required to follow child protection guidelines). This can cause all sorts of conflicts concerning your role in the PSE/ on

the street, and is best resolved by having a clear policy and procedure in place, and ensure that workers are skilled and confident in the application of such protocols.

THE ROLE OF THE WORKER

Essentially workers are guest in the PSE or on the street, when they're actually working, even if they may use the same PSE at others times on personal basis. A worker who is present for health promotion reason is in a privileged position, which should not be exploited (it can sometimes be similar to being the only sober person at a party). It is not acceptable to reveal to third party that an individual has been encountered in a PSE or meet on the street, as this may identify the young man as a sex worker, though it may be necessary to take actions in cases where men are in danger of violence or abuse. If outreach contacts are met elsewhere (say in gay venue), workers should not acknowledge the young man, unless the young man indicates (by making first contact) it is all right to do so, as again this may expose the young man.

Possible strategies for work in a PSE and on the street, include talking to men about safer sex or more general social issues (such as where they are staying), assessing the extent of anti-gay violence and police harassment, distributing condoms, lubricant, written information, putting up stickers or posters, or referring the young men back to your project/service's drop-in or to another appropriate venue for a more in-depth discussion about HIV testing and so forth. It should also be considered that the nature/circumstances of the young men using the PSE or street scene would dictate the nature of the outreach. For example, if the scene is one which revolves around drug use (such as crack cocaine), they drug use will be the predominant feature of the outreach intervention, sexual health and HIV prevention may come low in the list of immediate concerns for the young man. Workers need to familiarise themselves with the local scene and ensure their approach is informed and able to meet these needs. It is not acceptable for workers to combine outreach in a PSE with personal sexual gratification. They will need to make their own decisions about whether occasional visits to a PSE in a working capacity also mean that it is inappropriate to use the same venue for personal encounters at another time.

PREPARING TO WORK IN A PSE OR ON THE STREET

Even if workers are familiar with a PSE or street scene, they will need to observe it before they contemplate any interventions. They may need to research a number of PSEs or street areas before they choose the most appropriate one for targeting. Points to considered are: do the male sex workers use it extensively? Is it easy for you to get to? How

popular is it with the police? If it's a toilet or park, are there adequate entrances/exits, benches where you can sit around?

Once o PSE or particular street location has been identified, you need to become comfortable with it, and what this involves depends on the nature of the PSE/street location. That could mean visiting it at quiet times of the day to get the feel of it. It can be useful to note well-worn paths, cubbyholes, piles of cigarettes butts, which indicates, places where men sit and wait|chat, and also evidence of condom use. Clearly this all needs doing as unobtrusively as possible. Be familiar with the layout, know where the street lights and well lit areas are, map and plan escape routes, check the location of populated areas, such as pubs or cafes, and pay telephones, so you can call for help in an emergency.

Familiarisation with (public toilets, sometimes referred to as cottages) might include checking the number of cubicles, whether they have locks, the content of the graffiti, opportunities for contact between cubicles (e.g. holes), and checking out the places where men gather outside cottages (such as on nearby walls, benches or patches of grass). It may be thought safest and most appropriated to work only with men outside cottages, rather than men who are standing at a urinal, washbasin or in a cubicle. The latter options might increase the chances that your role is unclear, or that you'll get arrested.

The next step might be to visit the PSE or street location when it is in use, without making any interventions. For safety reasons, you should always work with another person, though a couple chatting but not cruising or buying sex may well excite suspicion. If for any reason you are on your own, you should be aware of the messages that you are giving out while observing. A person watching without cruising might lead to suspicions that they are a plain-clothes policeman, voyeur or gay basher.

One way of gaining a foothold in a PSE or the street location without leading to a misunderstandings (and it can speed the work up too) is to identify a local sex worker who is well known and respect, and who is willing to introduce you and your colleague to other sex workers so that you can explain your role and offer reassurance. The trick is to find that the key sex worker who is willing to offer you time and who will also have to accept that while they are accompanying you they cannot get involved in selling sex. Obviously, an element of luck may come into this.

You may wish to visit a PSE or street location at the same time every day/week, or vary your visits. The former has the advantages of predictability for users, and you may be able to develop deeper contact; the latter has the advantages that you'll encounter a wider

range of men. It may be safer to visit an outdoor location in daylight, but you may find that it is not well used. If you visit at night, stay near a lamp for greater safety. Sitting areas or the fringes of the PSE/street location itself might be more sensible locations than dark corner or undergrowth, which could lead to all sorts of misunderstanding and trouble. Some outdoor PSEs and street locations are best avoided immediately after the time when straight pubs and clubs turn out their customers, some of who may fancy a spot of anti-gay violence.

WORKER SAFETY

Workers should minimize any risk to themselves, but workers and managers should realize that a PSE and street location, is by definition a risk environment. Risk reduction can involve:

- Always working in pairs
- Having a manager on call for the duration of the outreach session and workers calling in to that manager at the end of the session
- Carrying a personal alarm and "rights on arrest" card
- Taking self-defence classes
- Withdrawing from the PSE or street location at the first sign of trouble (workers should agree a code word or phrase between themselves which should be used as a trigger to withdraw from a given situation)
- Avoiding unnecessary dangerous spots or times
- Ensuring adequate insurance cover, and checking the conditions under which claims would be honoured

WHAT TO TAKE TO A PSE OR ON STREET OUTREACH

- Leaflets, condoms, lubricants, "rights on arrest" card, phone numbers of other projects or services, business card or project/service leaflets
- Something to carry everything in (such as a back pack)
- Personal alarm
- Mobile phone
- You may want to take cigarettes and matches, because even if don't smoke these can be helpful for gaining introductions and confidence. On the other hand, you may decide that this contradicts your wider health promotion brief
- A small amount of petty cash, to buy contacts a coffee or basic meal (sandwich/burger)
- Warm clothing in winter
- An ID card you may have
- A letter of support or endorsement from your employer or the police
- The phone number of a good solicitor or contact number for gay & lesbian police liaison officer, and the manager on call
- Monitoring forms (it might be best to leave these in the office and just bring a small pocket note pad to make notes)
- Workers with the appropriate medical/first aid

training might what to consider taking a basic medical kit, in case of emergencies

WHAT NOT TO TAKE TO A PSE OR STREET LOCATION

- Lots of money, cheque books, credit cards, jewellery or other expensive personal items which may be lost or stolen
- Confidential phone numbers or details of users (in case the information falls into wrong hands)

RECORD KEEPING

As with all record keeping, you need to decide what records you want and why. There's no point in keeping copious records if they don't serve any purpose. Records might be needed to justify funding, to serve as a reminder when meeting users, to identify common theme/issues, or to help develop the work generally. Professionally kept records may also offer a guarantee against accusations of improper conduct in a PSE or on the street. Since sex workers are engaging in illegal activities, may be illegal immigrants, or are anxious to keep their sexuality secret, confidentiality and security of records are paramount, and it may be best not to use real names, which could identify users if records fell into wrong hands.

European law also demands that any computer records that may be maintained (such as an outreach database) are developed in such a way that individuals are aware of the information stored on such records about them, may access the information upon request, and that the information is not shared with a third party without their consent.

SAUNAS

There is a difference between working in an overtly gay sauna and a regular private or municipal sauna. In gay saunas it is theoretically possible to come to an arrangement with the managers/owners so that your outreach work is explicit, has their official blessing, and can stretch to putting up posters or providing free condoms and lubricant. In regular saunas it is highly unlikely that such overt work will be possible. It is, of course, true that many saunas rely on a clientele seeking male to male contact, to remain profitable, and that upwards of 60% of those present at any time may be men seeking sex with other men. Moreover, unless they are naïve in the extreme, it is likely that the owner/attendants will be aware that sexual activity of various kinds (including the selling of sex) takes place in the sauna, and these same attendants, may be gay themselves (though possibly closeted). The crucial consideration, however, is that in such situation sexual activity is tolerated to a greater or lesser degree, only so long as it is reasonably discreet. If outreach workers try to get co-operation from managers of regular or municipal saunas, they are in effect making an issue of the sex that occurs, and forcing the managers to take action.

Unless the managers are very enlightened, this action is unlikely to be positive. It would therefore seem that any outreach in non-gay saunas has to be covert and conducted with great sensitivity. The notion of sex being tolerated as long as nobody makes an issue of it may extend to overtly gay saunas, which fear officials/police interference.

It may also be the case that in overtly gay saunas where managers/owners are aware that sex is sold (in fact some saunas are known to be places to go and buy sex), such managers/owners may be unsupportive of outreach workers, so their main focus is on making profit. Workers should consider this is the motivation factor of the managers/owners when trying to gain co-operation from these individuals, and present their proposals in such a way that their outreach will enhance their business.

Workers need to be clear that they are doing outreach in saunas for valid reasons, or just because there happen to be a lot of gay men and sex workers there or because it seems superficially like an attractive option; being an HIV worker in a gay environment does not automatically mean that you are able to do any effective HIV prevention. It may be starting the obvious, but it is difficult handing out condoms and leaflets to naked men. Workers might even consider it compromising to have to take such materials into a sauna environment. Slow familiarization, with ensuring one-to-one discussion (possible referral to your project/service) may be the best strategy.

Approaching men in an unambiguous way, while simultaneously deflecting the advances of other men (in some saunas, especially those in which your outreach work is discreet and without the knowledge of the managers/owners) is clearly not easy. There is also the danger that an inappropriate approach might cause a man to complain to the management there and then, which would cause problems for you as a worker and risk compromising everyone else present (since, as in other PSEs, outreach workers are privileged guests, not participants). This reinforces the need for caution and a long period of observation since familiarity with the venue users i.e. who's selling sex and who isn't) and general sauna etiquette is something that cannot be achieved overnight. Don't forget that if you make a mess of things in a sauna, you can't beat a hasty retreat (as might be possible on the street) – firstly you have to get your clothes back on, and secondly you have to pass the attendants.

Obviously, work in saunas which are exclusive male, can only be undertaken by male staff, and in gay saunas heterosexual male staff members may feel uncomfortable, especially if needing to be naked. Staffing availability may therefore be an issue, and as with other forms of outreach, it is best undertaken in

pairs, and ideally never alone. As with other PSEs, workers need to consider whether it is professional to use the sauna for their own personal use at other times.

OTHER POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY WORKERS INCLUDE

- *Don't be too talkative; this may put people off. You need to keep a relatively low profile*
- *Talk about sex if the subject arises, but don't mention outreach work straight away. Find out about all the needs of men from ethnic minority groups, not just those directly related to HIV*
- *Don't feel you have to talk to someone every session*
- *Encourage men to come out of the sauna (for instance, invite them to join groups)*
- *Some men from ethnic minorities can be very closeted in saunas, and will often find it hard to make the first move in a conversation*
- *Some men from ethnic minorities may have many barriers, not just language, and you will need persistence to break them down*

PUBLIC TOILETS (COTTAGES)

It is probably best not to undertake outreach in toilets (cottages) in case they are raided. It is also very difficult to be present in a cottage without either being drawn into sexual activity or appearing to be a police officer. Work in public toilets can be done outside the building – on benches, a nearby wall, a patch of grass, or perhaps in a neighbouring café.

A premature explanation of your role as an outreach worker may frighten people off or cause other negative reactions. However, if you don't make your role plain at a relatively early stage, sex workers may feel disappointed or resentful, as if you have deceived them, when you do finally explain why you are there.

Don't stay if you don't feel safe. If you feel uncomfortable for whatever reason, don't be brave and hang around. You risk being subject to violence or police raid.

When doing purely observational work rather than actual interventions, don't make it obvious that you are hanging around. For instance, you can sit on a park bench, or in a nearby café.

Be careful if you make the first move to talk to someone; they may be a police officer. Since the sex workers' initial interest in you is probably that you are probably a customer, you must also be careful about the signals you're giving out by making the first approach.

Don't pester people using public toilets; they are most likely there to have sex or meet other men (or maybe even to have a pee)!

CLUB WORK

For many of the ENMP partner countries, there are established commercial gay scenes, bars and nightclubs, where it is known that young men selling sex many go to socialise, but also to look for business. In some towns and cities throughout Europe, some of these bars or clubs may be specifically known as venues to buy sex, older men may specifically go there for this purpose, and often owners/managers will be aware of (and often encourage) this. It maybe that they turn a 'blind eye' to when a young man slopes of to the toilet closely followed by the older man who has been chatting with the former at the bar, some even provide darkrooms or private rest areas for this sexually activity.

However, they are not running a brothel, as it is very rare for the bar or club staff to be involved in actually negotiating the sexual sale, their profit margin attained purely from the sale of alcohol and liquor, which lubricates these discussions!

It may also be that sex is being sold in venues, which are more generic gay bars and clubs, that is those frequented by a normal mix of men using the gay scene, and the venue is not specifically known as a place to buy sex, that the selling of sex in these venues is often opportunistic or occasional.

One of the main reasons for targeting outreach to such venues is the large number of male sex workers, which might be contacted in this way. You may be *interested in assessing the needs of sex workers on the scene, as well as raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and safer sex in this setting. In addition, you may feel it important to establish a presence on the scene and use it to raise your project's profile.*

As with other areas of outreach work, gay venue work requires initial observation, to establish the layout of the venue(s), or where there are a number of venues which are known to be frequented by sex working men, which are best to visit at which time. Workers should frequent the venue(s) at different times of the day, to observe when is the peak time at which the maximum number of male sex workers may be encountered. While during this observational time it is best to avoid contact, it may be useful if possible to have limited contact with popular young men working on the scene, who can advise workers on the best times to undertake outreach sessions. Depending on how supportive managers/owners are, workers many benefit from talking to bar staff, and gaining information from them to inform their future interventions.

The aim of this intervention to be to *establish contact* with male sex workers, *discuss safer sex* and HIV prevention issues, *talk to them about their*

experiences, and increase awareness of your project/service. One of the difficulties of this type of outreach centres around making contact even young men known to workers may pose a difficulty, because sometimes it can be hard to establish whether the sex worker is 'working' or just socialising on the gay scene, especially in those more generic, mixed crowd venues. Establishing contact in a socialising context may arouse suspicion from the sex workers friends and companions, which might lead to a potential risk of exposure or breach of confidentiality. This is less likely to occur in those venues, which are known to be more working pubs and clubs, where the very presence of a young man signifies he is working.

SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER

■ *Where to do the work*

Where there is a large and established gay scene, this may be difficult and will require a significant number of observation sessions and intelligence gathering, to establish which are the best venues, and at what is the best time to visit those venues, to maximise potential contact with young men selling sex. Obviously, where there are known sex selling venues, this may be easier. It is still worth conducting some baseline observations in other more mixed generic venues from the onset, and periodically during the course of your work. Especially so, in response to reports from established sex selling contacts, of new and emerging venues used by young men to sell sex.

■ *Where to begin*

Be clear from the onset on the purpose of doing outreach to commercial pub and club scene venues. Some workers can find this type of outreach very daunting and intimidating, especially if in an isolated or small location, where the scene is small and limited, and if gay they, may be where they socialise when off duty. Sometimes this merging of personal and professional environments can cause individual workers some tension.

■ *How to approach people*

Workers need to realise that in most pub and club environments interventions need to be kept brief, as the young men are there to work, and playing attention to an outreach worker can distract them from this. If just starting to work a new venue, or meeting new contacts, workers also need to avoid the potential of either being taken as a potential non-paying sexual pursuant, or a customer! Interventions need to be targeted and provide clear messages. Workers may also want to consider where they will buy contacts alcoholic drinks, as a way of establishing/maintaining contact, or whether that may go against the health promotion ethos of your organisation. It must be remember that it is difficult to undertake detail interventions or engage

in one-to-one counselling it a busy and noisy club or bar, therefore it is important to recognise that the purpose of outreach (as opposed to detached) work is to refer back to your project/service base or drop-in centre for more detailed work with clients.

■ *Contacting managers/owners*

Some projects/services may decide that it is beneficial to approach managers/owners of known sex selling clubs, or venues where sex is thought to be sold opportunistically, and *seek their support* for the outreach work. This needs to be considered careful, as they may perceive that your outreach may either deter customers, or draw unwanted attention to the fact that sex is sold on their premises, and therefore deny you entry. Workers may also want to consider their relationship with the young men selling sex, which needs to be established around trust, that may be compromised if workers are seen (or perceived) by the sex workers as being 'over familiar' with the owner/manager.

■ *Who does the work?*

Due to the nature of the commercial gay scene, this type of work is best undertaken in pairs, of which one will need to be male (either heterosexual and comfortable enough with his own and alternative sexualities as to not be intimidated or uncomfortable on the gay scene, or ideally, a gay man). Some gay venues (especially those known to be sex selling venues) will be exclusively male only, so the outreach team will have to be all male, but in more generic scene venues, with a mixed clientele, there is no reason why a woman should not be the second team member.

■ *Creating a presence*

During most other gay venue scene work, when outreach would be targeting the general gay male population, workers would *enhance their visibility, the projects use T-shirts, cards, posters, flyers and badges while working on the scene*. When working with young gay men selling sex, you want to blend in and be discrete, not draw attention to yourselves or even the young men you may be working with.

■ *Debriefing & Monitoring*

It is important to debrief as a team at the end of a piece of bar or club scene outreach. This should ideally be undertaken away from the venue in which you have been working. Any issues or concerns from the session should be discussed, and those which cannot be resolved during the debrief, be taken to team or personal supervision. It is at this time that details of contacts met during the session should be recorded, even if only in short note form, for addition to any motoring or record system your project /service utilises at a later date, while the details are fresh in your mind.

DARKROOMS

Some bars and clubs, especially in Western Europe, will have a secluded area, a room or series of connected rooms, which are poorly lit, and used for sex. These are often referred to as the 'darkroom'.

Darkrooms are areas where men go to engage in anonymous casual sex while using the facilities of the bar or club. This may range from voyeuristic self-masturbation while watching others, through to unprotected receptive anal intercourse (receptive UAI). Like work in PSEs or cottages, outreach work in a darkroom environment can be difficult, even when targeting just gay men, focusing on young men potentially selling sex in darkrooms is even more complex.

As the name suggests, these rooms are very dimly lit, making locating even known sex worker contacts difficult. In practical terms, it may be best for the outreach team to position themselves just with the darkroom (often such areas only have one access point). This gives the advantage of being able to view men as they enter the darkroom, and it may even be necessary to adopt a generic outreach strategy, such as issuing condoms and lube to all men as they enter the darkroom, but try to establish a longer engagement with those young men who may potentially be selling sex.

Co-operation of the bar or club owner is much the same as for bars or clubs without darkrooms, if you can achieve their support it will assist you with the work, but if not, it may be necessary to maintain a low profile and not draw unwanted attention to your work.

MESSAGE PARLOURS, INDOOR AGENCIES & BROTHELS

Some cities in Europe have what equates to male brothels, or a 'house of boys'. Because the sale of sex is still, in the main, illegal across most of Europe, a great many of these brothels will operate discretely and front as other types of establishment, such as an unlicensed massage parlour or an indoor escort or introduction agency.

Often such establishments will have a large concentration of men selling sex working there, with perhaps 5 – 15 young men per shift (depending on the size of the premises), and most operate a day (from noon till 7 or 8pm) and night (from 7 – 2am) shift system. The London experience of these types of establishments suggests that they often have a large number of immigrant men, although this many vary outside of the UK, elsewhere in Europe.

The establishment will be responsible for the recruitment and selection of customers, who will visit the premises in response to expensive and glitzy

advertising in the gay and/or local press, and/or via a website on the Internet. The standard layout of such establishments is for a reception/waiting area, to which customers are first shown upon arrival. This is usually adjoined by what is commonly called the 'boys room'; this is the area of the establishment where the sex workers wait between customers. It is usually fitted with rudimentary cooking and showering facilities, and a television. Often this room is fitted with a one-way mirror, which facilitates the customers anonymous viewing of the sex workers available when making his selection shortly after arrival. There will then be a number of bedrooms, in which the sex occurs.

The benefits for the young men of working in this way are that the establishment is responsible for all overheads and on costs (advertising, etc.). It is also safer than working on the streets or in a PSE, as there are other sex workers on the premises (should a customer turn nasty), and to some extent customers have been pre-screened (often particularly alcoholic customers will be turned away for example). It also allows the sex worker to have a clear distinction between the home and work place, unlike independent male sex workers, who may work from home.

The other main significant benefit is the concept of a peer network, these young men are not working in isolation, their work enables them to relate with and socialise with other sex workers. This is a useful resource for workers to tap when undertaking outreach to such establishments, especially to directing newer inexperienced sex workers to learn from more experienced sex workers. Workers can often facilitate this process during an effective outreach session.

The significant draw back to this is that sex workers in these establishments are not considered employees, that is the brothel owner or manager will argue that they are self employed masseurs or entertainers who hire rooms by the hour, and reside on the premises for the duration of their working day. This means they are not protected by any European work related legislation, such as the Working Time Directive or minimum wage – if a boy is not picked by a single customer for the duration of his shift, he will not be paid. The other significant draw back for the sex worker is that the establishment will keep 50% of any monies the customers pay for services rendered.

CONTACTING MANAGERS/OWNERS

The relationship with the managers/owners of these establishments is actually the fundamental key to this work, as they are the gatekeepers that allow entry into this potentially very productive type of outreach work. The central factor to remember when making initial approaches with these individuals is that their primary consideration is about running a

profitable business, not necessary the welfare or sexual well being of the young men working for them. Whatever approach you adopt when opening negotiations, bear this in mind. Your proposals must be attractive to them, your inroads to facilitate access for outreach must appear to cause minimum disruption to their business, and in some way, perhaps enhance it (it may increase their client base if it is that they can say their boys receive regular check ups for example).

It may be best to try and foster this relationship over time, expect that when approaching a new brothel, it will take time to get a foot through the door. If you have contact already with some of the young men working at the brothel, this may be helpful, especially if they are willing to introduce you to the managers/owners. A first step will be to try and establish enough contact to facilitate information about your project/service being disseminated to the young men. This will usually at least get you past the front door to the reception area.

Condoms and the provision of other safer sex materials, such as lubricant can be used as bartering tool to allow deeper penetration, and perhaps even access to the young men. In countries and parts of Europe where brothels are illegal and these establishments are fronting as unlicensed massage parlour or indoor escort agencies, they are often reluctant to keep large quantities of condoms on the premises, for fear that they may be cited as evidence that sex was being sold during a police raid. Sex workers will therefore be expected to supply their own condoms (if in the workers possession during a raid, it could be claimed the condoms are for a sex workers personal use).

Offering to supply the young men with these condoms on a regular basis can be an effective and powerful tool, which can be used to barter access to the young men. Often, this may start as just being allowed through to the rest room, and the opportunity to disseminate safer sex materials and resources to the collective audience of young men. Over time, this may develop into gaining permission from the owners/managers to wait in the reception afterwards, and give the young men the opportunity to talk in semi-private, for a one-to-one. Obviously, this will be dependant on the layout of the establishment, and how busy the reception is, if there are a large number of customers waiting, this might not be feasible.

The aim would be for the relationship with the brothel owners/managers to develop over time, and for them to appreciate the value of your intervention and realise that it does not prevent profit, if anything it potentially enhances it, as customers appreciate that some provision is being made for the welfare

needs of the young men. In this way, workers can begin to negotiate ways to enhance the benefit of this type of outreach.

Find out by conversation with the young men and the owners/managers when is the best time to visit the establishment, when is it quietest. Performing outreach visits at this time may allow you to use one of the bedrooms as a private space to see each of the young men in turn for one-to-one counselling. This allows some very constructive work to be undertaken, including assessment and harm reduction counselling, as well as the opportunity to gather accurate recording data on the young men seen – most will not object to workers actually explaining that they maintain confidential statistics of the outreach sessions, and completing said record with them.

When you have this private space for one-to one counselling, it is also a chance to check out with young men, especially new contacts, their motivation for selling sex. The ENMP pilot survey (Gaffney et al, 2002)¹⁴ showed that for many brothel workers, selling sex was a short term activity, often in response to acute financial crisis, and that in such off street settings, a higher proportion of men tend to be migrant workers. It may therefore be an opportunity to discuss choices with the sex worker, inform him of his rights. If it is that due to immigration status or financial situations he feels he has no choice but to sell sex, as workers, you may be able to help him explore other options and alternatives.

Should these options be limited, or financially not as attractive as sex work, or should the young men feel he's making an informed choice about selling sex, then workers have a responsibility to ensure he does so as safely as possible. Ensure that he has been adequately vaccinated against Hepatitis A and B, and if not direct him towards a local facility where this may be accessed. You might also recommend a regular sexual health screening from the same facility if available. There is also the opportunity to check his confidence of negotiating with customers – it may be he is very new to sex work and still quite naïve. A successful way of achieving this is through the use of peer facilitators (see later), directing them to talk with more experienced men within the same establishment who can impart some 'tricks of the trade'.

You may also be able to facilitate specific group work activities collectively with the young men in the establishment, such as safer sex talks, STI slide shows, etc. It is important when working in these establishments to also work in pairs. It depends on

the relationship with the managers/owners, but there are no practical reasons (apart from perhaps scaring customers in the reception area) if a female worker is one of the pair. For personal and professional reasons, never be completely alone with a sex worker in a room on the premises. Always carry ID, it is rare, but if raided you may need to establish you are not a sex worker, and always have a manager on call.

However, as with the previous section dealing with working in bars and clubs, it is important not to be seen to be over familiar with owners/managers of brothels, for fear of ostracising the sex workers. Once an understanding has been developed enough to facilitate you being given a private space in which to conduct your sessions, it is important to ensure that trust is maintained with the sex workers. It is important to remind them constantly that discussions and any information recorded about them is strictly confidential, that none of the information is ever shared with or shown to the owners/managers. There is a fine balance to be maintained between appeasing the owners/managers and remaining trusted by the young men, which workers must develop as this type of outreach progresses.

ESCORT AGENCIES

Escort agencies operate in much the same way as brothels, only the young men are not actually on the business premises, and most of the men buying the sex contact the agencies via the telephone, and again rarely visit the premises.

The young man registers with the agency, usually completing a profiling form, which provides essential personal information, body type, hair colour, nationality, range of acceptable sexual practices, etc., and provides a series of photographs, usually a formal/dress image, a topless image, and a nude image. The boy once registered with the agency, will give his availability, and state whether he is willing to see clients at his premises and/or visit paying partners at their home, hotels or work places, the later of which is most common.

Men who wish to buy sex, the customers, will contact the escort agency, usually by telephone, and increasingly using the Internet, although some agencies offer a viewing facility, where customers may visit the office base of the agency and view the photographs and profiles of the young men available. Once a selection has been made, the young man will be contacted by the agency and given the assignment details – where to go, who to meet, and what to charge.

14) Gaffney J, Schiffer K, Steward EC, Dowling Z, Erasmus A & Pryce A (2002) *The European Network Male Prostitution – Preliminary Analysis of the Pilot Survey in Migration and Sexual Lifestyles of Male Sex Workers. AMOC/DHV; Amsterdam & City University; London – work in progress*

Like with brothels/unlicensed massage parlours, the young working via and registered with escort agencies are not technically employed by the agency. Many of the agencies charge a 'joining' or 'registration' fee when the young man initially signs up with the agency. This allows the agency to claim it is acting merely as an introductory service. It charges hopeful young men a set fee to register, and then charges older men (the customers) a fee for each 'introduction' – this keeps the agency just within the confines of the law, otherwise they could be charged as being nothing more than sophisticated pimps! Having said this, like with brothels/unlicensed massage parlours, escort agencies very obviously sell sex, and the customers that contact them are aware that it their purpose.

Many of the escort agencies charge higher fees than the brothels/unlicensed massage parlours, and often insist on several hours of payment for a single assignment, and set rates for 'overnights' (staying with the customer until morning), as well as travel expenses (usually a taxi fare) for the young men to reach the customers destination on out calls. For these reasons, the type of customer tends to be of a better calibre than those of the street, bar/club, PSE or brothel. However, the young men working for the agencies will be expected to match the higher standards of the customers, they will have to be very good looking, well educated and manner, and fluent usually in the mother tongue of the country in which the agency is located, and English.

Payment for services is usually made directly to the young man on completion of the assignment, but the set fee will have been negotiated in advance with the agency at the time of the booking, and the sex worker will be aware what this amount totals. Like with the brothel/unlicensed massage parlour, 'extra' sexual services offered by the sex worker may be negotiated between the customer and the client, and the young man will keep this extra money, or 'tip'. The benefit of working in this way for many young men is that they can potentially earn a lot of money, but assignments are not guaranteed, and the draw back is that there may be prolonged periods when there is no work, therefore no money.

Similar to brothels/escort agencies, customers are provisionally screened when they make the booking, any 'odd' requests or suspicious sounding men will be refused services, making it a safer way for young men to work. The escort agency will also have details of the assignment, and will expect the sex worker to report in after the assignment, usually directly in person to the office, with the agency's money from the assignment fees. If the young man does not call in, the agency will attempt to trace him, which is an additional safety factor. Some agencies even employ drivers to deliver and collect the sex worker to and from assignments.

Escort agencies are difficult venues in which to undertake outreach work. Unlike brothels/unlicensed massage parlours, the sex workers are not actually 'on-site', so visiting the agencies office base does not guarantee contact with sex workers.

As with brothels/unlicensed massages parlours, much of this work is dependent on a developing a good relationship with managers/owners of the agencies. The managers/owners are the real gatekeepers for access to young men working via their business. It is a good idea to meet with these individuals, explain what your service has to offer, and like with brothel owners, try to 'sell' to them the benefits of the young men working for them being aware of and utilising your services.

By developing a meaningful relationship with managers/owners, they may invite you to opportunities at which contact with the sex workers can be established. For example, some agencies pay the young men not with each assignment, but once a week, when guys might visit the office to collect their cash payments, it may be possible for your outreach team to be present at the office during these times and make contact. Another opportunity may be to attend when a new young man is attending to register with the agency, an invitation from the manager/owner to attend this interview might facilitate contact.

However, the reality is that in most escort agencies, outreach work will not result in direct contact with the young men selling sex. The best is usually achieved is to have an initial meeting with the escort agency managers/owners, and make them aware of the services you provide, leaving some information (leaflets, flyers, condom packs, etc.) which might be passed onto the young men using registered with the agency. If you are providing outreach from a drip-in centre, the only way you may be able to monitor how effective this intervention has been, is to record how many of the new contacts using your service found out about it from their work with an escort agency.

INDEPENDENT INDOOR WORKERS

Perhaps the most significant numbers of young men selling sex, in many countries across Europe, are those working independently from their flats and apartments. Research in the United Kingdom (McKinney & Gaffney¹⁵) shows that a number of these men initially start selling sex in other ways, such as on the street or via brothels/unlicensed massage parlours, but many have no previous experience of selling sex.

Indoor workers advertise their services using the gay press or local newspapers, calling themselves escorts or masseurs, although few actually have massage qualifications, and in some countries, their advertising may be extremely sexually explicit, and

be obvious that sex is being sold. A few limit themselves to out-calls only (visiting customers), but the majority allow customers to visit them at their apartments. While the majority of European countries have legal rulings, which criminalise the selling of sex, and the all activities associated with the selling of sex, these young men sell sex discretely, and therefore tend not to draw unwanted attention to their activities by law enforcement agencies.

Unlike with female sex workers, who tend to use 'working flats', separate from those apartments at which they reside, the majority of independent male sex workers sell sex from the same apartment at which they live. This can have implications for both the sex workers physical and psychological health, although (unlike with female sex work), acts of violence and/or abuse against male sex workers working independently from flats is very rare across most of the European countries.

However, there is the potential for violence, as arrangements are made directly between the sex worker and the customer, without the intervention or knowledge of a third party. Outreach teams who visit young men selling sex from flats/apartments may want to discuss safety arrangements and tips as an integral component of their harm minimisation strategy. The Working Men Project (WMP) website within the UK has an excellent section on working safely from home, written by independent indoor workers, with input from the gay liaison officer of the Metropolitan Police Force¹⁵.

In addition to the potential of violent threat, there are the psychological effects, which can be experienced by independent indoor sex workers. As previously stated, it is common for female indoor workers to have 'working flats', a venue or premises which the women will hire for the specific purpose of selling sex. This creates a clear demarcation between work and private life, the women can 'leave the job' and return to a living environment, which is not associated with her sex work. For the majority of independent indoor male sex workers, they live and work at the same premises, so this demarcation does not exist.

This can sometimes have a very direct effect on the individual sex worker. For some, they can develop an almost clinical detachment – their apartment will be very clean and functional, and will lack personal effects, such as photographs or mementos, which might give a clue or some insight to a visiting

customer, about the person behind the sex worker. This form of invisible clinical barrier helps the sex worker to create this sense of demarcation, but can have a negative effect on the psyche in the long term.

McKinney & Gaffney's (2000)¹⁶ also identified a great sense of isolation which can be experienced by some independent indoor male sex workers. Linked to the notion of this clinical detachment, a number of the workers have few or no real friends, or established social networks, often because of fear of stigma and/or shame attached to their involvement in sex work.

Another factor (perhaps specific to the UK) is the level of competition, that there are many independent indoor sex workers advertising in the gay press (there are now even free gay press supplements within popular papers specifically for the purpose of escorts/masseurs posting their display photo adverts). If the worker is not at home and available for when the customer telephones, there are likely to be another half dozen boys advertising in the same publication, which the customer can call. For this reason, the sex worker can feel restrained, not able to go further than the local gym (with his mobile), so he is always available and ready for work when the phone rings. This need to be on stand by for work from home can make socialising or development of friendships/non-paying sexual relationships difficult.

This sense of isolation and the competitive nature of the business can also be a factor why some young men that sell sex as independent indoor workers are reluctant to access services and projects, especially those which have a drop-in service. While they acknowledge their isolation and the notion that having the opportunity to discuss their sex work with other sex workers may be beneficial, and help develop a similar level of peer network as is experienced by bar/club or brothel working young men, they are often reticent about actually engaging in this process, for the simple fact that they don't want to physically meet the competition! This can have a negative effect on their sexual health and ability to sustain safer sexually practices, as research by Rhodes¹⁷ identified that a lack of a peer reference framework for socially marginalised groups can lead to increased risk taking behaviours.

These are all important factors, which should be considered by outreach workers wanting to develop work with this type of sex worker. There are a number of ways to establish contact with independent indoor sex workers. Many place

15) McKinney C & Gaffney J (2000) *They think of the pleasure, not the risk...male sex workers as health promoters*. Oral presentation at C3 – 3rd National CHAPS Conference, Manchester, 1st March

16) See: www.wmplondon.org.uk

17) Rhodes T (1994) *Outreach, community change & community empowerment: contradictions for public health and health promotion*. In Aggleton P, Davies P and Hart G (eds.) *AIDS: foundations for the future*. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994: 48-64

advertisements in the local gay press, and those that advertises with pictures (the majority in the UK) require the sex worker to personally place the advert, so the publication can confirm that the picture is of the actual sex worker. Often, this is done on set days at the publication. If workers establish contact initially with the publications, then they may be able to facilitate being around on the days the sex workers come to place their adverts, thus ensuring direct contact.

However, it may be that the publication is just happy to have some of your service leaflets and printed information available to give to persons, rather than allowing the team into their offices. Alternatively, they may allow you to place an advert for your service within the escorts/masseurs pages, usually not for free, but at a negotiated, significantly reduced rate. As many of the young men that place adverts regularly check the escorts/masseurs sections, to ensure their advert has been printed and to check the competition, it would ensure that awareness of your service is raised.

The most effective way to reach this specific group of male sex workers is to telephone their adverts directly. This form of 'cold calling' can be difficult and feel uncomfortable for inexperienced outreach workers. You should think of what you are going to say, so it remains concise and understandable, it is often a good idea to write this down, so you have a clue card to work from. It is important within the first few minutes of any cold call, that you have established where you are from, the purpose of your call, whether the young man is actually selling sex, and that you are not a customer or the police! The phone conversation should be kept brief, so as not to block the sex workers line (and potential work), and be just enough to get him interested enough to consent to a home visit.

Cold calling adverts can be a time consuming piece of work, and adequate time should be set aside for this, it is best practice to set aside a few hours before the time you actually plan to undertake the home visits. The UK experience has found that starting to call early afternoon for visits late afternoon is the most effective time. Calling in the morning, many of the young men will still be sleeping, at college/school or in the gym. Calling in the evening, many will be working or preparing for work, and will not want to be visited, however, trying to arrange visits for late afternoon, most guys will be available, any day time activities will have stopped, and customers usually do not start before commuting time (post 5.30pm).

As a service/project you need to consider whether you will visit a sex worker once, as in introductory visit, to establish contact, take some condoms, and promote your project/service, or whether you will

visit regularly, to maintain contact and a regular supply of condoms for the sex worker. The frequency of visiting can have an effect on how long you may wish to spend on each visit. If just a one off visit, then you may want to consider a slightly longer visit, to ensure you provide all the information and empower the sex worker to access your service/project. In this case the number of visits that you may be able to make in one outreach session will be limited, to perhaps 2-3 visits. If planning to undertake regular visits, once contact is established, then a shorter contact time may be possible, facilitating more visits per session.

The following points need to be considered if planning to undertake outreach visits to independent indoor workers:

- When cold calling, keep your contact with the sex worker brief, remember this is his business line and he may not want it blocked and to be losing potential customers. Be clear about your message, either to quickly and concisely impart information about your project/service, or to arrange a visit to the sex worker.
- If arranging a visit to the sex worker, initially just take the general area in which the sex worker is living, do not push for the full address upon initial contact, as most sex workers will be reluctant to give these level of detail on a first contact. Say you will call (from your mobile phone) when actually in the area, a few minutes before you intend to knock on their door. This also gives the sex worker the opportunity to decline your visit, having had time to think about it following your initial telephone contact with them. It is also very important to inform the sex worker how many outreach workers will be visiting, and the gender of these workers – again this reduces the element of surprise and allows the sex worker to remain in control about the visit.
- You may need to decide as a team whether you will leave message on voicemail services, and the content of such messages. When cold calling, at least fifty percent of the numbers you call will be diverted to voicemail. If you leave messages, you may want to consider who else may be hearing the message, other than the sex worker, especially is on a landline, rather than a personal mobile – the last thing you want on an initial contact is a sex worker returning your call and accusing your service of disclosing his profession to a flatmate or partner! Therefore, have a clear and justifiable policy about messages left and their content, which the team and service/project should be signed up to.
- Always ensure that visits to independent indoor sex workers are with two members of the outreach team, this provides person safety for the team, and prevents any accusations of professional misconduct (e.g. the sex worker claiming the

outreach worker made sexual advances towards him). Always provide an on-call manager with details of the locations you are going to visit, keep your mobile phone switched on, and ensure that you call in at the end of your session. Your service/project should have a clear and established procedure for this to ensure worker safety, and so the manager is clear what their responsibilities are, should you not call in by the agreed time.

- Decide on the format of your visits before undertaking the work. As previously stated, some projects undertake only a one off visit, to introduce their services, and then leave it for the sex worker to establish additional contact, or access the service. Other projects/services will perform regular home visits, delivering condoms, and adding the sex worker onto their visiting list. Have a clear understanding of what you are offering before commencing this type of outreach.
- Consider how long you will actually spend on each visit, because of the isolation previously discussed, some independent indoor sex workers will greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the work they do with understanding persons, it may have been the first real opportunity they have had to do so, and they may want to talk for hours. It may be necessary to state when arranging the visit or upon arrival, that you have other visits arranged and therefore can only spend 30 minutes with them, creating a time boundary to limit the contact. Conversely, some sex workers may invite you to visit, but upon your arrive feel uncomfortable, and rush you along before you have imparted all the information you wanted to give them – workers need to be sensitive to these varied reactions, and tailor their intervention accordingly.
- When in the sex workers apartment, remember, not only is it his work space, but more than not it is also his home, and that as an outreach worker you are a guest within his space, and should respect this at all times.
- Finally, if undertaking home visits, be prepared for any eventuality, have a clear outreach policy that would guide outreach workers in their practice, what if they came across an underage child with the sex worker, or drug use, or a firearm, etc. It is rare that anything unusual would occur, but it is always when you least expect it, that these things occur, so it is best to have thought them through in advance.

THE INTERNET AND CHATROOMS

There is a section elsewhere within this ENMP manual, which discusses at some length the use of the Internet and chat rooms or portals as a way of

establishing contact and making connections with young men selling sex. However, it is worth noting a few valid points in this section regarding the specifics of using the World Wide Web in an outreach situation.

Many independent indoor sex workers advertise themselves on the Internet, and a considerable number have their picture and/or details registered with, and hosted by an escort agency which is web based, or have their own websites, which are specific to their sex work. It seems to be that this is especially true for North European male sex workers, and those in the Scandinavian countries¹⁸, where more visible forms of commercial male sex work, such as on the street, in bars/clubs or in brothels/massage parlours do not exist, or not as overtly as in more Central or Southerly regions.

In addition to website, many young men are being to cruise for business in chat rooms, areas of commercial website and community sites which have discussion rooms that facilitate 'real time' text based debate between registered users. Such sites tend to be gay, and whilst most Internet Service Providers and community websites regulate (through their terms and conditions of use which most members agree to when registering with the site) against any form of prostitution within the chat forums, the reality is it occurs constantly. In fact one UK site has become so tired of trying to regulate against escorts chatting for customers on line, gay.com have actually now provided an escorts and punters chat room, specifically for this purpose!

Projects and services need to consider their political positions, often influence by the nature of their funding before considering whether this is an area of outreach that they wish to explore. The Internet remains still very much unregulated, and most of the sites providing chat rooms that would be used for the selling of sex, are linked to and will have what are called 'hyperlinks' (a direction connection which allows the web user to click an on screen button and be navigated directly to a different web site) to more hardcore (and potentially illegal) websites. This needs to be considered if staff are using project/service IT facilities to access such sites, as often this will contravene the IT security policies of larger umbrella organisations, which will prohibit the viewing of sexually explicit material on work PCs.

It also has resource implications, in that the outreach team must have access to a PC, which is Internet compatible, and ideally have a secure digital connection, for faster connection to the web. Trawling through websites and chat rooms can also

18) Larsen, LB Petersen MB & Ørsted-Rasmussen (2000) Sale of sex between men on the Internet – Experiences with qualitative data collection from the Internet. University of Copenhagen.

be very time consuming, and yet yield little or no results, so in terms of gathering hardcore statistics, such as numbers of young men contacted on an outreach session, this can sometimes be difficult to substantiate.

Yet, the Internet is one of the most rapidly expanding media resources of the modern era, and as such new and innovative areas of outreach methodologies are being created and explored. A simple way to get started is to construct an email message, this can be sent to all the young men who use an email address in their more conventional newspaper advertisements, and also to men who may have website from an Internet web search. This is an excellent way to establish connect and perhaps enter into an email exchange of dialogue with sex workers.

Using a search engine (a web based device or resource which allows the Internet 'surfer' to look for sites which pertain to key words or topics), look up terms such as male prostitute, escort, sex worker, rent boy, etc. This will often yield websites which are escorts agencies or those of individual sex workers, which will often have links to other related sites once you start to sort through them.

It is a good idea to develop (either from expertise within your team, the support of an IT department, or purchasing in expertise) a web site for your own project/service – this can be referred to within your initial email. The specific web address or URL can be given, allowing the sex worker to gain more in-depth information about your service/project, and keeping the initial email brief.

When establishing contact with young men working in chat rooms, outreach workers need to consider (like with PSE or bar/club outreach), that the sex worker might be in the chat room because he's looking for work, or his own private casual non-paying sexual contacts, or either, or both! Therefore, interventions may need to be brief and precise, again, having a website to refer to allows you to

quickly send the URL, then the sex worker can access your details at a later time. Many young men will have obvious screen names (such as dick4rent, etc.), but a few will be generic, and it will only be by observing the textual conversation of the general chat area that the sex worker can be identified by the outreach team as potentially working.

Again security for workers is an issue within chat rooms. Screen names of outreach workers should be obvious, and not appear to as though they are selling sex, or a customer wanting to purchase sex. To avoid accusations of the content of any discussion had 'on-line' with a sex worker, the service/project may wish to invest in scripting software, special programmes which will monitor the chat and transcribe the dialogue as it occurs, which can then be stored securely and confidentially as a report of the session.

Outreach workers should also avoid using their own person screen or user names, especially if this is a site that they may use personally when not at work, to cruise or obtain potential sexual partners, as this could compromise their professional position. Finally, there is no way to validate information given to users of the Internet, just as you may be a customer pretending to be an outreach worker, so might the sex worker be a customer (or someone else) pretending to be a sex worker. Outreach staff therefore needs to be very cautious when undertaking this type of outreach work.

The purpose of outreach to chat rooms also needs to be decided, is it to just raise awareness of your service/project to potential service users, and perhaps facilitate access to the service, or is it going to 'outreach' in a virtual cyber environment, establishing dialogue with young men selling sex and begin to counsel one-two-one in order to meet the health promotion and harm minimisations aims of your service? These are key issues, which teams need to address and resolve before commencing this type of outreach.

II. Getting started

Needs assessment in the Southern European region

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THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN GROUP OF ENMP

Regional coordination: Greece (Hellenic Centre for Infectious Diseases Control)

Participants:

France (RUBIS A.R.A.P.)

Italy (PARSEC)

Portugal (ABRACO Associacao de Apoio a Pessoas com VIH/SIDA)

Spain (Cruz Roja Juventud-Departamento Central)

When identifying the specific problems, needs and aims within the region, the Southern European Group decided from the beginning to focus on the following issues:

- Development of activities/projects in the field of male sex work
- Needs assessment in the participants' countries
- Sensitizing other service providers
- Networking at national level
- Training for trainers

THE IDEA OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Lack of specific services in the field of male sex work is an important issue in the countries belonging to the Southern European Group. Of the five participating countries, only France has already developed services focusing on sex workers, while Spain has set up a project in Asturias targeting male sex workers. The specific services being developed in the five countries must be compared with the needs of the target group and the services already offered. For this reason the Southern European Group agreed to carry out a needs assessment on two different levels.

1. Assessment of already existing services

A questionnaire was prepared and addressed to as many services as possible such as:

- Sex workers projects
- Gay organisations
- Services for drug users
- Services for people living with HIV/AIDS
- Youth services
- Services for homeless people
- Services for migrants and migrant organisations

The questionnaire helped us to discover which agencies already had contacts with male sex workers and what specific services were offered to the group.

An additional effect of the questionnaire was to distribute information about the ENMP and to sensitize organisations for cooperation at national level.

The questionnaire focused on the following key issues:

- Basic information about the organisation
- Services offered (specific services for male sex workers)
- Needs of the target group
- Migration and mobility issues
- Interest in national networking

2. Gather information about male sex workers in the Southern European countries

Due to the lack of specific services, it was fairly difficult to establish permanent contacts with male sex workers. Projects experienced problems with receiving information from the target group itself. Therefore they tried to use their informal contacts with male sex workers and the relevant background information which already exists. It was decided that each country should describe the situation of male sex workers using this information. Detailed guidelines were prepared so that the reports could be compared.

The guidelines focused on:

- Socio-demographic characteristics of the male sex workers in each country
- Number of migrant male sex workers and their legal situation
- Economic and social situation of the male sex workers
- Living conditions
- Working conditions for practising sex work
- Professional and private sexual practices
- Drug use patterns
- Mobility patterns
- Access to social and medical services
- Access to information about services offered
- Main areas of needs

The assessment is not representative, but should be seen as an overview of the realities, as experienced by the participating countries. The evaluation of both parts helps to describe the situation and the needs of male sex workers, thereby contributing to the development of specific services which meet the specific needs of the target group.

ASSESSMENT OF ALREADY EXISTING SERVICES

The information acquired from all the countries indicated that, even in countries which offer services to female sex workers (e.g. 4 French NGOs), there are very few services which exclusively target male

sex workers (only 3/40 organisations in Spain and 2/8 in Portugal have developed specific programmes). However there was a generally positive attitude towards developing a network for sex workers and becoming more involved.

According to the reports, the reason for the lack of services is due to the fact that the issues relating to male sex work in Southern Europe are not vividly apparent. This is not because they do not exist, but because of the lack of registration records (due to the often anonymous nature of the organisations, the entanglement of legal issues etc). Another reason appears to be the lack of agencies devoted to male sex work and the absence of a formal network which could provide information and promote effective resolutions. In general organisations only become aware of issues related to male sex work if the client discloses such information in an interview or contact with an agency.

Some agencies provided estimates of the number of sex workers who approach them each month. Spain in particular has 3 active agencies working exclusively with sex workers, and 6 which serve 20 male sex workers each month as part of their work with female prostitution. 80% of these are immigrants wishing to legalize their status. France reported an estimate of between 20 and 30 male sex workers each month in 4 organisations devoted to prostitution. Of these approximately 30-40 % are immigrants. More than 20% of the immigrants have an illegal status. Despite the lack of registration, the other countries also reported the knowledge among professionals that some of their clients were male sex workers (8/14 Greek organisations, in 4 of which some are also immigrants, 4/10 Italian and 8/8 Portuguese, of which 6 also noted the need for services for transgender sex workers).

The issue of migration appears to be another major issue, in addition to that of health prevention and concerns with HIV for male sex workers, and was reported in all the participating countries. It is worth mentioning the reported nationalities of migrants who have requested services from each of the countries. Italy has offered services to migrants from Poland, Morocco, Romania, Albania and Bosnia. Spain has offered services to Latin Americans, Moroccans and East Europeans. Portugal has offered services to people from Brazil and former Portuguese colonies in Africa (mainly Angola and Mozambique). France has offered services to Arab, Moroccan, Algerian, Colombian, Sierra Leone, Brazilian, Russian, Tahitian, Polish and Romanian immigrants. Finally Greece has served Iranian, Iraqi and Afghani migrants and, less frequently, Turks and Palestinians.

The experiences of those organisations which have

already responded to the needs of male sex work reveal the following recurring issues: medical problems, STD prevention, information about public services and legal issues (especially regarding migration matters), economic disadvantages. To meet those needs, the agencies (Spanish and Portuguese) provide the following services: medical treatment, health promotion and HIV/STD prevention, special services for drug addicts, counselling, psychosocial support, legal advice, rights defence, drop-in centre, night shelter/housing, social sensitization and special services for trafficked persons.

In terms of knowledge of other agencies and networking, the results were poor. One exception was Italy, where agencies had reports of other known agencies because they belonged to a local network dealing with general prostitution problems. The value of creating a network was highlighted by the generally positive response to becoming involved in a network aimed at promoting cooperation and spreading knowledge about male sex work. Specifically, 6/10 Italian, all the Spanish, 7/8 Portuguese, 4/4 French and 12/14 Greek organisations declared their interest in participating in such a network.

The questionnaire showed that male prostitution is an issue which is obscurely present in southern Europe, and which must be given more attention. It also showed that, in general, cooperation is desired by local agencies.

GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT MALE SEX WORKERS

Comparison of the findings from the questionnaires for male sex workers, based on reports sent by Greece, Portugal, Italy and Spain:

- Vast majority of street male sex workers are migrants either originating from rural areas or from other countries: Africa, Latin America, Arab countries and Eastern Europe. Italy reported 70% of male sex workers as being foreign to the country, with 30% Italian. Spain reported many male sex workers from Latin America. Greece reported 80% of male sex workers coming from Albania, Iraq, Kurdistan and Afghanistan. Portugal was the only country with a much higher prevalence of national male sex workers as opposed to foreign male sex workers: 70% to 30% respectively.
- The ages of these male sex workers are as follows: the majority of male sex workers in Greece, Italy and Portugal majority are aged between 18 and 24. Spain reported the majority of male sex workers between the ages of 24 – 30.
- Urban vs. Rural: In Greece the vast majority are from rural areas; Spain reported a 90% / 10% ratio between urban and rural respectively; Italy reported an equal ratio of 50% / 50% rural / urban; Portugal reported a 70% / 30% ratio

- With regard to sexual orientation, all countries reported a higher incidence of self-identified heterosexuals vs. homosexuals. Greece reported more than 90% of the workers as being heterosexual, although the difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality is not as clear among male sex workers from Arab countries as for those from western cultures. Italy also reported 90% heterosexuals and 10% male sex workers who identified themselves as either homosexuals or bisexuals. Portugal showed 75% of street male sex workers as being heterosexual, although this percentage changes when interviewing indoor male sex workers, 85% of whom are homosexual, while 10% of all male sex workers interviewed identified themselves as being bisexual. In Spain this question is not relevant.
 - With regard to knowledge of language, Portugal and Spain reported that their male sex workers had a good knowledge of the language of the country of destination. Greece reported that few migrant male sex workers can speak Greek; the most common language is English.
 - With regard to relationships, Portugal reported that 10% of the male sex workers are married or living in a relationship; 60% are single or live with client; 30% are involved in a relationship, often with another sex worker of either gender. Italy reported no married male sex workers, although some are in a relationship with women. Greece also reported no married male sex workers, although some have live-in relationships with a man or woman, whereby the man is also often the client. Spain has no data on this issue.
 - With regard to socio-economic issues, all countries reported a high incidence of unemployment amongst male sex workers. Portugal and Italy also reported that 10%, and in Spain 20%, of the male sex workers are students. All reports showed that the majority of male sex workers live on their own or with family members. The incidence of homelessness is also high among the migrant population. As for socio-economic background, all countries reported male sex workers as being from the "lower classes" with very limited education. Regarding the reasons for choosing this line of work, all countries reported that the majority of male sex workers choose this work until their legal situation is settled and/or as transitional work.
 - With regard to services, the reports showed that information is available to all sex workers, including male sex workers. No country reported having specific programme for male sex workers. Non-governmental agencies attempt to provide the information and services requested by this group such as: legal advice, referrals to other agencies, supply of services and specific information.
 - With regard to professional vs. private sexual practices, Spain reported that those interviewed declared that they used condoms 100% of the time in a professional context. Greece reported that only a minority of male sex workers use condoms in personal relationships and that professionally the use of barriers is negotiable. Among Portuguese street male sex workers, the use of condoms is also negotiable and in a private context, they often fail to practise safe sex. There is also a very big difference in the level of knowledge of STIs and HIV/AIDS prevention among heterosexual and homosexual sex workers, the latter being the better informed.
 - With regard to working conditions, in Greece most of those interviewed work in outdoor locations, such as the street and cruising areas, and indoor locations such as bars and saunas. In Spain more of those interviewed used apartments (24), 3 used parks and streets, and 3 used cruising areas, bus and railway stations. In Portugal the main areas are the railway station at Rossio, Parque Eduardo VII as well as regular gay cruising areas. All the countries also reported advertising on the Internet as a new way of obtaining customers.
 - With regard to working conditions, no country reported known cases of male sex workers involved in trafficking or any significant issues with pimping. Police repression and intervention: Italy reported an increase in police repression, involving both migrant and local sex workers. Greece showed that police often raid places known for sex work, generally to arrest illegal migrants and harass the sex workers. Spain reported some police presence around bus and railway stations. In Portugal police are only involved when there is a suspicion of drug trafficking and have a very placid attitude when crimes against sex workers are perpetrated.
 - With regard to drug use, Greece reported that although some male sex workers use drugs, it does not seem to be a major issue. In Portugal drug use is the main reason for street male sex work, with a reported 90% of street male sex workers using intravenous drugs, particularly heroin. Needle exchange programmes are available to this population and for the population in general.
 - All countries reported male sex workers as having very similar areas of need: legal advice (immigration), drug services, medical/health services, HIV/STD prevention, housing, information and access to services such as condom use and lubricant, and one-to-one counselling.
- In conclusion, although the countries of the Southern Group are culturally very different, the need for the development of specific services for this group has high priority.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Southern European region, there seems to be a general lack of specific services targeting male sex workers.

Many services have male sex workers as clients without being in the position to meet their needs in matters of male prostitution.

The agencies interviewed did express great interest in the issue of male sex work and a desire for networking at national level.

Based on the reports from the five countries, we are able to sketch the profile of the main group of male sex workers in the Southern European Region. Most of them are young, migrant, coming from a low socio-economic background, identify themselves as heterosexual, live on their own, work on the street without a pimp and sometimes negotiate the use of condoms with the client.

New projects must take into account the specific needs of male sex workers. Important factors seem to be their legal status in the country in the case of immigrants, the acceptance of their sexual orientation, the development of a professional consciousness, development of negotiation skills, improvement of living and working conditions, promotion of HIV/STI prevention methods, information and access to health and social services, drug services.

The assessment does not aim to replace any survey. Based on the experience of the participating projects and on background information, we have tried to illustrate the position of male sex workers in the Southern European Region. Therefore much information (such as escort work, working through Internet, “high level” prostitution, etc.) could not be collected.

QUESTIONNAIRE SEND TO AGENCIES, OFFERING SERVICES TO MALE SEX WORKERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of the organisation

Type of the organisation governmental o non-governmental o

Address

City

Telephone

Fax

E-mail

Main objectives of your organisation

Target group for your services

Services that you offer

Professional staff involved in the service (specify the number)

	Structured	Volunteers
Physicians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychologists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paramedical staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male Sex Workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SPECIAL INFORMATION

Do you offer special services to male sex workers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, please specify

If No

Do you know whether some of your clients are male sex workers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

How do you know?

How many male sex workers request your service each month? Average per month

What are their special needs?

Are any of them foreigners?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes

How many (% approximately)

What are the most common nationalities?

Are any of them illegal?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes

How many (% approximately)

What are their special needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the service requested given anonymously?

Yes ☐ No ☐

OTHER INFORMATION

Do you work with/ refer to other organisations at local level?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please specify

Do you know other organisations which work with male sex workers?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please refer

Are you interested in participating in a national network for male prostitution?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes. What do you expect from it?

Thank you for your cooperation

GUIDELINES FOR GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT MALE SEX WORKERS

MALE SEX WORKERS

- Socio-demographic characteristics
- Age
 - Under 15
 - 15-18
 - 18-24
 - 24-30
 - 30 and older
- Number of migrants: legal situation; nationality
- Urban/rural
- Sexual orientation
 - Homosexual
 - Heterosexual
 - Bisexual
- Knowledge regarding the country's languages; other languages spoken
- Marital status
 - Single
 - Live-in relationship
 - Married
 - Others,

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

- Main economic activity
 - Employed
 - Unemployed
 - Student
 - Others
- Living conditions
 - Living on their own
 - Family
 - Customer
 - Homeless
 - Others
- Socio-economic background (class, family, education, perspective...)

SOCIAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES

- Is information about services accessible for MSW?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
- Are the services accessed?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes
 explanation (which kind of services, level of access)

PROFESSIONAL AND PRIVATE SEXUAL PRACTICE

- Use of condom
- Anal intercourse (active)
- Anal intercourse (passive)
- S/M Sex with men
- Sex with women

CONDITIONS OF THE LOCAL PROSTITUTION SCENE

- Main places for selling sex:
 - Street, CS
 - Brothel, clubs
 - Bars
 - Apartment
 - Escorts
 - Cruising areas
 - Saunas
 - Advertising
 - Internet
 - Others
- Working conditions
 - Local regulations and police regarding MSW
 - Police repression
 - Group behaviour – consciousness
 - Violence, pimps, protection money, trafficking, racket, child prostitution

DRUG USE PATTERNS

What role do drugs play in the life of male sex workers?

- In general
- In contacts with customers

What drugs are used and how often (table)?
Are the drugs used intravenously?

MOBILITY PATTERNS

- How long do migrants approximately stay in your country?
- What role does your country play regarding mobility within Europe (transit country)?
- Mobility within the country?

MAIN AREAS OF NEEDS

- Legalization of migrants
- Housing
- Schooling
- Employment advice
- Counselling
- Health services
- Drug assistance
- Legal advice
- Drug services
- Empowerment and lobbying
- Access to condoms and lubricant (comparison of prices)
- Others

III. Methods and services

Development and implementation of a Drop-In for sex workers in Rome

★ DEBORAH DI CAVE ★ PARSEC, ROME

In October 2001 the 'Street-work and Counselling Project for Prostitutes' - financed by the City of Rome, combined 5 different counselling centres from different parts of the town into one single Drop-In. Five street-work units for prostitutes are managed by five non-profit organisations, each working in a different district of the town. The tasks of these units can be described as: harm reduction, information and the facilitation of access to legal and health services.

Until October 2001 each of these units referred to a specific territorial counselling centre – open only a few hours during the week. The task of the centres was to assess the needs of the people who were contacted in the street, give them access to social and health services, and prepare steps for them to quit forced prostitution.

A deeper look at the needs of people who are forced into prostitution in Rome revealed some common characteristics compared with the national phenomena concerning hours and needs, which made it necessary to design a radical change of intervention.

At the moment the Drop-In is open for many hours on 5 days a week. It is located in a central zone of the city, close to the Central Station, which is also a meeting-point for some of the (im)migrant groups in Rome.

The unification of the different teams made it possible to create a professionally richer team. The team is now able to give a wider response to people who come to the Centre and guarantees counselling at any time from social assistants, legal counsellors and cultural mediators from the main ethnic groups.

The fact that the centre is open during many hours of the day and offers multidisciplinary team-work also makes it possible to empower the work of the back-office and to carry out serious networking, not only between institutional services but also between services which are not directly connected to the target groups at a local or national level.

The Drop-In works in an extremely flexible way and is able to respond to requests at a low-threshold and harm-reduction level (health information,

distribution of condoms etc.). At the same time the service responds to more complex problems like giving access to health or legal services and can often stop the condition of forced prostitution.

The flexibility of the service and the multidisciplinary and multi-ethnic team makes it possible to respond on different levels to people (women, men, transsexuals) who prostitute themselves in Rome. In fact the Drop-In provides opportunities to develop a more direct relationship with people who had been contacted by the various Street-Units before, or who had been sent by other social or legal services (as well as by the Police forces). The counselling process is very individualised and is able to give qualified and specialised advice.

The extreme flexibility is actually the strong point of the unified Drop-In and enables the centre to respond adequately to the very different phenomena of prostitution. A result of the new working context was a better reciprocal knowledge of each member of the teams, which also improved knowledge about different approaches of intervention.

The weak point of the project is the inherent risk of tackling many different - possibly too many - problematic situations in only one facility. This might endanger the security and efficiency of the intervention. For instance: a sexually exploited woman who wishes to get out of her situation as a prostitute may meet another woman still working on the street, who could then provide information about her to those who forced her into prostitution.

There is a very great need in the project for a common training for the operators of the Drop-In, in order to homogenise knowledge and methodologies and to underline the specific approaches of each sector of intervention.

Support and assistance to male sex workers – the example of the BASIS project (Hamburg)

★ GERHARD SCHLAGHECK ★ BASIS PROJEKT, HAMBURG

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

The BASIS project was initiated in 1986 under the aegis of the City of Hamburg, with the objective of preventing AIDS among male prostitutes and their

clients. Whether the concern was for the male sex workers as clients of the project, or whether the focus of concern was their customers, who were also fathers of families to whom they could be transmitting a dangerous and incurable infection, is an open question. What is important is that in this group of male prostitutes, there are also many socially disadvantaged persons with a multitude of social problems, who at the same time operate in a field that is the subject of stigma at various levels (prostitution and homosexuality), and who are therefore in need of a help programme specifically designed for their needs. The project started out as an agency that provided counselling and drop-ins and outreach work in the male sex worker zone. In 1990 and 1992, due to the great demand for night shelters, the project facilities were extended in the form of two night shelters for male sex workers. The three work areas in the BASIS project – Outreach Work, Drop-ins, and Night Shelters – are expanding in scope and are closely integrated with each other. In the meantime, nine female social workers have joined the project.

TARGET GROUP

The clientele of the BASIS project is a very heterogeneous group, the main common denominator being they earn money through sexual services. In addition there are various groups that are differentiated through the following characteristics, in which connection it should be kept in mind that there is also some overlapping:

- Nationality (37% foreign male sex workers in 2000)
- Drug-use
- Sexual orientation
- Age (around 15 – 40 years, on average around 20 years)
- Income or social status

The problems which characterise the life-situation of male sex workers are also multi-faceted:

- Homelessness
- Lack of money
- Drug-use
- Illegality
- Other conflicts with the law
- Illness
- Psychological problems
- Relationship problems

It should be stated that there is also a large group of sex workers who live and work without any major problems. The BASIS project however is essentially concerned with people who face a number of problems on a daily basis. The help offered, as described in the following pages, reflects this.

OUTREACH WORK

Sex work in Hamburg is done in several places, mainly at the main railway station area and from time

to time in more than 10 pubs, bars and hotels. In addition, business is also done in homosexual porn cinemas, apartments and sometimes in parks as well. There is a wide gulf between callboys who earn quite well and drug-abusing prostitutes who do not earn very well. Callboys use apartments, two somewhat upmarket bars or hotels, and in view of the absence of clientele in the early hours of the evening, local homosexual porn cinemas as well. Drug-using prostitutes and poverty-driven prostitutes are mainly centred around the main railway stations and in the less upmarket pubs near the main railway station and therefore in the main drug-using district of Hamburg.

In order to reach the clientele, it is necessary to be physically present in the work area itself. Four of the female social workers of the BASIS project cover the Outreach Work area. They visit the work area twice a week in the evening and at night. In addition, they also visit the main railway station at least twice. After facing initial mistrust from the managers, barkeepers and johns and male sex workers, they have recently become an accepted and permanent fixture in the pub scene. Access tokens to the zone consist of condoms and lubricants that are then offered to male sex workers and johns free of charge. Furthermore, in most bars, it is also possible to put out information and clarification material.

The regular presence of BASIS workers in the zone results in a high level of familiarity. Many know that the offerings put out by the BASIS project extend well beyond the distribution of condoms, lubricants and brochures, and use the facilities. It is also quite normal to conduct a counselling session at a bar – whether on the subject of HIV and AIDS or even about daily problems. Furthermore, presence in the zone itself is the most important way of making contact with new BASIS clients and to provide information about the facilities offered. In this connection, managers, barkeepers and johns play a far from insignificant role. In view of the high level of acceptance in the zone, they often pass on clients to the Outreach Worker.

Furthermore bars are also the place where contacts with johns are made, who, as mentioned above, also form part of the target group of the BASIS project. On the basis of the position that all the concerned parties should be informed about the risks, even johns are a target for AIDS-preventive work. In addition, they also have problems, for example with relationships, which they rarely like to discuss outside the zone, in order to avoid acknowledgement of their john status.

It is worth mentioning that the high acceptance of the work of the BASIS project in the zone has led to regular financial contributions and material help

from managers, barkeepers and johns for supporting practical work. These come in the form of both individual donations as well as collections in the donation boxes that have been installed in almost every bar, and are in the form of case as well as in kind (for example clothes, hygiene articles, etc.) on which the BASIS project is dependent.

Some of the above-mentioned prostitution locations are either not visited by Outreach Workers, or only seldom. The regular presence of female social workers at porn cinemas, for example, has adverse effects in view of conventional connotations. A placard developed by the AKSD (Network German-Speaking male sex workers projects) has been hung there and in bars, listing the facilities offered by the project. Many of the male sex workers working there however also work in the bars in which they meet Outreach Workers. This also applies to a small group of the drug-abusing male sex workers in the park. In addition, there is another AIDS-preventive institution active there. Callboys who work in apartments can be reached if they also work in bars. They can all be reached through a magazine distributed once a month in the prostitution zone among others, in which the BASIS project also advertises.

DROP-IN

The Drop-in of the BASIS project is located near the main railway station and most of the bars in the male sex workers zone. It is open for a total of 21 hours over 5 days of the week. All the female social workers assemble there, including the Outreach Workers and the female staff from the night shelters. Between 25 and 30 clients visit the drop-in during the course of the day. The Drop-in offers a protected area for male sex workers in which they can leave behind the pressure of being solicited and can enjoy non-discriminative treatment as human beings. The drop-in has a low threshold regime, meaning that the only condition for access is that one should be a sex worker. Furthermore the entire range of facilities offered is anonymous and free of charge and it goes without saying that all the female workers are bound by law to maintain confidentiality. The following paragraphs describe the facilities offered at the drop-ins, with an orientation toward the needs of the male sex workers.

BASIC CARE

The situation of many male sex workers is characterised by the fact that they lack the necessary means to earn their living. Homelessness and drug consumption reinforce this situation, and as a result the need in this area is quite large.

One meal is served each day in the Drop-in. In particular, the large number of crack addicts makes this facility necessary since the visit to the BASIS

project is often the only the time in the day in which they can get something to eat. For this reason it is also important that the meals are offered at the commencement of the opening hours.

The BASIS project receives something from the 'HamburgerTafel' almost every day; this is an institution that passes on food from supermarkets, among other things, to social work institutions. This makes it easier to provide food to clients on a regular basis. It also makes it possible to regularly provide food to clients who in most cases lack the financial means to buy food, for travelling or for taking home.

PERSONAL HYGIENE AND CLOTHING

Since many male sex workers do not have a fixed place of residence and often suffer from skin diseases as a result, it is necessary to offer them personal hygiene facilities. In the drop-in, there is a shower room that is regularly used by many of them. At the same time there is also the possibility of obtaining clean clothing from a store that receives supplies, particularly underwear and socks, through many donations. Furthermore there is a washing machine and a dryer for doing a little washing. The machines are in operation almost constantly throughout the day. A limited hair-cutting service is also provided.

RELAXATION

On the principle that the drop-in is a protected zone for male sex workers, it may be used as a place of relaxation away from daily life. Daily life in this sense refers both to sex work as well as, increasingly, the consumption and procurement of drugs, particularly crack. The drop-in offers a meeting point where games can be played. The game facilities available include a kicker, a dartboard, a PC (recently with an Internet connection) and various community games that are also intensively used. A trainee also dedicates some spare time outside the drop-in and goes out with clients to the cinema, the museum, pedal boat rides, etc. and generally engages them in activities that many would be unable to afford or would have little motivation to undertake under normal circumstances.

The BASIS project is trying to deal with the fallout of the sharp increase in crack consumption and the associated rootlessness by setting up sleeping accommodation during the daytime. After having a meal immediately after the centre opens, many male sex workers, some of whom have been travelling for several nights, merely want to sleep. The four sleeping accommodations that have recently been opened, and which may be used during the opening times, are often not enough, so that the two sofas are also used.

For some time now donations have enabled the

BASIS project to rent a holiday home near Hamburg for a few months each year. This is regularly used for short trips with up to four male sex workers. For the clients, a stay in the home offers a wonderful opportunity to recuperate even if the stay is limited to a few days.

STD AND AIDS PREVENTION AND MEDICAL CARE

Basic care also includes making available a range of information materials relating to STD and AIDS prevention, drug use and other subjects. Furthermore, condoms and lubricants are always kept available as handouts.

Unfortunately there are no facilities for medical care in the drop-in itself. Here use must be made of the STD clinics, addiction counselling centres that offer medical care, emergency ambulances of hospitals or, if anyone has medical insurance, family doctors. In some cases it is necessary and also possible to provide support to clients in the form of medicines at the time of in-take, or even through the storage of medicines and ointments that can be offered during working hours.

SOCIAL CARE

Apart from basic care, social care is the second largest area in the drop-in centre. The above-mentioned multifarious problems of the male sex workers make it necessary to offer visits and introductions to other institutions, in addition to counselling or support. The corresponding qualifications of the female workers provide an important precondition for the proper functioning of this facility. Furthermore the principles of low threshold and acceptance apply here as well. This means that action should be taken when the client himself formulates his wishes and is himself interested in initiating mechanisms for dealing with the problem. Excessive pressure would work counter to this. The irregular lifestyle of the many drug consumers in particular makes deadline-based work extremely difficult. A high level of flexibility is therefore necessary.

COUNSELLING

There are two counselling offices available in the Drop-in in a physically isolated area that guarantees a quiet counselling environment. The counselling sessions with the male sex workers deal with the many problems of the heterogeneous target group. On the one hand these may take the form of a long-term process with regular conversations and further support, such as contacts with the authorities over the telephone and writing of letters. On the other hand single counselling sessions often deal with questions such as the health risks of sexual contact. The permanent availability of the counselling service has the effect that many male sex workers also use it whenever they required.

Since the support facilities offered by the BASIS project are limited, it is often necessary to send clients to other counselling centres, for example addiction counselling centres, STD clinics, AIDS support centres, or education/training institutions. There are many good contacts and cooperative arrangements available to clients.

SUPPORT

Many of the clients of the BASIS project experience a high degree of uncertainty in their contacts with other institutions in the social support system, due to bad experiences or due to lack of experience, particularly regarding governmental institutions or the court system. Another area that generates a high level of uncertainty and fear is dental care. Due to many years of neglect, many of the clients, particularly drug users, face severe difficulties and therefore develop correspondingly high levels of anxiety. For this reason they are offered the chance of obtaining support through female personnel at regular intervals. On the one hand, emotional support is important. On the other hand, contact with other institutions, particularly the authorities for professional counselling, is often easier and more successful.

VISITS

The fact that some clients repeatedly come into conflict with the law means that they are also frequently arrested. The BASIS project is often the only functionally effective contact that they have with the outside world. In addition, many of them also want to take advantage of counselling and support, for example in connection with drug therapy planning after they are released following their arrest. As a result visits and counselling in court-designated institutions are also often necessary. In this connection an identity card makes such contacts easy.

The same applies to stays in hospitals. Apart from emotional counselling, material care is also necessary, since many male sex workers do not have any regular, secure contacts that could fulfil these needs.

NIGHT SHELTERS

One of the main problems of the male sex workers is homelessness. This mainly applies to drug users and migrants who are generally also the largest group amongst the clients of the BASIS project. Since it is often difficult to obtain accommodation in other accommodation facilities, the night shelters in two conventionally furnished accommodations (living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom) each offer five emergency sleeping places for male sex workers. There are two female social workers in each accommodation who also spend part of their working time at the drop-in. For this reason, it is quite easy to

set up contact there. The accommodations are manned from Monday to Friday between 10.00 hours and 18.00 hours so that clients may access the accommodation with their own key (for which they have to put down a security deposit of € 15) en route free of any obligations in the evenings and the nights and at the weekend, which is their chief working time. During this time, there is also an emergency call service that contacts one of the female personnel. There are three different stages of accommodation for differing levels of requirement.

Short stays

Many male sex workers use the night shelters for relaxation away from the zone. The knowledge that they have a fixed place where they can sleep, along with the opportunity to have a regular breakfast, is a comforting thought. It temporarily removes the pressure of sleeping outdoors with different johns is often linked with undesired sexual obligations, and provides an opportunity for recuperation. This very low-threshold facility is offered for one month. The only obligation during this period is that the house rules are followed. In addition, there is also the possibility of more far-reaching social-work-related help from the female personnel at the night shelters.

Longer stays

After one month in the night shelters, it is also possible to stay there for another three months. However this facility is offered with more stringent requirements. In other words, the client must improve his life situation and start working on his problems. For this, there is a system of regular weekly counselling sessions and task programmes that are checked later on. The main aim is generally to find a way of life for the client after he leaves the night shelter, in order to avoid subsequent homelessness. However all the other problems may also be included in this phase.

NOP (Emergency bed)

The large number of crack users who are homeless and who require all the money that they somehow manage to procure for their own drug habit, has rendered this facility necessary. For male sex workers whose drug consumption often requires them to travel all day long without sleep, it is possible to obtain an emergency bed in a night shelter for one to two nights in order sleep as long as they want. Since experience shows that such clients generally have no money, they may stay the night without a security deposit as well. Due to the time limit laid down, a longer stay to which the above-mentioned requirements shall be linked may be necessary.

CONCLUSION

The facilities of the BASIS project described above represent the current situation. In the last 16 years,

they have been constantly monitored, extended and modified. The situation of the current clientele and their needs played a significant role in this regard. However, we gratefully acknowledge the efforts of those who have made donations, in the present instance mainly the City of Hamburg.

The social work with male sex workers in the BASIS project has been successful. The facilities offered in accordance with the requirements have been accepted by the clientele. However the situation in Hamburg will be changing and a long-term review will also change the BASIS project. These experiences may provide encouragement to other cities and countries.

Migrant male sex workers in Amsterdam

★ KATRIN SCHIFFER ★ AMOC/DHV, AMSTERDAM

AMOC/DHV works for migrant (European) drug users and male sex workers in Amsterdam. Our practical work with male sex workers started more than 15 years ago with a group of young drug users, often coming from Germany. They generally sold sex at two spots: the Main Hall of the Central Station and various hustler bars in the centre of Amsterdam. It was felt that this group needed specific attention, as they felt ashamed and marginalized within the scene of drug users. A former colleague at AMOC initiated activities in this field and started to do outreach work in this specific area. He also visited the different men-to-men brothels and private clubs and started to organise HIV and STI prevention activities. 19

At the beginning of 1990, a new development became visible: a large number of young men, mainly from countries like Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic, travelled to Amsterdam to sell sex to men. This was something new and the sex market, the bars, brothels and punters were eager to welcome this new group of young men.

AMOC tried to contact this group by offering basic services, counselling, legal advice, information, condoms & lubricants, but we soon realized that our common methods were inappropriate. This new group had a specific background, which required a different approach. We had to realise that:

- Most of the boys and young men had already travelled through other counties (e.g. Germany, Switzerland...), so they already acquired experience as male sex workers. This also meant that the group changed quickly, i.e. old 'boys' left the country and travelled on and new ones came

to stay for a few weeks, months or years.

- Most of these young men clearly identify themselves as straight and show a 'typical macho-behaviour'.
- Homosexuality is strongly stigmatised in most of the Central and Eastern European countries, which leads to a negative attitude and behaviour towards the gay scene in general and gay men in particular.
- The double taboo on prostitution on the one hand and homosexuality on the other, leads to shame and frustration, which makes it hard for most of the young men to talk openly about their experiences as a sex worker and about STIs and HIV.
- Most of the young men do not speak other languages, which makes it hard for them to communicate (e.g. with service providers, customers...).
- The illegal status of these young men leads to further isolation, marginalisation and mistrust towards 'outsiders' (anyone who is not part of the prostitution scene).
- The cultural background and the fact that most of these young men come from post-communist countries with a repressive policy increase the sense of mistrust towards service providers. Most of the young men depend on their own network and rely on friends, colleagues and customers.

AMOC became aware that the common strategies were insufficient and in 1994 the 'Eastern Europe Project' was started with financial support from the National Aids Fund. The initial project was based on strong collaboration with organisations in Romania and the Czech Republic. The following methods were used to approach the target group:

- 1 colleague from Romania (2 times for 6 months) and 1 colleague from the Czech Republic (for 3 months) were invited to work for 6, respectively 3 months in Amsterdam. Another Romanian prevention worker, living in the Netherlands, was hired. These three workers started to map out the local prostitution scene, by contacting boys from the different countries.
- Outreach work was carried out regularly. The outreach and prevention workers visited the brothels, private clubs, hustler bars, the Central Station and other spots, where MSW pick up their customers.
- A drop-in was opened for two evenings a week. The boys who were contacted on the street were referred to the drop-in, where they could talk to a social worker and receive safe sex information.
- HIV and STI Prevention were organised in group sessions at least once a month. In addition safe sex information was given during individual contacts with one of the social and prevention workers.

This new approach seemed to work. In the first year of the project AMOC contacted 182 young Romanian men selling sex to men. The evaluation of the project was generally positive, apart from a few comments which influenced the implementation of the follow-up activity in the next year.²⁰

EXCHANGE WORKERS/ REGULAR WORKERS

One of the main methods used was the engagement of workers from the home country of the boys (Romania and the Czech Republic). However it soon became obvious that there were no boys from the Czech Republic. Therefore, the exchange worker from the Czech Republic returned home after a period of 3 months.

Although there was a large number of Romanian male sex workers, it seemed to work much better to have a regular Romanian worker who already lived in the Netherlands. We noticed that the exchange workers were much more affected by the values and norms of their home country than the target group itself, which had already spent years in the West and had become accustomed to the different Western lifestyle. This seemed to have a negative impact on the relationship between the prevention worker and the male sex worker, especially if sensitive issues as homosexuality, prostitution and drug use were discussed.

AMOC needed to invest much more time in educating the exchange workers than originally thought. Although this method was a useful tool for training prevention workers in Eastern Europe, it did not work sufficiently for the main aim of the project, i.e. reaching and supporting the target group. We therefore changed our method in the follow-up project, by engaging one regular Romanian worker already living in the Netherlands. He could use his cultural background and language on the one hand and his experience as an integrated (knowing the ins and outs of the Dutch system) Romanian migrant in the Netherlands on the other hand.

DIFFERENT NEEDS

The project settled down properly after the first project year and AMOC became more and more accepted among the target group. This made it easier to establish a trusting relationship with newcomers, who were often introduced by other boys. Others had already heard about AMOC and its services during stays in other countries.

We worked with a wide range of boys, all of whom had a specific background and needs. Those who had been in Amsterdam for a longer period appeared to have a stronger need for individual contacts with their social worker, whilst the newcomers were mainly interested in information regarding HIV and STI prevention.

HIV AND STI

Most of the boys did not have sufficient knowledge and information regarding HIV and STI. In the first 12 months of the project, AMOC referred 61 MSWs to the STI Policlinic. Unfortunately, we could only receive data relating to 36 visits. However, these results showed that more than 50% of the boys (19 boys) were infected with an STI (Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis,)

For this reason, each month, AMOC organised STI and HIV information activities during the evening drop-in. After the first year these events were organised spontaneously, especially for the group of newcomers, in order to avoid an overkill of information among the group of 'older' boys.

The HIV/STI prevention sessions were focused on influencing unsafe sex behaviour by distributing 'hard' information on the one hand (different STIs, ways of transmission, treatment...) and training negotiation skills on the other hand.

The distribution of hard information is important, as we have to deal with lots of false assumptions about ways of transmission and possible treatments, which are mainly based on anecdotes, myths and homophobic ideas. The second part of the HIV and STI training is focused on the specific interaction between MSW and customer /sexual partner. Different questions need to be highlighted, e.g. why and in which situation is it hard to use a condom or how can we stimulate our customer/sexual partner to use a condom? This part in particular is strongly interactive and based on the individual experience of the participating MSWs.

DRUGS

The use of drugs became more and more important. We realised that quite a few of the boys were using drugs like cocaine, XTC, Speed and Cannabis. As most of them had never used these substances before in their own country, its effects could be rather strong. We were often confronted with confused and anxious young men, who were not able to deal with the effects of the drug.

It also became more and more popular among customers to use drugs like cocaine together with the MSW. The boys from Eastern Europe are known for their passive role and it was popular way of broadening their horizons and removing taboos and shame, and also involved a higher risk of unsafe sex. It became necessary to watch this new development and we started to organise regular information sessions about drug use, the substances, their effects and ways to prevent unsafe behaviour.

SENSITISING AND TRAINING OTHER COLLEAGUES

One of the main tasks of the cultural mediator was to inform and sensitise other service providers about

the specific background and needs of the target group.

We referred many of our clients to the STI Policlinic for regular check-ups. Due to the different culture, the strong stigma on homosexuality and prostitution and language problems, communication between the staff of the policlinic and the boys became difficult or was misinterpreted. This miscommunication resulted in insufficient service provision, e.g. most of the boys denied having anal sex, because they were ashamed and as a consequence no anal smear test was taken.

Various meetings were organised, during which our cultural mediator provided background information about the target group, including strategies for proper communication. Our colleagues at the policlinic explained their way of working and together a new strategy was developed, making it easier to offer appropriate services to the target group. We also started to accompany new boys to policlinic, which made it easier to remove their fears. An added bonus was that it was easier to assist during language problems or cultural barriers, thus avoiding misunderstandings.

REPATRIATION

The group of young men who stayed in Western Europe for a longer period was growing. Some of them managed to settle down, found a partner, became legalised, started to study or to work. Others could not get residence permits, but found ways to survive by having regular customers or moonlighting.

Another group felt more and more isolated and lonely. They started to miss their home country and their family and friends. They also became tired of hiding and living underground. They were earning less money than before, were less popular with customers and the possibility of a satisfactory future in the Netherlands became more and more elusive.

It was therefore a welcome opportunity when we were able to start our cooperation with the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), which offered support and possibilities for voluntary repatriation. Since then we have been able to refer our clients to the IOM, where they receive a ticket to Romania and a small amount of money.

THE PRACTICAL WORK TODAY

Since the start of the Eastern European Project in 1994, we have been able to develop our activities in the field of male sex work. As a result of the changes in the sex industry in recent years we have been confronted with increasing migration and mobility. Many boys and young men used our services, some of them are still living in Amsterdam, others returned to their home country or visit Amsterdam at regular intervals.

Today, our work with male sex workers from Eastern European is structurally financed by the City of Amsterdam. Our activities are seen as an important contribution in this field. The main target group is currently Romanian and Polish boys, but we know that this can soon change. Sometimes we see a sudden influx of Czech or Hungarian boys, who disappear again after a while.

Our drop-in has become very popular among male sex workers and is frequented by approximately 20 young men every evening (Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m.). Our basic services, like food, drinks and shower are greatly appreciated, as well as the individual contacts with the social and prevention worker, who provide support in different areas. The drop-in is also used to keep in touch with family and friends in the home country, as we offer the opportunity to have occasional short phone calls.

Again, we have an increasing number of newcomers and we started up our regular HIV and STI group sessions again. Due to the mix of nationalities we need to plan these activities more carefully, taking into account the different language groups.

LESSONS LEARNED

- In recent years we have constantly been confronted with a rapidly changing group, influenced by the following factors:
- Number of MSWs
- Nationalities
- Situation in Amsterdam (homeless, living with customers...)
- Drug use
- Future perspectives
- Police actions

Sometimes we have to deal with drug use and homelessness. We see boys who haven't slept for days, totally exhausted and close to a breakdown. This group is mainly in need of basic services, like food, a shower and night shelter. Others are physically well cared-for, but need psycho-social support or legal advice. In a word, our work embraces many different kinds of support. We need to be flexible and be able to focus on the different needs of the different groups. Working schedules, services and methods are subject to the changes in the field.

Regarding HIV and STI prevention, we must be aware of the fact that this might not be the first priority for our target group. This applies especially for those who live in bad conditions, whose main priority is survival.

We also recognise the importance of cooperation at local level. Different organisations can support each other and supplement each other's services. Experiences should be exchanged regularly. It can

also be useful to visit other drop-ins or to do outreach work together with colleagues from other organisations or projects.

Last but not least, I would like to add that the development and implementation of new methods is an essential part of the work, even if some of these new strategies turn out to be useless. In short: "Nothing ventured, nothing gained!"

Ten golden rules for social assistance and healthcare for male sex workers

★ PJER VRIENS ★ GG&GD AMSTERDAM &
★ THOMAS DEMYTHENAERE ★ SENSOA, BRUSSELS

These ten golden rules are based on the experience of Belgian and Dutch social workers and health promotion workers. These rules could also be called guidelines, because we would recommend you to use them for a serious discussion about health programmes for MSW21, with either your colleagues, your supervisors or even with local authorities or the government. Some people will probably disagree on certain items. The scientific basis of these rules is fairly limited, partly due to the lack of good research, but mainly because of our inclination towards (and love for) outreach work. We look forward to hearing about your exciting discussions and hope to receive many responses.

DIFFERENT HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Male sex workers can be considered as a high-risk group for STD and HIV infection. This is obvious, when we study available epidemiological data. Unfortunately there are very few of these, but the ones we have indicate a much higher than average prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STD's22, probably varying from one country to another and depending on subgroups (MSW who work on the street, escort boys etc...).

Prevention of STDs and HIV and health promotion in general is not easy. Simple prevention strategies that might be successful with average young people do not work here because they fail to take into account the complicated psychological and social backgrounds of the MSW. Some of them live following a day to day survival strategy. Their first need is often very basic and practical: money, drugs and a bed. This might partly explain why they are not very open towards information concerning their health. And it explains why for some of the MSW, taking care of their health is not a priority. Psychological factors are more subtle but just as

important. MSW might have been the victim of abuse (sexual or in another way) in their childhood. They often have a very low self-esteem. They do not really believe in themselves and do not see many prospects for the future. They feel powerless in human relations, unable to stand up for themselves. This often makes negotiation about safe sex with clients difficult. HIV is a difficult topic to discuss because in the end they are very afraid of suffering, to die young, to die alone. Raising the issue is sometimes so confrontational that it is hard to talk about it. The subject often creates resistance that is hard to penetrate.

A better approach is probably to offer concrete services, which they perceive as something positive and helpful, for example hepatitis B vaccination, STD screening, HIV testing, free condoms or a medical consultation for urgent problems and advice. Offering counselling alone is not perceived as much help. At a moment when they do not view their life as very successful and they have many problems, it is quite understandable that they are not very open to listening to somebody telling them about the huge health risk they are taking. Offering these services gives you an excellent opportunity for counselling about health and safe sex. This is why we think safe sex counselling should go hand in hand with a more medical range of services and the possibility for care and treatment. One advantage of the Hepatitis B vaccination is also that it gives the MSW "tools" to protect himself. It can increase self-confidence. The knowledge that they are able to tackle this threat to their health can be empowering.

There is a second reason to consider health promotion. If you talk about STDs and HIV without offering possibilities for treatment and care, these diseases might be perceived as an enormous threat. And HIV is often viewed as a death sentence. This makes it very hard to talk about safe sex. Our theory is that if a MSW sees that he can do something about his health and that there is hope even if he is HIV positive, he might be able to believe a bit more in himself. And our hope, of course, is that the prevention work will then start to be effective. It goes without saying that offering these services should be linked with the best possible counselling.

LINK HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social assistance for MSW can be quite broad, ranging from a good talk to help with papers and administration, housing, support in finding a job or starting training, counselling about drug use or legal advice. Unfortunately, different organisations are often responsible for offering health and social assistance.

For two reasons we think it is important to link both services (health and social). First of all, social and psychological problems are often the cause of, or at

least contribute to risk behaviour (like unsafe sex) and poor attention for one's health. Secondly, health is often not the most urgent priority of MSW. Problems relating to legal status, residence permits, housing and debts often come first. It is also very difficult to start a treatment or take care of your health if all these problems are crowding your life. It is interesting to notice how offering a health service, like the hepatitis B vaccination, can be the first step towards further social assistance. It has often been a good way to gain confidence. But it may also work the other way around; a demand for social assistance can create an opportunity to raise health issues.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

Even in countries like Holland and Belgium where sex work is not illegal, other laws, discrimination and stigma force groups of MSW (illegal citizens and addicted MSW) to work in poor conditions like parks, stations or in hustling bars. In both countries, campaigns for law reform are an integral part of most health services dealing with MSW. Health services can approach local authorities directly to lobby for a more favourable environment if local laws and policy affect the work of health promotion.

But law reform alone is unlikely to improve conditions for MSW or their access to health education. Better conditions for MSW can be secured if they are organised in trade unions. For example unions for sex workers can negotiate with the police for improved conditions, such as being allowed to work in a certain area or to be better protected from violence. As service providers we can inform MSW about the union, for example in Holland where a specific union for sex workers already exists. In fact the union should put a lot of effort into contacting MSW themselves. But before MSW are willing to organise themselves in a union, individual empowerment has to be the first priority.

INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

This might be considered the most important rule for service providers working with MSW. Once this rule has been agreed on, all the other rules can be brought up for discussion on a regular basis.

As services working with MSW we should approach our target group with the respect they deserve as professionals with their specific questions and needs. Most MSW require the same advice on sexual health as other people, although issues specific to MSW might include; negotiating with clients, negotiating with management of clubs and bars, assertion training and conflict resolution, self-defence, recognizing STD symptoms and knowing where to get treatment, etc. With these skills they might feel more secure and more willing to identify themselves as a MSW.

But promoting and stimulating individual skills is also important; involving them in activities for health

promotion, giving them their own responsibilities and tasks, paying attention to personal hygiene and personal appearance, etc.

Finally, sexual identity is an important issue for MSW. Health promotion campaigns aimed at “gay men” would not reach MSW who see themselves as heterosexuals.

WHO TAKES RESPONSIBILITY?

“Good agreements make good friends”, as the Dutch saying goes. First of all this concerns your own team. Take time to discuss issues like: ‘What services do you want to offer and promote (STD screening, HIV testing, medical follow-up, only information about health)?’ ‘What is the role or the task of every team member?’ ‘What expectations do you have of each other?’ ‘Who will be responsible for pre-test counselling and post-test counselling? Who will take care of medical follow-up?’

Before you start to promote services like HIV testing or STD screening, make a clear plan for medical follow-up. ‘With which health services will you cooperate?’ ‘How will you assure treatment for illegal sex workers?’ ‘How will you organise individual follow-up treatment?’ ‘Who will provide further counselling and give support if a boy is tested positive?’

Make written conventions with partner organisations (aids clinics, specialized labs, vaccine providers etc). Make sure commitment and mutual expectations are very clear.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY

The question here is whether professionals who are not part of the medical staff can be informed about confidential medical information concerning MSW they know.

This medal has two sides. On the one hand you want the best follow-up and support for the MSW who use your services. On the other hand you want to respect the MSW's right to confidentiality.

In many cases it can make medical follow-up and support much easier if social workers, team psychologists or outreach workers are informed about the health situation of their clients. Nevertheless, it should be the MSW who decides whether medical information can be shared with other team members. It is important to take time before the test or before the visit to the doctor to discuss this. It is important for the MSW to reflect on who he wants to inform or have informed about the result of an HIV test, for example.

Our experience is that in general MSW want social workers to be informed so that they can get support from them. A good solution might be, if the patient agrees, for the doctor to call in a member of the non-medical staff (outreach worker, social worker,

psychologist) to start further follow-up.

It is also important to be very clear about the shared duty of professional confidentiality. This can be necessary to keep things workable and clear. For example it is not a good situation if only one social worker knows the HIV status of a boy and his colleague is not informed. If informing one social worker means that the whole team might (if useful) be informed, the patient should be notified in advance.

In any case it is extremely important that no other MSW, acquaintances of your patient or other people who are not a member of the team obtain confidential medical information.

FIND SOLUTIONS FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

In our countries we meet a variety of boys from various cultures working as MSW. As service providers we try to identify their different needs, caused by their cultural background. We should try to find specific health promotion strategies for different cultural groups. Different MSW have different attitudes towards their work and different feelings about speaking about it. Some clinics employ cultural mediators, black men, gay men or sex workers working as peers. Appropriate staff training is vital.

FREE AND GOOD SERVICES.

As service providers offering health care to MSW, our main goal is keeping MSW healthy and informed. Services like STD control, TBC control, hepatitis B vaccination, safe sex information and condom distribution are considered very important. Experience has taught us that use of our services increases if they are offered free. Even more efforts like offering free services on the spot gave a much better result, not only for the most vulnerable groups. So from a pragmatic point of view, we should offer free services to reach a maximum level of health care; we should also offer services of good quality to inspire confidence.

Besides, free condom distribution and other free services can be used as an entry point for outreach workers. They can be used as an occasion to talk about safe sex and STD but also about negotiating with customers and empowerment. Distributing packages with condoms and lubricant can be combined with health information and handing out addresses.

A GOOD TEAM NEEDS GOOD TRAINING

This may seem obvious of course, but it is often a cause of many problems. Important criteria when selecting professional or volunteer team members are patience, an open mind and a non-judgemental

attitude. People also have to be able to accept their own limitations. In a more medical context it is sometimes very hard to accept that your patient does not want to be helped or start a treatment, for instance.

Often social workers are very well trained to listen and help solve psychosocial problems, but lack training for medical health matters. Not only nurses or doctors should be well informed about STDs and HIV/AIDS. We think all team members (outreach workers, social workers etc.) should have detailed knowledge about STDs and HIV/AIDS. Nurses and doctors should also be trained in social assistance skills.

OUTREACH IS THE WAY TO GO.

Commercial sex takes place in a mix of formal and informal settings. Each setting requires a different approach from healthcare workers and welfare workers. Don't wait in your office until MSW knows where to find you. Visit and contact MSW on the spot as an outreach worker.

With many thanks to the colleagues of Adzon in Brussels, especially Johan and Myriam.

Internet survey in Central and Eastern Europe

★ PJER VRIENS, GG&GD AMSTERDAM &
★ BART VANDENBROUCKE ★ ADZON, BRUSSELS

FRAMEWORK

Service providers have observed an increasing number of young men selling sex to men through the Internet. This issue has been discussed several times within the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP). However, no data and information has been available regarding this new phenomenon and we did not know how to approach MSW on the Internet. Therefore, the members of the Central and Eastern European group of the ENMP agreed to carry out a survey in order to gain some insight into this new development.

The survey started at the beginning of October 2001. Each country prepared a report and this present paper summarises the outcomes and conclusions of the survey, carried out in the different countries of the region.

AIMS

The survey aimed to gather information about men selling sex to men on the Internet. We wanted to chart where and how MSWs actually contact their customers, how they could be approached by service providers and if they would be interested in interventions through the Internet.

GENERAL METHODS

The survey started at the beginning of October 2001 and was implemented in 6 different countries within Europe (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Switzerland and the Netherlands). The first months were used for orientation and observation on the web, carried out by one "outreach worker on the net" in each country. Chat rooms, dating boards, newsgroups and gay websites were visited, in order to map out the commercial male sex market on the Internet. In January 2002 we started to approach MSW actively. A short questionnaire was developed, so that we could receive comparable information from MSWs themselves in all countries. We agreed beforehand that each country should invest approximately 75 hours.

Survey report from Austria

Verein Wiener Sozialprojekte, Wien

Specific methods

Homepages were visited 2 hours a day for 22 days, during working days and weekends. Personal e-mail addresses were requested via chat rooms so that we could send them the questionnaire. Most of the MSWs who were approached were either not interested in the topic or sceptic about the anonymity of the questionnaire.

Dating boards seem to be more popular in Austria. The time-investment is much shorter. Most of the MSWs place an advertisement with a picture and their e-mail address or/and mobile phone number. Twenty-five MSWs were asked to fill in the questionnaire.

Results

Only one MSW from the chat room contacts answered the questionnaire - it was his first day as an MSW on the chat. On the dating boards, only one questionnaire was returned, not even completed.

Final remarks

In general MSWs are quite well organised. The spectrum ranges from own homepages to personal ads on dating boards and chats in chat rooms. There seems to be no demand for support or counselling, possibly because the anonymity of the Internet leads to scepticism. For the distribution of information, the Internet is definitely the medium of the future and should therefore be taken into consideration. (Uwe Hincziza, Verein Wiener Sozialprojekt (VWS), carried out the survey in Austria.)

Survey report from Belgium

N.Z.W. Mozaïk Adzon, Brussels

Specific methods

Belgium is a country with two languages, and the

Belgian Internet scene is generally divided into French and Flemish (Dutch) sites. The time spent on the survey (75 hours over the period of 6 months) was equally divided between the two language groups (French, Flemish and bilingual chat rooms were visited).

The questionnaire was published on a website as a mail-form (www.straathoekwerk.com/adzon). No e-mails needed to be sent and the questionnaire could be completed and returned anonymously.

Announcements were made on 11 gay dating boards, which requested the support of MSWs and referred them to the website. A reference to the website was also put on the chat sites, which were visited weekly, and which resulted in 34 individual contacts).

Despite the fact that most of the visitors on chat sites use nicknames, the outreach worker on the survey was always very clear about the meaning of his presence and his organisation. MSWs were frequently referred to the organisation. Everyone who sent back the completed questionnaire with an e-mail address received a short message to thank them for their participation to the survey. A few weeks later, all MSWs who had indicated that they wished to be informed in the future were contacted and invited to make use of the services of the organisation.

Results

34 MSWs in chat rooms were approached to visit the website with the questionnaire. An announcement was put on 11 gay advertising sites, which proved to be a good strategy, resulting in 36 returned questionnaires.

■ How do you sell sex on the Internet?

19 of the 36 MSW sell sex in chat rooms, 18 through dating boards, 8 through escort services, 4 through their own homepage, and 2 through other ways (one of whom uses the sauna). This means that more than half of the MSWs sell sex through chat rooms and dating boards, which seem to be an effective way to contact clients. Escort services and private homepages seem to be used less frequently, but should not be dismissed! Some MSWs use a combination of strategies on the net.

■ How many customers do you meet in one week?

We can see that most of their clients are contacted through dating boards and chat sites (57 and 40 clients in one week). Quite a number of clients are reached by escort sites (29). We see that private homepages are less successful (9). Some MSWs have other methods, but they gave no details.

■ How long have you been selling sex on the Internet?

Most of the MSWs have been using the Internet for

less than 6 months (11), although there is very little difference with those who have already been using the Internet for more than a year (9).

■ Do you sell sex in other ways?

Most of the MSWs only use the Internet to reach clients (15), although 10 of them also try to work in other ways. Five of them mentioned escort services, advertising in newspapers and magazines and prostitution on streets, squares, saunas, gambling halls and bars.

■ Would you be interested in further information and support through the Internet?

More than half of the respondents showed interest in further information (14), almost all of whom wished to be informed by e-mail (11). Newsgroups and links to other websites were also marked as interesting (6).

■ Contact in the future?

Nearly half of the respondents (15) would like to be contacted in the future and attached their e-mail address. Three of them wrote a short e-mail requesting more detailed information about Adzon and the survey.

Final remarks

Mapping out the relevant websites was difficult, because of the alteration on the World Wide Web. Therefore, frequent updating is inevitable. Due to the positive results of this survey, Adzon is considering continuing its presence on the Internet in a more structured way, focussing on the most relevant chat sites and dating boards.

"The results of the survey showed us that this relatively new way of sex-work can (or should) be a new area for prevention and social work. It is our task now to find out how we can reach the sex-workers and how we can offer our services to them. We must evaluate our services and try to make them attractive also for sex-workers who cannot be reached by a personal man-to-man contact. The methods for social work or prevention on the Internet are new, unknown or non-existent. Support and exchange of information can be very useful for those who are working in this new area of prostitution."

(Bart Vandenbroucke, C.A.W. Mozaïek-ADZON, an organisation in Brussels for young MSWs, carried out the survey for Belgium.)

Survey report from Bulgaria.

National Centre of Public Health, Sofia

Specific methods

Very little is known about how male sex work is organised in Bulgaria. Prostitution has always been a criminal offence, but since the fall of the

totalitarian regime, it has been tolerated to some extent.

In collaboration with various web-providers, the questionnaires were sent to their member lists. Around 65 questionnaires were sent to e-mail addresses found on dating boards and different gay sites. The questionnaire was also published on a homepage (www.anketi.4t.com). In addition, all popular gay organisations were contacted by referring to the questionnaire.

Results

Only one questionnaire was received from a MSW, who also phoned and asked about the purpose of the survey. He was very interested in the aim of the survey and promised to find more MSWs to participate. He thought that the low response to the survey might be explained by the fact that most of the MSWs feared a lack of confidentiality and would not identify themselves as MSW anyway.

Final remarks

There are plenty of MSWs advertising in newspapers but also on the Internet. Recently the Ministry of Interior started a campaign against child pornography on the Internet. This campaign resulted in the official removal of Internet sites offering sexual services and led to the development of an underground scene. This example illustrates how politics can affect the possibilities of service providers to offer their services to MSWs in an appropriate way.

(Michail Okoliyski, National Centre of Public Health, carried out the survey in Bulgaria)

Survey report from the Netherlands.

PPP – Department of the Municipal Health Service, Amsterdam

Specific methods

In the Netherlands the percentage of households with access to the World Wide Web has increased enormously in the last few years and the Internet is very popular especially among gay people. During the survey, we mapped out relevant sites, the number of 'visible' escort boys, the possibility to contact them as an individual (e-mail, telephone) or through an agency and the access to the site.

Finally we found 12 dating boards, 6 important chat-sites, 12 Escort-agency-sites and 3 individual sites. One web-provider offers two entrances for his visitors, one for commercial sex (www.wechat.nl) and one for other non-commercial chat (www.chatboy.nl). The survey was focussed on the commercial site. Most of the MSWs clearly used signs as \$\$, to show potential clients what they were looking for. We

found many Dutch MSWs offering sexual services on dating boards, but also other nationalities (US, Belgian and German), even including Romanian and Moroccan MSWs. Most of the dating boards use mail-forms. Visitors can send e-mails, but e-mail addresses are invisible.

Around 25 questionnaires were sent to different addresses found on dating boards. As in Belgium, the outreach worker was clear about his intentions and his position on the web. He spent a total of 75 hours carrying out the survey.

Results

On the visited chat site, only one MSW showed an interest in the survey. Most MSWs were very suspicious and obviously just looking for a customer. The outreach worker did not insist, because he didn't want to annoy the group. From dating board contacts, only 4 questionnaires were received. All MSWs who answered the questionnaire showed an interest in receiving information from service providers and asked to be kept informed.

Final remarks

Due to the low response, it is hard to draw conclusions from the questionnaires. It was impossible to use questionnaires for escort agencies, because the MSWs cannot be approached individually through these sites. Only a few Dutch boys use their own site on the Internet, or use dating boards to present their URL.

"I would like to experiment with new methods in the future to reach MSWs. I would like to use banners or invite MSWs on chat sites to visit our own website with relevant information and references. ...Lots of MSWs did put their mobile phone number on the Internet. In future it might be possible to use SMS for contacting them; new strategies can be invented for mobile phone. ... It was surprising that quite a number of MSWs who repeatedly put their E-mail address on the Internet used different descriptions."
(Pjer Vriens, outreach worker at GG&GD Amsterdam, the Municipal Health Service, carried out the survey in the Netherlands)

Survey report from Poland.

TADA, Warsaw

Specific methods

The most common gay dating site in Poland is www.gejowo.pl. Existing chat on this web site is very popular – the average number of daily visitors is about 350. It is also possible to develop a profile with a photo, so we were able to find approximately 300 profiles on the web.

There has been an increase in the number of private web sites from MSWs including concrete prices,

personal descriptions and photos with telephone number. Gay dating boards are frequently used by MSWs to offer their services. Despite clear restrictions about not placing commercial ads, those with expressions such as: "...want to meet gentlemen for informal purposes..." or "...wait for concrete meeting proposals..." were used. The average number of informal sexual ads placed on gay dating boards is about 50. "Informal agencies" (Polish name for brothels) could not be found on the Internet. Chat sites were visited daily for 2 hours during a period of 50 days.

Results

The outreach worker had about 150 conversations during the course of the survey, supposing that some of them were selling sex through the Internet. About 80% of the MSWs use the chat room, which has been described by 90% as the most effective way to make new contacts with customers. The other 20% mostly use ads in the gay press. The number of new contacts made through chatting is 1 to 6 times a week. A higher frequency is observed at the end of the week, especially at the weekends.

About 47% of the MSWs use dating boards to contact their customers, with an average of 2 contacts a week. Only 4 MSWs have a private website at their disposal. There is no data available about the number of contacts made through these private web sites.

About 75% of the MSWs have been working on the Internet for less than 6 months, 15% for less than 1 year, while only 3 mentioned that they had been working this way for more than 1 year. Only 30% of the contacted MSWs were interested in receiving information and support by e-mail.

Final remarks

Selling sex through the Internet is quite a new phenomenon in Poland. However, the high response during the survey showed its increasing popularity and it will be interesting to follow the developments in the future.

"I had great difficulty getting and keeping the contacts in the chat room. The chatters were very suspicious and distrustful. However some of them were willing to undertake the contact, but mainly because it broke the monotony, not through real need or advantage."
(Robert Lukasik, TADA Warsaw carried out the survey for Poland.)

Survey report from Switzerland.

MSW Project Bern, Switzerland

Specific methods

Two years ago, the Swiss outreach worker had

already mapped out sites visited by MSWs. Only the most relevant sites were used for this survey. In chat rooms he presented himself as a client: "Older man, generous, is looking for boys up to 30". In this way he obtained some information from MSWs. But as soon as he revealed his identity it was difficult to continue the contact. Most of the MSWs were found on free gay dating boards, despite the fact that commercial ads are not allowed. Some escort sites ask money to place an ad. Chat sites have very strict rules for users. For example, it is not allowed to put a "\$" sign in your profile. Some individual websites were also found.

Results

Only a few MSWs were found on chat sites, although quite a lot of customers were looking for MSWs. About 80 questionnaires were sent, of which 5 were returned: These 5 MSWs had been working on the Internet for more than 1 year, using dating boards, homepage and e-mail. They also work in bars, clubs and place ads in newspapers.

Final remarks

MSWs with their own websites are like high-class professionals in Switzerland. Contacting MSWs on chat sites was time consuming and yielded few results. Because the MSWs who were contacted on the Internet also work in bars and place ads in newspapers, they are not seen as a new target group.

On the other hand, service providers must be aware of new developments regarding MSWs on the World Wide Web. The Internet can be used by service providers to promote themselves.

(Dave Kohler, National Project for MSW from the Aids Hilfe Schweiz, carried out the survey for Switzerland.)

GENERAL OUTCOMES OF THE SURVEY

Where to find MSWs on the Internet?

More than half of the respondents use gay chat rooms and gay dating boards. Escort services and private homepages seem to be used less, but cannot be dismissed!23

Method

The method did develop during the survey. In most participating countries only a handful of questionnaires were returned. Belgium received the most questionnaires back and in this case the outreach worker did use a mail-form. We could try using this method in countries which have not yet been surveyed to try and gain more information from the MSWs themselves. Many of the MSWs put their mobile phone number on the net as well, and in future it might be useful to use SMS messages to contact them. As service providers we have to

develop new methods for reaching MSW on the Internet. We therefore need to experiment with new strategies in the future.

Changing Internet

Most of the countries indicated the rapid development and changing importance of sites on the Internet. Service providers must be creative to deal with this changeability and a presence on the Internet in a structured way is advised²⁴. In that case, a great deal of time will have to be invested. For the distribution of information concerning MSWs, the Internet is definitely the medium of the future and should therefore be taken into consideration.²⁵

Our Offer

To contact MSWs on the web it is necessary to offer information and support. Specific needs of the MSWs need to be mapped out and appropriate services need to be developed in order to meet these needs. A number of MSWs showed an interest in receiving information regarding STIs and practical information, although there was less interest in social assistance and consultation.

Outreach

Some MSWs work on the Internet and in other ways (bars, clubs, streets). Others work exclusively on the World Wide Web²⁶ and can only be approached through the Internet. Different target groups need different approaches. Outreach on the Internet cannot replace outreach work on the streets²⁷.

Cultural differences

In most of the European countries the Internet is already an important communication medium. Access to the Internet is comparatively low in many Eastern European countries. In the Netherlands, for example, the percentage of households with their own access to Internet has increased enormously over the last few years and the Internet has become very popular especially among gay people. In Bulgaria MSWs are worried about confidentiality and do not easily identify themselves as MSW²⁸. Each country needs to develop its own individual method, based on the national realities on the Internet and the cultural differences within the target group.

Different cultures

MSWs from different cultures were found on the World Wide Web, for example in the Netherlands other nationalities (US, Belgian and German), and even Romanian and Moroccan MSWs were present. This also means that service providers need to provide language and cultural specific information through the Internet in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Service providers must develop new strategies to contact and maintain contacts with MSWs. We need to invent new methods for reaching MSWs on the Internet. We need to experiment with new strategies, invest time in following the changes on the Internet and contacting the MSWs themselves. This survey is just the start of a new development for service providers working with MSWs, the start of outreach work on the Internet.

IV. Training

Skills building for health workers in the field of male prostitution – Lessons learned from some European training workshops

★ GEORG BRÖRING ★ NIGZ – EUROPEAN PROJECT AIDS & MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

Interventions specifically designed for male sex workers are comparatively new. While (community-based) organisations in the field of female prostitution already existed before the AIDS crisis (in particular related to prostitutes' rights), these initiatives were developed much later for male sex workers (mainly related to health issues). In some cities in Europe, projects were set up to provide health promotion and AIDS prevention information and social support; in other cities, general health services took male prostitution on their agenda. At the European level, the European Action Plan on AIDS and other communicable diseases provided funds to stimulate interventions aimed at male sex workers. Some funds were aimed at European exchange and skills building (e.g. in the framework of AIDS & Mobility – A&M); others were provided for the development of (local) interventions, like the LOOKS Project in Cologne. Later, funds were made available to support an umbrella project: the European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP).

The development of new initiatives created the need for skills building and exchange. On the one hand, health workers²⁹ in countries with comparatively little experience requested training in the area of male prostitution; on the other hand, some countries had already developed comprehensive knowledge and expertise.

The experiences that are presented below are based on a series of training workshops that were organised by the European Project AIDS & Mobility and the European Network Male Prostitution. Two events were organised in Vienna and Berlin (1997) to make an inventory of relevant issues, methods and

materials in connection with male prostitution. The results of these meetings were compiled in a training manual (Pierpoint & Bröring 1998³⁰). A third training workshop was organised in 2001 in Athens. The workshops were facilitated by Wim Zuillhof, senior advisor with the Schorer Foundation, a support organisation for gays and lesbians in the Netherlands and the author, project co-ordinator of the European Project AIDS & Mobility (based at the Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention – NIGZ).

In the first section, the main areas that need to be addressed in skills building activities with respect to male prostitution, will be summarised.³¹ The second paragraph will present some conclusions that can be drawn from the various training events that were organised. Specific attention will be paid to the diversity within Europe, and to the cultural diversity of the male sex workers.

MAIN AREAS OF SKILLS BUILDING

In general, three main areas can be distinguished in which training workshops can improve the skills of health and/or social workers who work in the field of male prostitution: Knowledge, professional skills and awareness/attitude.

Knowledge

A broad range of knowledge is requested to provide appropriate services for male sex workers – from the individual situation of the sex workers to the health/social service structures and to the wider society. Regarding the individual situation, one may think about the sexual orientation, the (health) risk behaviour, the ethnic background or the motivations of the populations that are addressed. It is also relevant to know the 'scene' – in the gay community and/or drug related? In short, health workers need to know, who exactly they wish to provide services to and what their (health) needs are.

Knowledge about health and social services is important, as it may be necessary to refer to other support services that are more appropriate to meet the needs of the sex workers, like STD clinics, municipal health services, drug services, housing offices etc. In addition, it may be helpful to find allies to achieve (political) support for male sex worker projects.

With respect to the wider society, it is important to know the legal framework – is prostitution legal? –

²⁹ For reasons of simplification, I use the broad term health worker (as most of the participants in the training event were working in the area of health promotion), while this includes also outreach workers or social workers who work in the same field.

³⁰ Georg Bröring & Tracey Pierpoint (eds.): *Male Prostitution in Europe – Training guide for health and social workers who deal with (foreign) male prostitutes*, NIGZ, Woerden (NL), 1998

³¹ For the purpose of this article, a selection of relevant issues had to be made. The author is aware of the fact that male prostitution has many more facets than can be presented in this concise contribution. The author also acknowledges that – in the framework of ENMP – much more has been done than the training workshops that are the basis of this article, and that the article therefore only provides a limited picture.

and the attitudes in the society. Both laws and attitudes influence to a large extent the interventions of health workers.

In this connection, the role of training is not so much the presentation of the information regarding the situation of male sex workers, but rather to provide tools to acquire the knowledge. Exercises may point out methods to make an analysis of the target group, like focus group discussions, small surveys, site visits etc. International exchange can help to learn from other countries, how they succeeded to gain access to populations, how they achieved political support and funding, and how they found partners for the implementation of their projects.

Professional skills

The most important tool for health workers in the field of (male) prostitution is without doubt communication. Can he/she talk easily about sex, preventive behaviour, the 'scene'? Does he/she relate to the communication and is able to speak the same language. Communication training may go beyond the scope of training for health workers who work in the field of male prostitution. But through role plays, one may experience how talking about certain subjects 'feels'. And fellow participants may give feed-back on the way people communicate – paternalistic? Empathic? Supportive? Even though a training workshop provides a somewhat artificial environment, it may help to become aware of the impact one has on others. Other professional skills may be crisis management or political lobbying. Training workshops may give an insight in the participants stronger and weaker sides and how they can contribute their skills to working with male sex workers.

In addition, the use of information and education tools, like AIDS prevention materials, can be addressed in training workshops. Trainees can learn from each other about the existence of these materials, or how they can be developed for their respective target groups.

A very specific aspect of being successful in a project on health of male sex workers is project planning. Often health workers treat this subject as useless, waste of time or 'red tape'. But improving one's skills in project planning can benefit to setting clear objectives and the evaluation of these: are they realistic, can they be met. Sometimes even more important: This can add to clear and convincing project proposals by which finances can be obtained.

Awareness/attitude

Last but certainly not least, the personal level, the awareness and attitudes of health workers with respect to male prostitution are a crucial aspect of training workshops. The insight in the own motivations and purposes of working with male sex

workers are an important precondition to provide support services. Why is someone involved in the work, what is his/her attitude towards (homo)sexuality and prostitution, what does he/she strive to achieve? Training workshops can stimulate self-knowledge and awareness of health workers, thus making their work more transparent and effective.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the experiences of the training workshops in Vienna, Berlin and Athens, some conclusions can be drawn, regarding the programme, the trainees and the methods used.

Programme

As the issue of male prostitution is very complex and multi-faceted – from health aspects to legal and psycho-social aspects – and as the working fields of the health workers may be very diverse, the programme needs to be focused. Not all can be done in a single event, and the trainers should be aware of the possibilities and restrictions of a comparatively short training workshop before planning the event. A good analysis of the needs and the expectations of the trainees is therefore necessary. Questionnaires about the working fields, the experiences and the training needs of the participants is a useful first step to develop the programme. In a later stage, and well before the training workshop, the objectives and the contents of the training needs to be clearly communicated to the participants. A quick evaluation during the training workshop may help to check, whether the programme is consistent with the expectations and the promises that were formulated before the event. Here it will help if the programme allows for some flexibility. For instance, one part of the programme may be left open, so that it can be filled with an exercise according to the needs of the participants. However, in that case, the trainers should have prepared some alternatives, preferably for different levels of the programme (personal level, knowledge, certain skills).

But even with a well-prepared programme, some frustration is almost inevitable. The experience from all training events showed that participants (and trainers) found the time too short: So many issues to discuss – so little time... One possibility to restrict this frustration, is to propose follow-up, either at a smaller scale (in bi- or multi-lateral collaboration) or at a follow-up workshop.

Trainees

Training workshops at the European level bring together health workers with a broad variety of backgrounds and working fields. Some may work in the framework of municipal or governmental services, others may have specific non-governmental male sexwork projects; some work

mainly in the drug scene, others in the gay scene; some may have sufficient financial means to implement their projects, others may have to work with very limited resources; some may have already long-running projects, others may be in the stage of setting up a project; and finally the ethnic background of their target populations may vary as well.

In general, the diversity of the group is an advantage, as the trainees can learn from each other. Participants who face new populations during their work – for instance from a specific ethnic background – may exchange views with other participants who are already more experienced with these groups.

However, it may be necessary to split the group and allow participants from comparable backgrounds – e.g. those who work in the drug field, or those who are in the process of setting up a project – to work together. This can prevent the feeling of the ‘more experienced’, that they are more contributing than receiving and the frustration of the ‘beginners’ that their contributions may be limited. Altogether, it is important to request mutual respect for the diversity of knowledge, expertise and involvement.

Involvement of male sex workers

One aspect that was put on the agenda of all training workshops is how to realise a better involvement of male sex workers in the training workshops. One of the obstacles may be the rather academic approach of the events, and that they were organised from the viewpoint of health workers. It may be an interesting idea to develop a meeting, where the involvement of sex workers is the highest priority, and where all other aspects of the training come on the second place. The experiences of an earlier ENMP meeting with and for male sex workers may be a good starting point for further (pilot) projects in that field.

Intercultural aspects

Another aspect that should be addressed more intensely is the cultural diversity of male sex workers. Even though the cultural background of the populations differ throughout Europe – e.g. more from the Balkan countries in Greece and Italy, more from Central/Eastern Europe in Germany and the Netherlands, more from the Maghreb countries in Spain and France – it may be useful to pay more attention to different cultures – and the different attitudes and practices regarding sexuality and prostitution – at the European level. For instance, a special session at a training workshop can be dedicated to making an ethnographic analysis about relevant populations – and to discuss own perceptions, experiences and prejudices.

Sex worker involvement/ user participation

★ JUSTIN GAFFNEY ★ WORKING MEN'S PROJECT (LONDON)

This section of the ENMP Manual discusses the benefits of engaging with men who sell sex and ensuring they can contribute in meaningful way towards the delivery of quality services, which meet the needs of their population. In order to illustrate the points for consideration within this discussion, examples will be drawn from the practice of the Working Men Project (WMP).

The Working Men Project is a specialist sexual health promotion and HIV prevention service for men who sell sex or work within the commercial male sex industry, attached to the department of sexual medicine at St Mary's NHS Trust Hospital, London, United Kingdom. The service is nurse led, and offers screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), treatment of sexually acquired infections, testing for HIV, screening and vaccination for Hepatitis A and B, condoms and safer sex supplies, and specialist sexual health advice and information. As well as offering five clinical sessions per week, the WMP has an active outreach programme, taking condoms and sexual health promotion to men selling sex on the street, from unlicensed massage parlours, and from their own flats and apartments.

CONTEXT

The Working Men Project is based at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. Paddington is located in central west London, well serviced by public transport rail, bus and subway networks, and with London's main west country rail branch-line, as well as the Heathrow Express, the new 15 minute non-stop direct rail link to Heathrow Airport, Europe's busiest international airport. Serving an area with some of London's most affluent residents, and some of the most severe pockets of social deprivation, the locality has a dense collection of public housing bed and breakfast hostels, and a large refugee and asylum seeking population.

Since its inception in 1994 the Working Men Project has provided sexual health care to over 800 men selling sex, and prevention advice to a considerably greater number of men in this time. Eighty-six percent of these patients identify as homosexual, and 66% are migrant, of which English is not a first language for many. Clinical audits of men attending the project show that on initial presentation, while many are asymptomatic, one in three will have a sexually transmitted infection isolated. Eleven percent of those who choose to test for HIV infection, have tested positive.

In the United Kingdom, to be a sex worker is not illegal, however, many of the activities pertaining to the actual selling of sexual services are criminalized, such as soliciting a person in a public place for the purpose of selling sex, or living of the 'immoral' earnings of sex work. This legal posit has an influence on the negative perception of prostitution held by the majority of British society.

These three significant areas: homosexuality, prostitution and migration, are significant barriers to accessing health care or information for many of the men selling sex in London. It is from within this context that the WMP attempts to reach out and to establish contact with, and promote engagement of clinical services by men selling sex.

Research has shown that peer group and social norms are important determinants of behaviour for a number of groups (Fennell, 1993; Rhodes, 1994), and more importantly, that social consensus and peer endorsement of sexual behaviours are amongst important determinants of behaviour change (Rhodes, 1994; Kippax & Crawford, 1993). More recent research (McKinney & Gaffney, 2000) identified social isolation as an additional barrier to information, and endorsement of sexual behaviours, for many off-street sex selling men in London.

However, research conducted by the WMP (Ziersch et al, 2000) demonstrated through evaluation of a peer education programme with men selling sex from a several massage parlour, the limitations of peer education based information provision. It showed the importance of considering the context in which a peer education programme operates, and the need to move towards a collect model of community action, with ownership by the sex workers involved. A significant finding was that while some sex workers interviewed for the study identified that "peers" were better able to understand the circumstances of sex work (such as eroticising safer sex with a client), health professionals were viewed by many as a more appropriate source of information/advice for most sexual health related matters.

MODEL OF USER INVOLVEMENT

Drawing on these findings, the Working Men Project has developed a model of service provision and service develop which seeks to enhance a partnership approach, and facilitates maximum involvement of service users. This is best illustrated in figure 1, which outlines the model of user involvement developed over the past few years within the WMP. This model recognises that service users come from very different start points when considering the application of their involvement with services:

■ Sex Worker Engagement

The reality is that many male sex workers do not

want to be active participants in the emancipation of prostitution, or the delivery of sex worker appropriate services. They often want nothing more to use services, but this alone can be considered a significant form of involvement – if the services were not appropriate and meeting their needs, they would not engage. Contact figures from outreach, engagement with drop-in or health services, and frequent or repeat visits by the same men are valuable indicators that your service is meeting a need and should not be dismissed as unimportant.

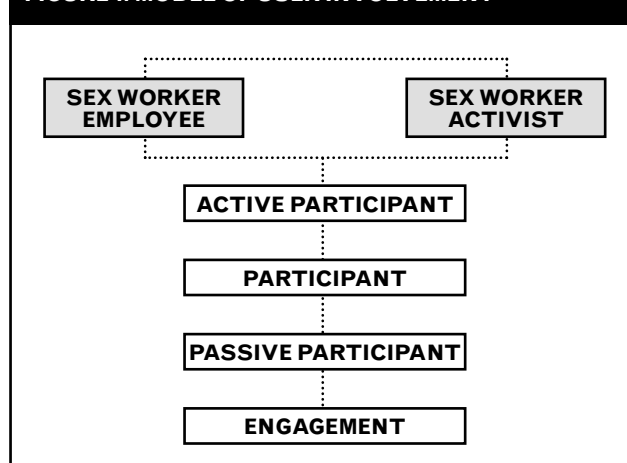
■ Passive participation

While many services have active outreach programmes, a significant number of male sex workers access projects and services because they have been brought or recommended by a friend or peer (a fellow sex worker and service user). This extends the concept of engagement further, in that the men using services are satisfied enough with the service to recommend it to others. They are acting as informal outreach workers, signposting appropriate others to services which may meet their needs.

Some sex workers using services will also be happy to complete audit or user survey type questionnaires – these questionnaires may range from asking about their experience of using the service, to asking about their sexual lifestyle or sex work. The information obtained from such survey's can help to inform the development of services, and monitor trends in reported behaviour patterns, which can be used as a marker of the success of health promotion activities or local strategies.

Both these examples demonstrate what is meant by the term 'passive participation' – that is the sex worker is not necessarily making an active decision to become 'involved' with the service, or are project staff actively recruiting the services of the sex worker for such, but implicitly, by the nature of their actions, these individuals are participating in the delivery and development of the service.

FIGURE 1. MODEL OF USER INVOLVEMENT



■ Participation

This is a stage further than passive participation, where project staff will be actively recruiting sex workers to participate with service delivery and/or development, and sex workers are willing volunteering to engage with such processes. This may include sex workers participating in research or service development focus groups, group work health promotion activities or health promotion material resource development. Examples from the Working Men Project include research based focus groups exploring entry into sex work, and negotiation of safer sex with paying partners, and development of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) photo cards for working men. With the development of these STI cards, service users advised on terminology and language, imagery and style/layout to ensure it would be appealing and appropriate to the target group.

■ Active Participation

Active participation is a more formal and structured involvement of service users in the direct delivery or development of services. Examples from practice include the training of peer educators and facilitators, sex workers who receive specific training around HIV and STI transmission, safer sex, knowledge of local health and support services, and communication skills. These men can then return to the working environment (street or massage parlour/brothel) and act as a resource for other sex workers, performing simple needs assessment and providing information or sign posting other sex workers to appropriate health or support services. However, as previously discussed, they can have their limitations, and these need to be acknowledged. It may also be appropriate to use these peer educators on some outreach duties, especially to other men selling sex in isolation from flats and apartments.

The Working Men Project has also involved a small number of men in the development of its website (www.wmplondon.org.uk), where again they advised on layout and content, but through collaborative training with the hospital's Information Technology (IT) department, these young men were also training in using web design software, so they could actively participate in the actual construction of the site. Now the site is up and running, pending additional funding, we would be seeking to provide additional training for them, so once our password protected chat-room is launched, these volunteers will act as chat monitors, to ensure the codes of conduct (which they will develop) within the chat facility are adhered to.

Management of sex worker volunteers and active participants can be difficult. It has to be appreciated that these individuals are volunteers and also not professional workers – they can be unreliable and troublesome, not necessarily respecting codes of

accepted professional behaviour or boundaries.

Appropriate training and regular support and supervision need to be in place to help prevent or lessen the potential of some of these difficulties. However, sex worker participants should never be viewed as a potential solution to a staffing crisis or to plug gaps in service delivery. While their active participation can enhance greatly service delivery, they need to be resourced and supported. Compensation for lost earnings (by the time contribution they make towards attending training, etc.) and any expenses incurred (travel, etc.) need to be budgeted.

■ Employee

For a small number of sex workers and service users who become actively involved as participants and volunteers in service delivery and/or development, there may come a natural progression towards wanting to be paid for their contribution. As their skills develop, it is arguable that they begin to mirror tasks and skills of other paid project staff. Where the opportunity arises, it may be appropriate to consider recruiting them as paid staff, and in some cases a form of 'positive discrimination' (that is to give preferential treatment in the recruitment and selection process) of a sex worker for a role may be desired, and possible within an employment law framework.

It is important for services and projects to develop their own local policy or framework around the employment of sex workers, for example whether they would require them to have exiting sex work, for what period of time they should have exiting before becoming a paid project workers, etc. Such policies are best developed with advice from your human resource departments, and should be set within the context of the service provision. Issues such as confidentiality, the view- point of other service users (who may know the potential candidate), etc., need to be considered, but these should not be used as barriers or excuses as to why it is not possible to employ current or ex-sex working men.

■ Activist

For some sex workers who have become actively involved with services, the natural progression is not necessarily to want to join the staff of the project, as often this will in reality require them to have exiting or severely reduced their sex work. Occasionally, male sex workers are proud of who and what they are, and being in control of their work, consider they are providing a valuable service to the community, which should be recognised as a genuine profession and protected by labour laws in the same way as all other professions and forms of work are. These men are often articulate and organised, selling sex independently in a very structured way, off-street from flats and apartments, or via the Internet.

Projects and services may wish to assist these men by facilitating their participation into the sex worker rights movement, networking them with local sex worker activists, or providing them with training opportunities (such as skills in public speaking or writing for publication), which can help them on their path to emancipation.

The Working Men Project has linked a number of such men who use their service to the UK based International Union of Sex Workers, which recently joined with the UK's third largest trade union (the GMB), to form a sex workers branch. Such men are skilled enough, and 'out' enough as sex workers to present positive images of sex work to the media and researchers, and would also be used for user consultation, asked to sit on management committees as user representatives, etc.

TRAINING FOR USER INVOLVEMENT

The European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP) recognises the importance of providing male sex workers with appropriate support and training to assist them to develop in a meaningful way as participants in service development and/or delivery. To this end, in November 2000, in partnership funding with the European Youth Foundation and UNAIDS, a training seminar was facilitated in Budapest, Hungary.

The objective of this seminar was to have a European meeting of young male sex workers, to exchange information, to make an inventory of their needs, to gain their opinions, express their visions and discuss how to deal with these shared opinions and visions. Twelve male sex workers and 3 facilitators met together during four days and explored various issues about the commercial male sex industry across Europe.

Theoretical model which underpinned the programme (figure 2) explored the contextual issues of sex work from the perspectives of the participants, and through a process of engagement identified what sex work meant for individuals, how it affected the individual's personal life and social networks (friends, partners, family) and how their sex work interacts with wider society. Discussions explored issues pertaining to health and welfare, legal issues,

taxation, employment rights, working conditions and personal relationships. Existing 'informal' European networks were identified and the need to establish a Europe Wide Network for male sex workers was discussed.

Participants were from all parts of Europe (UK, France, Spain, Poland, Hungary, Netherlands, Germany, Ireland and Switzerland) and sold sex in many different ways, but their experience(s) of sex work were similar when shared. When identifying needs (health, legal, etc.), these were also similar across different countries.

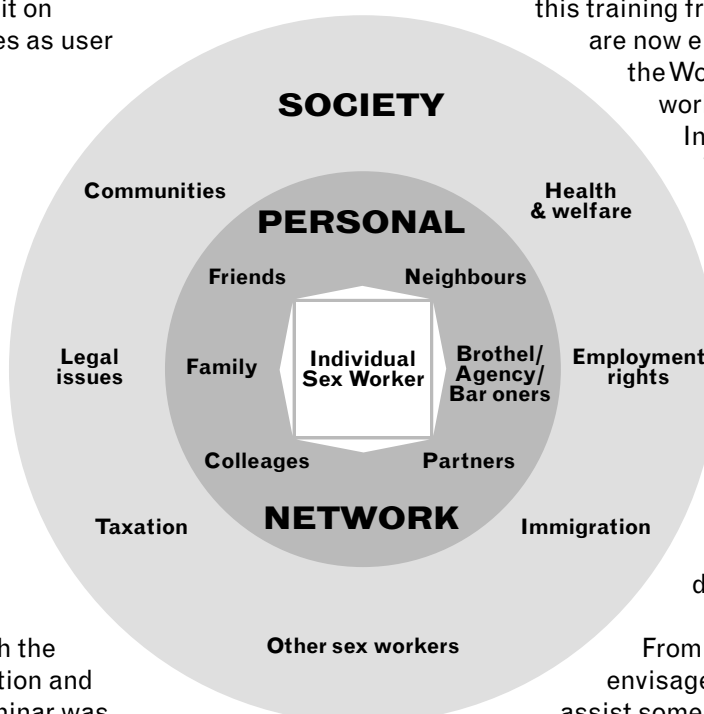
THEORETICAL TRAINING MODEL. FIGURE 2.

A number of the young men who participated in this training from the United Kingdom are now either paid employees of the Working Men Project or sex worker activists within the International Union of Sex Workers. The benefits of this training and the positive outcomes for the participants has lead to the ENMP considering repeating the training programme in the future, for a wider number of young men, and utilising some of the skills of the previous participants in the delivery of the programme.

From this future training, it is envisaged that the ENMP will assist some of the sex worker activists to form their own network, and it is hoped that the network for professional project staff (the ENMP) and the male sex worker activist network will work in unison and share joint general meetings, with some shared and interactive sessions, but this vision may not be realised for some time to come.

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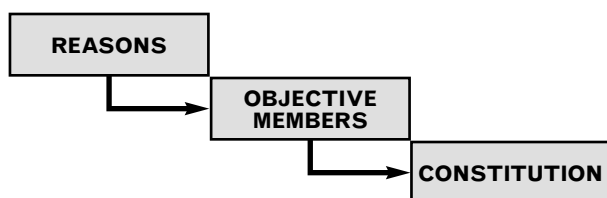
V. Networking

Creating a network

★ BEATRICE SEISDEDOS DE VEGA ★ CRUZ ROJA JUVENTUS, MADRID

Based on our experience in coordinating the constitution of the Spanish National Network of Organisations and Projects working on Prostitution, we have prepared the following paper in order to help anyone who is considering the possibility of establishing a network. In preparing this paper we had to remember that the conclusions are not statements but the result of our experience in Spain. Not every country has the same needs or the same sort of organisations. Therefore, wishes and requirements may be different in each particular case. However we would like to use our experience to provide some tips on what we feel one should consider when setting up a network.

We hereby suggest some patterns to follow in the process of creating (or considering participating in) a network.



THE REASONS FOR BEING PART OF A NETWORK

WHY DO WE NEED
TO BE PART
OF A NETWORK

The answer to this question will define our position when considering the option of creating or participating in a network. It will show our needs, strengths and weaknesses to be shared with the rest of the members of the network, and implies a previous analysis of our organisational resources.

We hereby present some of the reasons given by the organisations when deciding whether to belong to a network:

- We cannot work in all areas of activity
- We cannot cope with all the local/national/international areas
- There are certain services that we are unable to support

- The wish to exchange experiences
- To create a lobby
- To create synergies among the organisations
- Economic reasons (better options to get finance)
- The sex workers also work through networks

It is easy to find what you need from other organisations, but we should also bear in mind that belonging to a network involves advantages and disadvantages. Your decision (whether to participate or not) will depend on your idea of advantages and disadvantages. Consider the following statements referring to belonging to a network and list them according to what you consider positive or negative.

- The need to give in sometimes to find a consensus
- The decision processes are much slower
- The need to find a consensus to continue working
- Extra work for the members
- Provide information about what our organisation does
- Respect for members' autonomy
- Be responsible for our actions as members
- Diversity means difference
- Networking means active participation
- The possibility to supply other services
- Lobbying capacity
- Willingness to exchange experiences

MEMBERS AND OBJECTIVES

When creating a new network there are two key issues that must be solved from the very beginning: the objectives of the network and its members.

OBJECTIVES

As we have already mentioned, each network is different, not just because its members are different but also because its goals are different. Therefore, there can be no single rule for setting out network objectives. However, these are the steps to be considered:

- Think of the real need behind your motivation to create the network
- On this basis, choose a general and simple objective common to all the potential members (i.e. creating a network of organisations working on prostitution in your country)
- Convoke a first meeting with the proposal
- Those interested in it should start defining the objectives of the network.

Remember the importance of the goals. They will be the reference for the actions and the link of all the members. In the definition process consider the following requirements of the goals:

- Feasibility

- Capacity to link the members and, at the same time, respect members' independence.
- Participated elaboration
- Not only suited to one organisation's requirements (avoid one organisation leading the process)

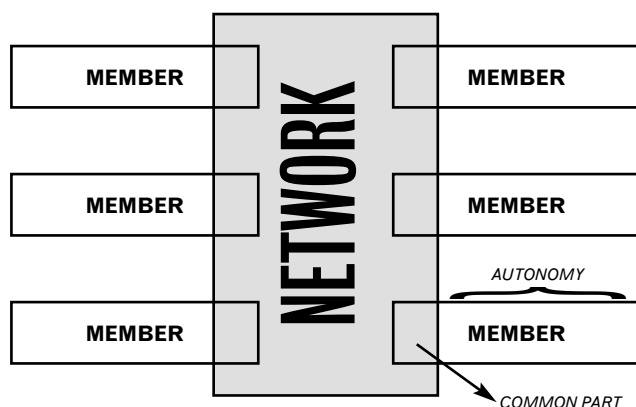
If we want all the members to feel represented by the network, the pioneer of the network should not be the one who defines its objectives. When linking different people, the more they help in constructing the objectives, the more they will feel part of it. This will guarantee faith in the project which will become:

- strength in defending its principles,
- greater lobbying capacity
- fast project distribution

MEMBERS

Who will join the network mainly depends on the pioneer and then on the network itself. When convoking the first meeting, it is the pioneer who decides which organisations to invite. Once the network starts to grow, the members must decide if they wish to impose any entry conditions. It also depends on the characteristics of the network: diversity implies different types of organisations and fewer entry conditions; analogy brings smaller groups and tighter conditions. At the same time, diversity means a wider network, greater lobbying capacity; analogy favours faster decision processes and facilitates consensus.

Another point to bear in mind is the autonomy of the members. From the very beginning you should clarify which actions belong to the network and which belong to the organisation itself. In the Spanish case, this is important because the ideology of the members varies. Actions strongly related to the ideology of the organisations normally belong to their autonomous part. This will be easier to understand in the following illustration:



As we can see, there is a common part, a linking point which is mainly represented by the objectives.

CONSTITUTION

The legal constitution should be the last step to consider when creating a network. Firstly try to

define the more basic structures and check that these structures work properly enough to warrant the temporary continuity of the network.

Now that we have defined the more basic points (objectives, members features and entry conditions), it is time to choose the functioning structure of the network. Let's say, if we want to have a representation organism, a coordination centre, a president, a committee for decision making...

Once more, there is no magic formula that guarantees the perfect structure; it always depends on the size of the network, its geographic setting, its economic and human resources, etc.

However, one role (played by one or various organisations) is required no matter what the conditions of the network: the coordinator. The coordinator will have to record all the agreements, maintain the data base of the members, keep all the documents referred to the network...in many cases, he will also be the reference point and the public liaison for the network.

Considering that the network will be subjected to constant changes, i.e. new members, old ones might leave, the coordination may change from one organisation to the other...; our advice is to compile a set of documents which quickly and readily provide the following information:

- **Objectives:** A single document no longer than a page, easy to check, will be a great help to those organisations considering their future membership. It might also be a reference document for the network that we have to bear in mind when taking decisions.
- **Rights and duties of the members:** this is a relevant document too, which we also suggest should be no longer than a page. At first sight, the new members should know what they can demand and what will be demanded from them. Respecting these rights and duties will guarantee the peaceful coexistence of diverse organisations in the network.
- **Governmental structures and their tasks:** As we have already mentioned, the definition of governmental structures will depend on the features of the network. The members should choose the ones that best suit their needs and how they are going to be distributed (i.e. by election process). However, it is important to have a document in which these structures, their functions and duration are described. Once again, the members will know what they can demand of structures and it will facilitate the "handing over of power".
- **Coordination and its tasks:** We have already emphasised the importance of coordination. It is then the task of the members to specify, as well as for the governmental structures, its functions and its duration.

- *The communication process:* If the structures of the network are rather complex, it would be better to clarify the internal communication process, i.e. when a new member joins the network or when a meeting is convoked.
- *The register:* It is always a good idea to have a "history register" containing reports of the meetings, the agreements adopted, the press releases and all the documents that give some idea of how the network has evolved.
- In the specific field of sex work, it will be helpful to have a standard press and public releases stating what the network is and what the network does.

Defining these points is critical if we wish all the members to have a uniform idea of what the network is, what they can demand from the network and what they have to offer to the network.

The last step for the network will be the legal status which will depend on the country laws, the objectives of the network and the wishes of the members. However, try not to arrive at this last step before the structures are settled and working fluently.

THE SPANISH NETWORK

On 22 June 2001 in Madrid, a meeting took place among various representatives of companies and national research studies working with the collective of sexual workers. The result of this meeting was the birth of the Red Estatal de Organizaciones y Proyectos sobre Prostitucion (National Network of Organizations and Projects regarding Prostitution), or ROPP.

A second meeting was organized on 13, 14, 15 and 16

December 2001 in Gijón (Asturias), in order to consolidate the Network, and establish parameters for working procedures, communication and services, as well as to encourage cooperation between the organizations and facilitate three training centres.

A third meeting was convoked on 24 and 25 May 2002 to clarify certain aspects of the network like the role of the coordinator, the rights and duties of the members and the settlement of a standard communication procedure with regard to press and public releases.

We will now describe the structures of the Spanish network, how these structures work and the manifesto that governs our actions. However, this is no blueprint for success, because networks work differently in different countries and our network is still too young to have proved whether its structures work.

MANIFESTO OF INTENTIONS

NATIONAL NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS REGARDING PROSTITUTION (ROPP)

Reason to be

- Because of the complex industry and sex market
- Because of the mobility of the migrant flows
- Because of the invisibility of the interference with the Human Rights
- Because of the need of the media for more adequate information
- Because of the partial knowledge of the reality
- Because of the lack of social sensitizing
- Because of the diversity of answers

COMISSION	MEMBERS		TASKS	PERIODICITY
PERMANENT COMMISSION	NORTH ZONE	ORGANISATION 1	Compilation of information from all organizations and projects from each zone to elaborate the Agenda and send the information to the Central Offices.	Until the next meeting of the ROPP
		ORGANISATION 2		
	EAST ZONE	ORGANISATION 3		
	ORGANISATION 4			
	CENTRAL ZONE	ORGANISATION 5	Structure the points for future meetings	
		ORGANISATION 6		
	CENTRAL ZONE	ORGANISATION 7		
		ORGANISATION 8		
TRAINING COMMISSION	ORGANISATION 9		Look for training information from companies which do not belong to the ROPP	Until the next meeting of the ROPP
	ORGANISATION 10		Compilation and distribution of the possible training procedures for the members of the ROPP	
	ORGANISATION 11		Prepare the training centres for the next meeting of the ROPP	
			Compilation of “grey materials” and relevant bibliography	

Who compose the ROPP

- Companies, groups and people who work from different perspectives in prostitution and sexual work.

Objectives

- Consolidate the Network presenting it to other companies, groups and people
- Favour the research and the knowledge of the reality
- Optimize resources and promote the creation of new ones from the interrelation (national and international) and the exchange of experiences
- Promote, induce and claim laws and social reactions
- Denounce interference with Human Rights: the trade of people, the legal abandonment, the economic exploitation, the social marginalization and any other discrimination

Actions

- Design and configuration of promotion materials both for internal and external communication and the Agenda, the resources guide and the informative brochure
- Create training centres for the exchange of experiences
- Structure the internal procedures of the Network through a Permanent Commission, groups and work zones
- Stimulate cooperation between the companies, groups and people who work in the Network

Establishing a National Network: The Irish Network Male Prostitution

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INTRODUCTION

The Irish Network Male Prostitution (INMP) was established in 1999. At present it is mostly a regional network based in the Eastern Health Authority Area, (Counties Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow), with a population of 1.3 million people (a quarter of the total island's population). Since its inception, the INMP has played an important role in highlighting the issue of male prostitution, needs, training, discussion forums and reports.

Setting up a national network may seem difficult, but in a fairly small country where community work and networking already occurs, it may be easier to gather people together. The Who, How and Whys of a network can depend on the social climate, agency/people involved and the focus and tasks set out. Presented here is an account of how the INMP was established, the legal and social situation in Ireland (more details at www.enmp.org) and of the lead agency Gay Men's Health Project (GMHP).

LEGAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION

Prostitution is illegal in Ireland. In 1993 when homosexuality was decriminalised in a new Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993, to loiter with intent to solicit was introduced.

Prior to 1993, male homosexual acts were illegal in the Republic of Ireland. Equality and anti-discrimination acts have since been introduced. Issues concerning Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals, including male sex workers and the homeless are described in a new publication *'Implementing Equality for Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals'* (The Equality Authority 2002).

Overall the climate for LGB people in Ireland is generally positive, particularly in bigger cities, though there are isolated cases of homophobic attacks and discrimination. However, male prostitution is very rarely commented on, although when covered by the media, it can be sensational. Like other MSW issues this generally comes down to ignorance or prejudice. Establishing a network may not only tackle this problem, but also provide support for those aware and working in this area. HIV continues to rise especially among heterosexuals, though MSWs continue to be the highest numbers among males contracting HIV through sexual contact. Another concern is the rise of syphilis which has increased dramatically among MSWs (particularly in the Dublin area) from an

average of 20 per year by the end of 2000 to 180 in 2001 with a similar number for 2002.

The web is becoming a useful tool for information and here are some relevant websites for further information on the Irish situation:

- www.equality.ie
The Equality Authority, detailing anti-discrimination and protection issues.
- www.gayhealthnetwork.ie
network of gay and bisexual men involved in HIV/AIDS sexual health, publications, research
- www.gcn.ie
LGBT monthly community publication
- www.hivireland.ie
HIV& sexual health services network
- www.outhouse.ie
LGBT Centre Dublin and other community resources on the pink pages
- www.ndsc.ie
National Disease Surveillance Centre, for latest HIV and Syphilis and Epi-insight publication.

BACKGROUND TO INMP

The setting up of a national network male prostitution was made possible by my role as coordinator of the Gay Men's Health Project (GMHP) and the support of the East Coast Area Health Board. The Gay Men's Health Project (GMHP), a statutory service for gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men, was established in 1992. GMHP provides an STI Clinical, outreach and counselling service. Outreach comprises 80% of its work and involves contact with males involved in prostitution. The outreach team is based in Outhouse (LGBT community Centre). In 1997 GMHP published the MP Project Report on males in prostitution to highlight the situation in this area.

This remains the only statutory piece of research. The report contained interviews with male sex workers and highlights issues and needs regarding homelessness, STI and HIV, drug use and sexual orientation (59% identified as gay, 21% bisexual and 19% heterosexual). It also looked at training and other needs of service agencies and called for a review of the legal situation regarding the 1993 Act. Lastly it suggested ways of dealing with the issues and needs of males in prostitution, NGO and governmental agencies. For some of us, establishing a network seemed the most logical thing to do. Meanwhile in 1998, GMHP became a member of European Network Male Prostitution (ENMP) and I acted as country coordinator for Ireland. I was very motivated by my experience at this ENMP meeting, and my first task on arriving back home was to gather interested people together in Dublin to establish an Irish Network.

BIRTH OF INMP

In Ireland there is a strong sense of community and

we tend to network a lot. For instance GMHP was already involved in networks such as Gay Health Network (GHN), and AIDS Liaison Forum (now HIV Services Network). It was therefore fairly easy to set up another one, although there was a sense of "not another meeting"!

Local, NGO and governmental agencies and groups were contacted to gauge interest, and the following formed the founding group of the Irish Network Male Prostitution (INMP): a homeless agency (Focus Ireland), a drugs project (Ana Liffey), MSM sexual health (GMHP), HIV positive (Open Heart House). The meetings take place in Outhouse resource centre.

It was decided to keep the initial group small and only for those who were aware and who came into contact with males in prostitution. The Network was to be one of action rather than words, aimed at raising awareness and organising discussion Forums to increase awareness about the network and male sex work issues. It was not intended as a political campaigning group, though the emphasis would be to influence policy on the legal standing of male prostitution, (political correctness was not a criterion for joining). Members would not have administrative functions as this would be carried out by me and the GMHP outreach workers. This approach allowed members to concentrate on their tasks, and involved only a few hours per month, and no funding worries. It also emphasised that the INMP would not be a service agency, but would bring services together.

INMP ACTIONS

Talk, Action, Talk, Pause, Action, Talk, Pause, Talk, Action... some months after the first meetings the group decided it was necessary to have some action and to promote discussion and the network. In December 1999 we organised the 1st Forum on Male Prostitution ever to be held in Ireland. Over 50 people attended from many agencies

1ST FORUM AGENDA

This forum took place over two days, with presentations on the situation in Ireland and internationally and a small discussion group format. There were speakers from Ireland, the health authority family unit, the Gardai (police) and an international perspective introducing speakers from London, Leeds, Glasgow and Amsterdam. The forum described services for males in prostitution and for young men. Katrin Schiffer gave an account of the services provided by the ENMP, AMOC and some other European services for male sex workers. In the evaluation the international presentations scored highly, followed by the local presentations. Importantly though, 74% of respondents wished to join the Network and up to 80% wanted further forums and training.

Comments from the respondents and feedback from the small group influenced both the agenda for the working group and the next forum.

The working group continued meeting and quickly compiled the Forum report. I produced a report entitled 'Male Prostitution – What's the Best Approach?' These led directly to the commissioning of the report on service needs and provisions: "Such a Taboo" (launched in June 2001) and a 2nd Forum in March 2001.

In the meantime two ex-male sex workers became involved and they were supported to attend the special peer meeting in Budapest, organised by the ENMP.

2ND FORUM AGENDA

This 2nd Forum Male Prostitution in Ireland was a one day affair and coincided with the ENMP regional meeting. Apart from the update on the 'Such a Taboo', there were presentations by the two men who attended the meeting in Budapest and by the ENMP members. The presentation by the two ex-male prostitutes provided an emotional account of their life experiences.

In the afternoon there was a workshop on creating safe environments for working with MSM on homophobia and heterosexism

The evaluation of the day showed that the Peer Presentation scored highly followed by both the International presentations and the homophobia workshop.

'SUCH A TABOO'

Communication is maybe the most important aspect of any network and the INMP tries to live up to this. In some ways we have been successful with discussion forums and reports. Apart from the forums it was the launch of the main report 'Such a Taboo' that really gave the working group a sense of achievement (INMP/ECAHB 2002).

Published by the INMP and East Coast Area Health Board, the report provides an analysis of the service need and service provision for males in prostitution in the Eastern Region. It contains six chapters covering the Irish situation, a literature review, attitudes to males in prostitution, services in other countries, outreach, service providers' knowledge, definition of male prostitution, social and economic factors, developing services for males in prostitution, training and policy development and a conclusion and recommendations.

The 'Such A Taboo' recommendations have a direct influence on the future of the INMP. Many of the agencies interviewed saw the network continuing and being responsible as a steering group for the implementation of the recommendations. They also saw GMHP as continuing as a lead agency in the issue especially concerning training on MSMs. Therefore it was agreed to appoint an acting

coordinator (seconded from GMHP outreach team) to promote and implement the "Such A Taboo" recommendations and to act as a regional INMP coordinator for the Eastern Area, and that I would continue as country coordinator.

Copies of reports are available although it is intended to place both Such a Taboo and the MP Report on the ENMP website.

COUNTRY COORDINATION

Developing the network throughout Ireland is a special task. Already contact has been made with interested agencies, many of whom have attended the Forums and launch of reports. In order to further establish communication and support means travelling wider, which depends on resources. The other issue is local interest, so rather than riding into town and stating "here I am" and declaring that we have all the answers, initial contact will be made with interested agencies and groups throughout Ireland (North, West and South). This will be aimed at developing regional networks, raising awareness, providing training facilitators, including peers, and promoting "Such a Taboo" as a model.

Hopefully in the future both the country coordinator and the regional coordinator(s) will attend ENMP meetings where possible.

CONCLUSION

The Irish Network Male Prostitution has been very successful in implementing. However rather than lying back (as can happen) and resting on its laurels, after a break it now needs to be reinvigorated by using the "Such a Taboo" and by receiving support from members and the East Coast Area Health Board. Networks can be beneficial, supportive, motivating and fun, especially if the following is kept in focus:

- talk, plan, action, socialise, talk, rest, talk, humour, action, evaluate, talk...
- communication
- regular group/committee meetings
- actions
- forums with set topics to use training and discussion.
- secure funding/or support resources (for administration and conferences)
- support for network members from own group/agency
- include male sex workers where possible-provide training and support to them.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the INMP, past and present, for their dedication and support, the East Coast Area Health Board, the ENMP, the male sex workers involved with INMP and our respective agencies, without whom, none of this article would be possible.

VI. Gathering data

Methodological aspects of gathering scientific data in sexual behaviour

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PROBLEMS OF THE EMPIRIC AIDS AND SEXUAL SURVEYS IN THE DATA GATHERING PROCESS.

For effective AIDS prevention in target groups, health professionals need insight into the behaviour patterns and motives which are concealed behind epidemiological data.

The level of available knowledge on human sexuality could be described as insufficient and scarce in many aspects. In the history of sexology, data concerning human sexual behaviour have been gathered predominantly in the clinical area resulting in the fact that the emphasis has been put on sexual problems and human pathology.

Bearing this in mind, we can presume that difficulties would arise not only in the investigation part of the AIDS psychosocial survey, but there could be problems related to the survey as such. The characteristics of AIDS surveys and sexual surveys in general could be classified into five groups:

1. MAJOR PROBLEMS RELATED TO INTERVIEWING

It is an extremely complex task to describe and then investigate human sexual behaviour by means of objective, measurable and liable to verification determinants, especially when sexuality is related to issues of guilt, stigma, isolation and social taboos (such as having sex with same sex partners and selling sex services). Prevailing psychological and social concepts, models and methods can be applied only restrictedly in research. This is particularly true concerning preventive behaviour studies. The investigator should consider the as yet less advanced and very specific subject of AIDS. In this respect, he or she should be even more dedicated to the subject of the survey as well as to its object.

2. PROBLEMS IN RESPONDING

The investigator in an AIDS or sex survey first encounters a sort of puzzle. He should learn to differentiate between:

- what respondents think they are doing
- what they say they are doing
- what they actually do.³²

These three categories cannot always be delimited. Often the respondents forget and repress a

significant part of their behaviour and even intentionally twist reality for different reasons. That is why the investigator has to try to study what really people do and what their attitude really is to what they have done, because sexual perception shades distinctively the perception of one's own sexual activities. The researcher should ask the questions without evoking stereotypes in the mind of the respondent; he should not provoke imprecision nor suggest answers.

These were the reasons why the prominent American researcher of sexual behaviour Alfred Kinsey gave up using questionnaires and started to attach more importance to personal interviewing. In his interviews, he tried to make himself understood in a scientific language common or appropriate to the individual respondent. Even when the investigator personally leads the interviews, he must take into consideration a number of problems since he has to provide comparable results that could be statistically evaluated. One of the ways of increasing the validity is to double the interviews with matching results. In large investigations, however, the adequate standardization of the approach is questionable.

In this regard, we should consider another problem. Surveys aimed at giving an account of retrospective self-descriptions of sexual behaviour encounter methodological difficulties that should be considered in the choice and the elaboration of research instruments and methods as well as in the data assessment and interpretation.

We could expect that only some particularly motivated people would give details of their sexual life. Besides, respondents participating in the survey experience in a specific way the actuality and/or significance of the subject of the survey. Another psychological source of inaccuracy could be forgetfulness about subjectively unimportant events due to aversion and in some case repression of conflicts and aversive sexual experiences. Shame as an unconscious filter to memories is also often underestimated in sexual behaviour surveys. Respondents do not recall their sexual acts in the behaviouristic way they are being interviewed. Their answers are often tinted with the sexual concept of their own selves and this concept is much more consistent and free from contradictions than their actual sexual experiences are.

3. RESPONDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

We should also consider the motives for

³²) Haeberle, E.J.: *Die Sexualität des Menschen*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 1985

participation in research projects. Motivating them for the researcher means on one hand to conform to the results and on the other to transform and put them into practice. Thus the researcher takes on a kind of obligation that the respondent's participation would be valuable for others.

Difficulties in human sexuality surveys also stem from the protection of intimacy and privacy against third party observation. Moreover, it represents one of the distinctions between sociological and medical surveys of sexuality. Researches of biological dimensions of sexual behaviour (as carried out by Masters & Johnson in the nineteen sixties in Saint Lewis) are not sensitive in the same degree as research of social dimensions where the respondent's personality is a requirement.

4. RESEARCHER'S MOTIVATION

Occasionally researchers in the field of sexual behaviour have to face people's unwillingness to participate in interviews. This problem is closely related to the way in which the information gathered in research groups is used. In post-communist countries this issue is topical since there have been acts of political abuse with regard to such data and violation of privacy. Hence, people distrust such interviews and questionnaires. Sometimes respondents are confronted with the lack

of competence of some researchers. This lack of professionalism could reveal itself as an inappropriate approach to the object of the study, ill-defined questions (the use of terms, expressions and language unfamiliar to the respondent), improper way of questioning, bad articulation, etc. The incompetence could not only threaten the validity of the survey but could also dishearten potential respondents because of the impression of unimportance or lack of meaning.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH

Last but not least we should also consider the fact that due to the different social, cultural and economic settings, the results of psychosocial surveys of AIDS and sexuality could only be partly transferred in other countries' context. Each country has its specific situation and this should be taken into consideration. Although more accessible, unilateral studies and a single group analysis (e.g. only people with homosexual behaviour) should also be avoided. If we consider a psychosocial survey of only the group most affected with HIV in Bulgaria – people with heterosexual behaviour, other affected groups (intravenous drug users, people with homosexual behaviour) would be only a particular group. In this respect the specificity of target groups, though important in prevention practice, could be ignored in such a survey.

Appendix

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