



Analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities

indoors

# Indoor sex work



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## **INDOORS**

Support and empowerment of female sex workers and trafficked women working in hidden places

This manual is based on contributions from the 8 partners of the INDOORS project.  
It was compiled within the framework of the INDOORS project  
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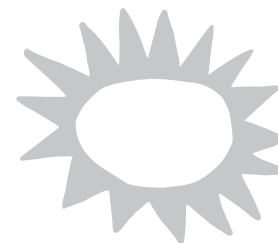
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APDES – The Piaget Agency for Development is a non-profit association, founded in 2004 to promote sustainable development. APDES works with vulnerable communities and populations, with the objective of improving access to health, employment and education, empowering people and strengthening social cohesion.

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Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus (CDCP) is a non-profit association founded by sex workers and allies in 1982. The main goals of the Committee are to affirm the civil and human rights of sex workers by raising public awareness, working on health prevention, and supporting people who have been coerced into sex work. It combats all forms of discrimination against marginalised populations – migrants, sex workers, MSM, PLWHA – and seeks to ensure equal access to health services. CDCP Onlus is based in Pordenone and has operated harm reduction programmes in several Italian towns. Presently it operates in Trieste and Genoa and is active at a national and international level with other associations and NGOs.

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## **Médecins du Monde (MDM)**

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Médecins du Monde is an international humanitarian organisation providing medical care to vulnerable populations affected by war, natural disasters, disease, famine, poverty or exclusion. Since 1986, MDM also operates in France, fighting for access to health and rights for migrants, drug users, sex workers, homeless people, children, and Roma people. MDM also works on a HIV/Tuberculosis/Hepatitis prevention/screening programme. Since 2000, MDM Nantes has led a harm reduction programme with sex workers.

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The TAMPEP Onlus Association is a non-profit organisation based in Turin since 2001. It has however been active in the area since the establishment of the TAMPEP International Foundation in 1993. The organisation aims to promote actions and policies that respect the rights of immigrants and immigrant sex workers, who face social discrimination and marginalisation, while taking into account their choices and their dignity. The association additionally cooperates with existing organisations in source countries of migration in order to impede the coercive and exploitative systems that ensnare both adult and minor victims of trafficking with the aim of sexual and labour exploitation.

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TAMPEP is the European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers. It is an international project operating in 25 European countries, including 10 Central and Eastern European countries.

TAMPEP was founded in 1993 to address the needs of migrant sex workers in Europe. It is based on the principles of the protection of human rights and the direct representation of sex workers.

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# Introduction

## Introduction

Following policy and legislative changes and the development of new technologies, the prostitution scene in Europe has evolved during the last ten years. According to TAMPEP, the *European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers*<sup>1</sup>, a shift was observed from outdoor to indoor sex work between 2003 and 2008.

Indoor sex work is an evolving and growing phenomenon with its own structure, codes and working conditions.

Facing the restructuring of sex work settings, service providers and organisations have developed new strategies to contact indoor sex workers who are more isolated. However, broader development and implementation of such strategies is required in order to cover geographically and structurally more settings and provide indoor sex workers with comprehensive, quality outreach services.

This manual on indoor sex work has three aims: analysis, documentation and recommendations.

### Analysis

“Indoor Sex Work” aims to provide a comprehensive and non-judgemental approach to its subject matter through an analysis of the indoor prostitution scene in seven large European cities.

### Documentation

This manual seeks to provide enhanced knowledge of the mechanisms of indoor prostitution and the working conditions in indoor sex work venues, in order to lead to reflection on harm reduction, violence and empowerment of indoor-based sex workers.

### Recommendations

“Indoor Sex Work” also presents examples of good practice for service providers for the implementation of new outreach methodologies in order to encourage a broader development of comprehensive indoor outreach services.

In this manual, indoor sex work is defined as any kind of sexual services offered in private sex work venues, where solicitation and the sexual exchange occur off-street.

For these reasons, it is distinguished by the chosen terminology of “indoor”, as opposed to outdoor sex work taking place on the streets. Although indoor sex workers are more isolated, both groups of sex workers face violence, lack access to fundamental rights, and are in need of initiatives to enhance their empowerment.

This manual focuses on indoor sex work because many people lack sufficient information on it and it tends to be viewed in terms of clichés: to the general public, indoor sex work is either prestigious, or a violent and coerced form of sex work. According to our analysis, the reality is much more diverse than that, and this manual seeks to provide a realistic picture of the indoor prostitution scene.

As this manual is not scientific, the research presented is empirical, based on local mappings in seven European cities, collected by outreach teams from the partner organisations who are very familiar with the reality of sex work. The results are not exhaustive and show only trends rather than exact figures.

The manual is based on a non-judgemental approach and a sex workers’ rights perspective.





All sex workers have the same fundamental rights as highlighted in the Declaration of the Rights of Sex Workers, compiled and endorsed by 120 sex workers and 80 allies from 30 countries during the first European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration held in Brussels in October 2005.

In particular, when talking about violence, all sex workers have the right to security and to equal protection against discrimination and other forms of violence. It is important to underline once again that violence is not part of the job.



## Declaration of the Rights of Sex Workers

- The right to life, liberty and security
- The right to be free from arbitrary interference with your private and family life, home or correspondence and from attacks on honour and reputation
- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- The right to freedom of movement and residence
- The right to be free from slavery, forced labour and servitude
- The right to equal protection of the law and protection against discrimination and any incitement to discrimination under any of the varied and intersecting status of gender, race, citizenship, sexual orientation etc
- The right to marry and found a family
- The right to work, to free choice of employment and to just and favourable conditions of work
- The right to peaceful assembly and association
- The right to leave any country, including yours, and to return to your country
- The right to seek asylum and to non-refoulement
- The right to participate in the cultural and public life of society



# The INDOORS project

## The INDOORS project

This manual was produced within the framework of the INDOORS project, a European project financed by the European Union in the framework of the Daphne Programme of the Department of Justice and Home Affairs. This project was born in light of the following issues, which were identified in the final report of TAMPEP: a lack of outreach projects targeting indoor sex workers; a lack of networking between existing projects and initiatives; and the need to reach out to more indoor sex workers, especially the more isolated ones.

The INDOORS project was carried out since December 2008 by six organisations in five countries: Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento in Porto (Portugal), Amnesty for Women in Hamburg (Germany), Autres Regards in Marseille (France), Comitato per I Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus in Genoa and Trieste (Italy), Health and Social Development Foundation in Sofia (Bulgaria) and Médecins du Monde in Nantes (France).

TAMPEP Onlus in Turin (Italy) and TAMPEP International Foundation in Amsterdam (Netherlands) were affiliated with the project.

Coordination of the project was carried out by Autres Regards in Marseille (France).

The project aimed to support sex workers and trafficked women, working indoors in hotels, apartments, brothels, clubs, bars, massage parlours, saunas, sex shops and other indoor venues, to protect themselves from any kind of violence (including social violence and physical/psychological threats to health), in giving them the means to empower themselves and to respond to violence.

More specifically, the project aims to accompany and to support sex workers and trafficked women in their indoor work:

- through advocating for better access to public services for sex workers and especially supporting them in their access to public health services and to their fundamental rights
- through supporting improvements to the situation of indoor sex workers, especially their working conditions, in order to encourage their decision-making skills and their empowerment, by giving them tools, advice and information relating to these issues
- through improving the knowledge of outreach workers and professionals on indoor prostitution and ensuring that outreach and support is provided with a respectful and non-judgemental approach
- through promoting outreach work in the field of indoor prostitution at a local, national and European level, in order to promote and encourage long-lasting support.

Through the development of various activities, the INDOORS project provides a comprehensive assessment of the indoor prostitution scene in seven cities; a better knowledge of the mechanisms of indoor prostitution for outreach workers and professionals in contact with indoor sex workers; greater awareness of problems in indoor prostitution and the need for broader prevention of these problems.

Collaboration between partner organisations has encouraged the development of new outreach methodologies and has facilitated exchanges of experiences, knowledge and good practices on violence prevention and harm reduction among indoor sex workers.



# Our approach

## Our approach

The analysis and the good practices proposed in this manual are based on local assessments carried out in seven cities in five European countries: Marseille, Nantes, Hamburg, Porto, Sofia, Genoa and Trieste.

Local assessments allow for a more comprehensive and realistic analysis of the indoor prostitution scene in each city. These major cities are each significant due to their geographic location and their role in the process of migration.

**Sofia**, as the capital of Bulgaria, is in the centre of migration flows because Bulgaria is the only country of origin included in the research and is also a transit country. Sofia is a gateway to Europe: Bulgarian sex workers may start in Sofia and move to other European countries to continue their activity.

**Trieste** is situated at the border with Slovenia, which is a transit country for migrants coming from EU and Balkan countries who intend to move on to Italy. A cross-border movement of Italian clients and sex workers can also be observed because prostitution is not prohibited in Slovenia.<sup>2</sup>

The other cities, **Genoa, Hamburg, Marseille, Nantes** and **Porto**, are major ports and migration flow has also been part of the history of the cities. The countries of origin vary, mostly depending on migration routes and the communities already settled.

This research also has the objective of being transferable to other contexts, cities and countries, because in the cities covered here there is a wide range of sex work structures, settings, and legislative frameworks.<sup>3</sup>

## Methodology used for the research

The research was based on a local mapping activity carried out during regular outreach in the seven European cities, between January 2009 and June 2010, using a common questionnaire drafted by all the partners.

Outreach was undertaken by experienced teams with knowledge of the field. Social workers, counsellors, nurses, psychologists, cultural mediators and peers were involved in this research.

Each outreach team comprised two professionals whose functions varied depending on the local context and the organisation of the structure. This allowed for the provision of comprehensive data with different professional approaches: predominantly a harm reduction approach and a community-based approach<sup>4</sup>.

In this manual, the main sex work venues researched were apartments and hotels (in each of the seven cities), although the survey also targeted *bassi*<sup>5</sup> in Genoa; brothels, clubs and truck stops in Sofia; and massage parlours in Hamburg.

The questionnaire was used to collect information for our research and as a basis for outreach work, but never as a specific tool to be filled in. Inclusion of such a questionnaire in our outreach work would have been too intrusive for the sex workers contacted and an impediment to gaining their trust. They could have been suspicious that the questionnaire was related to the police. All questionnaires were filled in after outreach work had been completed, sometimes incorporating information given by the sex workers directly, and sometimes using only information provided in their newspaper or online advertisements.

It should be emphasised that even though a common methodology was used, each partner organisation was able to adapt it according to need. This was both a limit and a great resource for our research.

It was limiting because local data often reflect a local situation and do not always allow for scientific comparison; but it was also a great resource because it was important for this research to avoid ironing out differences and to instead underline them in order to draw comprehensive conclusions.

This research provides local figures that should be understood with regard to the local context. Although these figures are based on the local reality, they should be taken as trends because they are not exhaustive and represent only those indoor sex workers contacted by the partner organisations. Since indoor sex workers are more isolated and hard to reach, and because sex workers are mobile, the partners did not assume they had contacted all indoor sex workers.

### **Selection of good practices**

“Good practices” can be defined in multiple ways. However, certain elements can be considered as fundamental to good practices in the field of migration, health and sex work.

A good practice implies not only strategies but also activities and projects that “have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result.”<sup>6</sup>

According to UNESCO, a good practice is also innovative and develops new and creative solutions.



Good practices provide a much-needed link between research and policy-making by inspiring decision-makers with successful initiatives and model projects that can make an innovative and sustainable contribution to solving problems in society.<sup>7</sup>

It is not always easy to fulfil all these criteria.

A good practice will be innovative for an organisation in a specific context but may not be for another one with a different level of experience with indoor sex workers. The sustainability of an activity will also depend on human resources, time allotted to the activity and the funding of the project.

In the field of sex work, two issues are crucial when selecting good practices: active participation of the community, and a non-judgemental approach and respect for sex workers.

In accordance with these considerations, all our good practices are based on the following:

- they promote a non-judgemental attitude and respect for sex workers' rights
- they promote and encourage the participation of sex workers in the preparation, implementation and/or evaluation of the activities
- they have been evaluated and are transferable to other contexts and cities

Projects, actions and strategies that can be considered as good practices are presented within this manual.

These 26 examples of good practice do not cover all intervention frameworks for indoor sex work, but are here to illustrate strategies in order to encourage new developments.

They can be modified, and are intended to serve as inspiration for the set-up of projects related to indoor prostitution, or to further develop initiatives to promote indoor sex workers' empowerment and access to rights.

# Structure of the Manual

As both sections are based on the same research in the same cities, this manual aims to propose a comprehensive basis for work with indoor sex workers.

Since the organisations' work with indoor sex workers is new in many countries, it seemed necessary to simultaneously provide an outline of the topic in order to have a comprehensive approach to indoor prostitution and a selection of good practices as examples of initiatives to encourage the development of indoor sex work-related projects.

## Analysis

The analysis of indoor sex work includes a presentation of the legal and structural context of each city where the mapping was carried out, and of the outreach methodologies used, in order to better understand the local situations and to allow the reader to bear in mind the local context.

The results of the research, illustrated with words from indoor sex workers, are presented along several themes: the indoor prostitution scene, the organisation of indoor sex work, and the situation of indoor sex workers based on their needs and their vulnerability to violence and isolation.



## Good practice themes

The examples of good practice cover three themes: making contact with indoor sex workers, empowerment of sex workers, and promotion of the activity and project. As this manual could not cover all themes, these three were chosen in order to inspire ideas for new projects or already existing projects targeting indoor sex workers.

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### Contacting indoor sex workers

The very first step before commencing work with this specific target group is thinking about how to make contact with indoor sex workers. Different outreach methodologies are suggested and outlined with an explanation of their context. This allows service providers to adapt their activities depending on the situation and the city or country's legal and structural context.

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### Sex workers' empowerment

In the second theme, the good practices presented aim to give ideas on how to enhance empowerment and tackle isolation and violence. Empowerment is defined here as supporting sex workers' rights, promoting their access to public services, facilitating community exchange, and providing them with clear and complete information.

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### Promotion of the activity

Finally, the success of any activity depends on its promotion: good practices are proposed for promotion aimed at service providers, organisations, universities, media and the general public.



**A**n analysis  
of indoor sex work in  
seven European cities

# Legal and structural contexts of indoor prostitution

The research was conducted in seven cities with a range of legal frameworks and sex work venues. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the results it is important to know the contexts of the cities in which the mapping was carried out. In the following chapter each city is described in terms of its legal and political context pertaining to sex work, and how indoor prostitution is structured.



## Genoa and Trieste, Italy

### Legal framework in Italy

In Italy, prostitution is regulated under the Penal Code. There is no explicit mention of prostitution; therefore it is neither illegal nor legal. The Merlin Act of 1958 shut down all state-run brothels and freed sex workers from mandatory registration and medical examinations. The act imposed numerous restrictions on sex workers and made sex work subject to legally marginal conditions regardless of whether it takes place indoors or on the street.<sup>8</sup>

It is impossible for migrants to obtain a residence or work permit for the purpose of sex work.

☒ **Indoor sex work** is prohibited, though in practice, private apartments with only one sex worker are “tolerated”.

☒ **Prostitution** is prohibited in houses, hotels, dance halls, entertainment clubs, and other areas open to the public.

Renting a house, tolerating the presence of prostitutes in bars, clubs, dance halls or other public facilities, and employing a person to work as a sex worker are all punished under the Penal Code as an offence of aiding and abetting.

⚠ **Soliciting** on the street is forbidden and fined. Several mayors have issued decrees that prohibit indecent dress, improper behaviour and stopping near churches, public buildings and residential areas. A fine can range from € 80 to € 500.

☒ **Pimping, exploitation and human trafficking** are criminalised. It is prohibited to induce, facilitate, aid and abet, or exploit anyone who does sex work.

Pimping can also be interpreted as partners living with or married to a sex worker – especially if these persons are unable to provide proof of gainful employment that earns them sufficient income as an individual.

Although the law contains repressive aspects, it also provides social protection for victims of human trafficking.

*Organising indoor sex work and soliciting are forbidden. Pimping, exploitation and human trafficking are criminalised.*

## Local context

### Genoa

The territory of Genoa (population 611,000) is such that sex workers who work indoors are concentrated in a specific area in the centre of the historic town, the Maddalena area. They work in apartments and flats at street level, called *bassi*.<sup>9</sup>

Although this structure has advantages – it facilitates the exchange of information and the cultivation of relationships between indoor sex workers, rendering them less isolated – it also has drawbacks.

The high increase in sex workers and consequently increased tensions in the Maddalena area in recent years have led to strong protests and sporadic acts of intolerance by residents and shopkeepers in the area. Levels of exasperation have also risen due to the degeneration of the area and a combination of various problems (sale and consumption of drugs, pollution, high concentration of night clubs, etc) that have a strong impact upon the area.

As mayors now have the judicial power to declare as an emergency anything that might endanger the security and decorum of the cities, the Municipality of Genoa issued a provision in September 2008, exclusively for the Maddalena area, which demanded the closure of storerooms at ground level that were not used as such. This provision solely hit the area of Genoa where sex workers traditionally worked. The provision also contained a note of warning to anyone who was found in a storeroom with furniture such as sofas, beds, etc and intended to use it for something other than its original purpose.

Checks by officers from the Municipality take place in the presence of the police. The sex workers have no choice but to open the door and allow the inspection of the premises in which they work.

Some sex workers began to protest against this situation. The Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus (CDCP) was contacted through outreach workers in Genoa who were already in contact with the sex workers, and this led to the creation of the Genovese group that took action.

*Indoor sex workers are concentrated in a specific area, and work in bassi. The municipality demanded the closure of this area.*

### Trieste

Trieste (population 205,000) is not a harbour city in a commercial sense, but is situated at the border with Slovenia. This city is therefore in a cross-border region for migrant sex workers coming from EU and Balkan countries, and Italian sex workers who wish to work in Slovenia.

In Trieste indoor sex workers work in apartments and hotels all over the city. They are not concentrated in any specific area.

Sex workers advertise online and in newspapers. Although they mostly work alone and are more isolated, they prefer to maintain their anonymity, likely as a result of recent attempts by police authorities to identify them. Indeed, in 2009 extensive actions to shut down web pages and ads published in newspapers were carried out by magistrates and the police. Consequently, there are no more ads in Trieste's local newspaper "Il Piccolo", while a weekly magazine called "Il Mercatino" publishes ads which use coded language to attract clients.

As a result, making contact with sex workers has become more difficult.

*Indoor sex workers are dispersed across the city and more isolated. The police and magistrates shut down web pages and newspaper ads.*



## Hamburg, Germany

### Legal framework in Germany

☒ **Prostitution** is legalised in Germany.

Germany's Prostitution Act of January 2002 recognises sex work as a legitimate activity, giving both employed and self-employed sex workers standard labour rights and social security benefits. However, migrant sex workers without a regulated residence permit do not benefit from this law whatsoever. As the law has no link to German immigration law, it does not grant foreigners the legal right to enter the country and establish residency for the purpose of working in the sex industry.

*Indoor and outdoor sex work is regulated under zoning laws. Pimping, exploitation of sex workers and human trafficking are prohibited.*

As there are no uniform guidelines or standards as to how the Prostitution Act should be implemented, it is interpreted and applied differently in each of the 16 federal states of Germany. Working on the street in a prohibited zone (the so-called *Sperrgebiet*) in some German towns is prohibited.<sup>10</sup>

☒ **Indoor sex work** is legalised, under building and zoning laws. Brothels are only permitted in commercial and industrial areas. Self-employed sex workers may also work in residential areas.

☒ **Pimping, exploitation of sex workers and human trafficking** are prohibited in German law.

Since 2005, within the context of the 37<sup>th</sup> Criminal Code Amendment Act, German law was aligned with the European and international provisions on human trafficking<sup>11</sup> and provides enhanced support for victims of human trafficking.

## Local context in Hamburg

Hamburg, the second largest city in Germany (population 1.8 million), with the country's biggest and most important port, and its famous red light district – the Reeperbahn in St. Pauli – is a well known sex industry centre.

Indoor prostitution comprises around 80% of the entire sex industry. Apartments, brothels, massage parlours, bars, clubs, cinemas, saunas, etc, are spread out across almost all of the city, including residential areas. The majority work in small apartments.

According to local police<sup>12</sup>, sex work in Hamburg mostly takes place indoors. There are around 350 apartments, where on average two to three women, including some transgender women, work together; and around 150 brothels and 40 clubs. These arrangements facilitate contact between indoor sex workers.

In specific districts, such as St. Pauli and St. Georg, the two main red light districts, there are around 40 hotels, as well as sex shops, cinemas, bars, escort services and so on, where sex work takes place.

*Sex workers mostly work indoors, in small venues. Workplaces are dispersed across the city.*

## Marseille and Nantes, France

### Legal framework in France

☒ **Prostitution** in France is neither prohibited nor regulated. There is no legislation that clearly targets 'sex work' or uses that term.

Since the Law on Inner Security in 2003, active and passive soliciting are prohibited. Although active soliciting means behaviour (using words or gestures) with the aim of proposing a remunerated sexual service and advertising it in a public place, passive soliciting concerns any

person who 'has the intention' to propose a remunerated sexual service. This is forbidden in any public place, such as streets, bars, public gardens, roads, car parks, woods etc. The punishment for passive soliciting is two months' imprisonment and a € 3,750 fine.

This legislation is national in scope, but its application is regional and is dependent on the action of individual prefectures.

There is no specific legislation on **indoor sex work**. According to recent practices by police forces, sex workers advertising on the Internet may be charged with the offence of soliciting.

Prostitution is prohibited in hotels, saunas, bars, clubs and other areas open to the public. There are no rules concerning private apartments, but it is highly advisable that all sex workers working together in an apartment have their names on the lease in order to avoid prosecution for pimping. Organising indoor sex work is also forbidden.

■ **Sexual exploitation** and pimping – the assistance or protection of prostitution, sharing or receiving money earned through prostitution, or living with a sex worker without having any proper resources oneself – are forbidden. Pimping covers a broad range of actions. Thus, partners of sex workers can also be charged with pimping.<sup>13</sup>

☑ **Human trafficking** is prohibited and subject to punishment. The Law on Inner Security also provides social protection for victims of human trafficking.

*Organising indoor sex work and soliciting are both forbidden. Pimping, which covers a broad range of actions, is criminalised, as is human trafficking.*

## Local context

### Nantes

Nantes (population 283,000) has a harbour and is the largest city in the west of France. For a number of years now, outdoor sex workers have faced repression, with police forces targeting migrants in particular. The partner organisation, Médecins du Monde, has found that the number of indoor sex workers is four times higher than that of outdoor sex workers.

The indoor sex work population is not the same as the outdoor one and there would appear to be a clear division between the two.

Outdoor sex workers are concentrated in several specific areas, but there are no specific indoor sex work areas in Nantes. Indoor sex work venues are dispersed across the city and mainly take the form of private apartments and hotels. The isolation of indoor sex workers is compounded by this dispersal and the fact that they often work alone in the flats.

The hidden nature of indoor sex work makes it difficult to map the indoor prostitution scene, and as such it remains partly unknown.

*Police target migrants on the streets. Indoor sex workers mostly work alone in flats dispersed across the city.*

### Marseille

Marseille (population 852,000) is the biggest French port and has always been the centre and entry point of migration flows in France.

Outdoor sex work venues have evolved over time and in relation to migration patterns and policies, but they tend to be concentrated in specific areas.

In contrast, indoor sex work venues are mostly apartments dispersed across the city, which render sex workers more isolated from one another.

Indoor sex workers advertise in local newspapers and on general and specialised websites, but without giving their addresses. The main reasons for this are the strict legislation on indoor sex work and the fear of checks by the authorities, but also a preference for more anonymity.

Prostitution also takes place in saunas, hotels, bars and clubs, but it is not official and remains hidden.

Although police controls have become more frequent in Marseille and violence has increased in the streets, as yet no decrease in outdoor prostitution has been observed. Indoor prostitution has nevertheless increased greatly, without obvious links to the political changes in the outdoor scene.

*Indoor sex workers mostly work alone in apartments across the city and are more isolated.*

## Porto, Portugal

### Legal framework in Portugal

☒ **Prostitution** is neither criminalised nor regulated and there is no mention of it in Portuguese legislation. Although it is not recognised legally, it is not considered a crime. Therefore, sex workers cannot be arrested for providing these services. Nevertheless, there is no legal framework to protect the rights of sex workers, which leaves them in a vulnerable position. As sex work is not considered a form of labour, it is impossible to obtain a work contract for engaging in this activity<sup>14</sup>, or to make deductions to the national social security or financial systems under this professional occupation.

☒ **Indoor sex work** is not specifically recognised by Portuguese law, but the law protects people inside their homes. This means that police forces cannot enter any apartment without prior written authorisation by a court.

☒ **Pimping** – the encouragement or facilitation of prostitution professionally or for profit – is considered a crime punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years. The owners and managers of apartments and bars can be accused of pimping, because they may facilitate prostitution.

*Indoor sex work is not mentioned in the law and there is no legal framework to protect sex workers' rights. Pimping and human trafficking are criminalised.*

☒ **Human trafficking** is also considered a crime. A person who delivers, entices, accepts or transports someone for the purposes of sexual exploitation is liable to be punished with a prison sentence of between 3 to 10 years.

### Local context in Porto

Porto (population 263,000) is the second biggest city in Portugal and is also a port. Indoor sex work is dispersed throughout the city, mostly in private apartments. Most of the sex workers have a different residence and use these apartments specifically for work.

In Porto, almost all sex workers advertise their sexual services in the Relax pages of two specific newspapers, and also on specialised websites related to sex work.

*Indoor sex workers work in collective settings across the city. Apartments are organised by sex workers themselves or a manager.*



The reality of the sex industry as encountered by the partner organisation is that it is structured in a collective way: apartments always have at least two sex workers and the largest apartments may have up to five. These collective structures encourage networking and contact between sex workers. The apartments may be organised by a manager or rented by a small group of sex workers working for themselves.

## Sofia, Bulgaria

### Legal framework in Bulgaria

☒ **Prostitution** is neither criminalised nor legalised. The legal framework in Bulgaria does not directly address sex workers.

There is an old article in the Penal code “Unearned income through immoral means” which states that able-bodied persons of age, who continuously fail to engage in socially beneficial work, or those who receive income through unwarranted or immoral means, are subject to up to two years of imprisonment or probation.<sup>15</sup>

Lately, more frequent arrests of sex workers have occurred based on this article. It is particularly invoked with regard to street-based prostitution. As a result, the police often detain sex workers and charge them with disturbing public order, with having no ID, and so on.

Due to a lack of regulation, there are frequent cases of police corruption and police violence against sex workers, blackmail, and other arbitrary acts of abuse.

☒ **Indoor sex work:** Massage and escort services are two legalised activities that, at times, are directly or indirectly connected to sex work. They are subject to a municipality-imposed annual patent taxation.

Organising and offering venues for prostitution (indoor sex work) is criminalised, and not only managers but also sex workers may be punished by the law for pimping if they rent an apartment or other venue.

*Two activities are legalised: massage and escort services. Organising and offering venues for prostitution is criminalised, as are pimping and human trafficking.*

On one hand, the law pursues the owners and people who are directly in charge of the sex business. On the other hand, access to sex workers depends mainly on their managers/controllers. If legal problems arise, service providers will find that contacting the target group proves complicated and sometimes even impossible.

☑ **Pimping**, persuasion into prostitution and **human trafficking** are also defined as criminal acts by the Penal Code.

### Local context in Sofia

Sofia (population 1.4 million), as the capital of Bulgaria, is in the centre of migration flows from Eastern to Western Europe.

In Sofia, most of the indoor venues are brothels or private apartments, where five to ten or more sex workers offer sexual services.

Indoor sex workers work mostly in collective venues that are controlled by managers and criminal business organisations.

Other specific spots are truck stop areas with hotels, bars (featuring strip shows) and restaurants. The majority of clients are foreign drivers, mostly from Turkey.

Borovets, a winter ski resort near Sofia, also has a sex industry, with sex work taking place in bars that are open seasonally.

Throughout Sofia, all indoor sex work venues are owned and managed by criminal business networks, and sex workers have to abide by their rules.

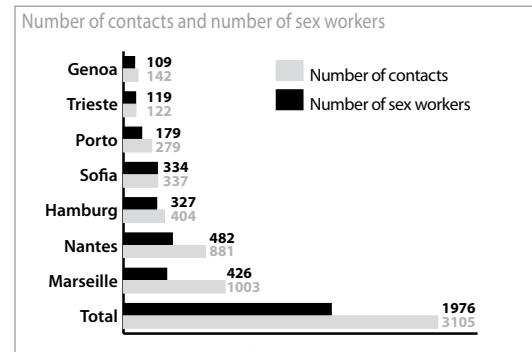
Online searches for sex have recently become very popular in Bulgaria and many sex workers use the Internet to sell their services, although word of mouth remains the most effective way to advertise.

# Research methodology

The INDOORS project was developed using a common questionnaire and database, with the help of Sphinx© software, but allowed for differences in the participating cities. In Nantes, in particular, prior to the commencement of the INDOORS project, Médecins du Monde had already begun work with a questionnaire specific to their local context. As a result, some aspects of the INDOORS questionnaire differed in Nantes. For this reason, some tables do not include results from Nantes, or do include their results but give different kinds of information. Please note that this research is not scientific but empirical. It is based on the database used to collect the information, on the outreach methodologies implemented by the partner organisations, and on the ethics of the project. The partners did their best to avoid being intrusive, to avoid interfering with sex workers' work, and to adopt a non-judgemental approach. It is essential to bear in mind this methodology in order to better understand the content and the results of this research.

## Number of contacts and number of sex workers

The survey was carried out from January 2009 to June 2010 in seven European cities – Genoa, Hamburg, Marseille, Nantes, Porto, Sofia and Trieste. The outreach teams from the partner organisations made 3087 contacts during this period. These 3087 contacts were comprised of 1976 different sex workers.



The difference between the number of contacts made by the outreach teams and the number of sex workers contacted is explained by the fact that an individual sex worker may have been in contact more than once, on different occasions and through different methods of contact (telephone, visits, and so on).

68% of the sex workers were contacted more than once. One third of the targeted sex workers (32%) were only contacted once, which can be explained by the turnover observed in all the partner cities. Indeed, the fluctuation of advertisements for sexual services on the Internet and in newspapers, and the mobility of sex workers in the visited locations, give further indication of a high turnover.

## Observations

First of all, **significant differences** in the partner cities can be observed according to the **number of contacts**. These differences are explained by the methodologies chosen by the organisations.

In Sofia, Hamburg, Porto, Genoa and Trieste, outreach was conducted solely or in most cases by direct visits to sex workers at their workplaces.

In Marseille and Nantes, the cities with the highest number of contacts, outreach was conducted by telephone calls or through the Internet, and rarely by visits. Overall, outreach through visits seems to yield a lower number of contacts, but certainly allows for a more direct approach to sex workers.

Although this difference might be expected to influence the results of the research, particular attention will be given in this analysis to highlighting local differences and to each specific context.

This piece of research is a local rather than a global one, and its local framework should always be remembered.

Moreover, in this project the quality of the research is not influenced by the quantity. Each outreach team implemented methodology chosen in response to the local situation, with results that could be suitably analysed.

Secondly, because this research sought to respect each organisation's ethic and its previous outreach methodologies developed in daily work, a specific method was established to record the data.

In order to preserve the confidentiality of the sex workers, a code was created for each person including a letter (linked to the city) and four numbers.

In Marseille, Nantes, Genoa, Trieste and Porto, each sex worker had his or her own code, allowing the organisations to ensure tracking of the individual (how many times the person was contacted, whether their circumstances changed, etc.).

In Sofia and Hamburg, the code was related to the contacts made by the outreach teams: sex workers were recorded with a new code as new contacts each time.

These two methods are not contradictory, as the mobility of indoor sex workers in Hamburg and Sofia is high and the turnover does not allow for follow-up contact with them. Moreover, in Sofia, because indoor settings are controlled by third parties, the team decided at the beginning of the action not to "track" the indoor sex workers they met.

For ease of comprehension and in order to provide as realistic an analysis as possible, **this analysis is based on the number of sex workers** and not on the number of contacts. Indeed, taking into account the number of contacts would influence the results greatly, as 68% of sex workers were contacted more than once. This approach avoids the appearance of the same sex workers multiple times in the results.

## Methodologies used to make contact with indoor sex workers

This section on methodology is intended to provide more details on outreach was implemented by the partner organisations.

It will describe the diverse tools selected to collect data on sex workers before the commencement of outreach, the first contacts made during outreach, and the different methodologies carried out during the project.

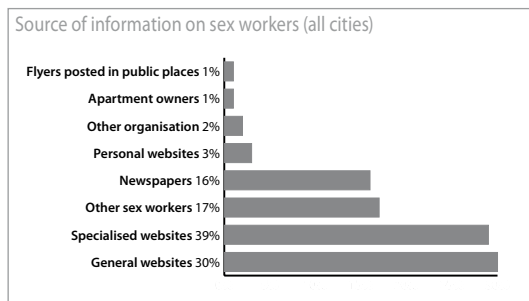
### ■ Media used to seek information on sex workers

Tools chosen by indoor sex workers for communication and advertising are many and varied, and mostly depend on laws regulating prostitution on the Internet and in newspapers.

Sex workers may advertise in newspapers, on websites dedicated to the sex industry or on websites with more general themes. Some also have a personal website.

In collective sex work venues, sex workers know their colleagues and they themselves are sometimes the best means to make contact with other sex workers.

Because of these variables, each organisation chose the most appropriate means to find information on indoor sex workers in order to make contact with them efficiently.



This table displays the means by which organisations obtained the required information about indoor sex workers, such as their telephone numbers and/or addresses. Where a specific source is not represented in a particular city, it is not necessarily the case that sex workers do not use it as a tool to advertise their services – it was simply not chosen by the partner organisations.

Three methods of finding information about indoor sex workers were used throughout the seven cities: the Internet, newspapers, and through sex workers' networking.

### Websites

62% of the sex workers' contact information (phone numbers and/or addresses) was found on the Internet, particularly in the cities of Hamburg, Marseille and Nantes.

The Internet is the first place checked by organisations when seeking to make contact with indoor sex workers, because it has become one of the most popular communication tools used by them to advertise sexual services. Ads related to the sex industry can be found on specialised websites, general websites and personal websites.

- A specialised website is one where only advertisements linked to the sex industry can be found.

- A useful feature of such websites is that organisations will find more information about sex workers on them: their age and gender, as with almost all ads, but also sexual practices offered, prices, telephone number, address and/or email.

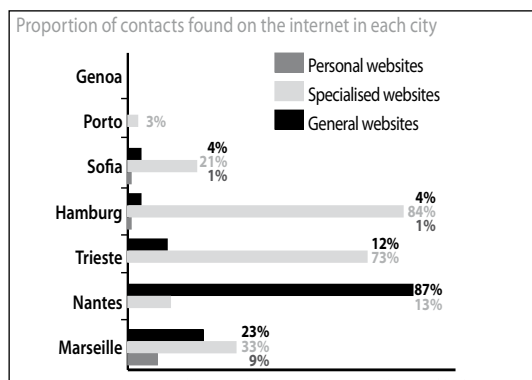
- A general website runs all kinds of ads, and those for sexual services will be published in a specific, discreet section reserved for adults. It may be labelled "escort and erotic massage", "erotica", "without consequences", "adult dating", or similar.

- Personal websites are those created by sex workers themselves. There are fewer of them but this space often allows them to publish more pictures of themselves and better attract clients. These websites can be found through any search engine by typing "escort". Often, sex workers who have a personal website also publish ads elsewhere such as specialised or general websites.

General websites were used in making 30% of the contacts, and mostly by the French outreach teams in Nantes and Marseille.

29% of the contacts were made through specialised websites.

3% of contacts made were with sex workers found through their own personal websites.

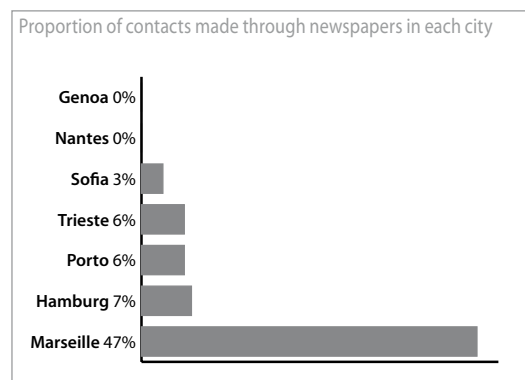


Deeper analysis of these types of websites shows that the content of the ads is not homogeneous in all cities. Sometimes, sex workers clearly provide their addresses and contact numbers in the ad. This is especially the case in Hamburg, where information is also provided on sexual services. This is connected with the legalisation: in Hamburg, where sex work is legalised, sex workers do not face the risk of prosecution.

By contrast, in Marseille, Nantes and Trieste, sex workers do not give their addresses, because of possible police checks. They have more to fear and this makes them harder to reach.

Furthermore, websites providing pictures and additional details of services offered by sex workers are located in foreign countries where prostitution is either legalised or more tolerated, such as Germany and Bulgaria. Indeed, several websites located in France with clear references made to sexual practices were closed after having been charged with the offence of pimping: this was the case for [escort-girl-annonce.fr](#) and [escort-girl-paradise.com](#).

In Trieste, similar actions were carried out to shut down web pages.



## Newspapers

As newspapers are also a communication tool used by sex workers to advertise sexual services, the majority of partner organisations used them to find sex workers' information.

Although the development of new technologies plays a big role in the sex industry, advertising in newspapers is still common for indoor sex workers.

16% of the contacts were found in newspapers, mostly in Marseille but also in Hamburg, Trieste and Porto. This was mostly dependent on whether each city's local newspapers offered a place to advertise or not.

But again, the situation may vary greatly and follows local patterns: in Hamburg, one can find ads for sexual services as well as ads announcing apartments available for rent and/or sex workers looking for colleagues, while in Marseille one will have to closely examine the dating pages and nothing will be explicitly mentioned.

In Trieste, the extensive actions targeting web pages have also touched ads published in newspapers. As a result, the local newspaper "Il Piccolo" no longer publishes explicit sex ads, and those which remain use coded language in order to attract clients. The number of ads published regionally (Trieste and surroundings) fell from



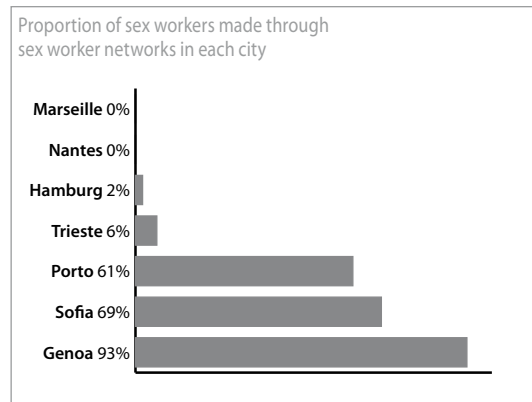
662 in 2009 to 257 in 2010. Contacting sex workers has become more difficult as some phone numbers are non-existent: some of the individuals have changed jobs, while others simply do not respond to the phone calls.

In Genoa there are little or no ads in the local newspaper. As in Porto and Sofia, the team's contact strategy was to meet indoor sex workers directly or through their colleagues.

### **Sex workers networks and verbal communication**

17% of the total contacts were found through sex worker networks.

When it is possible to use networking and verbal communication, face-to-face exchanges may facilitate more in-depth discussions, and function as an efficient way to contact sex workers and build trust at the same time.



The circumstances of these contacts in Genoa, Sofia and Porto vary as contact was initiated on different terms. In Genoa, sex workers themselves asked the organisation to support them. Indoor sex workers were the first to make contact, and the so-called "snowball effect" worked naturally here.

In Porto and Sofia, the outreach teams made the initial contact. Sex workers were very receptive to their visits and began to spread the word about the projects.

In all cases, although contact may have been initiated in different ways, the results show high involvement of indoor sex workers in the project.

Several factors encourage this kind of communication: low turnover of sex workers, a strong community of sex workers making use of networking, the fact that sex workers are not isolated and the fact that they share a common cultural identity.

Other kinds of networks are important in obtaining information on sex workers, especially regarding newcomers to the sex industry. Particularly in Porto, the owners of sex industry venues often promoted the project and introduced the team to new sex workers.

In Genoa, links between the Comitato and another sex work project proved useful in obtaining information on sex workers they had not previously reached.

### **Conclusion**

In all the cities where the research was carried out, female, male and transgender indoor-based sex workers all advertise their services on general and specialised websites and in newspapers, regardless of gender, country of origin or services offered.

Nevertheless, according to the experience of the outreach teams, one trend stands out: the number of sex workers advertising their services on the Internet has increased in recent years. The partner organisations put forward two reasons for this change: online advertising is much cheaper than placing ads in daily newspapers, and the Internet is a much more anonymous medium for both sex workers and their clients.

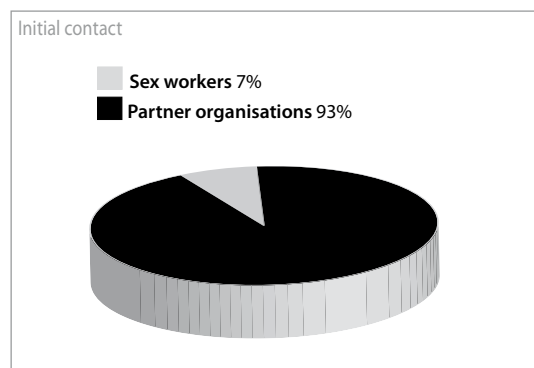
Factors liable to have an impact on local variations and specifics are as follows:

- national legislation, especially regarding the Internet and newspapers
- the internal rules of the medium where the ad is published
- the legal status of sex workers
- sex workers' preferences and client demand

In all media, the turnover of ads is very high: indoor sex workers may place an ad for a week or for a month, or may not advertise at all for a period of time. Partner organisations must pay close attention to the chosen medium. This turnover makes indoor sex workers hard to reach.

### ■ Initial contact

First contact was initiated either by sex workers or by the organisations.



#### Initial contact made by the organisations

This percentage of 93% of contacts initiated by the outreach teams reflects the global reality of outreach work: organisations must contact sex workers in order to reach them.

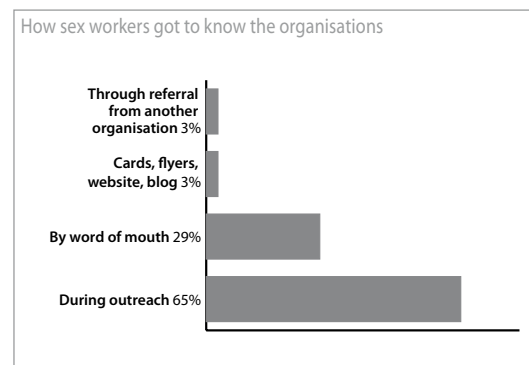
Within the framework of this project, the organisations mainly initiated contact through phone calls or direct visits.

This is explained by a number of factors.

Firstly, the general methodology used by the organisations to make contact with outdoor and indoor sex workers is to visit them or contact them at their workplace, in order to create initial links. Once first contact has been made, indoor sex workers are more likely to contact the organisations by themselves and to spread information about them.

In cities where follow-up with indoor sex workers was possible, this methodology showed a positive impact: indoor sex workers began to contact the organisations by themselves for more information or for advice on specific problems.

Secondly, indoor sex workers, due to their mobility and their wish to stay anonymous, will not seek out contact with sex workers' organisations, and often remain isolated when facing difficulties. Most of them are unfamiliar with sex workers' organisations and do not contact them.



#### Initial contact made by sex workers

212 sex workers contacted the partner organisations directly. This was the case in every city except Sofia, where the partner organisation, HESED, was always the party to initiate contact.

In the majority of instances (65%), sex workers learned about the organisations following an outreach session. Outreach work ensures visibility and enables more sex workers to find out about projects that exist for them.

27% of the sex workers who contacted the teams, especially in Porto and Genoa, got to know the organisation through word of mouth from other sex workers. Building trusting relationships with the sex workers contacted during outreach visits was the best way to promote the services of the organisation.

Although these percentages do not show it, the Portuguese partner organisation, APDES, noticed that in Porto, sex workers were increasingly initiating contact and asking for visits from the team. The outreach team estimated that more than 50% of their visits were a result of direct requests from sex workers or the owners of the apartments.

This highlights the effectiveness of “word of mouth” and correlates the above points on the important role of sex worker networks and verbal communication.

3% of the sex workers made contact after having found information on a card or flyer distributed by the organisations in specific places (public services, sex shops, etc), or after having visited their websites and blogs. This was the case in Marseille, Genoa, Trieste and Porto. These strategies may have a smaller impact, but more hindsight and longer-term analysis is required before results can be evaluated.

Finally, 2% of the sex workers were referred by other organisations, mostly in Genoa.

## ■ Outreach methodologies

Two main contact methodologies were developed in the INDOORS project: contact through phone calls and contact through direct visits.<sup>16</sup>

In each city, outreach methodologies were chosen according to the structure of indoor sex work venues and the information given in the ads by indoor sex workers.

City	Outreach methodologies
Marseille	SMS: 64%, Voice mail message: 51%, Phone call: 32%, Email: 12%, Counselling at the office: 2%, Visit: 1%
Nantes	Voice mail message: 54%, Phone call: 25%, Email: 3%, Website: 3%, Counselling at the office: 1%
Trieste	Phone call: 96%, SMS: 11%, Email: 2%, Visit: 2%

In Marseille, Nantes and Trieste, contact with indoor sex workers was mainly made by telephone (phone calls, SMS and voice mail messages). This was chiefly because in France and Italy, the partner organisations could only find telephone numbers, rather than addresses, in the ads published in newspapers or on the Internet.

These cities also do not have specific districts known for indoor prostitution, and indoor sex workers are instead dispersed all over the city.

Initial contact as well as subsequent contacts were made by telephone. The teams always offered sex workers the possibility of a visit or a meeting at the organisation’s premises or in a neutral place.

When the individual was not reachable, an SMS, voice mail message or email was used to give all the contact information of the organisation (telephone number, email, website).

The outreach teams also visited sex workers, but this took place less frequently.



City	Outreach methodologies
Sofia	Visit: 96%, Website: 4%
Hamburg	Visit: 100%
Porto	Visit: 98%, Phone call: 2%
Genoa	Visit: 72%, Counselling at the office: 25%, Phone call: 3%

In the other cities, Hamburg, Sofia, Porto and Genoa, indoor sex workers were contacted through direct visits. Two approaches were developed.

In Porto, although the initial contact took place by telephone in order to describe the outreach work and to ask sex workers for permission to visit, the telephone was not used to develop outreach for sex workers – it was merely a tool to initiate the visits and to solve other problems. After giving notice, the outreach team would immediately visit the sex workers at their workplace.

According to the experiences of the team, this approach was easy to implement because sex workers were very open and receptive to their work. On first contact they might be suspicious, but this initial mistrust was overcome as they got to know the outreach team and heard more about them from other colleagues.

In Hamburg and Sofia, after having tried in the past to contact indoor sex workers by phone without success (they said they did not need services or had no issues), the teams decided to visit the apartments directly, without giving notice. This was possible because in Germany and Bulgaria, venues' addresses are displayed in ads. Legal or more tolerant conditions of work for sex workers allow them to advertise their services more openly than in other cities and countries.

Finally, in Genoa, indoor-based sex workers mostly work in a specific area of the historic town, which significantly benefits outreach logistics.

## Responses of sex workers

In total, when direct contact was made, 73% of all indoor sex workers were interested in the project and the approach. Contacts were positive in every city.

City	Sex workers' reaction
Marseille	No response: 68%, Interested: 15%, Refused: 8%, No time: 5%, Hang up: 1%
Nantes	No response: 63%, Interested: 13%, Refused: 11%, No time: 7%, Hang up: 3%
Trieste	Interested: 75%, Refused: 22%, No time: 3%

In Marseille and Nantes, the majority of phone calls did not result in direct contact, but in each instance an SMS was sent or a message was left on voice mail. This strategy proved successful, as sex workers eventually called back. The number of cases resulting in no response is partly explained by the high turnover of indoor sex workers. Aside from this, both national and migrant sex workers in every city were interested and wanted information.

In Trieste, a large majority of sex workers showed great interest.

City	Sex workers' reaction
Sofia	Interested: 98%, Silence: 2%
Hamburg	Interested: 53%, Did not open the door: 17%, No time: 13%, Refused: 8%, Silence: 5%, No response: 1%
Porto	Interested: 89%, No response: 7%, No time: 3%, Silence: 1%
Genoa	Interested: 99%, Refused: 1%

On the other hand, in cities where outreach was conducted through visits, contacts were more successful and sex workers showed interest in the information given by the organisation.

In some cases, sex workers refused, had no time or did not open the door, especially in Hamburg. There are numerous explanations for this: some felt anxious because they did not know the team, and others were in the company of a manager who did not want contact to be made. However, in Sofia, it appears in the results that managers and organisers made contact possible. Only 142 sex workers (7%) were not interested in contact.

Reasons for refusal	Number of sex workers	Percentages
No need for services offered	73	51%
Do not feel concerned	25	18%
Not in sex work any more	21	15%
Do not offer sex	18	13%
Do not offer sex for money	5	3%
Total	142	100%

Sex workers refused contact mostly because they did not have any need for what the teams were offering or because they did not have concerns about health prevention.

They said they practised safer sex, were very familiar with the context of sex work, and presently felt secure. Sex workers also refused contact with partner organisations for other reasons.

- Some of them did not offer paid sex or did not offer sexual relations. This may have been a misunderstanding caused by the fact that outreach teams contacted people offering companionship, escorting, and/or massages. However, it may also be a way for sex workers to protect themselves from possible checks by law enforcement.

- Others were no longer active in sex work. This may be attributed to the high turnover taking place on the

Internet and in newspapers. It illustrates that sex work can be a temporary means to solve a financial problem, or a temporary activity.

## ■ Conclusion

The context of sex work can vary greatly, for a number of reasons, and the situation is never stable. Changes may occur very frequently and so it is not always possible to implement the same methodology. Interventions need to be very flexible in order to overcome obstacles: wariness from illegal immigrants who are afraid of police raids; sex workers “on tour” who are indifferent and not interested in spending time meeting outreach teams.

It is important to adapt the methodology to sex workers’ needs and respect their working time. It is also important not to insist when they say no to calls or visits even after detailed explanation.

Managers and organisers may be a barrier to contacting sex workers. It is sometimes necessary to adapt outreach methodology and take them into account in order to reach sex workers.

Access to and contact with sex workers also depends on the community contacted: some communities are more receptive to outreach work than others. For instance, in Porto, Latin American sex workers appeared to be the most receptive group, while Portuguese women were more suspicious. This may be linked to the specific needs of each community, their history and integration in society.

It is also important to keep in mind that sometimes migrant sex workers may be more integrated in their local community than in general society, and it may be harder to reach them.

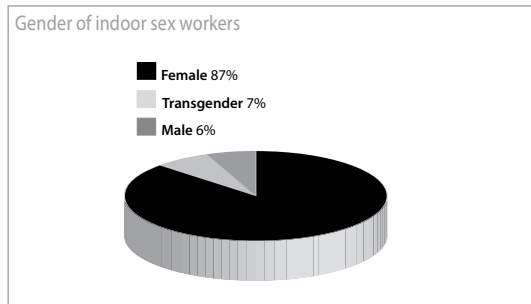
Developing cultural mediation in such projects as a tool to better understand the codes, practices and community specificities is a key strategy in order to adapt harm reduction and prevention to each migrant group and community.

# Indoor prostitution scene

This section provides an overview of the indoor prostitution scene in the seven cities, profiling the indoor sex workers contacted (gender, age, migration and legal status) and the organisation of their work based on the following variables: where they solicit clients, which sexual services they offer, where they work, whether they work with a third party, and their mobility.



## Profile



### ■ Gender

Indoor sex work is largely done by female sex workers, comprising 87% of the total. This result may be explained in part by the fact that this was the main group targeted by the project.

Nevertheless, this was not the only group targeted by the teams, and in some cities, men and transgender women were also contacted.

In Trieste, 26% of sex workers contacted were transgender, and in Marseille 14%. In Marseille, 7% of sex workers contacted were male, and in Nantes, 14%, although they stopped contacting male sex workers in 2009 because most of the ads found were not concerning sex work. In Porto, Sofia and Hamburg, almost all sex workers reached by the organisations were women.

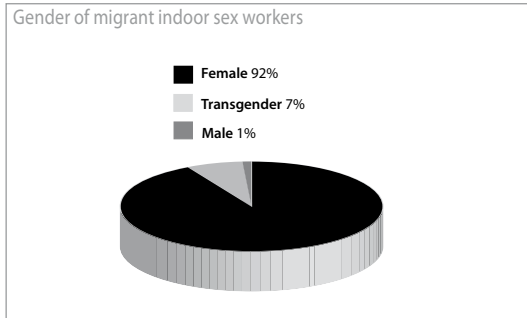
This highlights the need for more projects to target male and transgender sex workers in indoor settings, as they may also be in need of contact with sex worker organisations and better access to public services.

It also shows differences in gender visibility in the indoor sex work population. For instance, in Sofia, the team did not make contact with any transgender sex workers and only a tiny percentage of male sex workers (1.5%), while in Trieste and Genoa, no male sex workers were contacted.

The lack of transgender visibility, especially in Sofia, can be attributed to discrimination experienced by this group, though this also takes place in the other partner cities.

Another interesting point in this research was that male sex workers offering services for women were also contacted, in contrast with outdoor settings, where male sex workers offer sexual services exclusively to men<sup>17</sup>. This population seems to seek more anonymity than other indoor sex workers, certainly due to fears of stigmatisation, or because female clients desire more anonymity.

Despite these trends, the fact that female sex workers comprised the majority is representative of the general sex work population, outdoor and indoor<sup>18</sup>.



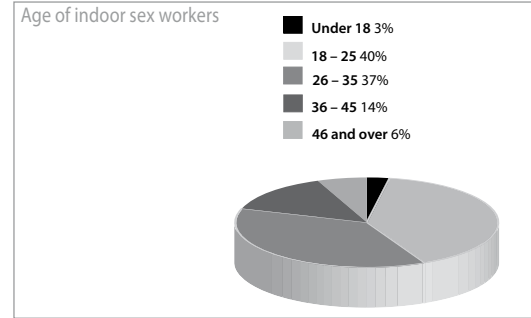
When examining the migrant sex worker population more closely, it can be observed that only 1% is male and 7% transgender.

In the migrant population, sex work is obviously much more feminine than masculine. 58% of contacted transgender sex workers are migrants.

These local trends confirm that sex work and migration concerns mostly women, including transgender women. While in Marseille, the majority of female (transgender and non-transgender) sex workers are nationals and in Sofia all female sex workers are nationals, in Trieste, Genoa, Hamburg and Porto the vast majority of indoor sex workers are migrants.

With regard to male migrant sex workers, the results show that this population remains invisible in indoor settings. This may be for several reasons, such as cultural taboos within the community, or the fact that migration may present them with a wider range of work opportunities.

However, migration continues to present a real opportunity for transgender people who want to escape stigmatisation and cultural repression in their countries of origin and begin the gender reassignment process in another country.



## Age

On average, the vast majority of indoor sex workers contacted were aged between 18 and 35 (77%). At first glance, this is in significant contrast to outdoor settings, where sex work is performed by all age groups, and where older sex workers tend to be more numerous.

There may be various reasons behind this difference, and especially in terms of advertising on the Internet, it would seem that use of new technologies tends to come more easily to younger generations.

One third of indoor sex workers are aged between 26 and 35. With regard to migrant sex workers, this could lead to the assumption that many of them already have children, this being a reason for them to engage in sex work in order to support their families back home.

Another reason for the predominance of this age group, however, may be the methodology chosen to record age. During this research age was recorded according to the information given in ads or to what was claimed by sex workers.

Since sex workers tend to make themselves younger in order to attract more clients, the percentage of sex workers over 36 years old may be underrepresented.

Porto is the only city where age can be considered to be more precise, as the team asks sex workers their birth

date when they first make contact. In this city, 78% of sex workers are also aged between 18 and 35. Additionally, the team observed that in general the migrant population is young and healthy.

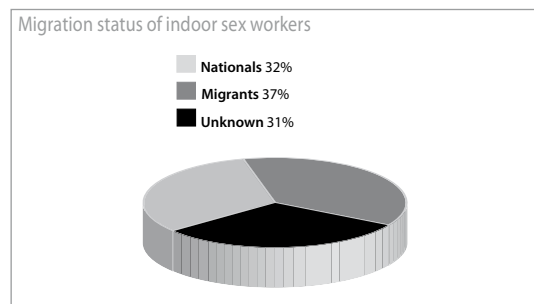
However, percentages vary from city to city. In Sofia, indoor sex workers appear to be the youngest, as 62% are aged between 18 and 25. In Genoa they are older (42% are over 46).

What stands out is the fact that in Sofia, Hamburg and Genoa, the organisations made contact with 9 minors involved in prostitution.

Although this situation occurs sometimes in Bulgaria, it is new in Hamburg, where the organisation made contact with three Bulgarian sex workers who seemed to be under 18.

Particular attention should be paid to such individuals so that this does not become a new trend in the partner city. Partner organisations may work with specific authorities and organisations able to take action on such issues.

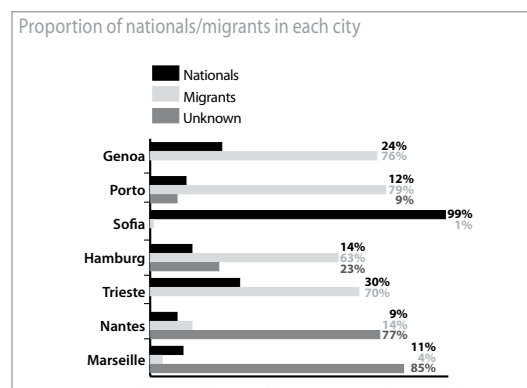
## ■ Migration: regions and countries of origin



This research flags up a weak point regarding the migration status of indoor sex workers, as their status is unknown in 31% of cases. It illustrates the difficulties encountered by some outreach teams in asking sex work-

ers about their origin. This relates mainly to methods of outreach employed by the French teams (by telephone and without direct visual contact with sex workers), but also to Europe's current climate of repression against migrants. Migrants are less visible and harder to reach, especially when working in indoor settings. Their feelings of mistrust towards public services and organisations, particularly at first contact, are obvious, and migrants are wary of disclosing their origin.

In terms of differences between cities, there are two tendencies: in Hamburg, Porto, Genoa and Trieste, the vast majority of indoor sex workers are migrants, while in Sofia, Nantes and Marseille, the vast majority of indoor sex workers are nationals.



### Cities with low numbers of migrants

According to the results of this study, the majority of indoor sex work in Marseille, Sofia and Nantes would seem to be performed by national sex workers.

In Marseille and Nantes, because the context of repression against migrants and the difficulty of building trust on the phone, the team made the decision not to ask the origin of the individuals with whom they came into contact, but to give them the opportunity to raise it themselves – which they did not do.



Although results are not exhaustive, field experience would indicate that the proportion of newly arrived migrants is very low. The vast majority of people contacted by telephone and visited by the team were fluent French speakers, albeit sometimes with a light accent.

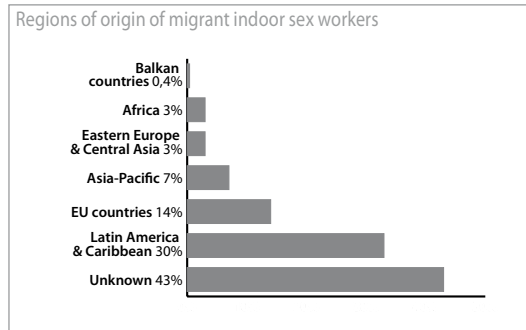
On the other hand, as Bulgaria is both a country of transit and of origin but not a final sex work destination, the proportion of migrants in Sofia is extremely low (1%). This low percentage concerns sex workers who were in transit to Western Europe. The 99% of nationals recorded in Sofia include members of the Roma ethnic minority.

In these cities, political developments in recent years have had a negative impact on the migration flow of sex workers. While in France they are mainly hidden in order to avoid controls, in Bulgaria they have encountered new legal barriers to entering the country since the EU expansion.

### Cities with high numbers of migrants

In Porto, Hamburg, Genoa and Trieste, where the outreach methods allowed for a better analysis of the migrant population, the results show that a majority of indoor sex workers are migrants.

This is explained by the fact that all of these cities are located along a migration route (being a port or situated close to a border) and have large migrant communities. In Genoa and Trieste, indoor prostitution has always been an exclusive domain of Italian nationals, but the massive influx of migrants in the last twenty years, mostly from Latin America, has inevitably left its mark on indoor settings.



This table again displays the limits of these results, as 43% of the regions of origin of migrant sex workers remain unknown.

Nevertheless, in Marseille and Nantes, where this was particularly the case, information found in the ads may provide some clues. Indeed, in order to appeal to clients, indoor sex workers often make mention of their origin: “black women”, “Latin American women” or “beauty of the islands”. In some cases, it may refer to ethnic origin but does not necessarily mean that these sex workers are migrants.

Overall, the partner organisations found that a majority of indoor migrant sex workers came from Latin America and the Caribbean. The other main region represented is the European Union. The fact that so many indoor migrant sex workers are coming from new EU countries shows that EU enlargement is an important factor in this internal mobility. Moreover, the strengthening of repressive policies against migrants in Europe is an important issue to consider with regard to the increase in trans-European mobility.

The partner organisations also documented migrants coming from Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia<sup>19</sup>, and, in lower numbers, Africa and Balkan countries<sup>20</sup>.

The low proportion of indoor sex workers coming from Africa is a particular characteristic of the indoor sector in Nantes, Marseille, Genoa and Trieste.

Indeed, in these cities, sex workers coming from Africa are far more numerous in outdoor settings than in indoor settings. In Marseille, 57% of outdoor sex workers come from Africa<sup>21</sup> in comparison with 12% of indoor sex workers; in Nantes, where the team did not notice any tendency linked to African origin, 77% of outdoor sex workers come from Africa<sup>22</sup>.

In Genoa and Trieste, although a small number of African sex workers was in evidence (8% in Genoa and 2.5% in Trieste), this does not compare with the nationwide average of sex workers coming from Africa to Italy, working in both indoor and outdoor settings, making up 40% of the migrant population<sup>23</sup>.

The fact that the majority of visible indoor sex workers in some partner cities are mostly from Latin America and

the Caribbean is linked to several factors.

In Porto, history has a great impact. In Portugal, common language is a significant feature and there are multiple formal agreements between Brazil and Portugal to facilitate migrant integration. The long-standing presence of Latin American migrants on Italian and Portuguese territory benefits their integration. Migration policies in each of the countries studied and the high level of settlement of these communities make the integration of these migrants easier.

In Sofia, the few migrants contacted were mostly from Balkan countries and non-EU countries in Eastern Europe, and were in transit to Western Europe.

### Top 10 countries of origin of national and migrant indoor sex workers

A total of 40 countries of origin was recorded in the seven cities, showing a high mobility of migrant sex workers.

#### Countries of origin

	Cities surveyed						
	Hamburg	Genoa	Trieste	Sofia	Porto	Marseille	Nantes
1	Thailand	Colombia	Italy	Bulgaria	Brazil	France	France
2	Germany	Italy	Brazil	Ukraine	Portugal	Brazil	Morocco
3	Poland	Dominican Republic	Colombia	Russia	Romania	Romania	Nigeria
4	Bulgaria & Russia	Nigeria	Venezuela	Turkey	Mozambique	Bulgaria	Brazil
5	Lithuania	Ecuador	Spain		Nigeria	Italy	Cameroon
6	Dominican Republic	Romania	Cuba			Senegal	Spain
7	Latvia	Argentina	Romania			Colombia	Italy
8	Romania	Uruguay	Poland			Somalia	
9	Ecuador	Panama	Ukraine			Poland	
10	Estonia & Hungary	Tunisia	Morocco			Algeria	

In terms of numbers of nationalities counted in each city, there are significant differences.

In Sofia, sex workers contacted came from only four countries, including Bulgaria, and in Porto, although the organisation recorded a high level of migrant sex workers, only five nationalities, including Portuguese, were counted.

In Marseille and Trieste, ten different nationalities were documented, in Genoa 13, in Nantes 15, in Hamburg 27. Hamburg appears to be located at the biggest crossroads of migration routes with the greatest turnover, while in Sofia and Porto, two cities with differing migration figures, migration is more exclusive to specific communities.

**I** *I want to become independent, but I do not know how. I work in Hamburg for three weeks, then I travel to Denmark and Ireland. How should I pay taxes on my income?*  
Hungarian female sex worker in Hamburg

In Porto, the majority of sex workers come from Brazil. Indeed, Brazilians comprise the most significant migrant population in Portugal overall, essentially due to historic links and their common language. Academic studies and statistics show that they work mainly in restaurants, hotels, the entertainment industry and so on, where interaction and empathy with clients play a significant part in the success of an employee. This is also the case with sex work, although such activity is not included in official statistics. A great majority of Brazilians – especially women – choose sex work as a more rapid way to earn revenue and fulfil their migration objectives.

In Genoa and Trieste, the majority of indoor sex workers also come from Latin America, mostly from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Brazil. The small but nevertheless noteworthy amount of data on Nigerian women

may reflect the presence of the Nigerian trafficking system in the sex industry as they work either on the streets or indoors.

Changes to immigration legislation in recent years have driven migrant sex workers further underground in all of the cities studied.

In Hamburg, Germany's second largest city and its most important port, sex workers from Thailand have long been established as the largest group. They have well-developed networks, working in apartments as well as in massage parlours.

Sex workers from EU countries also form a large group (31%). This picture changed considerably since the EU expansions of 2004 and 2007, with a visible increase in sex workers from these regions since then. Theoretically, they could work on a legal basis, but not all sex workers from the new EU countries are aware that they can work legally, as self-employed, in the sex industry in Germany, and that the process to do so is quite simple.

## ■ Legal situation of indoor migrant sex workers

According to the results, the majority of the indoor migrant sex workers contacted would appear to be in Italy, Germany and Bulgaria legally.

In Nantes and Marseille, the low amount of data collected on migrants does not allow for a clear answer. But according to the experience of the two partner organisations, this seems to contrast greatly with the situation in outdoor settings, where the proportion of illegal migrants is higher.<sup>24</sup>

In Porto, the majority of indoor sex workers are in an irregular situation, as most migrant sex workers enter Portugal legally but end up overstaying their visas. Furthermore, although Portugal's migration policies may appear strict, authorities are not chasing migrants and that may be the main reason for the high number of mi-

grants living in Portugal. This may also explain migrants' disclosure of their situation to outreach teams, aided by the connections and trust established between the two parties.

The reality is more complex than the figures show, as irregular migrants may remain invisible and may not be reached by organisations.

Different circumstances were observed in each country.

**1.** Overall, harsh migration policies in Europe are also affecting indoor sex workers and obliging them to hide more in smaller and unknown settings in order to avoid controls.

For instance, in Italy, recent changes in migration policies have made it a crime for any migrant to be present on Italian territory without legal papers. As a result, migrant sex workers are harder to reach: either their work, on the street or in flats, is more hidden, or it is directly managed by a trafficking network.

**2.** The choice of migration routes and settlement is also significant.

In Hamburg, while the great majority of Thai women are already married when they enter Germany and therefore are entitled to work on a legal basis, other women intend to remain in the country for only a few months, and do not bother going through all the legal processes.

In Italy, immigration is much easier for Latin Americans thanks to their long-standing presence on Italian territory, and this is also the case for Moroccan and Algerian migrants in France.

**3.** The status of sex work plays a key role in the legal situation of indoor sex workers.

In Portugal, France, Italy and Bulgaria, since sex work is not recognised as formal work, it is not possible for migrants to obtain a working visa or permission for sex work, even if they are entering the country legally.

**4.** Two main realities come to the fore when analysing the legal situation of migrants in indoor settings. Although some indoor sex work settings contacted by the partner organisations seem to require legal immigration status, others are organised in such a way that irregular sex workers may find a place to work.

In Germany, migrant sex workers can establish themselves as self-employed, as permitted by the Migration Law and the Prostitution Act. This situation allows them to be more independent.

In Marseille and Nantes it is almost impossible to work in a flat without having valid papers, and irregular migrant sex workers are obliged to seek out other possibilities: working in a hotel, working in a friend's flat, and so on.

In Porto and Sofia, although the background is quite different in each city, indoor sex work settings are managed by third persons who are less concerned with legal status.

## Organisation of sex work

### ■ How do sex workers choose where to advertise sexual services?

Multiple factors affect this decision, and depend on the city. They include the following.

#### Legal framework

In countries where sex work is not a legal activity, indoor sex workers generally adapt to existing communication tools: websites based in another country or local newspapers which still accept such advertising. They then adapt the language used and information given in their ads: rather than directly offering sexual services, instead they mostly advertise massages or adult meetings for one night.

Police actions also have a direct impact upon the site of advertisement, as stated above. Since the extensive police actions in 2009 in Trieste, sex workers no longer advertise in the local newspaper.

On the other hand, in Portugal, irregular migrants do advertise their services in newspapers, because the authorities are more lax and do not investigate them.

### **Media policy**

The policy of the chosen media also plays a part: newspapers may require valid documentation before allowing publication of an ad. As such, irregular migrant sex workers do not have access to advertise in such newspapers. As a rule, newspapers are also more expensive than the Internet.

### **Client preferences**

Sex workers also choose their communication media according to demand. Often sex workers publish ads on the Internet and in newspapers simultaneously in order to increase business.

Furthermore, according to reports from sex workers, clients looking in newspapers and clients looking on the Internet comprise two distinct groups. The outreach team noted that clients searching online tend to have a higher purchase power. Therefore, the same services with the same sex worker will cost an 'internet client' more than they would cost a 'newspaper client'. Sex workers in the position of having these two kinds of clients manage the two groups using different mobile phone numbers (one specific to the newspaper ad and another for clients referred by the Internet). On specialised websites, they can price by the hour or by sexual practice. Although this phenomenon is prevalent in Porto, Marseille and Nantes, it mostly depends on the website, the city and the demands of clients.

### **The personal preference of the sex worker**

Sex workers will often choose the most practical and easiest media to use: one may be more used to newspapers, while another may prefer the Internet.

Sex workers may also seek more anonymity through newspapers and/or general websites. In Porto, sex workers said they did not use the Internet to advertise their services because they feared exposure and were afraid that their relatives might find out about their work.

Mobility is also an important factor in their choice: mobile sex workers will use the most flexible media.

A specific medium may also be traditionally linked to a specific community, based on country of origin, gender identity, etc. For instance, in Marseille, transgender sex workers tend to publish ads in newspapers, while in Genoa they publish them on the Internet. Also in Genoa, specialised websites are used mostly by transgender South American sex workers, and the daily newspaper "Secolo XIX" is used more by South American and Eastern European women.

Finally, sex workers will choose their medium according to the practices and prices they can mention through it: practices are much more detailed on specialised and personal websites.

In all cases, sex workers find the best way to attract clients and to overcome the legal barriers and difficulties, although often the consequence is greater isolation.

In countries with an abolitionist attitude, such as France and Italy, indoor sex workers tend to hide when advertising their services: they frequently change their telephone numbers, they do not display their addresses, or they only advertise massages in order to avoid controls. The more indoor sex workers try to hide, the more difficult it becomes to reach them. Organisations may lose time and face barriers when searching for contacts.

This research makes clear that the legal framework heavily impacts on outreach and HIV/STI prevention.

These activities are much more efficient when indoor sex workers are not isolated and when their workplaces are visible and easy to find by organisations.

### ■ Sexual services offered by sex workers and the issue of STI/HIV prevention

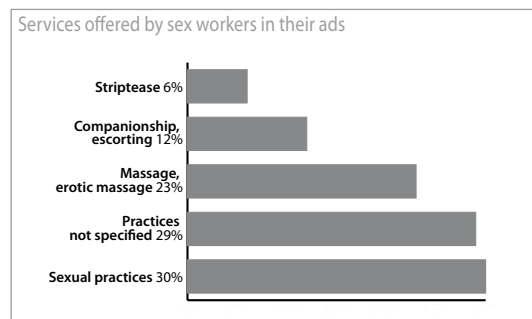
STI/HIV prevention and harm reduction are the main aspects of the outreach work carried out by the partner organisations. These are based on and adapted to the specific circumstances of sex workers, their sexual practices and their needs.

The sexual practices offered by indoor sex workers in their ads may have an impact on their attitude towards health prevention.

Furthermore, a team will not have the same approach to a sex worker offering unsafe practices in an advertisement or to a male sex worker offering sexual services to women.

To approach and better understand the STI/HIV prevention issue among indoor sex workers, two questions are key:

- What are the sexual practices on offer in their ads?
- When sex workers use a medium to advertise sexual services, does the information presented in the medium play a role in the negotiating power of the sex worker?



Two interesting trends are apparent: one group of sex workers who clearly offer sexual practices in their ads, and another who will use several indirect ways to attract clients' attention. In 29% of cases, sexual practices were not specified; massages, including erotic massage, were offered by 23% of the contacted sex workers; companionship and escorting by 12%; and a few offered striptease.

This difference depends on the city: in Hamburg, Sofia, and in lower numbers in Porto, sex workers openly advertise sexual practices, alongside other services such as massage or striptease.

On the other hand, in Nantes, Marseille and to a certain extent in Genoa and Trieste, the vast majority of sex workers offer massage (in Nantes) or simply do not specify practices (in Marseille, Genoa and Trieste).

The principal explanation for this lies in the recent legislation and policy changes and ongoing clampdowns in those cities.

### Top 10 sexual practices offered by indoor sex workers

1. Vaginal sex with protection
2. Fellatio with protection
3. Anal sex with protection
4. Fellatio without protection
5. Fellatio (protection unspecified)
6. Vaginal sex (protection unspecified)
7. Role playing
8. French kissing
9. Anal sex (protection unspecified)
10. Sadoomasochism

Across all of the cities researched, indoor sex workers offer safer sexual practices on their ads, but also often advertise unsafe sex. However, two main factors may contribute to these findings.

- Some websites have an in-built list of sexual practices, which include unsafe ones, and sex workers select the practices they want to put in their profile.
- The aim of advertising sexual practices is to attract clients. In order to compete in a growing industry, sex workers may offer special services such as sadomasochism and fetishism (as observed in Nantes) or unprotected sexual practices.

*I offer 'natural' fellatio and I'm aware of the risks but 95% of the clients ask for fellatio without a condom, so I do it.*  
Sex worker in Marseille

Partner organisations found that there are differences between practices advertised and the actual practices of sex workers, although of course in the vast majority of cases it is not possible to evaluate the risk taken by sex workers. Certain factors will lead the teams to adapt their STI/HIV prevention work: are condoms visible in the apartment? How do sex workers come across when speaking to clients? What is their knowledge of health issues? How frequently do they experience condom bursts?

### **Sexual practices advertised impact the negotiating power of sex workers**

Regardless of location, the information displayed in the advertisement plays a role in the negotiating power of the sex worker.

The strategy of offering unsafe sex in ads significantly increases difficulties experienced by sex workers when negotiating condom use with clients. They may indeed attract more clients, but clients may be dissatisfied and feel cheated due to false advertising, with the result that sex workers lose the upper hand in the situation.

Some sex workers develop strategies to overcome this difficulty. In Porto, as sex workers work in a collective set-

ting, they tell the client that the person who offers "natural sex" is not currently in the apartment, and suggest he has a safer sexual service with one of them instead. Looking at client negotiation skills is an important empowerment issue.

The teams may approach this subject when discussing condom use, during individual or group meetings or outreach: how to suggest alternative, lower-risk services without losing earning potential.

### **Factors associated with the practice of unsafe sex**

According to the experience of the teams in the field, sex workers may mention safer sex in their ads but, likely due to competition, financial need, pressure or coercion, they may practise unprotected sex.

The practice of unsafe sex is strongly linked to the working conditions and environment of the sex worker.

First of all, sex workers new to the industry appear to take more risks than those with more experience. This may be explained by the fact that some are unfamiliar with the work and its codes of practice. Those who are isolated cannot connect with colleagues to discuss work and sexual practices. It is important to highlight that the sex worker community plays an essential role in prevention. Peer education should be more widely promoted.

*A client wanted to have sex with me and another girl from the brothel. I was the first and put on a condom. After we had finished, my colleague came and wanted the client to continue, using the same condom he had used with me. I was terrified and made her change the condom.*  
Sex worker in Sofia

The experience of the team in Marseille was that those who work only occasionally in the sex industry are more likely to have unsafe sex practices. Again, the question of isolation and lack of information about codes has an impact on sex workers' attitudes towards STI/HIV prevention.

Another factor may be the economic situation which impacts all sex workers, regardless of age or gender. Competition among sex workers may lead to unsafe sex, generally oral sex, despite the fact that many of them know its risks.

It may also depend on the venues. The situation in Porto illustrates this: the apartments traditionally used for sex work where unsafe sex practices were performed, mostly with older clients, face real difficulties in changing the habits of those clients and promoting safer sex.

Violence is also an issue, in cases of isolation, coercion and personal or financial pressure. On the other hand, in controlled sex work venues such as in Sofia, indoor sex workers practise safer sex regardless of their age, migration status or experience of violence or isolation.

Among migrant sex workers, isolation is a significant factor that impedes their access to information, and therefore renders them more vulnerable to violence and coercion.

Finally, the working conditions of sex workers and their attitudes towards prevention are directly linked to their ability to demand fair working conditions and human rights, and to establish their negotiating power.

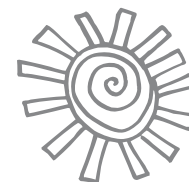
### ■ Structure of indoor sex work venues

The following tables show the workplaces of sex workers contacted by the outreach teams, and do not provide a complete picture of the prostitution scene in each city. However, it can be assumed that partner organisations covered a wide range of indoor venues in order to reach

more indoor sex workers. The majority of the contacted indoor sex workers work in apartments. But in each city, there are also other sex work venues, visited to a lesser degree by the partner organisations: hotels, bars, saunas, massage parlours, sex shops and brothels.<sup>25</sup>

City	Indoor venues <sup>26</sup>
Genoa	Apartments: 96%, Hotels: 6%, Unknown: 1%
Hamburg	Apartments: 53%, Unknown: 34%, Massage parlours: 7%, Brothels: 6%, Clubs: 0.2%
Marseille	Unknown: 74%, Apartments: 25%, Hotels: 8%, Clubs: 0.5%, Bars: 0.2%, Sex shops: 0.2%
Porto	Apartments: 92%, Unknown: 5%, Bars: 2%, Clubs: 2%, Hotels: 1%, Massage parlours: 0.7%, Brothels: 0.4%
Sofia	Brothels: 66%, Apartments: 35%, Clubs: 25%, Hotels: 9%, Bars: 7%, Massage parlours: 1%, Unknown: 1%
Trieste	Apartments: 83%, Unknown: 16%, Hotels: 14%, Saunas: 5%, Clubs: 1.6%, Massage parlours: 1.6%, Bars: 0.8%, Sex shops: 0.8%
Nantes	Unknown: 60%, Incall (in an apartment or unspecified venue): 27%, Outcall: 13% (11% to hotels or unspecified venues; 2% to clients' homes)

As apartments and brothels are the most common workplaces recorded in this mapping, specific attention will be paid to their characteristics.





## Apartments

### Individual apartments

In Marseille, Nantes and Trieste, indoor sex workers mostly work alone in apartments. These are small venues scattered across the cities, which remain hidden - clients mostly contact the sex workers by telephone.

There are two different kinds of apartment: sex workers may work in their own homes, or in a venue solely used for work.

Several factors influence their choice. Police controls and anti-prostitution laws make it difficult to rent an apartment specifically for sex work. In Italy and France, laws on sex work and on procuring prohibit sex workers from working with their colleagues in the same apartment. They need to exercise caution with regard to their neighbourhood and landlords, and when deciding to share an apartment (in France, all names should appear on the lease when sex workers share an apartment for work, in order to avoid prosecution for pimping). This situation also leads them to be highly suspicious when outreach teams first make contact.

Moreover, economic factors may explain why some sex workers work from their own homes: they often cannot afford a second apartment and do not have an alternative. This is mostly the case for those sex workers who work intermittently. This is an important issue in Marseille, as occasional indoor sex workers tend to work more in hotels or in their homes because this is more economic, easy and flexible.

Working in a venue specifically used for sex work also has its advantages: sex workers may prefer a division between their work and their private lives, or they may want to maintain their anonymity in their neighbourhood and social network, in order to avoid any stigmatisation linked to their work.

In these cities, partner organisations recorded only a small number of sex workers sharing a workplace, mostly females. For them, this choice was linked to security concerns as well as being able to offer different sexual practices to their clients.

### Collective apartments

In terms of collective apartments, there is great diversity in the partner cities.

In Hamburg, the majority of indoor sex workers work in small apartments which are spread all over the city, including in residential areas. Although 10% of sex workers prefer to work alone, apartments are mostly shared by two (40%) or three and more women (30%), sometimes with a mix of both transgender and non-transgender sex workers. Because of the high costs of these workplaces, some sex workers also live in them.

In Genoa, the majority of sex workers are also organised collectively (59%) because of increasing rents as a result of the high density of sex workers in the old town. The structure of their workplaces, the *bassi*, allows constant proximity to colleagues and ensures some level of safety. Working collectively also allows them to offer a broader range of sexual services to clients.

In Porto, sex work is mostly organised following a specific pattern: about 82% of sex workers use an apartment other than their home in which to work. These apartments are often organised by a manager. If they work and live in the same city, they work on a rota established with their manager, and then return home to sleep. If they are working in a different city, it may be two, four or six weeks before they go home, but they always return after a period of intense work. Some apartments offer 24-hour services: during this period the sex worker works and lives in the same place, although she does not consider it home.

In Sofia, the structure of apartments is also organised by third parties, but the system is different. This organisation should not be confused with brothels. Although sex workers solicit and wait for clients in the apartment, the sexual services are performed at the client's place. The client needs to call the manager first and a guard or taxi driver (usually working with and for the manager) will drive the sex worker to the client's home. The presence of the guard or taxi driver also functions as security for the sex worker, as he may check the place, the client, and/or whether the sex worker is safe during the transaction.

### **Impact on sex workers' empowerment**

The structure and the individual or collective character of these venues have an impact on the isolation of sex workers and consequently on the risks they may take relating to STI/HIV prevention and their own safety.

Working in individual or collective settings should be a choice and not a result of external factors.

Indeed, sex workers may feel more secure in a comfortable place with which they are familiar and in which they are not obliged to hide and stay isolated from other colleagues. Working at the client's place, as in Sofia and Marseille, represents a higher risk for sex workers and may increase their vulnerability and negatively impact their negotiating power.

The structure of the sex work environment also has an impact on empowerment: sex workers may appreciate the proximity of colleagues. In particular, in venues controlled by third parties, they may suffer a high degree of dependence and in this case proximity to other sex workers may decrease their isolation.

Globally, countries where sex work is legalised, such as Germany, offer more options to sex workers among the existing workplaces.

*I have worked alone and independently for years in a basso [...] Yesterday, due to an order that was issued by the town council, I was informed I had to shut the basso within three days. Half an hour later a woman who exploits sex workers asked me to work for her ... I said no ... I have no idea how long I can hold on if I do not find another place to work.*

Latin American female sex worker in Genoa

### **Brothels**

Brothels were visited only in Hamburg and Sofia; systems are different in each case.

In Hamburg, brothels (comprising around 6% of visited venues) are larger settings, where four or more sex workers work together, generally organised by a third party.

In Sofia, most of the indoor sex work venues are brothels (66%), where five to ten or even more female sex workers offer sexual services. These venues are run by managers. A few sex workers also live in the brothels, usually those from another part of the country, who are new to the city and are permitted to live in their workplace for a while.

### **Other workplaces**

Several other types of workplace were visited by the outreach teams, but in lower numbers, as activities were concentrated in those venues where sex workers were more numerous.

Bars were visited in Porto and Borovets, a winter ski resort near Sofia, where the bars are opened seasonally. Sex workers working in hotels were also contacted in Genoa, Porto, Trieste, Marseille and Nantes. The teams visited clubs in Porto and Hamburg as well as in Sofia, where clubs also hold strip shows.

While some bars and clubs openly target the clients of sex workers, others offer sexual services unofficially.

As with some bars and clubs, it is not always clear which massage parlours (venues visited in Hamburg, Sofia, Porto and Trieste) offer sexual services. For instance, in Hamburg, some massage parlours offer only traditional Thai massage, without sexual services. Erotic massage, however, includes sexual services and is offered in massage parlours and brothels.

In Marseille and Nantes, sex shops were also visited, primarily with the aim of promoting the organisation rather than to directly reach sex workers, although it is known that sex workers also offer their services in this setting. It is harder to undertake a concrete harm reduction activity in such a place because sex work is far less visible. Indeed, legislation forbids sex work in private places such as sex shops, and the owners are reluctant to allow an outreach team to enter.

Other specific places, such as truck stop areas with hotels and restaurants, were also reached in Sofia, and the AP-DES team participated in the biggest erotic fair in Porto, where sex workers also offer a variety of sexual services.

### ■ Indoor venues run by a third party

According to the research, migrant sex workers working in indoor settings are more likely than national sex workers to be dependent on third parties. Indeed, most indoor migrant sex workers perform sex work in venues managed or organised by a third party: apartments, brothels, bars, clubs and massage parlours.

By contrast, nationals tend to work more in self-organised apartments, with the exception of Sofia where the vast majority work in the organised sex industry.

Although collective settings are mainly managed or organised by a third party, the level of dependency varies depending on the structure of the workplaces and on the city.

In Porto, Hamburg, Sofia and Genoa, partner organisations observed the characteristics of venues organised by a third party.

In **Porto**, apartments are managed by owners or receptionists who are often present in the venue all day. They are usually women. Their function is to place ads in newspapers, interact with clients regarding payment for services, manage the place including the cleaning, and sometimes respond to the needs of the sex workers. Occasionally these owners and receptionists are also sex workers themselves: they are usually older ones with more experience and accumulated knowledge, and have been established in Portugal for a long time. In some rare cases, the owner is a generally absent figure who only shows up to collect the rent from the sex workers. As sex workers have an agreement with the owner of the house, their level of dependency varies depending on this “contract”: in some venues, sex workers do have free range in terms of their schedule and can register and manage their work calendar themselves, but very frequently this agreement implies strict timetables and rules, which can reduce their autonomy. Sometimes it also involves mandatory unsafe sex practices.

During outcalls in Porto, sex workers may also be accompanied by a third party. When they visit hotels or motels, they usually ask a male friend, acquaintance or taxi driver to accompany them. This person should remain alert in case something happens, answer phone calls, take note of how long the sex worker is taking to provide the service, and help in any way if necessary. Sex workers pay them for their assistance.

In **Hamburg**, apartments, brothels, clubs and massage parlours are also mostly managed by a third party. While the majority of national sex workers working in apartments do not have managers, the reverse tends to apply

to migrants. Managers and organisers are mostly male, except among Thai sex workers where the majority are female. The great majority of sex workers are not coerced or victims of trafficking, but are, in some way or another, dependent on these managers or organisers. In these two kinds of organisational frameworks for indoor settings, the owner or manager runs the workplace, establishes the terms of the “working contract” with the sex workers, and also plays the role of security guard.

As in any other settings, dependency may arise when a sex worker is placed in a vulnerable situation and is no longer able to make his or her own decisions on working conditions. This dependency may particularly affect migrants when they need to find a place to work and accept more difficult conditions (higher fees to pay the owner, longer working hours) than expected.

*“We came to Germany because we thought that we would earn more money here. Because of the financial crisis, the situation in Spain has become very bad.”*  
Latin American female sex worker

In **Sofia**, the system is different as most indoor sex workers, nationals and migrants alike, work in venues which are organised either by a manager or by a controller. The vast majority of sex work venues are controlled by criminal business networks. Although under these circumstances, the bond and dependency on the organisers seem to be greater, they are not all under coercion. The rules vary from one setting to another: some sex workers may choose their own working conditions, and others may have to work for a predetermined number of hours or clients.

Finally, in **Genoa**, another type of system was reported by the partner organisation. Some sex workers, mostly newcomers, suffer economic exploitation in order to

have the opportunity to work for short periods in Genoa. These individuals are isolated in the city and are subject to two phenomena: hostility from locals and exploitation by colleagues who have been around for longer and who sub-let their workplaces. As a result, these sex workers depend on those who brought them to town. Among indoor sex workers working in controlled and/or organised sex work venues, levels of dependency may vary.

In order to assess whether sex workers have control over their working conditions, several factors should be evaluated: their ability to manage their own hours and number of clients; their control over their income; their ability to negotiate condom use with clients; their ability to leave sex work, and so on.

## ■ Mobility of indoor sex workers

17% of the indoor sex workers contacted were reported as being “on tour” by the partner organisations. This number seems to be low compared to a European estimate that “almost three quarters of all migrant sex workers and almost a third of national sex workers are believed to have worked in more than one country before”<sup>27</sup>.

However, this research found that 42% of contacted migrant sex workers had already worked in a different city or country. Although numbers seem to be underrepresented, this confirms the statement above: in indoor settings, migrants are much more mobile than nationals. The term “on tour” was used by sex workers themselves. Partner organisations recorded sex workers as being on tour when their ads used the phrase or when they spoke of their mobility. Thus “on tour” means both transnational mobility and in-country mobility.

There are notable differences between the cities.

In **Marseille**, **Nantes** and **Sofia** only a small minority of sex workers spoke of being on tour. This result can be attributed to the fact that the majority of contacted sex workers in these cities are nationals. Indeed, in Sofia, where 99% of sex workers are nationals, the only mobile sex workers are migrants, the main reason for their mobility being an economic one. On the other hand, nationals have interpreted mobility as being transnational, and did not consider the term “on tour” relevant to their in-country or in-city mobility. In Marseille, “touring” sex workers chose this mobility in order to preserve their anonymity.

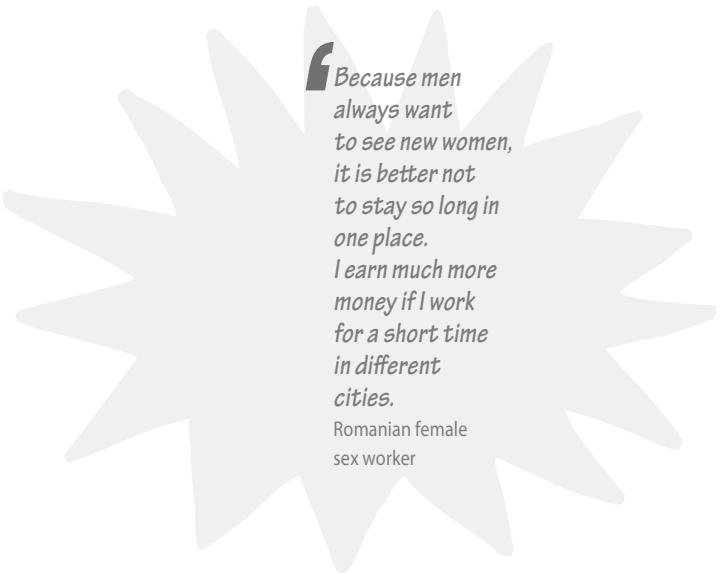
In **Hamburg**, the mobility of sex workers in indoor settings is fairly low (16%), but still much higher among migrants (22%) than nationals (2%). This could be explained by the settlement of a high number of migrant sex workers with legal status and of German sex workers working in the city. Mobile sex workers contacted in Hamburg are in search of better remuneration and working conditions, which are linked to the demands of clients and also to legal changes.

In **Trieste**, 25% of contacted sex workers were mobile, all of them migrants. This can be attributed to policy changes which have created a harsher climate in Italy for migrants, but also to seasonal mobility between tourist towns and the turnover which may be controlled by organisers of the sex industry.

The highest levels of mobility were recorded in **Genoa** and **Porto**. Across the seven cities, migrants are more mobile than nationals, and sex workers gave several reasons for this. In Genoa, one of the main reasons was lack of work due to large numbers of sex workers in the field. Seasonal mobility and changes in policies were also reported. In Porto, mobility is mainly due to the preferences and demands of clients.

Although sex workers tend to experience their mobility in a positive way, it may also increase their isolation. First of all, when the decision is not taken themselves, mobility is a form of violence. Where coercion is present, organisers may arrange the transfer of (migrant) sex workers and further control of them in order to reinforce their isolation from others. This isolation is greater when they don't know where they are, when they cannot see other colleagues or when they do not speak the language. For instance, in Bulgaria, the few migrants contacted were particularly happy to get in contact with the organisation.

Mobility may also be decided by other colleagues who have been in the region for longer, as in Italy. Secondly, many sex workers perceive mobility as a positive part of their jobs: being “new faces” in another part of the city, in another city or even in another country. This mobility increases their earning potential. It is also a good alternative for them to meet new people and get up-to-date information on the sex industry. In this way, they can break away from their isolation.



**“**Because men always want to see new women, it is better not to stay so long in one place. I earn much more money if I work for a short time in different cities.

Romanian female sex worker

# Issues for indoor sex workers

This section provides an assessment of the situation of indoor sex workers based on the main issues constituting their needs (general needs, health needs and the specific need of STI/HIV prevention), the violence they encounter (forms it takes, factors behind it, and strategies to reduce it) and their isolation (from other sex workers, support organisations, and society in general).



## Needs

The needs identified by indoor sex workers during outreach reflect their specific circumstances, their working conditions, and the approach taken by partner organisations.

In all the cities researched, health was the main issue for all sex workers, regardless of gender, but other issues were discussed, all linked to the notion of general health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being as defined by the WHO<sup>28</sup>. General needs were looked at concerning their legal and social situation or their working conditions.

There are also variations in terms of migration. With migrant sex workers, the main themes approached, after their health, were their legal situation (mostly in cities where legislation and policies are harsh towards migrants), their security, their working conditions and also

the need for language courses. National sex workers discussed subjects linked to their social and psychological situation, their security, their clients and their working conditions. These findings correlate a greater labour independence among national sex workers than among their migrant colleagues, for whom sex work is a temporary activity and is linked to their migration process.

### ■ General needs of indoor sex workers

Health, medical consultation and HIV/STI issues are the main needs of non-transgender sex workers, both male and female; transgender sex workers are more concerned, after health issues, with their working and living conditions and their security. This correlates their need for better integration, the stigmatisation they encounter in daily life and the difficulties they face in the gender reassignment process and in enjoying their rights.

These results also show that isolation is an issue affecting all sex workers, particularly nationals. There are some variations in terms of regional specificities and migration status.

In Marseille and Nantes, where sex workers are dispersed throughout the city, all of them expressed a need to discuss their working or living conditions and their isolation. In Porto, transgender sex workers needed also to talk about violence, pressure and abuse. It is noteworthy that isolation and a desire to discuss living conditions were apparent in Porto, even though indoor sex workers work collectively. This is explained by the fact that sex workers experience social isolation, especially in relation to their community. Their relationships with one another are not based on friendship but often on competition. Moreover, they spend most of the day in the apartment, having little contact with the outside world, and this results in a deficit of interaction with the wider community.



## General needs of indoor sex workers

FEMALE sex workers		MALE sex workers		TRANSGENDER sex workers	
Nationals	Migrants	Nationals	Migrants	Nationals	Migrants
Medical consultation	Health	Medical consultation	Health	Health	Health
HIV/STI testing	Medical consultation	Health	Medical consultation	Isolation, living conditions	Working conditions
Health	Working conditions	HIV/STI testing	Accompaniment to appointments	Personal safety	Medical consultation
Working conditions	HIV/STI testing	Working conditions	HIV/STI testing	Legal support	Pressure and abuse
Isolation, living conditions	Social situation	Isolation, living conditions	Working conditions	Pressure, abuse and violence	Isolation, living conditions

Advocacy and rights were also needs identified during outreach: this was the case with national sex workers in Hamburg and Genoa, but also among migrants in Genoa.

Adult literacy and professional integration are additionally needed by migrant sex workers in Germany. They need to know the language of the country of migration, to integrate into society and work on a professional basis in sex work where possible.

The desire to leave sex work was also expressed by both migrant and national sex workers (mostly older ones), showing that this wish is not necessarily linked to any kind of pressure or, coercion but rather the quest for a better economic situation.

*I'm fed up with lying to my family and friends and not being able to speak about my work. Only my best friend knows but I don't talk about it much in order to not annoy him. I would like to get in contact with other girls, I need to talk about what I'm doing.*

Sex worker in Marseille

### ■ Health needs of indoor sex workers

The health needs of migrants and national sex workers are similar, and are linked to their gender. While women are more concerned by female-specific problems such as gynaecology or pregnancy tests, men focus more on HIV/AIDS and general health issues. Among transgender sex workers, dependency on alcohol, tobacco and drugs is a relevant issue, as it is for non-transgender female sex workers in Genoa and Hamburg.

In Marseille and Genoa, health issues were not raised by sex workers as their main needs, but the teams focused on how sex workers could deal with these issues.

Besides specific problems, more general issues such as overall health or tiredness were discussed. These may be linked to the specific working conditions in indoor settings: working in a closed room, eating unhealthy foods, etc.

## Health needs of indoor sex workers

FEMALE sex workers		MALE sex workers		TRANSGENDER sex workers	
Nationals	Migrants	Nationals	Migrants	Nationals	Migrants
Gynaecological problems	Gynaecological problems	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS	Alcohol, tobacco, drug dependency	Alcohol, tobacco, drug dependency
HIV/AIDS	General health	Hepatitis B	Dental problems	General health	General health
Hepatitis C	Dental problems	Hepatitis C	Tiredness	Hormone therapy	Hormone therapy
Hepatitis B	HIV/ AIDS	Alcohol, tobacco, drug dependency	General health		Psychological problems
Pregnancy testing	Alcohol, tobacco, drug dependency	Dental problems			Hepatitis B

### ■ The specific need for HIV/STI prevention

As HIV/STI prevention is an issue for all sex workers, their knowledge of it should be gauged, as should their access to health services.

### Sex workers' knowledge of HIV/STI prevention

According to the outreach teams, sex workers do have an average knowledge of HIV/STI prevention, but this knowledge is not complete, and they may often promote misunderstandings and a lack of awareness.

Still, disparities are in evidence, due to several factors.

#### Experience

Those who have been working for longer have a better knowledge of HIV/STI prevention than newcomers to the sex industry and younger migrants.

#### Structure of the venues

In isolated sex work venues, as in Marseille and Nantes, sex workers lack information on HIV/STI transmission (especially through oral sex) and on the best action to take

should a condom break.

On the other hand, in collective sex work settings, as in the apartments of Porto or the brothels of Sofia, some myths about prevention may circulate (the use of two condoms for extra protection; washing the vagina internally after a condom burst; self-medication - mainly vaginal creams - as an STI prevention strategy; risk-free unprotected sex when both people have HIV/AIDS, etc).

#### Migration

For migrants, language barrier is the most important factor impeding knowledge of HIV/STI prevention.

In order to ensure greater knowledge of HIV/STI prevention, it is essential to reach as many sex workers as possible and promote among them the importance of community building and exchange between colleagues. Again, peer education and cultural mediation are recommended strategies here and need to be developed in sex work projects.



## Sex workers' access to public services

Sex workers' knowledge of STI/HIV prevention is not enough: their access to health services should also be guaranteed.

This mapping shows that access to health services is not equally effective and efficient in all of the partner cities, because of access to health insurance, services available, and of the knowledge sex workers themselves have about these services.

With regard to health insurance, the main disparity relates to migration status. All national sex workers contacted were insured (except in Sofia, where half of the nationals do not have any health insurance), while migrants mostly were not.

Furthermore, several reasons were given to explain migrants' difficulties in accessing health services. Some, in Porto, prefer to pay for medical care in private clinics because they receive faster service and better quality; others lack information on health care and existing health services, especially in countries and cities with a complicated and bureaucratic system; for others, changes in immigration law and public health care significantly impact their access to health services. In Italy, irregular migrants can only access a specific unit which is exclusively for emergency cases, and they fear controls and deportation. This leads some of them to take health matters into their own hands, such as practicing abortion at home, while others underestimate and ignore their health problems.

Among national sex workers, it was surprising to note that although in most cities, they do have access to the health services available, in Marseille many still did not know where to get a free and anonymous HIV/STI test.

In order to ensure effective access to health services for sex workers, several actions are recommended:

- A comprehensive approach towards national and migrant sex workers and the potential to visit them with interpreters. In Hamburg, this significantly aids access to health services.

- In the event that (migrant) sex workers face discrimination or experience negative attitudes from medical staff, mediation between sex workers and health services may be necessary.

- The potential for free access to certain health services, such as family planning and screening for STI/HIV.

- The inclusion of sex industry managers and organisers in HIV/STI prevention where sex workers face barriers to their freedom of movement.

- The promotion of comprehensive policies and legislation (sex work, migration and health care): these often impede sex workers, mostly migrants, from accessing health services.

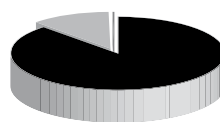
## Violence

In this study, violence is understood in a broad sense: verbal, physical and psychological violence were analysed, as was violence due to stigmatisation and discrimination, and due to lack of access to fundamental labour and human rights.

This section aims to provide a comprehensive approach to the various aspects of the mechanisms of violence and dependency.

Number of sex workers affected by violence in indoor settings

- Violence was neither described nor observed 1804
- Violence was described by the sex worker 245
- Violence was observed by the team 4



Of 1976 sex workers contacted, 245 said they had experienced violence at least once, and the partner organisations observed violence against 4 sex workers. In total 249 (12% of all contacted) sex workers were concerned by violence. This does not mean that none of the others experience violence; just that they did not speak about it.

When examining the findings by city, huge differences can be seen in the numbers of sex workers who faced violence. While in Marseille, Nantes and Sofia, a small number of sex workers were concerned, in the other cities (Genoa, Porto, Trieste and Hamburg), significantly higher numbers of sex workers experienced violence.

City	Number of sex workers concerned	Percentage
Hamburg	74	19%
Trieste	66	54%
Porto	52	19%
Genoa	45	32%
Sofia	36	11%
Marseille	27	3%
Nantes	4	0.5%

These two tables showing levels of violence against sex workers merit further discussion.

First of all, violence is not present across all sex work settings and is not as common as one might think. According to the indoor sex workers contacted, sex work is not inherently violent, but the conditions and the environment in which they work may facilitate violent situations. Second, violence is an issue which is not easily spoken about among sex workers, and among indoor sex workers more specifically.

All of the outreach teams found that the sex workers they visited in their workplaces found it easier to talk about the violence they faced, while in Marseille and Nantes, where outreach was conducted mostly by telephone and the teams chose not to ask any questions, it was more difficult for them to discuss. Direct contact with indoor sex workers through visits encourages outreach teams and sex workers to establish trust, and enables them to talk about violence. The teams observed that sex workers tend more to tell stories of violence that they have witnessed, that happened to others, or that are no longer taking place. When they get to know the team better, they reveal episodes of violence that they suffered themselves.

Working conditions may also be an obstacle preventing sex workers from speaking out about violence. Clearly, the working conditions in Hamburg offer a more confidential environment than in Sofia. Indeed, although collective settings generally provide protection for sex workers, the presence of the owners may be a hindrance. They may be the triggering agents of the violence, through the economic exploitation of sex workers, the denial or misrepresentation of information about their rights, or through using persuasion to encourage sex workers to receive any type of client and practise unprotected sex. Furthermore, when sex workers are approached in groups rather than alone, lack of trust towards other sex workers may also hold them back from mentioning violent situations.

*When you start working as a prostitute, you must already have taken into account that someone will directly or indirectly exploit you.*

Latin American female sex worker  
in Genoa

Other reasons may impede sex workers from discussing violence.

■ People may have very different interpretations of and feelings about violence. Thus, some sex workers may not categorise some of their experiences (economic exploitation, sexual abuse, discrimination and stigmatisation) as forms of violence. Also, the widespread assumption that violence is a condition inherent to sex work may influence the interpretation of violence experienced by themselves. As a result, in some situations, sex workers may label an experience as violence only if it is physical or sexual violence.

■ Where violence is a result of lack of respect for sex workers' rights, the majority (mostly migrants) are unaware of these rights, do not have information on the types of support available, and thus do not perceive certain experiences as violence. When they do, they may be afraid of involving the authorities, may assume the police will not help them because they are migrants, or may be afraid of losing their jobs.

## ■ Forms and perpetrators of violence

In this project, several types of violence were identified for analysis, but the mapping was also open to other types identified by sex workers, in order to reach the most comprehensive conclusions possible.

Violence in indoor settings appears to be mostly verbal violence, physical violence and violence due to discrimination and stigmatisation. Psychological violence, meaning all sorts of psychological pressures, demands and expectations, also seems to be a common and frequent form of violence experienced by both national and migrant sex workers. It may be linked to other forms of violence as a result. Psychological violence was mentioned by newcomers to the sex industry, mostly in Porto. In Hamburg, the team reported that migrants suffered psychological pressure from two sides: as migrants in a new country and very often from their families back home.

### Form of violence

Number of times the violence was encountered  
(a sex worker may face several violent situations at the same time)

	Genoa	Hamburg	Nantes	Marseille	Porto	Sofia	Trieste
Physical	25	24	10	2	16	19	18
Verbal	41	18	12	1	23	4	42
Sexual	17	6	3	2	4	3	8
Psychological	20	9	1		8	11	29
Discrimination and stigmatisation	26	16	5	1	22		28
Non-paying client	2		3				
Coercion				1			
Robbery					2		

Additionally, the frequent reports of verbal violence and violence through discrimination and stigmatisation confirm that sex work is still not accepted by society, and that there is still a moral debate about it, even in countries like Germany where sex work is legalised.

Economic exploitation was also reported by sex workers. It correlates the fact that although a majority of sex workers have control over their income, some, mostly migrants, do not, and this dependence is a form of violence.

Sexual violence should be highlighted as a form of violence faced by sex workers, because clients continue to behave sometimes as if it is part of the job.

**I** *I was raped, humiliated and got ripped ...  
They are all bastards.*  
Sex worker in Nantes

In some other cases, sex workers felt it to be a form of violence when clients did not pay for their services. This may happen more often than was reported, but in these specific situations, the sex workers classified it as violence.

Among perpetrators of violence, clients are the most prevalent, with 167 cases. A client is defined here as a person purchasing sexual services, with or without the intention to pay the sex worker. These numbers show the significant exposure of sex workers to violence committed by clients, mainly verbal violence (insults) and physical violence. However, the behaviour of the client reflects the behaviour of the society, as both engage in verbal violence and stigmatisation.

Sex workers are also subjected to violence from their relatives. This may take the form of discrimination or verbal violence. It is also linked to the fact that “exploiters” nowadays have new faces bearing little or no resemblance to the stereotypical trafficker, and are often linked to the sex worker.

## Perpetrator of violence

Number of times the violence was encountered  
(a sex worker may face several violent situations at the same time)

	Genoa	Hamburg	Nantes	Marseille	Porto	Sofia	Trieste
Client	25	24	21	1	30	13	53
Relative, friend, acquaintance	8	7	4	1	12	9	4
Police	30				1	12	5
Trafficking network	21			1	3	3	1
Other forms							
Society in general	1	1	2		9		
Public services				1	4		
Other sex workers and colleagues	1				4		

Violence is also committed by the police - the national police and the municipal police (a police force specifically active in Genoa). This demonstrates that clampdowns and changes in legislation have a significant impact on sex workers. Several intensive police actions were carried out in indoor settings in Sofia, and sex workers experienced psychological violence from the police.

There were 29 cases of trafficking networks, mostly in Genoa, confirming that parts of the sex industry are under control of criminal networks. In Genoa, this data reflects the presence of the Nigerian trafficking system in the sex industry. Few organisations were able to report such cases because victims of trafficking are often more isolated and hard to reach. Orders laid down by traffickers and controllers in a given area can have a negative impact on all sex workers who work in the area.

In 5 cases, public services featured as perpetrators of violence. This result shows the high level of discrimination towards sex workers and more specifically towards migrant sex workers, even from service providers.

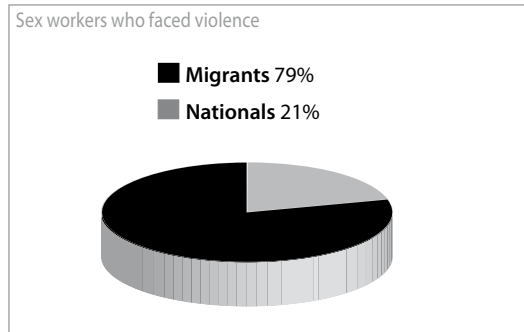
**f** *You can imagine a Brazilian woman in a public health centre. She may not even be a sex worker but doctors feel repulsed. All it takes is being a Brazilian ... Can you believe that he put on two pairs of gloves to examine me?*  
Brazilian female sex worker  
in Porto

## ■ Indicators of violence

Gender	Proportion of sex workers who faced violence
Female sex workers	13% of all contacted female sex workers
Male sex workers	1% of all contacted male sex workers
Transgender sex workers	22% of all contacted transgender sex workers

## Gender

Although violence touches all sex workers regardless of gender, all partner organisations reported more violence towards transgender sex workers. 22% of transgender sex workers had experienced violence compared with 13% of (non-transgender) female sex workers. This may be linked to the high levels of discrimination and stigmatisation encountered by transgender people.



## Migration

Migrant sex workers have experienced more violence than national sex workers. Out of 249 sex workers who have faced violence, 197 were migrants (79%).

The legal situation of migrants makes them more vulnerable to violence, coercion and discrimination. Trafficking or other forms of exploitation, in particular economic exploitation, affects more migrants than national sex workers (although in Hamburg, the NGO KOOFRA<sup>29</sup>, which deals with victims of trafficking, mentioned in their 2008 annual report that 50% of their service users are German). In addition, they face more abuse from the police (blackmailing, psychological violence and so on), linked to their legal status.

Moreover, even in a city like Hamburg, where most of the contacted migrants have legal status, all forms of violence were referenced. Apparently the Prostitution Act still has not led to sufficient legal support for sex workers in Germany.

Finally, the migration route may also be experienced as violence, whether in the home country, during the migration process or once in the host country.

### Working conditions

According to the research, violence is present in all sex work settings, regardless of size of venue, whether it is controlled or not, whether sex workers work alone or collectively, and whether or not they are dispersed or isolated.

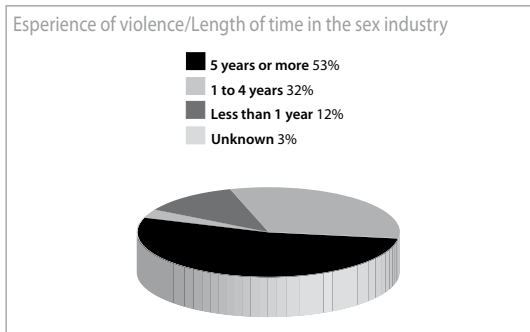
In Marseille and Nantes, although fewer cases of violence were reported, sex workers said they experienced physical and verbal violence from clients when they were working at home alone. In Hamburg, violence in smaller settings like apartments and massage parlours was also referenced by 30% of sex workers contacted. These cases occurred both when sex workers were working alone or with another colleague. The isolation of sex workers seems to have a significant impact on their exposure to violent situations.

On the other hand, in some cities collective settings also seem to increase potential for violence. In Porto, although the number is not representative enough to draw a conclusion, two out of four sex workers working in clubs suffered violence. In Hamburg, the same number is reported: more than half of the sex workers working in brothels had experienced some sort of violent situation (12 out of 22). This could lead to the assumption that brothels are more likely to “hide” cases of violence.

In Sofia, sex workers also face violence, although less often than in the other cities. Even though the sex industry is controlled by third parties, it may be structured to provide protection for the sex workers, as managers seem to take care of them and violence from clients rarely occurs. Violent incidents in Sofia occur more to those working from collective apartments rather than in hotels, clubs or brothels. The apartments function merely as a place where clients can be solicited, with the actual service being performed at the client’s place. This demonstrates the higher risks faced by sex workers when they do not work in a familiar and trusted place.

*In a short space of time, three women were mistreated. Home visits have become too risky. One time I went to a private house. There were several men present. I panicked. Thank God nothing happened, but I will not do that any more. A hotel is 100% secure because the customer is registered there. I always call the reception first to be sure he is registered and only then do I go up to him.*

Polish female sex worker in Hamburg



### Length of time working in the sex industry

More cases of violence were experienced by sex workers who were new to the business (32% of them had less than 1 year of experience) and those who had been in it for longer (53% of them had more than 5 years' experience).

One would expect that those who have been in sex work for longer are more experienced and would therefore know better how to protect themselves, but apparently this is not the case. Those who have spent more time in the industry will have had many experiences, including violent situations.

*I entered sex work late in life. The first year was the hardest; during that year I had many problems in terms of health and security.*

Sex worker in Marseille



## Sex workers' strategies to reduce violence

### Self-defence strategies

In order to defend themselves in the course of their work, sex workers mentioned several self-defence tactics. They learned these tactics by themselves, with colleagues or with the help of organisations. There are numerous strategies, specific to each venue (individual, collective) and to each work situation.

Sex workers working alone may refuse to answer calls from withheld numbers, may select clients by voice and tone on the phone, or discuss violent clients with colleagues ("blacklists"). Some try to observe the clients before letting them enter the premises, and others keep a dog in their apartment.

All of them avoid whenever possible going to a place they do not know (the client's place) or try to choose the hotel, and they tell someone (a colleague or friend) when they are leaving with a client. It is not always possible to do this, but they often try to inform a third party (who may also be a manager, as in Sofia or Porto).

They may also use tools to defend themselves, such as tear gas or pepper spray. Those with more expertise know that wearing certain accessories can expose them to more risks (e.g. high-heeled shoes will impede a fast getaway in the event of danger; long necklaces and earrings could be pulled by attackers).

Some sex workers have learned to defend themselves by participating in self-defence training.

These are only examples mentioned by sex workers, but they show that many take control of their circumstances. They try to be prepared for any violent situations that might arise.

It is therefore important to highlight these strategies and to offer sex workers opportunities to discuss them. This will enhance their empowerment and self-confidence, whilst simultaneously increasing their ability to avoid violent situations.

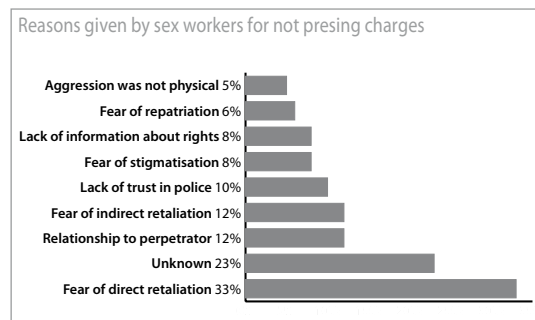
*I don't think that there is more violence indoors than outdoors. For me, the person needs to set her rules and everything will be OK. If you are caught off-guard and let it seem, even with a look, that you are not the one in control, then... You have to consider that the client is on unknown territory, he knows neither the place nor the person.*

Sex worker in Marseille

### Legal strategies

Only 32 sex workers out of the 1976 sex workers contacted had ever pressed charges. This means that the vast majority of sex workers who have experienced violence did not press any charges.

Considering the 249 sex workers who suffered violence as well as all the cases which may not have been revealed, this number is incredibly low.



The main reasons given by sex workers for not pressing charges are fear of direct and indirect retaliation, and relationship to the perpetrator. Nowadays “exploiters” are mainly relatives, friends and/or acquaintances, and as a result sex workers have an emotional connection to the perpetrator, which may lead them to drop charges. The fear of indirect retaliation also demonstrates how widespread the sense of powerlessness and insecurity is among sex workers.

The other reasons are more related to police forces.

Lack of information on the scope of their rights is often the first factor to increase the vulnerability of sex workers. It is important that full and accurate legal information reaches them, especially when they work in isolated indoor settings.

Sex workers may require the support of an organisation in order to see their rights fulfilled. Indeed, the police do not represent a trustworthy authority for them. Irregular migrant sex workers mentioned their fear of arrest. For instance, in Italy, the partner organisation reported that the new legislation on migration has worsened the situation and irregular migrants fear being repatriated. In fact, should an irregular sex worker press charges against anyone, she or he is in turn automatically accused of the crime of irregular immigration.

Furthermore, migrant and national sex workers are generally afraid of being stigmatised by the police.

Others do not trust the police’s capacity and ability to solve their problems of violence. Indeed, several who had contacted the police said that either the police refused to take action or did not understand the seriousness of the situation.

Another reason given confirms the highly subjective notion of violence: Several sex workers did not press charges because the violence they suffered was not physical.



**f** *Of course I have faced violence, I was beaten once but I did not press charges ...*

*Who do you think will believe a whore?*

Female Latin American sex worker in Italy

## ■ Conclusion

Violence is present in all settings and is an important issue for the sex industry.

Several factors may increase the number of violent situations, such as the isolation of the sex work venue, the control of the venue by a third party, the overall context and status of sex work in the country and the city, and of course the ability of the sex worker to defend him- or herself.

Working conditions will impact the level of dependency of sex workers and their ability to defend themselves in situations of violence.

In addition to these factors, it is important to highlight that legislation against migrants, criminalisation of sex work and the general stigmatisation of sex workers prevent them from accessing their rights and from defending themselves through the legal system.

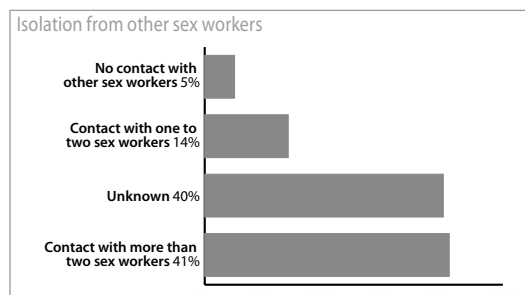
In comparison to outdoor settings, violence in indoor settings is less visible. In Marseille and Sofia, the partner organisations reported that outdoor-based sex workers speak more about violence than indoor-based sex workers. On the other hand, in Genoa and Trieste, the collected data evidenced that indoor sex workers who work in a flat or hotel are subject to more violence than their colleagues who work on the streets.

Violence may take different forms and be less visible. In outdoor settings, sex workers are more exposed to violence and stigmatisation from the general public. In indoor settings, sex workers are subjected to violence mostly from clients, controllers and police forces.

## Isolation

The isolation of sex workers in indoor sex work settings is another important aspect of this project.

Isolation is defined here as isolation from other sex workers, society and service providers.



## ■ Isolation from other sex workers

According to these results, indoor-based sex workers mostly do not seem to be isolated from other sex workers. Among all the sex workers who could provide an answer to this question, only 5% did not have any contact with other sex workers. This result should be approached with caution because only 60% of sex workers could provide this information. The high level of non-response is again linked to outreach methods and to the fact that sex workers did not necessarily mention this subject. In terms of local differences, there are huge variations by cities and by sex work settings. The field experience of the partner organisations mainly contradicts these results.



## Factors influencing the degree of isolation from other sex workers

### Structure of sex work venues

In individual and dispersed settings, as in Marseille and Nantes, indoor-based sex workers are more isolated than their outdoor-based colleagues. They usually have fewer opportunities to speak to other sex workers and exchange information. The majority of them do not know other sex workers and do not want to speak to them either. When they wish to communicate with one another, they often use forums as a tool for networking.

In Trieste, where the venues have a similar structure, sex workers are also isolated from each other because they are located all over the region and most of them work alone (20% of them have no contact with other sex workers). In this case, shared nationality may facilitate contact. This is confirmed by the situation in Genoa, where migrant sex workers group together and help one another according to their country of origin. The structure of the venues in this city also plays a big role in networking. Sex workers work alongside one another in the same buildings and very often share the same apartments and/or have the same landlord (in Genoa, only 0.7% of sex workers have no contact with any colleagues).

In collective settings, like in Porto, Hamburg and Sofia, the workplace allows them to get to know other sex workers. In Porto, only 0.4% of sex workers do not know any other sex workers. Their social network contributes greatly to the sharing of information, codes and practices. In Hamburg, there are strong links between sex workers (only 2.3% have no contact with another sex worker). Globally, when sex workers have contact with one another in the workplace, this allows them to informally exchange information, codes, practices (which may not only be good ones) and strategies for security, even if they remain in competition with one another.

The level of dependency also influences this exchange. In some cases, working hours do not afford sex workers free time or allow them to take vacations, and this increases their isolation. Clearly it is in the interests of traffickers and exploiters to keep sex workers under their control isolated. Trafficked or exploited people are entrusted to a network in charge of setting them up in the sex industry. This network imposes rules and tariffs, and consequently exchanges between sex workers will be impacted by these rules.

Individuals who have freely and consciously chosen sex work usually starts working in the field through acquaintances who help them to understand and familiarise themselves with the mechanisms of sex work. This exchange of information is beneficial to their self-esteem, and may lead to enhanced empowerment and professionalism.

### Stigmatisation of sex work and desire for anonymity

In Marseille and Nantes, the majority of sex workers avoid contact with others because they do not want to “enter” into the “sex work community” and be recognised as a sex worker. They want to keep their anonymity, often because they consider their work as being only occasional or temporary. This has an influence on their working practices: they are less likely to share codes and tips on sex work, and tend to be more vulnerable because of a lack of knowledge about harm reduction, HIV/STI prevention and safer work.

*I don't have contact with other escorts and I'm not looking for contact with them.*  
Sex worker in Marseille

In Sofia, even when sex workers work collectively, they rarely have contact with each other. This can be explained by the fact that they do not want to be identified with their colleagues and prefer to put up boundaries.

As sex work is still criminalised or stigmatised in all countries, most sex workers live a double life in which their activity in the sex industry is a well-kept secret. Fear and experiences of discrimination increase their tendency to avoid other social networks and friendships, provoking social withdrawal. The social stigma also leads to confusion and misinformation on the part of the media, which creates a distorted view of sex work among the general public.

### **Local and legal contexts and economic situation**

Isolation may increase because of the local context and economic situation.

Often, sex workers do not develop close relationships with each other due to their competitive position in the sex industry and increasingly difficult economic situations. This is not specific to indoor-based sex workers: some tensions also occur between outdoor-based sex workers. The isolation of indoor sex workers is often linked to a context of criminalisation of sex work or to increasing difficulties with local residents. The deterioration of neighbourhood relations can lead to ever-increasing intolerance towards sex workers and consequently leave them in a more isolated situation. In all of the partner countries it was observed that the criminalisation of sex work leads to more vulnerability and isolation for indoor sex workers as they tend to hide, remain invisible, are harder to reach and may avoid contact with other sex workers.

For migrants, an illegal situation increases their isolation. Migrants lack full knowledge of their rights and of available services. Furthermore, they fear coming forward because of the chance of forcible repatriation. This leaves them more vulnerable, at increased risk of abuse and discrimination.

### **Mobility**

Mobility can increase the isolation of sex workers, especially in cases of coercion, when they do not have control over their movements. Isolating indoor sex workers appears, then, to be a means for controllers and managers to gain a tighter grip over them.

This point is also linked to the fact that newcomers to the sex industry or to the city are more isolated than more experienced sex workers or those who are more settled in.

However, mobility can also be positive for sex workers, by facilitating information exchange as workplaces change. In other words, information multiplies through sex workers themselves, making them “informal” peer educators.

## ■ Isolation from society and service providers

According to the mapping, indoor-based sex workers appear to be quite isolated from service providers and society more generally. Of all the sex workers who provided this information, only 35% were already familiar with the partner organisation, mostly through outreach, and only 6% knew of another organisation. Although this result should be considered with a degree of caution, as the level of response comprises only 60% of the contacts, it confirms the fact that there is a gap in service provision and that organisations have difficulty in reaching indoor-based sex workers.

The mobility factor may explain the fact that two thirds of contacted sex workers did not know the partner organisation, even though outreach is conducted regularly. This context shows how important outreach is in contacting and informing a great number of sex workers, given that a number of them work and live in isolated settings. It also confirms the need for wider outreach to indoor sex work venues, and more generally to workplaces that are increasingly hidden and isolated.

In terms of isolation from health services, only 12% of the sex workers contacted have had a medical check-up. Even then, sex work remains taboo: they are unlikely to speak about it with their doctor, and they do not get tested regularly.

*I do not have a residence permit, so I usually go to a private doctor. I pay for all the tests because I'm afraid of going to the hospital.*

Latin American sex worker

Their links with public services depend largely on support from outreach teams facilitating their access to those services. Sex workers have an ongoing significant need for information, counselling, and social and medical support, regardless of their level of independence. Their needs also relate to their level of knowledge, their current priorities in life, and types of financial or social pressure they may be under at the time. Often, a support organisation simply represents another place where sex workers, independent or not, can go for information. This link also gives them the opportunity to open other channels where they can ask questions or find solutions to problems.

Across Europe, stigmatisation, mistrust and bureaucracy are the common factors impeding access to public services. Sex workers often come to the partner organisations for medical and social appointments or for support, bridging the gap in public services.

*When I go to my doctor  
I never disclose my work ...*  
Sex worker in Sofia



# Conclusion

## Conclusion

There is no single representative profile of indoor sex workers.

Sex workers enter the sex industry for many reasons, each relating to individual circumstances. Financial and economic needs are the greatest motivating factors for indoor and outdoor sex workers to enter prostitution. For some, prostitution may be an occupation – occasional or otherwise – that allows them to earn more money, and for others, sex work is one of their few options due to a vulnerable situation, such as migration, poverty, or lack of education.

The question of what motivates sex workers to begin work indoors rather than outdoors can not be answered so easily. Repressive policies and legislation, the influence of new technologies, a desire for greater anonymity, discrimination and stigmatisation, and the influence of friends, acquaintances or coercion are all factors that impact the choice – or the obligation – to start working indoors.

Indoor sex work settings remain mostly disconnected from outdoor ones. The organisation of the venues, the working conditions, and the rules and codes are different.

Despite this reality, indoor sex workers express the same needs, mostly related to health and STI/HIV prevention. Because discrimination and stigmatisation are universal issues, they face difficulties in accessing public services and encounter violence from the general public.

Isolation is a specific feature of indoor sex work, which leads to more violence. Indoor sex workers are more isolated and vulnerable to any changes that may occur in their personal circumstances. Because of their isolation,

they have less ability to insist on their rights (legal, social, labour rights) and to ask for information related to their specific situation.

Sex work projects and organisations remain a necessary link between those sex workers and wider society. Expanded outreach to indoor sex workers is necessary, as indoor venues become increasingly hidden. Outreach methodologies need to be adapted to each local context and to indoor venues. A specific approach may be needed when indoor venues are controlled or organised by a third party; managers and controllers need to be taken into account if outreach work is to be efficient.

HIV/STI prevention and the promotion of rights are key issues to ensure the empowerment of indoor sex workers and reduce their vulnerability.

Organisations, service providers and policy-makers need to have the same objectives: promoting independence, self-esteem and autonomy among sex workers, by focusing on the reality of indoor sex workers and their needs, by encouraging community networking, and finally by listening to their experiences.





**G**ood practices

# Contacting indoor sex workers

This section provides examples of good practices for contacting indoor sex workers through **visits** and **phone calls**, but also an example of making contact with **clients**, the use of **intermediaries** to contact indoor sex workers, and several approaches tailored to more specific circumstances.

Where the selected methodology depends on legislation and political context, a short summary will be given.



## Visits to collective apartments

**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

### ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender indoor-based sex workers

### ⬆ Location

Portugal: the city of Porto and its surroundings

### ⋯ Team

Two outreach workers from a multidisciplinary team (psychologist, nurse, social worker, sociologist, economist, cultural mediators)

### Ⓞ Materials Used

- Flyers about STIs and safer sexual practices
- Flyer explaining how irregular migrants can access public health services according to Portuguese legislation
- Small cards from APDES introducing the team and its services
- Lubricants and different types of condoms

### Ⓜ Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is neither legalised nor criminalised. There is no legislation on sex work. Pimping and human trafficking are prosecuted as criminal acts. Indoor sex work is not regulated. Police officers need prior written authorisation issued by the court in order to enter any private apartment

**Workplaces:** Private and collective apartments dispersed throughout the city.

### Objectives

To encourage closer contact in outreach work, long conversations are held with sex workers on various issues, such as health promotion, information on legal issues, psychological and/or social support, empowerment and citizenship.

By developing closer links with sex workers, the team is able to:

- provide direct/face-to-face contact with the aim of reaching and better responding to their needs;
- establish a relationship with them and earn their trust and confidence in sharing sensitive information

(e.g. legal problems, violent situations, concerns about health, negotiating with clients, etc);

- have sufficient time to discuss more complex topics, such as empowerment and citizenship.

### Preparation

- Contact with indoor sex workers: the team sometimes initiates contact by phone, but more often the team is referred by other sex workers
- Preparation of outreach work: a plan is made, taking into account sex workers' requests, situations requiring prioritisation, and the geographic areas that need to be visited.
- The schedule of visits to sex workers is drawn up one or two days in advance.
- Before leaving the office for outreach, and also as they approach the apartments in question, the team calls the sex workers to confirm that they are available to meet with them.

### Development

Outreach work is carried out on average of 3 days per week. The team visits the flats whose staff have shown interest in receiving them. The visits usually last between one and two hours, sometimes more, depending on topics addressed, the sex workers' receptivity, and the number of sex workers present.

Several topics may be addressed during the visits:

- Health education and distribution of STI prevention materials;
- Information about immigration law;
- Social and psychological support;
- Promotion of empowerment and citizenship;
- Strategies to prevent violence;
- Information about health and community services, and respective referrals.

Specific topics are selected each time, according to the needs identified by sex workers. The team constantly seeks to adapt to circumstances.

### Materials produced

Several flyers (with information on the APDES project and services, STIs, abortion, oral sex, anal sex, access to public health services, access to legal support, and so on).

### Evaluation

One of the most useful ways of contacting indoor sex workers is direct visits to the flats where they work. Every six months the team produces an evaluation report based on questionnaires answered by sex workers and on the data collected during outreach work. In addition, the team meets once a week to discuss procedures and situations related to the work. So far, one of the most relevant indicators of positive evaluation is promotion through sex workers' word of mouth and, consequently, greater numbers of sex workers benefiting from the project.



**TIPS:** In forging a connection with indoor sex workers, it is important to demonstrate willingness to listen and talk to them. Be sensitive to the type of information a sex worker wants to share with the team and to the time she or he is willing to spend with you.



**TAKE CARE:** It is also important to assure sex workers that the team's presence in the apartment will not interfere with their work. As such, visits should be scheduled according to the times most convenient to them and you should be prepared for interruptions at any time (for instance if a client arrives).



# Visits and workshops in collective venues

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**The TAMPEP project in Germany through the NGO Amnesty for Women**  
[www.amnestyforwomen.de](http://www.amnestyforwomen.de)  
[www.tampep.eu](http://www.tampep.eu)

## ▶ Target

Female and transgender migrant sex workers working in apartments, brothels and massage parlours

## 📍 Location

Germany: Hamburg

## 👥 Team

Cultural mediators from Bolivia, Czech Republic, Colombia, Peru, Poland, Russia and Thailand; nurses from Brazil, Kazakhstan and Poland; a team of drivers

## 📁 Materials Used

- Outreach bags: two types of condoms (for anal and vaginal/oral sex), lubricants, TAMPEP leaflets on HIV/STI prevention and sex work issues in 19 languages, leaflets on legal rights, referral addresses.
- A grab bag, with specific information and objects relating to health issues, used by the nurses during the workshops.

## 🌐 Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is legalised. Sex workers have labour rights and social security. In some towns, working on the street is prohibited. Pimping and human trafficking are penalised. Indoor sex work is legalised under building and zoning laws and in specific areas.

**Workplaces:** Brothels, apartments, massage parlours.

## Objectives

- To contact new sex workers coming from Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America, working in apartments, brothels and massage parlours
- To strengthen contact with already known sex workers
- To distribute information on legal issues such as the alien law and Prostitution Act
- To inform sex workers about safer sex, HIV/STI prevention and health in general
- To deliver workshops on health and legal issues
- To distribute condoms and lubricants
- To encourage the empowerment and increase the self-esteem of migrant sex workers
- To refer sex workers to other social and health care support organisations in town

## Preparation

- Creation of a list of all addresses of indoor venues. This list shows the date when each visit was made, the nationality of the sex workers contacted and their response to the team. It is updated every month and gives an overview of the venues, in order to make the outreach visits more effective and avoid repeating visits soon after they were last made.
- Selection of the addresses: the cultural mediator visits specialised websites where sex workers offer their services, in order to find new venues.
- Planning the route: The team chooses, when possible, new addresses or ones that have not been visited lately by colleagues. The choice of venues to be visited also depends on the nationality of the day's outreach team, as it is much easier to make contact if the team speaks the same language as the sex workers visited.

- The team starts the journey by preparing the outreach bag. The driver is given the route for the day. Outreach is done by car in order to reach as many addresses as possible.

### **There is an important difference between apartments/brothels and massage parlours**

*While apartments and brothels are very clearly venues where sex workers offer sexual services, in massage parlours this is not always the case. Some massage parlours offer only traditional Thai massage, without sexual services. Erotic massage, however, includes sexual services and is offered in massage parlours or in brothels. The information found on the Internet is not always clear; therefore outreach workers have to be very careful when making contact. Knowledge and sensitivity are necessary in recognising and responding correctly, to the situation.*

#### **Development**

Outreach work takes place two to four times a month, for about 5 hours, from Monday to Friday, between 12pm and 6pm. Each visit lasts between ten minutes and an hour, depending on sex workers' availability. Each address is visited on average once every three months.

- On arrival, the team rings the bell and the staff introduces themselves as being from an organisation for migrant women, Amnesty for Women, and show what they have to offer (condoms, lubricants, leaflets). They try to involve the sex workers in conversation, and if they are not busy at the time they try to deliver a workshop. Depending on the sex workers' questions, they give answers, show pictures, and hold demonstrations, for example how to do a breast exam.

- To encourage discussion, the nurse carries a grab bag which contains prevention materials (condoms, lubricants, dildo, contraceptives, syringes, tampons, dental dams, diaphragm, female condom, and small presents such as a hand mirror and small toiletries bag). Sex workers are invited to reach in and pick out one object. The team asks the sex worker if she knows what the object is or what she knows about it. This is a very effective way of starting a conversation, which leads to a "spontaneous" workshop, lasting from 15 to 60 minutes. In general, three to six sex workers participate in this kind of activity.
- A special documentation sheet is completed after every apartment, brothel or massage parlour visited, and another one after every sex worker contacted. This is done in the car, after every visit, and never in front of the sex worker. This information is later used to produce statistics related to the outreach work carried out, as well as the basis for reports and analysis of the situation of migrant sex workers.
- After each outreach activity a short report is written by the cultural mediator or the nurse, which gives the list of visited addresses and a short analysis of the day's experience and most important aspects.

#### **Materials produced**

In recent years all the materials used were updated and adapted, according to changes in the sex work scene. New materials were developed, such as a brochure with more pictures than text, for people who could not read, or specific legal information for sex workers from the new EU countries.

#### **Evaluation**

The first evaluation takes place during and immediately after the outreach activity; the second evaluation is done during the bi-monthly exchange meetings.

**Positive:** Contacting an isolated and vulnerable group in the environment where they live and work is the best way to support and empower them, while building their trust in service providers.

**Negative:** The mobility of sex workers makes it difficult to build long-lasting relationships, and requires constant updating of the address list.



**TIPS:** Because of migrant sex workers' often isolated living and working conditions, outreach work is a fundamental tool to reach them and distribute health and legal information. Due to sex workers' mobility, outreach work has to be done regularly and constantly.

- The presence of cultural mediators and migrant nurses opens doors and increases sex workers' reliance on the outreach team, but also on other organisations in town (NGOs and health care centres). Because of this, the number of sex workers seeking support and counselling is quite high.
- Workshops offer a very efficient strategy to involve sex workers directly in an activity, to provide, explain and spread information, and to facilitate peer education, as those participating can pass on the information to other sex workers.



**TAKE CARE:** Never disturb sex workers while they are working: respect their work and their time. Do not invade their space.

- Do not leave any information lying around that could be dangerous for sex workers, such as information on how they can defend themselves from violence, because this information could be used against them.

## Visits to controlled venues

**Health and Social Development Foundation**

[www.hesed.bg](http://www.hesed.bg)

<http://yoursafeblog.blogspot.com>

### ▶ Target

Male and female sex workers working indoors, and their managers and controllers

### ⬆ Location

Bulgaria: Sofia and Borovets (a nearby ski resort)

### ⋯ Team

Outreach team of two people (usually one male and one female). Team members are required to have a background in psychology and/or social work.

### Ⓞ Materials Used

Bag packed with condoms, lubricants, safer drug use materials, specialised educational materials, pregnancy tests, dildo.

### ☹ Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is neither legalised nor criminalised. There is no legislation on sex work. Pimping and human trafficking are prosecuted as criminal acts. Massage and escort services are legalised.

**Workplaces:** Brothels or private collective apartments in Sofia, and bars in Borovets. They are managed by criminal business networks.



## Objectives

- To reach as many indoor sex workers as possible through conversation and negotiation with the managers.
- To meet sex workers' needs, implement health promotion and HIV/STI prevention, and facilitate better access to the available public services as needed.

## Preparation

- Mapping and locating new venues: the outreach team searches for information, most specifically addresses, on specialised websites and in specialised advertising brochures, for example "Sofia by night". Sex workers who have already been visited also refer them to other indoor venues and sex workers.
- Schedule of the places to be visited every week: both old and new places are scheduled.
- Every first visit or contact is made face-to-face by experienced and well-trained outreach workers.

## Development

Every indoor venue is visited once or twice per month. The team conducts outreach at least three times a week. Visits usually begin at around 8:30 or 9pm, when sex workers have already arrived and there are no clients yet. At the beginning of the project, the initial contact with sex workers was made by telephone. Practically all of the calls failed: the response was always "No, we do not offer sexual services" or "We do not need your services". Then the outreach team choose a different approach: direct visits.

To make direct contact with new sex work venues, the outreach workers go to the address and try to identify the right buzzer (normally it is different from the others in the building). When the door is opened by a guard or manager, the team always starts by explaining who they

are and what they offer. It is crucial to explain that they are not associated with the police. It is up to the manager whether the outreach team will be permitted to enter and talk to sex workers. It may take more than one visit for this permission to be granted.

A regular outreach strategy is implemented. The main goal of the outreach work of HESED is to visit as many indoor venues as possible and to offer as many services as possible on a regular basis. A team of two outreach workers offer individual and/or group consultations for HIV/AIDS and STI prevention, safer sex and safer drug use, referral and accompaniment to other relevant public health services, in response to the needs expressed by sex workers.

All sex workers receive free materials for safer sex and safer drug use and adapted information materials.

Sex industry organisers may take advantage of the same services (safer sex materials, consultations, testing and medical check-ups) as the sex workers.

## Materials produced

Within the framework of another project, "Power of prevention", the HESED team developed a specialised brochure targeting the managers: "Who are we?", which contains all the necessary information about the NGO, team, services, principles of work and referral organisations.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out during the project and remains positive. The most significant indicator is the fact that sex workers refer the outreach team to other sex work venues, at which the outreach workers are expected, have an easy first contact and are well received.

According to the team's statistics, HESED has only been met with a refusal from 5% of the indoor venues visited.



**TIPS:** Never interfere with business.

Respect the rules of the establishment. Keep a clear schedule for visits – visit the sex workers when you said you would. Offer everybody the same things.

Use the same language as the sex workers.

Ensure the team works under supervision.

As the sex industry is a very strictly organised business and many indoor venues operate as part of a network, it is always useful to say that the team has been given the address by their colleagues. Allow the managers time to investigate you and your work.



**TAKE CARE:** Always conduct outreach in pairs. Be ready to show your identification papers at any time during the visit (especially if the police arrive!). Be prepared for all eventualities and do not insist if your help is not needed or not wanted. Be proactive and do not give up!

## Visits to individual apartments

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### Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### ▶ Target

Male, female and transgender sex workers working in apartments

### 📍 Location

France: Marseille and Aix-en-Provence

### ⋯ Team

Always two outreach workers: a social worker and a peer educator (a sex worker who works in an apartment).

### 📄 Materials Used

- Cards and flyers about the organisation.
- Free condoms (male and female) or condoms for sale, lubricants, and information on HIV and STI prevention.

### 🌐 Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is neither prohibited nor regulated. Passive and active soliciting is forbidden and prosecuted. Pimping and human trafficking are prohibited; The definition of pimping covers a broad range of activities. There is no specific legislation on indoor sex work in apartments. Sex work in hotels, saunas, bars and clubs is prohibited.

**Workplaces:** private individual apartments dispersed across the city; hotels, sex shops and bars.

## Objectives

To improve access to health care and to inform sex workers about health and HIV/STI prevention, their rights, and the risks of indoor sex work.

Visiting sex workers allows the team to forge connections or improve existing ones more easily than through phone calls. This outreach mostly targets indoor sex workers who cannot or do not want to come to the organisation's premises for a variety of reasons (they want to stay anonymous; they live far away; they do not want to meet other sex workers, etc).

## Preparation

- Initial contact is made through a phone call. After two or three phone calls, a visit is suggested.
- A date is set for the meeting, depending on the sex worker's availability.
- The team asks if the sex worker wants specific prevention materials (male and female condoms, different kinds of lubricants, dental dam...) or to buy condoms.
- The team calls the sex worker a day in advance to confirm the visit, and prepares safer sex supplies and other documents and information materials.

## Development

The visit takes place when indoor sex workers agree and are available. It may last from half an hour to more than an hour, depending on the level of interest of the sex worker and his or her needs.

Condoms (for free or for sale) are an essential intervention tool and help to strike up a conversation. They also function as a starting point in discussions of prevention. Visits allow the development of the links established by phone. They allow face-to-face interaction with sex workers and in-depth discussions about prevention, the

delivery of small training sessions or workshops with safer sex materials, and discussion about sex workers' needs and problems; they can share information about their personal lives, if they want to.

During the first visit the team can provide a better introduction to the organisation, the project and the purpose of the visit. The sex worker also has the opportunity to speak about what she or he wants and needs. The team gives information about health and HIV/STI prevention, but also about sex workers' rights, working conditions and violent situations.

Because the team only visited individual sex work settings, it was always important to carefully prepare the content of subsequent visits (with some guidelines on prevention, violence, living conditions, and working conditions).

Two or three months after the first visit, the team calls the sex worker to suggest another one.

After the outreach, a short report is written by the team with feedback on the visit and important information or facts to be noted for future contact with the sex worker.

## Materials created

Small cards with the following information: an outline of the project, the organisation's address, the telephone number, website and blog. The team always gives multiple cards to the visited sex worker so that they can be distributed to others: the snowball effect.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out during the course of the project. The team adapts the methodology of its visits according to sex workers and the time they have available.

If the visit has not been well prepared, there can be unexpected results. It's important to specify the main objective of the visit and to ask sex workers what they expect from the team and why the visit is important to them. The team always discusses the visit afterwards, and writes a report to provide feedback.



**TIPS:** Gender is not generally a problem: men can visit women as well. But it would be preferable for the same team members to visit indoor sex workers: this allows links to be forged and trust to be built. If possible, include a peer educator in your project, as his or her experience of indoor sex work is beneficial. Share the aim and the content of the visit with the team, in order to regularly adapt the purpose of the visit. Offer various themes and workshops. This will prevent the content of your visits from going round in circles. If you feel it necessary, limit the length of your visit and do not be too intrusive.



**TAKE CARE:** You are visiting indoor sex workers during their working time. They may ask you to stop and postpone the visit if a client comes. Be quiet during your visit and in particular be discreet in the neighborhood. Some sex workers provide their address in their email signature. But going to visit them without arranging a date may be a risk: sex workers are not always there, or they may refuse to open the door.

## Using telephone and email to contact indoor sex workers

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### Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender sex workers working in apartments and/or hotels

### 📍 Location

France: Marseille and Aix

### ⋯ Team

Outreach workers: a social worker and a peer educator (a sex worker working in an apartment).

### 📁 Materials Used

Dedicated mobile phone, database, spreadsheet to record the phone numbers and surnames.

### 🌐 Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is neither prohibited nor regulated. Passive and active soliciting is forbidden and prosecuted. Pimping and human trafficking are prohibited; pimping covers a broad range of actions. There is no specific legislation on indoor sex work in apartments. Sex work in hotels, saunas, bars, and clubs is prohibited.

**Workplaces:** private individual apartments dispersed across the city, hotels, sex shops and bars.

## Objectives

- To let indoor sex workers know about the organisation; to support them and reduce their isolation.
- To improve access to health and rights for indoor sex workers: enhance their knowledge about HIV/AIDS/STI/hepatitis, encourage gynaecological check-ups and contraception, and provide access to harm reduction materials.
- To explain and improve their access to the health care system and public services.
- To inform them about their rights and enhance their empowerment.

## Preparation

- Selection of one or several media used by sex workers to advertise their services.
- The team decided to contact sex workers who advertise in a local newspaper, on selected listings websites (general and specific) and on personal websites. It takes a lot of time to research these media, so it is important to consider carefully before choosing which to target.
- Creation of a tool to record the contacts found in the media.
- A list was created on Excel summarising contacts with sex workers and brief information about them (telephone numbers, surname, city, specific place of work, sexual practices and so on). This avoids listing the same person with multiple telephone numbers.
- Implementation of suitable methodology for calling sex workers. For this step, the team included sex workers. The methodology was developed with peers in order to identify the best approach with indoor sex workers. The methodology is specific because contact is made through phone calls and is different than for outdoor outreach. It is important to

consider terminology, frequency of calls, and the best time to contact sex workers.

- Collection of the data. A database was created using specific software, in order to collect and analyse the information given by sex workers during contacts and to ensure follow-up with individuals contacted.

This analysis assisted the team in adapting their methodology, and in better responding to the needs of indoor sex workers.

## *The telephone as a tool for contacting indoor sex workers*

*Médecins du Monde, Nantes*

*Although the same methodology was implemented for this good practice, the evaluation and recommendations are different.*

### *Evaluation*

*As a humanitarian organisation, Médecins du Monde, although specialising in sex work in Nantes, found it very difficult to forge links with sex workers and explain their work to them. The team did not want to make the sex workers feel that they were viewed as people in need. This approach did not make sex workers feel comfortable.*

*Moreover, most of the questions and needs of the individuals contacted were linked to sex work, sharing experiences and their rights. Generally they did not need help in accessing health services.*

### *Recommendations*

*Be sure that when you have made a connection, you will be able to answer to the needs of the sex workers.*

*To implement this good practice, it is essential to be a community-based organisation or project working with and for sex workers.*



## Development

The contacts were made every week, in the morning or afternoon. It is important to try to find a time when sex workers are not too busy.

During the first call, the team introduces the outreach work, the activities of the organisation and the purpose of the call. At the end of the call an SMS is sent with the telephone number, email, website and address of the organisation to make sure the sex workers know how to contact the team if they need to. If it is not possible to speak with the person, the team always leaves a short voice mail message.

When possible, an email is sent to provide more detailed information on the project.

The next step is to consolidate the link: the team will discuss prevention, sex workers' needs, and sometimes their personal life. Usually the team calls every 6 to 8 weeks, depending on the needs of sex workers. At this stage it becomes easier to have more personal discussions with sex workers, and to share experiences with the team.

## Materials created

IT social networking: email, blog, Facebook.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out during the project: it is important to adapt the methodology. It was necessary to make several changes to the introduction of the organisation for the first contact. The outreach team always made some time to discuss the contacts, methodology, results and difficult situations.

This method of contacting sex workers is time-consuming. It may be difficult to create a strong link with indoor sex workers. Some might not want to have contact with the organisation. It is important to be patient and to find

a good frequency for the phone calls: not too often, but enough to make a connection.

Phone calls continue to be an effective method of contacting sex workers when they are isolated and want to maintain their anonymity.



**TIPS:** Try to focus the intervention on health prevention and information about HIV/STIs: it is a good basis on which to initiate contact, even on the phone. Sex workers are mobile and their advertisements fluctuate. Regularly monitor the chosen media. Continually adapt your activity to the needs of indoor sex workers.



**TAKE CARE:** Bear in mind that sometimes "escorts" do not consider themselves as belonging to a particular community: more specifically, to the sex workers' community. Choose your words carefully: it may be preferable to avoid speaking directly about prostitution, because indoor sex workers may approach their work differently.

Do not be too intrusive; find the appropriate way to communicate. Some sex workers may feel more confident if you do not ask questions on the phone. Do not leave voice mail if you are not sure that it will be picked up by sex workers.



# Contacting clients through ads and fairs

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**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

## ▶ Target

Clients of sex workers

## ↑ Location

Portugal: city of Porto and its surroundings

## ⋯ Team

One member of the outreach team to answer phone calls. Four people to participate in the fairs on rotating shifts.

## © Materials Used

- Newspaper ad
- Flyers for clients
- Posters

## Objectives

As clients are the ones who most often encourage sex workers to provide unsafe sex, the aim is to inform them about STIs and safer sexual practices. Some sex workers take risks in order to guarantee work because of the high demand for unsafe sex. In this way, clients must be a fundamental target in the prevention of STIs and in the promotion of sex workers' rights.

In order to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, a helpline is available for clients. Conversations with them are focused on health issues, raising awareness of safer sex practices and bringing sex workers' rights to their attention.

With this activity, the team intends to:

- encourage safer sexual practices and prevent the spread of STIs;
- promote respect for sex workers (to combat discrimination and stigmatisation of the job and prevent physical and psychological violence);
- provide information on male sexuality;
- inform clients about services in the community,
- distribute preventive materials such as condoms and lubricants.

## Preparation

For the ad in the newspaper:

- Preparation of the contents of the ad to be published.
- Publication of the ad in a strategic position of the local newspaper, in the same section where sex workers advertise their services.
- In order to receive authorisation for this, the team contacted the newspaper publishers, explained the project and its objectives, and negotiated a symbolic fee for the ad. The most popular local newspaper was chosen.

For participation in the fairs:

- Preparation of the promotional materials (flyers and posters) to publicise the team's work with clients.
- Scheduling APDES' participation in the fairs.

Prior contact with the manager of the fair is necessary in order to outline the project and its objectives, and to negotiate free entry for the outreach team and a strategic position in the fair.

### Development of the activity

Every first Monday of the month, the team advertises the number of the helpline for clients. This number is in operation every day but most phone calls are received on the day of publication.

A full-colour ad is published in the local newspaper in the section where sexual services are advertised, known as the Relax Section. This ad introduces the project and the services provided by the organisation.

The team also participates in national erotic fairs, often frequented by clients. These are also a useful venue at which to make contact with the sex work community in general. The team distributes prevention materials (condoms, lubricants and so on), outlines their work with sex workers and clients, gives information about STIs and safer sex practices, and promotes respect for sex workers and an end to stigmatisation of sex work. The outreach team tries to cover all the opening hours of such events, which usually last from 2pm to 2am for five days.

### Materials created

Newspaper ads:

- For the clients: flyers on STIs and safer sexual practices, lubricants and condoms.
- For the fairs: several flyers (explaining APDES' projects, STIs, abortion, oral sex, anal sex, access to public health services, access to legal support, etc), two posters (one about APDES' services, aimed at sex workers, and one about safer sexual practices, aimed at clients).

### Evaluation

Clients are an important indirect target group. Work with them can be evaluated positively by the high number of contacts initiated by them and their readiness to ask questions and receive information. Qualitative assessment is carried out on a regular basis, and quantitative assessment every six months. For this evaluation the team looks at the number of contacts made with clients, their level of interest in talking to the team, the number and the quality of questions, and the number of repeat contacts (face-to-face and by phone).



**TIPS:** It is important to clarify the aims of this work at the beginning of the conversation with the client (be it by phone or face-to-face) so as to avoid misunderstandings. The ad can easily be confused with that of an escort agency. The conversation should begin with a clear message to clarify the function of the project. It is also very important to make the client aware of the services that the team is able to offer. Requests for advice on sexual health (premature ejaculation, impotence, etc) are very common. If the team is unable to respond to these questions it is important to know partners or other agencies to which clients can be referred.



# Taxi drivers as intermediaries

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## Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### ▶ Target

- Direct target: Taxi drivers and their passengers
- Indirect target: Female, male and transgender indoor sex workers using taxis as public transport to go to work

### 📍 Location

France: Marseille and Aix-en-Provence

### 👥 Team

Outreach workers: project coordinator, social worker and a peer educator.

### 📄 Materials Used

Small cards tailor-made for the taxis, with information on the project: email, phone number, website and blog.

### Objectives

To make contact with indoor sex workers through taxi drivers. According to the team's experience, indoor sex workers use taxis as a mode of transport when they do outcalls (visiting a hotel or client's home). Some of them also use taxis to move around the city, and they know taxi drivers well.

Taxi drivers are good intermediaries and key informants, because the taxi provides a service in a comfortable and intimate setting which sometimes encourages the passenger to speak freely. When a sex worker using the taxi service feels confident with the taxi driver, he or she will call the driver again and a trusting relationship may be established.

### Preparation

- Assessment made with sex workers to determine whether taxi drivers are valuable intermediaries.
- Location and selection of the target according to contacts previously made and the experience of sex workers.
- Contact with one of the two taxi companies in Marseille and Aix-en-Provence. An appointment was made with the sales manager. The team introduced the organisation, the activity and the approach. They explained the project and the idea of using taxi drivers to promote it to indoor sex workers.

### Development

The small cards created by the organisation were distributed to several taxi drivers through the sales manager. He suggested contacting and distributing the cards to all the taxis for which he is responsible (30 at night and 70 during the day).

These cards are offered by the taxi drivers to their passengers whenever one shows interest or when a specific query or issue related to sex work arises.

The team and the sales manager agreed not to leave the cards in a visible place in the taxi. They should only target sex workers and people with an interest in the sex industry.

The action also promotes open and respectful discussion on sex work.

The team regularly called the sales manager to get feedback and to find out whether the taxi drivers encountered any difficulties.

The team was also offered the opportunity to promote the project at the end of the year during the taxi company's general assembly.

### Materials created

Small cards with specific information on the action, and the address, phone number, website and blog of the organisation.

The card is nicely presented but not too explicit about sex work, so it does not make the taxi drivers or sex workers uncomfortable.

### Evaluation

Using taxi drivers as intermediaries in contacting sex workers has a positive impact. It saves time, because when the action is well prepared and the message is clear, it is not necessary to meet all drivers.

The team asked for regular feedback from the sales manager and taxi drivers. They did not encounter difficulties, but results were seen gradually.

Indeed, if sex workers are interested and take the cards, they may only call when they need information.

It is important to be patient and not to forget to ask for regular feedback from the taxi drivers.



**TIPS:** Only taxi drivers who are interested should participate in the project: it should not be obligatory and should be based on trust.

Try to keep in touch as often as possible with taxi drivers in order to adapt your action and methodology. Preparing a leaflet for taxi drivers that explain the action may improve the clarity of the message.

## Sex shop owners as intermediaries

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### Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### Target

- Direct targets: sex shop owners and their customers
- Indirect targets: Female, male and transgender sex workers working in sex shops

### Location

France, Marseille.

### Team

An indoor-based peer educator and a nurse.

### Materials Used

Small cards specifically developed for the sex shops.

### Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is neither prohibited nor regulated. Sex work is prohibited in sex shop centres.

### Objectives

It is difficult to make direct contact with sex workers working in sex shops because sex work is forbidden in such venues in France.

The aim is to promote the project among sex shop owners so as to have them function as intermediaries between indoor sex workers and the organisation. Sex shop owners are good intermediaries and key informants because of their contact with sex workers.

The team informs sex shop owners about their services and particularly their work on health and HIV/STI prevention.

This action aims to contact as many indoor sex workers as possible, particularly those working in private venues such as sex shop centres who are not often reached.

### Preparation

- Noting the location of all the sex shops in the city.
- Selection of several sex shops where the team knows that sexual services are on offer.
- Fine-tuning the methodology and approach. As sex work is prohibited in sex shops, special care had to be taken at this stage. The team chose a health promotion approach in order to better facilitate contact with the sex shop owners.
- Creation of small, attractive information cards adapted for sex shops.

All these steps were taken with the support and experience of peers.

### Development

The team tries to visit the sex shops every 2-3 months. To begin with, the team selected some sex shops and visited them. They introduced the project and the activities for prevention among sex workers.

Depending on the contact, they explained either that this action was intended to reach sex workers who may be customers of the sex shop or that it was to contact sex workers working in these venues.

The team asked if they could leave some cards in the shop. Some owners were happy for them to be left in a clearly visible place and others chose to give the cards directly to sex workers as required.

Several days later, another team member went to the sex shops anonymously to check whether the cards were still visible or not.

The team keeps in touch with the sex shop owners: they visit them every two months to get feedback on the action. Sex shop owners generally speak more openly on the second visit.

### Materials created

Small, attractive cards were created, containing some information on the project, and the address, phone number, website and blog of the organisation.

They look like business cards and are small enough to fit in a pocket. These cards were adapted specifically for the sex shops.

### Evaluation

Though the legislation forbids sex work in sex shops, the contact with sex shop owners was very positive. They all agreed to promote the project and to give the cards to sex workers. One of them even created a small poster for his shops with the address and telephone number of the organisation.

It is important to have a clear message and to adapt the cards over time. Some clients called the organisation looking for information or sexual services because they thought the organisation offered them!



**TIPS:** Explain your aims clearly. Adapt your message according to the legal context and the receptiveness of the sex shop owner. You can always say that the aim is to contact sex workers who might buy accessories or films at the shop. Keep in touch with the sex shop owners. Choosing an approach of health and prevention is always a good way to enter into discussion with the owners.

# Using word of mouth with sex workers and apartment managers

**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

## ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender sex workers working collectively in apartments. Owners and managers of the apartments

## ↑ Location

Portugal: city of Porto and its surroundings

## ⋯ Team

Peer educators and outreach workers from a multi-disciplinary team (psychologist, nurse, social worker, sociologist, economist, cultural mediators).

The services of a designer were used in creating the cards.

## Ⓢ Materials Used

Bag with condoms, lubricants, dental dams of mixed flavours and cards promoting the project.

## Objectives

- Spread the word about the project and its services among the sex worker community, through the involvement of peer educators, sex workers and owners/managers of apartments.
- Distribute cards publicising the services and invite sex workers to pass them on to their colleagues.

This action allows sex workers to get in touch with the project/organisation and have access to the services it provides. For the team, word of mouth is a useful source

of new contacts who might appreciate information on the project/organisation.

This is probably related to the fact that the great majority of sex workers contacted have a similar background (country of origin, language, cultural habits) and usually share information, codes and practices. This allows communication about the project to flow easily.

## Preparation

- Preparation of a “business card” to outline the services of the team and how to get in touch. A large number of these should be printed for distribution during outreach work (three to each sex worker).
- Identification of influencers or key individuals to spread the word about the project/organisation. Three types of influencers were identified:
  - peer educators, who are part of the sex work community
  - sex workers
  - owners/managers of apartments/houses, who have contact with a large number of sex workers on tour and can facilitate entrance to other apartments.

## Development

The “word of mouth” tool is promoted during every visit to the apartments, three times a week.

As members of the sex work community, peer educators have enhanced knowledge and proximity to the target population. They are especially effective in promoting the project and its services to new sex workers as well as introducing the outreach team to previously unknown sex work venues. Peer educators function as desirable communication channels due to their informal approach and proximity to the community. Their message is readily accepted because they share the same social norms and language as the other sex workers.

During outreach work the team invites sex workers to spread the word about their services amongst their colleagues/friends. In each visit to sex workers' apartments the team hands out a bag of condoms, lubricants and cards from the project, and sex workers are encouraged to give these cards to their colleagues and tell them about their personal experience with the project/organisation.

The team always tries to be on good terms with the owners and receptionists of apartments and houses, because they facilitate contact with sex workers and play an important role in their lives. The team chats to them informally and offers them the same materials and services provided to the sex workers.

The team makes it clear that they do not want to interfere with business. They enquire about the most convenient time to visit, and let owners know that sex workers can end conversation with them at any point. These key influencers spend longer periods of time in the house, and play an important role in spreading information on the organisation's services, particularly to new arrivals to the workplace. Once a good rapport with them has been established, the team can find out when new sex workers arrive, and schedule a new visit accordingly; the owners and receptionists can also refer the team to other apartments they own or know about.

### **Materials created**

Cards from the project: these look like standard business cards and contain the following information:

- the name and logo of the project;
- the services offered by the organisation: health care, condoms and lubricants, information on sexuality and safer sex, information on the rights of migrants, psychological and social support, accompaniment to medical and community services;

- contact details for the project: land line, mobile and e-mail. The card also highlights that the service is free and anonymous.

### **Evaluation**

This is a very effective way of reaching new sex workers and the process is not costly or time-consuming. Word of mouth communication among sex workers about the services provided by the organisation has been the most important source for new contacts for the project. However, if the team decides to expand their target group and contact sex workers with different profiles (in terms of nationality, place of work, isolation, or desire for anonymity) they will need to incorporate other strategies.

To evaluate this action they always collect and register feedback from the sex workers on how they first heard about the project (through a peer educator, a colleague/friend, owner or receptionist).



**TIPS:** When distributing the cards to sex workers, all the information should be explained with care (name of the project, services, contacts, confidentiality policy).



**TAKE CARE:** This action loses its relevance if the team is not able to respond to all sex workers' requests. The distribution of new cards must be proportional to the time and resources that the outreach team has to respond to all requests.



# Guidelines for outreach work

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The TAMPEP project through the NGO Amnesty for Women  
[www.amnestyforwomen.de](http://www.amnestyforwomen.de)  
[www.tampep.eu](http://www.tampep.eu)

## ▶ Target

Outreach teams working with indoor-based female sex workers

## ↑ Location

Germany: Hamburg

## ⋯ Team

The outreach team – cultural mediators, social workers, nurses – and the project coordinator.

## © Materials Used

A4 leaflet in German.

## Objectives

The Guidelines outline in clear and simple form basic information regarding the structure of outreach work for indoor settings. The aims of the leaflet are to give newcomers a feel for what is relevant, knowledge of priorities, and clarity about what should be avoided.

The leaflet is a guide which provides cultural mediators and nurses engaged in outreach activities with rules and information which will help them to standardise their work and, consequently, to increase its quality and professionalism.

## Development

The Guidelines are used by every new person commencing outreach work. The leaflet also provides a refresher of relevant points for experienced outreach workers and gives new mediators guidelines on which to focus. It is also used for students as an example of how to do outreach work.

The Guidelines were developed according to the structure and needs of outreach work. They were drafted and reviewed by the outreach team (cultural mediators and nurses) in collaboration with the project coordinator. They were printed, handed out to the outreach team and pinned on the information board at the TAMPEP office.

Guidelines for Outreach Work includes the following information:

- Aims of outreach work: to distribute health and legal information; to refer to other organisations. Main priority: to respect and empower sex workers.
- Basic rules about security: never enter anywhere alone – the work is always carried out by two people. Never insist! Respect sex workers' space.
- Preparation: decide who is going to follow the day's route and who is going to write the day's report. Things to do: research new addresses listed online, review the address list, and prepare the bags with sufficient information materials, condoms, lubricants and small gifts.
- During outreach work: rules on filling in the various documentation sheets, how to approach sex workers, how to deal with them, issues to consider, how to carry out workshops, how to encourage sex workers' participation in the workshops.
- Materials to distribute: types of condoms and lubricants, information materials on health and legal issues, and information about other organisations for referral.

- After outreach work: what should go in the report, what it should focus on, where to send it.
- What to do if outreach work is cancelled: how to inform the day's team in time.
- Outreach team meeting: the importance of attending the meetings, issues to be discussed, planning forthcoming outreach activities.
- Invoices: how and when each outreach worker has to file her invoice.
- Trafficking in women: definition of trafficking; how to recognise cases of trafficking or other violence and how to respond.
- List of referral organisations: a list of different organisations in Hamburg offering social and medical assistance for national and migrant sex workers, including address, telephone, opening hours, services offered and languages in which counselling is available.

### Materials created

Guidelines for outreach work is a leaflet with detailed information on important points to consider when preparing and conducting outreach work for indoor-based sex workers.

### Evaluation

**Positive:** The Guidelines give a very clear picture about the process and the priorities of outreach work for indoor-based sex workers, giving its practitioners a greater sense of security and professionalism.

**Negative:** The Guidelines were not updated regularly.



### TIPS:

- Hold regular exchange meetings with the outreach team in order to improve and/or update the information contained in the Guidelines.
- The Guidelines should be considered merely as a starting point. They contain the basic rules for training new outreach staff. They are changeable and therefore need to be constantly reviewed according to changes in the scene.
- Keep an updated list of team members' telephone numbers, including mobiles. This list must be circulated among the team in order to facilitate communication, mainly in the event of an activity being cancelled and another appointment arranged.



# Peer integration

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## Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender sex workers working in apartments, hotels, or other indoor settings

### ↑ Location

France: Marseille

### ⋯ Team

The director of the organisation and the project coordinator. The indoor project team.

A social worker or outreach worker from outside the project.

## Objectives

The main aim was to include a sex worker in the project and to share his or her experience of indoor prostitution. This inclusion allows for better and easier contact with other indoor sex workers thanks to his or her experience. A peer is the best person to pass information on to other sex workers: he or she knows the situation, the difficulties, and the risks of sex work, and can share his or her experience, providing a clear and adapted message.

This inclusion is also to encourage peer education. Involvement of peers is a key strategy in a project targeting sex workers.

## Preparation

- Communication regarding the recruitment process. Indoor sex workers known to the association were asked whether they wanted to participate in the project. An ad was also published, posted on the organisation's website, in the office and in the mobile unit. During outdoor outreach the team informed sex workers of the recruitment process for the indoor project.
- Information on the project, its aims and activities, and the importance of peer participation. Discussion about what the peer could offer and bring to the project.
- The recruitment process was carried out by the director of the organisation with the participation of the indoor team. A male sex worker was selected who worked in an apartment and also had experience of outdoor sex work.



## Development

The peer works for the project 4 hours a week, depending on his availability. The recruitment process highlighted several points:

- some sex workers may not want a work contract, although they are willing to help, support or give advice to the project on an occasional and voluntary basis. In this case, the team did not refuse the help offered, and adapted the peers' involvement as appropriate (deciding on methodology for phone calls, involvement in the action targeting taxi drivers, etc).
- When recruiting a sex worker, it is necessary to adapt working hours according to his wishes and availability. The team discussed with him the most appropriate and interesting activities, what he wanted or did not want to do, and what he did or didn't feel confident about. His hours were also adapted during the project according to the requirements of each activity.

Before commencing work with the project, the peer received training on health and HIV/STI prevention from the organisation's nurse, in order to refresh his knowledge and feel confident answering questions from other sex workers (what to do in the event of a condom burst, where to seek help, etc).

His tasks were:

- To make contact with indoor sex workers through phone calls
- To ensure e-empowerment through participation in online forums
- To contact sex shop centres

## Evaluation

Regular briefings with the team are necessary in order to share his feelings and experiences and to discuss any difficulties that may arise.

It was also important for him to have the opportunity to see somebody outside of the project, a voluntary trainee social worker, to discuss his feelings more freely if he wanted to.

It is very important to help the peer to find his or her own position in the team and in the project, and to encourage his or her participation in a specific activity.

The evaluation was very positive. Peer involvement ensures better contact and communication with indoor sex workers. It promotes networking and exchange among an isolated population.



**TIPS:** Take into account the availability of the sex worker when scheduling activities and working hours.

Note that it may not be easy for a peer to speak about some topics with other sex workers: discuss this with him or her. It may be difficult to hold dual roles as a sex worker and as a peer working at a project for sex workers. Have regular feedback and briefings with the peer: speak with him or her about his or her feelings, difficulties, involvement, and ideas about the project's evolution.



**TAKE CARE:** Bear in mind that it may take time before a peer feels confident promoting the project to other organisations and presenting him- or herself as a sex worker.

# KOOFRA: support for trafficked women

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**KOOFRA**  
**Koordinierungsstelle gegen Frauenhandel**  
**(Organisation Against the Trafficking of Women)**  
[www.koofra.de](http://www.koofra.de)

## ▶ Target

Women potentially affected by trafficking

## 📍 Location

Germany: Hamburg

## 👥 Team

KOOFRA is coordinated by two women.

The organisation works with a pool of lawyers who specialise in different fields; a pool of available shelters; and a pool of female counsellors from up to 20 different cultural backgrounds, guaranteeing counselling in the native language of the service users.

## 📄 Materials Used

KOOFRA has an information leaflet in 21 different languages.

## 🔄 Context

**Legislation:** Prostitution is legalised. Pimping and human trafficking are prosecuted as criminal acts.

Many women and girls around the world decide to migrate in order to escape poverty in their homelands and earn money elsewhere. They do this to support families back home or to build a future for themselves. Middlemen and -women target and approach such women. They promise well-paid work in various industries: domestic and au pair work, kitchen work, sex work, or even arranged marriages. The women are then asked to pay

money for the arrangement costs, and the cycle of exploitation typical of female trafficking begins.

## Objectives

KOOFRA is an NGO that offers social and psychological support to women affected by trafficking. Its priority is their stability and empowerment. By informing them about their rights, they give women the tools required to decide for themselves the best steps to restructure their lives.

Women affected by trafficking are confronted with such a multitude of problems and concerns that it feels as if they will never be able to solve them. KOOFRA's services are tailored to meet and support the social and psychological needs of these women.

Another key activity of the organisation is to combat trafficking in women and speak up for the rights of those affected by it. KOOFRA carries out advocacy work at local, national and European levels, in collaboration with various networks.

## Development of activities

If outreach workers from the INDOORS project have suspicions about a case of violence and/or trafficking, they try to inform sex workers about the work of KOOFRA. However, care is essential when giving this information, because it could place the sex worker in danger if someone else overhears the conversation. Therefore, leaflets are not given out and information is only given verbally.

KOOFRA was the first NGO in Germany to sign a cooperation treaty with local police on support for those affected by trafficking. The police are duty-bound to inform all women they encounter in a trafficking context about KOOFRA, while KOOFRA operates independently in offering counselling to the target group.

In Hamburg, those affected by trafficking are given four weeks “reflection time” in which to decide whether they want to testify against their traffickers. During those four weeks the woman receives a residence permit and is supported by KOOFRA. The police have no influence on her decision, and KOOFRA’s support does not depend on whether or not she intends to testify.

KOOFRA’s services include:

- A shelter: safe and secure accommodation
- Care and psychosocial support from counsellors who have the same native language
- Financial aid for basic needs
- Medical assistance from specialist doctors
- Support and accompaniment to appointments and meetings with governmental officials (immigration, social security, police, etc)
- Legal advice from qualified and specialist lawyers
- The opportunity to talk about and share their experiences with counsellors speaking their mother tongue, who are trained for this type of situation
- The necessary preparation for their return home, if possible with referral addresses
- Support during legal proceedings

### Materials created

KOOFRA information leaflets, written in 21 different languages, are only found in places to which women potentially affected by trafficking have access.

### Evaluation

The written agreement between KOOFRA and the police means that cooperation is very effective. It clearly sets out what each party is expected to do.



**TIPS:** When doing outreach work:

- It is very important to ensure that the woman is alone or that no one is listening to the conversation when discussing violence and/or trafficking.
- If the woman wants more information, she is shown the KOOFRA leaflet in her language by the outreach worker, reads the information, writes down the contact telephone number and returns the leaflet to the worker.



**TAKE CARE:** For security reasons, leaflets like KOOFRA’s are not to be distributed widely as they can put women potentially affected by trafficking in danger. For instance, if a controller encounters the information, it could have very negative consequences for a woman or a girl.



# Empowerment of sex workers

This section provides examples of good practices in different actions targeting indoor sex workers that are implemented to encourage their empowerment: promotion of their rights, access to health care, e-empowerment and specific tools created for them.



## Mediation with a municipality

**The Genoese group of the CDCP**

**Le Graziöse**

**[www.lucciole.org](http://www.lucciole.org)**

### **Target**

Sex workers who work in the historic centre of Genoa

### **Location**

Italy: Genoa

### **Team**

3 social workers and counsellors; 1 peer educator.

### **Materials Used**

Informational material regarding the activities of the CDCP – Le Graziöse.

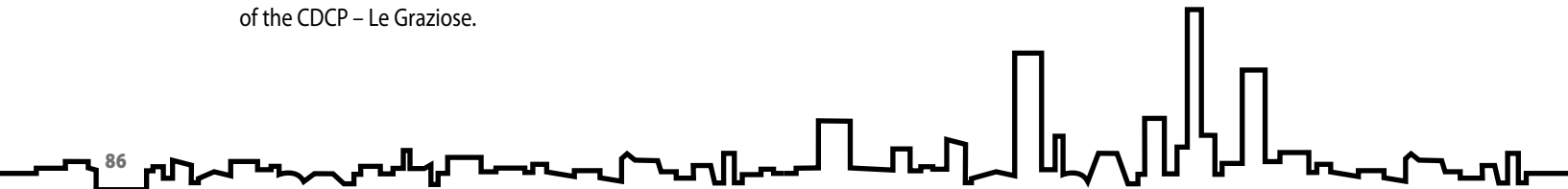
### **Context**

Prostitution is neither legalised nor criminalised. There are strong protests and sporadic acts of intolerance by residents and shopkeepers in the Maddalena area in the centre of Genoa.

The Municipality of Genoa issued a provision to close storerooms at ground level (bassi), sex workers' workplaces, in this area. Municipal officers and police enforce this.

### **Objectives**

- Improve sex workers' working conditions and their quality of life in the Maddalena area, in the historic centre of Genoa, by defending their rights and empowering them.
- Create channels of communication and collaboration with the Municipality of Genoa.
- Move from repressive strategies against sex workers to an understanding that regards them as potential resources, as an active component in finding solutions to a problem in which they are involved.
- Restore peaceful coexistence between sex workers, residents and shopkeepers in the area.
- Improve sex workers' self-esteem and enable self-organisation in order to build and maintain dignified and respectful working conditions for all.



### **Preparation**

- Group meetings with sex workers in the Maddalena area.
- Set up a group of ten to twelve sex workers in order to create the Genovese section of the CDCP, with the objective of taking decisions and planning actions together.
- Meeting with competent public officers with the aim of setting up a dialogue between the Municipality and sex workers.
- Meeting with residents and shopkeepers in the area aimed at understanding their complaints.

### **Development**

After an initial year of operation in the historic centre of Genoa, a group of organised and well-established sex workers in the area became active and the organisation obtained a collaboration agreement between the Municipality and sex workers.

The second year was focused on consolidating and organising the achieved results:

- Consolidation of the group
- Selection of peer educators
- Start-up of a project in joint partnership with the Municipality

Subsequently, channels of communication and discussion were formalised with the Municipality of Genoa and the Municipal Police in charge of the closure of the bassi. The Municipality of Genoa formally handed a social mediation project in the Maddalena area to the CDCP.

The Genovese group of the CDCP was expanded and became a point of reference for the majority of sex workers in the area.

A free self-defence course was organised by the CDCP, in collaboration with the Municipality of Genoa, aimed at sex workers and women who reside and/or work in the historic centre of the city.

### **Evaluation**

Internal evaluations carried out periodically with the national coordinator of the CDCP highlighted the following:

- Achievement of the minimum objectives that were set at various stages of the project
- Thanks to progress made in their activities, the number of sex workers involved in the activities of the CDCP increased
- Improvement in the quality and number of contacts made with sex workers, residents, shopkeepers and institutions, together with the consolidation of the presence of outreach workers in the area in question
- No hostile demonstrations against the presence and activities of the CDCP
- Associations, organised groups of residents and shopkeepers in the area concerned demonstrated their willingness to collaborate with the CDCP in different ways.

At the end of the first year of activity by the CDCP-Genoa, the Municipality of Genoa's city council for women and social affairs issued a positive evaluation of its achievements, leading to a decision to formalise and continue its collaboration with the CDCP. However, the Municipality's approach is ambiguous, as it has recently advanced new repressive sanctions against outdoor sex workers and clients.





**TIPS:** Begin with a specific goal identified by sex workers (in this case the defence of their working area) in order to facilitate the creation of the group and its duration.

Identify an office (even temporarily) in the area in which sex workers work. This will help participants to maintain and strengthen their contacts, stay informed of events and have insight into the moods of the people they work with and for.



**TAKE CARE:** It is very important to involve the various subjects (sex workers, institutions, citizens) in the decision-making process. Experience has shown that collaboration is possible when proposals are discussed and shared, whereas if decisions are perceived as “coming from above” they are more likely to be met with closed doors and opposition.

## Mobile medical unit

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**Health and Social Development Foundation**  
[www.hesed.bg](http://www.hesed.bg)

### ▶ Target

Male and female sex workers working indoors

### ⬆ Location

Bulgaria: Sofia and the nearby ski resort of Borovets

### ⋯ Team

Doctor specialising in sexual health, nurse, outreach worker/driver.

### Ⓢ Materials Used

The MMU (medical mobile unit) is equipped with a gynaecological chair and a place to take blood samples. Free safer sex materials and medicines are also available.

### ~ Context

Access to public services is impeded by several barriers, mainly linked to stigmatisation, discriminatory attitudes from medical staff, and controllers who may restrict sex workers' freedom of movement.

### Objectives

- To offer free, confidential and anonymous testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B and C, sexual health check-ups and STI treatment in the places where sex workers work and/or live. Every patient is registered in portable documents using an anonymous code rather than his or her name.
- To reach as many indoor sex workers as possible and meet their health needs; to implement diagnostics and treatment and to improve sex workers' access to health services.

### Preparation

The MMU functions as an integral part of the outreach work of HESED and visits locations already identified by the outreach workers. The first MMU visit is arranged in advance by the outreach workers and they introduce the MMU staff in the indoor venue.

### Development

The MMU offers medical services about 4 times a month. Outreach usually begins at around 8:30 or 9pm when sex workers have already arrived at their workplace, and goes on until all those requesting services have been seen.

- Visiting the location: after the outreach workers and/or MMU staff have received a request from sex workers, the location is incorporated into the week's schedule for outreach visits. The MMU parks near the building and the outreach worker accompanies the sex workers to the MMU to receive the services required – testing and/or medical check-ups, consultations and referrals.
- Blood testing: immediately after the visit, the MMU goes to the laboratory of the Regional Inspectorate in charge of public health care, where the blood is tested.
- Two weeks after the visit, the MMU returns to the location to give sex workers their test results and/or to offer further check-ups and medical consultation if required.
- The MMU's next visit to the same place is planned for a minimum of 3 months later.

### Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out during the project. The most significant indicator for the success of the work is the fact that the MMU is the most requested service offered by HESED and the staff are very much welcomed.

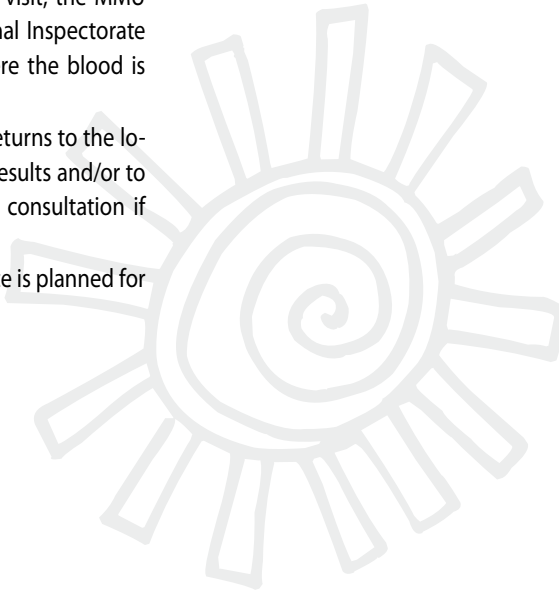
The MMU allows sex workers to have greater access to health care, especially those in a more vulnerable situation.



**TIPS:** Never neglect to carry out pre- and post-testing consultations; maintain confidentiality and do not disclose test results to another person. Offer the same services to the sex workers' partners if possible.



**TAKE CARE:** The MMU is an expensive service. Be frugal with the available resources. Significant results come if the service is sustainable!



# Improving access to public health services

**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

## ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender migrant sex workers working in apartments

## ↑ Location

Portugal: city of Porto and its surroundings

## ⋯ Team

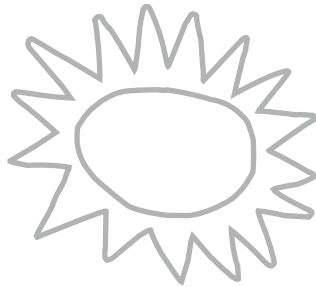
Two outreach workers from a multidisciplinary team (psychologist, nurse, social worker, sociologist, economist, cultural mediator).

## © Materials Used

Flyer: "Access to public health services".

## ~ Context

Most migrant sex workers do not have contact with public health services because of a lack of information about the health care system, its bureaucratic mechanisms, and discriminatory attitudes. Public health and social services are not sensitive to the specific needs of indoor sex workers.



## Objectives

The project/organisation functions as a mediator between migrant sex workers and public health services. This entails:

- facilitating medical appointments and personally accompanying sex workers to health facilities;
- providing information on the steps to registering in the public health system, and supporting sex workers in that process;
- informing health services about legal frameworks concerning access to health;
- ensuring that sex workers' rights are respected and, when they are not, activating legal procedures.

This action aims to improve migrant sex workers' access to public health services (especially for those with irregular status). An additional goal is to prepare public health structures to better attend to the rights and needs of migrants wishing to access their services.

## Preparation

- Needs assessment and exploration of the main needs of sex workers which can be fulfilled by public health services (sexual health, psychological support, nutrition).
- Establishment of protocols/partnerships with health services (creating a network of hospitals and local health centres to refer the sex workers to).
- Information/training of the team on the legal framework for migrants' access to public health services; this is important not only to inform migrant sex workers, but also to pressure administrative services to respect migrants' rights.
- Preparation for contact with public health structures when migrants' rights need to be clarified.
- Creation of a flyer with relevant information.

## Development

This is a continuous and integrated action which requires daily effort and availability from the work team. The activity takes place every time the outreach team visits the field and sometimes additionally requires administrative work.

This action is closely linked to the outreach work. Every time the team visits an apartment and makes contact with sex workers, it informs them about their rights and the services provided by the project/organisation. Two strategies are usually employed:

- If a sex worker needs medical care covered by the team's protocols, the outreach team arranges the medical appointments and, if needed, accompanies the sex worker to health services; after the initial appointment the sex worker should have more confidence and be able to return alone if necessary.
- The team informs all sex workers how public health services work and what they have to do to access them. If someone needs more specific medical care which is not covered by the organisation's partners, the team tries to give her the tools to register in the public health system. All the steps to be taken are explained and the sex workers are supported throughout the process: namely, the team can go with them to any public service needed.

## Materials created

Flyer: "Access to public health services". This flyer provides information on the rights of migrants relating to health and it also specifies the exact steps a migrant should take to register in the national health system (particularly in the case of migrants who do not have legal status or do not contribute to social security).

## Evaluation

Every six months the team collects feedback from sex workers through a questionnaire. Sex workers report that this service opens doors to health care, to better knowledge of their rights, and to overcoming fears in accessing public health services.



**TIPS:** If health services do not act in accordance with the law, creating barriers to migrant sex workers' admission to the services, try to inform them about the existing laws guaranteeing migrants' rights in relation to health. Bring the legislation on paper with you to back up your argument. If necessary, lodge a complaint and/or consult a lawyer and open a disciplinary procedure.



**TAKE CARE:** When accessing public health services, sex workers should be treated as anyone else. If the service providers propose the creation of a separate service for this population, do not accept it. This would increase feelings of isolation, marginalisation and stigmatisation.

# E-empowerment through forums

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**Autres Regards**

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

## ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender sex workers working indoors and participating in online forums

## 📍 Location

France

## 👥 Team

An indoor-based peer educator; an outreach worker.

## 💻 Materials Used

A computer with internet connection.

## Objectives

To provide accurate and clear information and take part in discussions online with indoor sex workers.

To provide a form of e-outreach to sex workers who are not otherwise in contact with the organisation.

Participation in forum discussions, especially those about prostitution and sexuality, is a means to contact and inform more indoor sex workers and to answer their questions about STI/HIV prevention, health, violence, security and their rights.

## Preparation

- Creation of guidelines in order to identify the objectives, guiding principles, different persons concerned, topics the team wants to cover, values, and dos and don'ts.

- Creation of two lists: One with information on other organisations in France working with sex workers; another with information about different associations and organisations in Marseille working on migrants' rights, health, drug use and violence. These lists allow the team to quickly refer sex workers to organisations suited to their needs.
- Training on health and STI/HIV prevention is delivered to the team before they commence participation in the forum.
- Selection of a forum focused on sexuality and particularly on prostitution.

## Development

Participation in the forum takes place as often as possible, according to the availability of the team.

A profile for the project was created on the forum in order to present the organisation and ensure greater visibility.

It is important to regularly monitor the chosen forum.

The team participates in discussions on the chosen topics, mainly answering sex workers' questions.

This action is developed mainly by a peer. He selects a topic (according to the guidelines created for e-outreach), reads it (it may take a long time to read all the messages) and decides whether or not to respond to it. Many sex workers ask questions about clients, sexual practices and prices – it is important to select the right topics. Sometimes misinformation on STI/HIV prevention or on legal issues is posted on the forum, and the team can set the record straight.

Once a response is posted, it is necessary to keep regular watch on the forum and follow up the discussion.

## Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out during the project. The methodology and the method of intervention were adapted in response to sex workers' needs. It was important to get in contact with the moderator of the forum in order to explain the aims of the action, in order to prevent posted messages from being deleted.

The evaluation is positive, because this action allows the team to reach indoor sex workers who are not easily reached. Because a peer developed this action, it also supports and promotes networking and exchange between sex workers.



**TIPS:** Carefully read the rules of the forum and avoid advertising your organisation.

The moderator may delete your message if it is forbidden to advertise any kind of services (including those of NGOs).

Try to participate as often as possible; it is important to regularly read the different topics and maintain a regular presence in the forum.

If a peer participates in the forum, discuss it with him or her as often as possible.

Be polite and use a friendly tone on the forum for better results.

Be clear with your guidelines and follow them – it is easy to get sucked into the “game” of the forum!



## Sex in blog – a sex work blog

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**Autres Regards**

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

<http://indoors13.blogspot.com>

### ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender sex workers working indoors

### ⬆ Location

France:

The blog was created specifically for indoor sex workers working in Marseille and Aix-en-Provence, but it can be accessed from anywhere.

### ⋮ Team

Two outreach workers; a peer educator.

### Ⓒ Materials Used

A computer with internet connection.

### Objectives

- Creation of a blog with posts on health, rights, security, local and national events, etc: <http://indoors13.blogspot.com> In Marseille, indoor sex workers are more isolated than those working in outdoor settings: generally, they do not know one another and are not familiar with sex workers' organisations. This online space was created so that they can exchange information, participate and ultimately support each other.
- Empowerment of indoor sex workers by informing them about the organisation, health prevention, and their rights.

- Supporting indoor sex workers' access to service providers (public health services, social and legal services) through giving them addresses and tips.
- Maintaining links established through phone calls.

### **Preparation**

- Researching the most suitable blog host: the hosting website should be easily accessible and should offer attractive options for the design of the blog.
- Preparation of the content of the blog: its purpose and topics to be covered in the virtual space: information, advice, empowerment activities and so on.
- Preparation of the design of the blog: it should be attractive, clear and adapted to indoor sex workers (in the context of indoor sex workers in Marseille, this meant that the words "prostitution" and "sex work" should not appear prominently in the title).

### **Development**

The blog is updated with at least one new post per month, sometimes two or three.

In the blog, several sections were created:

- a space to introduce the organisation, the project and how to contact the team
- ground rules for using the blog, including values and the respectful attitude essential when posting messages
- other sections for each topic: information and links on health, prostitution, and the partner organisations.

Every month, messages are posted on different subjects: health prevention (STI/HIV, hepatitis), safety advice, rights, news from the organisation, information on prostitution (movies, books) and so on.

The blog was developed with the close collaboration of a sex worker, who advised us on the topics and content of messages and on the design of the blog.

Sex workers are always invited to respond to those messages and to give their opinion. The team responds in turn.

In order to encourage them to visit the blog, indoor sex workers are notified by email each time a new or important message is posted.

### **Evaluation**

The number of visitors is an indicator and allows the team to carry out ongoing evaluation. The blog is visited a great deal and sex workers say that it is a good initiative.

The blog is more a tool to provide information to sex workers rather than to exchange information both ways. Because of their wish to maintain anonymity, sex workers visit the blog regularly but do not post comments very often.

Although they do not participate actively in the blog, it is a useful and attractive tool to empower sex workers and reduce their isolation.

This activity was adapted regularly: messages are always posted according to sex workers' needs and to local/national events; the design of the blog was changed to a more attractive one; a step by step guide was created to help sex workers to post comments, and a poll was created in order to learn what sex workers wanted from the blog.



**TIPS:** It's important to post messages as often as possible, because a blog needs to be responsive.



**TAKE CARE:** The blog can be visited by anybody and it could attract clients who might think it is a website to promote escort services. Be clear in the title and presentation of the blog: the reasons behind it and the target audience should be outlined. Try to moderate comments before publishing them. Be careful about what you write in the blog: some information could harm sex workers if non-sex workers also have access to it, particularly tips on violence and security.

## Staying healthy in the sex trade – a pocket organiser

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**DAH/Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe  
(the German AIDS-Help Organisation)  
in collaboration with the BSD/Bundesverband  
für sexuelle Dienstleistungen  
(the National Organization for Sexual Services)**

### ▶ **Target**

German and migrant female sex workers

### 📍 **Location**

Germany: produced in Berlin and distributed nationwide

### ⋯ **Team**

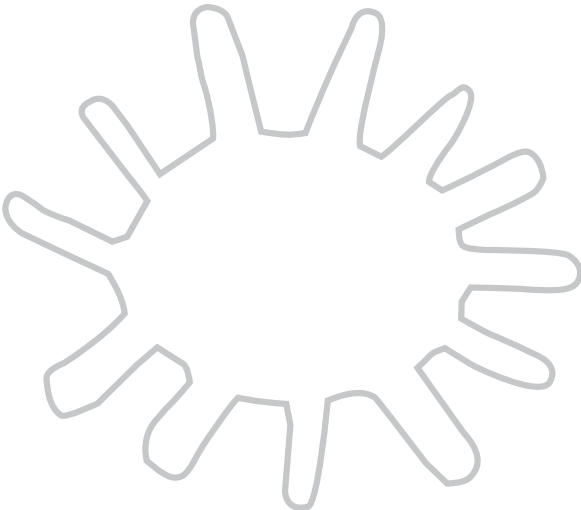
Cultural mediators.

### © **Materials created**

“Staying healthy in the sex trade” is a small A6 booklet with information for sex workers about various aspects of sex work. The booklet includes a list of NGOs working with and for sex workers in Germany, an address book and a changeable annual calendar. The booklet is available in seven different languages: German, English, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Czech and Spanish.

### **Objectives**

To offer sex workers a product that would be both practical, because the calendar and the address book can be used on an everyday basis, and useful, because it provides important information about their work in prostitution, their rights as sex workers, their health, and other tips and advice.





The aim of “Staying healthy in the sex trade” is to empower sex workers and increase professionalism.

The booklet also serves as a tool to facilitate communication between social workers and sex workers.

### **Preparation**

The booklet was inspired by a similar one developed by DAVIDA, a sex workers’ organisation in Brazil, with practical information on sex work, beauty tips, recipes and an address book.

The DAH, which collaborates with the various NGOs in Germany working with and for sex workers, decided to produce the booklet in accordance with information provided by the organisations. The result of this cooperation is a product that uses clear and simple language, providing specific information for sex workers with a non-discriminatory or stigmatising approach.

The Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe developed the text according to the German context and needs. It was added to and reviewed by a German sex worker, a member of the BSD, before the booklet went into production. After the text in German had been approved, it was translated into Bulgarian, Czech, English, Polish, Russian and Spanish.

### **Development**

The booklet comes out once a year, in December, with the calendar for the coming year. The first part of the booklet, where all the information is provided, does not change.

In Hamburg the booklet is distributed by cultural mediators, responsible for conducting regular outreach in apartments, brothels and clubs to national and migrant sex workers. It is distributed along with condoms, lubricants and TAMPEP leaflets. The booklets are handed out to sex workers, who are informed of the content, including the calendar and the address book. The book-

let is distributed with the calendar during the first two months of the year and, from March onwards, without the calendar.

The booklet provides the following information:

- Sex work, the basics: Keep it a secret, or tell all? What are my boundaries? What is the best workplace? What do I need in order to work professionally? How do I protect myself against violence?
- Sex work and health: Hygiene, Caution during menstruation, The fewer drugs the better, Necessary vaccinations, Safer sex (avoiding HIV and other infections), Sexually transmitted diseases, Recognising and treating STIs early on
- Prostitution and the law
- Professionalism pays
- Booklets (other information materials)
- Addresses (NGOs in Germany)

The booklet has a very appealing graphic design and is colourful, with attractive photos and illustrations. It has a plastic cover which allows removal of the calendar.

Organisations interested in distributing the calendar can order them for free from the Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe.



## Evaluation

The evaluation is positive. Sex workers are usually very happy to receive the booklet. Some start reading it right away because its content and layout are presented in a very positive and inviting manner.

## Recommendations

- Due to the increase in nationalities among migrant sex workers, the booklet should be translated into even more languages.
- The legal information should be updated in accordance with changes occurring to legislation.
- The content could include even more practical tips for sex workers, such as make-up, nutritious recipes and relaxation exercises.



**TIPS:** The content and format of the booklet were developed with care and consideration, showing great respect for the target group. The fact that a sex worker was a key participant in the entire process – conception, development and production – was a fundamental aspect of the high quality of the booklet.



**TAKE CARE:** The fact that the booklet's title very clearly references "sex trade" or "sex work" made some sex workers feel uncomfortable and they did not want to accept it for fear of stigmatisation and discrimination. Therefore, the cover should not be so explicit about the content, so that sex workers who do not want to expose their work can use the booklet publicly without fear.

# CD-ROM and MP3 for sex workers

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## NGO Cassandra

(a sex workers' organisation in Nuremberg) and AIDS Counselling Centre of the Health Secretary of Nuremberg

### ▶ Target

Female, male and transgender migrant sex workers

### 📍 Location

Germany: produced in Nuremberg and distributed nationwide

### 👥 Team

Staff from Cassandra and the public health service, translators, sound technicians, a sound studio, and graphic designer for the cover.

### 📀 Materials created

A CD-ROM and MP3 for sex workers, providing information on legal and health issues, prevention of violence, how to work professionally in sex work, and a list of counselling centres.

It is divided into 13 chapters, each tackling a different issue, allowing the sex worker to select the topics that most interests him or her. It is available in Bulgarian, Romanian and Thai.

## Objectives

Both institutions observed, during their regular outreach activities, that a number of sex workers were partially or totally illiterate, or that their German was still very limited. This mainly affected those coming from Bulgaria, Romania and Thailand. The idea was to find a way to give those sex workers access to the same qualitative information as their colleagues.

## Preparation

- The original text, in German, was developed by staff from Cassandra, including sex workers, and from the public AIDS Counselling Centre. There is a long history of collaboration between the two institutions, resulting in a very clear, effective and respectful tool to spread important information among sex workers who have difficulty in reading.
- After completing the text it was translated into Bulgarian, Romanian and Thai, and recorded by the translators in a specialised sound studio.

## Development

The total duration of the CD-ROM and the MP3 is around one hour.

The only chapter specifically for women is chapter 4, on female hygiene. The remainder of the information is useful for female, male and transgender sex workers.

The CD-ROM's 13 chapters are as follows:

- 1 Contents
- 2 Information about Cassandra and the public AIDS Counselling Centre in Nuremberg. This part can be altered when an organisation or institution from another town orders a master CD-ROM.
- 3 Prevention of HIV/AIDS and STIs, including explanations of the most common mistakes or misunderstandings in sex work.
- 4 Female hygiene, including important tips and advice.
- 5 Safer sex and how to use condoms effectively.
- 6 How to work in sex work on a secure and professional basis.
- 7 The German Prostitution Act.
- 8 Legislation on migration, self-employment, taxes and finances.

9 Police controls in sex work establishments, including sex workers' rights when dealing with such situations.

10 Health insurance.

11 Contact details and opening hours of counselling centres for sex workers.

12 Contact details and opening hours of public health centres offering anonymous and free of charge services for sex workers.

13 Contact details and opening hours of counselling centres for victims of violence, including trafficking in women.

There are three versions of the CD-ROM: one in Bulgarian, one in Romanian and one in Thai. Organisations can buy a master copy in the desired language and make copies for distribution. Each master CD-ROM costs €75.

As the original CD-ROM gives information on organisations available in Nuremberg, it is possible to send Cassandra a list of local resources which can be incorporated into the new version.

## Evaluation

- This is a very useful informational tool, not only for use by individuals but also by groups. It can be easily used as a starting point for a conversation or workshop, when several sex workers are gathered during break times or a special workshop activity.
- The CD-ROM can be used as a very efficient education and exchange tool, as well as for training of peer educators.



## TIPS:

- As a strategy to spread information more efficiently, sex workers should be encouraged to share their CD-ROM with colleagues.
- Organisations and public health care services from the same town should be encouraged to order the three CD-ROMs together and insert local information into the same master copy. This would increase their cooperation, strengthen the local network, and make it easier for sex workers to find all the services available to them locally.
- Staff from the organisations included in the list of counselling centres provided on the CD-ROM should be aware of the information contained in it so they can give further information when sex workers have questions on the various issues.

## The client's guide

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**Health and Social Development Foundation**  
[www.hesed.bg](http://www.hesed.bg)

### ▶ Target

Direct target: Male clients of indoor-based sex workers  
Indirect target: Female indoor-based sex workers

### 📍 Location

Bulgaria: Sofia

### ⋯ Team

- Outreach team to develop and distribute the card.
- Graphic designer to create the card.

### 📄 Materials Used

A6 card.

### Objectives

The aim of the Client's Guide is to reach as many clients of indoor sex workers as possible and to advise them in an indirect way how to behave with a sex worker in order to avoid problems and have a good time.

Up until this time, no work in Sofia was aimed at the clients of indoor sex workers, and this action was inspired by their lack of information and the need to change negative attitudes towards sex workers. The situation at the time did not allow the outreach team to make direct contact with clients, and so an indirect way was chosen.

### Preparation

- Preparation of the text with the title "Client's guide" and six short, useful tips
- Feedback from sex workers and their managers
- Design and printing of the card in A6 format

## Development

Initially a large number of cards were distributed en masse to the indoor venues in Sofia, and later the outreach workers left cards wherever needed.

The guide takes the form of an A6 card and is attractively designed with a stylised illustration of a gentleman talking with a girl.

Managers were included in the process of preparing the card, and their feedback was sought with regard to the text and the design. Soliciting their help meant that in an indirect way the managers gave their approval for the use of this tool on their premises.

## Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out during the project. The most significant indicator was positive feedback from sex workers. They liked the card very much, and shared with the team that it was the first time someone had shown interest in their clients and their relationship with them. There are only a few cards left now.



**TIPS:** Always negotiate your actions with the managers! Be flexible. If the situation does not allow direct contact to be made with the target group, find indirect way to reach them! Use easy and understandable language.



**TAKE CARE:** Bear in mind the feelings of sex workers, the interests of their managers and the privacy of their clients.



# Promotion of the project

It is important to promote sex workers' projects along with a non-judgemental approach.

This section provides examples of good practices in promoting to public services, universities and the media.



## Partnerships with public health services

**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

### ▶ Target

- Direct target: Public and private organisations
- Indirect target: sex workers

### ↑ Location

Portugal: city of Porto and its surroundings

### ⋯ Team

Two outreach workers from a multidisciplinary team (psychologists, nurse, social worker, sociologist, economist, cultural mediators).

### © Materials Used

Informal interviews during outreach; an evaluation questionnaire for sex workers.

### Objectives

Sex workers, like everyone else, have multiple needs. In order to provide a holistic response to these needs it is crucial to establish partnerships with public and private organisations operating in the fields of health, legal and social support.

This way we can specialise in our work, while ensuring that sex workers will be supported at other levels.

The main proposals for the partnerships are to:

- facilitate the access of sex workers to fundamental community services (health, employment, education, legal support)
- strengthen skills of outreach workers (our own and those from partner organisations) through reciprocal training and awareness sessions.

### Preparation

- Needs assessment of sex workers in multiple areas (health, education, psychological, social, professional) using the most appropriate tools (questionnaires, informal interviews).
- Identification of the needs which can be met by the team and those which can not
- Contact with public and private organisations that can respond to needs identified
- Meeting with the potential partner to present the project and agree on partnership
- Signing a protocol with the organisations that have agreed to work in partnership

## **Development**

Whenever new needs are identified by the team, it tries to identify services (preferably public and free of charge) capable of responding to sex workers' requests.

During outreach work the team takes notes on the needs and concerns of sex workers in order to make permanent changes to the services that they provide or refer to. To identify these needs two tools are employed:

- informal interviews during outreach work to collect information as and when it is given
- once a year, an evaluation questionnaire through which sex workers evaluate all the services available and suggest some changes to the procedures. In order to guarantee honest answers, these questionnaires are confidential and filled in by the cultural mediator, who enjoys a privileged relationship with the sex workers.

In day-to-day work, the team refers sex workers to the services provided by its partners, in accordance with their specific needs. For instance, the organisation's partnerships include two hospital units for gynaecology and obstetrics consultation and analysis; the Faculty of Nutrition of Porto for nutritional consultations; a dental clinic; a hospital for infectious diseases; a diagnostic pulmonology centre for screening and treatment of tuberculosis and HIV testing; a national support centre for migrants, offering legal support among other services; a psychiatric hospital in Porto offering counselling and gender reassignment surgery to transsexual people; and a local office offering job opportunities, training courses, career development, and job search assistance, among others.

The team also exchanges training courses and awareness-raising sessions with partners to improve reciprocal knowledge and learn better practices in different fields (migrant issues, legal procedures, health promotion and so on).

To implement a partnership, the respective organisations sign a protocol, formalising their commitment and their responsibilities to one another.

## **Materials created**

Partnership protocol and an evaluative annual report.

## **Evaluation**

To evaluate the partnership an annual meeting is organised with all partners.

Sex workers' needs are re-evaluated as well as their satisfaction with the services provided by partners. This is noted informally, each time the team conducts outreach work, and formally once a year. Questionnaires and informal interviews are used in order to make strategic changes to the services provided, including the partnerships.

## **Recommendations**

To guarantee the quality of the services provided by the partners, contact organisations that you already know from other partnerships, that are well-known for their good practices, or significant organisations with special expertise in their field.

It is important to follow up partners' work with regular contacts and evaluation procedures, so that they can feel more supported in their work and easily clarify doubts or make suggestions.

To encourage partners' involvement it is also worthwhile to invite them to participate in the production of outreach materials (for instance, in the edition of a newsletter) or develop mutual initiatives.

# Promotion aimed at public services and ngos

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## Autres Regards

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org)

### ▶ Target

Direct targets: professionals from NGOs and public services

Indirect targets: Female, male and transgender sex workers working indoors

### ↑ Location

France: Marseille and Aix-en-Provence

### ⋮ Team

Project coordinator, outreach worker and peer educator.

### ⊙ Materials Used

- Small cards designed specifically for the project
- Flyers giving information on the organisation
- Leaflets with information on sex workers' rights
- Condoms

### Objectives

- To promote the indoor project to professionals from NGOs, social workers and public services which could potentially have contact with indoor sex workers.
- To raise their awareness of indoor sex work and encourage a respectful and non-judgemental attitude towards indoor sex workers.
- To encourage them to refer indoor sex workers to the organisation when needed.
- To develop networking between organisations and to guarantee support for sex workers and enhanced access to their rights.

### Preparation

- Selection of NGOs and public services:
- This selection is made based on the current needs of indoor sex workers and the aims of each service provider.
- Drafting of introduction to the project.
- Creation of cards and leaflet on the organisation.

### Development

The project is promoted as often as possible, when sex workers' needs or relevant organisations are identified. The team has already contacted several service providers, particularly those which were not already in contact with the organisation: student centres for preventive medicine, a centre for women's health, health prevention centres, social workers working in disadvantaged areas, and other associations for sex workers.

The introduction to the project and the partnership will differ every time, according to the structure and the needs identified.

The team also promotes the project at specific events organised by the partners and service providers: a debate on indoor sex work issues at the Faculty of Law, a stand and workshop on health prevention during an erotic fair, a training session for social workers, etc.

Each time, small cards specific to the indoor project and flyers with information about the organisation are offered to the public services and NGOs.

After each visit, contact or event, the team maintains a link with the partners in order to evaluate the promotion and to encourage them to pass the information on to other organisations.





### Materials created

The small cards resemble business cards and are small enough to fit in a pocket. They have an attractive design and the information they provide is adapted to the target group.

### Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out after each contact, meeting, or event.

The results were positive because the project has gained broader visibility among service providers and NGOs related to sex work. These services have begun to contact *Autres Regards* by themselves in order to learn more about the project and the team's approach.

Service providers are also more aware of indoor sex work and more generally the issue of stigmatisation and discrimination against sex workers.

### Recommendations:

Adapt your methodology and the content of the promotion to the different organisations contacted. Service providers targeting students do not necessarily have the same needs as outreach social workers and they should all be informed in an accurate and effective way.

Be patient but firm. The aim is to explain why it is important to have a non-judgemental approach when working with sex workers. Note that partners and service providers are liable to have different images of sex work than you do. They may also find it difficult to speak openly about sex work.

Begin with a health approach and speak about HIV/STI prevention, which will lead you into discussions of sex work.

## Training day for service providers

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Médecins du Monde Nantes

[www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/En-France/Nantes](http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/En-France/Nantes)

### ▶ Target

Service providers

### 📍 Location

France: Nantes

### 👥 Team

Social worker, coordinator, and four volunteers

### 📄 Materials Used

Small cards

### Objectives

- To publicise the work of MDM
- To encourage social workers to refer sex workers to MDM
- To reach sex workers who would not otherwise be reached
- To raise awareness of MDM and make it known as an organisation dealing with issues related to prostitution
- To make partners aware of prostitution issues

### Preparation

- Selection of organisations and service providers that may be interested in the work of MDM or that need to be informed
- Presentation of the work and its objectives

At the very beginning of the project, the team had already contacted these services to discuss the possibility

of starting work aimed at indoor sex workers. They were all interested, as Nantes lacked projects related to indoor prostitution.

- Evaluation of the training needs of the organisations contacted.

The organisations and MDM agreed that it would be useful to organise a training day at which social workers could raise questions and exchange comments on sex work.

### **Development**

The training took place in Nantes one day in October 2009.

The advantage of this training was to present MDM's work carried out with indoor sex workers, but also to outline prostitution issues and harm reduction.

The participants were mostly social workers.

Around 20 attended, from domestic violence organisations, shelters, and others.

The training was mostly based on the image each social worker had of sex work and the "acceptance" of this activity by each organisation. Numerous discussions then took place about situations with which the organisations had been faced. Thanks to the participation of a lawyer working with MDM, the training also allowed participants to learn more about French legislation regarding sex work. A sociologist explained different approaches to (abolitionism, prohibitionism and regulation). MDM explained its structure and ethic (non-judgemental approach, harm reduction) to the participants.

### **Materials created**

Small cards for distribution to service providers.

The cards are aimed at indoor sex workers and provide contact details for the project and a short summary of the services provided by MDM.

### **Evaluation**

The evaluation was positive: at the end of the training day, all the participants felt that it was very useful to their work. The training met their expectations.

They asked Médecins du Monde to provide a training day every year so that all their team members could attend.

### **Recommendations**

Prepare materials to give out so that people can find the organisation's contact details easily.

Work on the image that the partners and social workers have of prostitution issues.

Be available to deliver training to your partners and service providers when required, so that they will be better equipped to refer people to sex work organisations. This way you ensure a good partnership as well as quality access for sex workers to public services and other service providers.



# Promotion at the university of Genoa

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**The Genovese group of the CDCP – Le Graziöse**  
[www.lucciole.org](http://www.lucciole.org)

## ▶ Target

Students at the University of Genoa's Faculty of Education Science. Sex workers of Genoa

## ↑ Location

Italy: Genoa

## ⋯ Team

Three social workers and counsellors, one peer educator

## © Materials Used

Informational material on the work of the CDCP  
Puttanopoly (board game about sex work)

## Objectives

- To raise awareness of the activities and projects carried out by the Genovese group of the CDCP – Le Graziöse.
- To broaden knowledge of the CDCP's activities (projects and events) in Genoa, beyond the immediate target group.
- To make the CDCP's experience accessible to university students.
- To hold debates and collaborate with the Faculty of Education Science at the University of Genoa.

## Preparation

- Initial contact with some researchers from the faculty.
- Meeting and exchange of information on respective projects and research.
- Identification of common interests.

## Development

This activity was carried out over two years.

Interest shown by some researchers from the faculty in the activities of the new branch of the CDCP led to a collaborative exchange of knowledge.

Both parties took part in events on sex work, and members of the Genovese group of the CDCP held a lecture on migrant sex workers as part of the Sociology of Migration course.

The Genovese group of the CDCP also participated in the making of a documentary and in research on migration and sex workers.

Debates were organised as well as work with Genovese citizens who had no direct involvement with sex work or related issues but were interested in holding discussions on the topic.

The Committee consolidated its collaboration with the University with the inclusion of a lecture in the Sociology of Migration and Sociology of Education courses.

## Evaluation

A positive evaluation was made based on the attainment of the initial objectives. In addition, researchers from the Faculty of Education Science and the professor of the Sociology of Migration course from the same faculty expressed their satisfaction with the work done together over the years by declaring their willingness to maintain collaboration.

## Recommendations

The direct involvement of sex workers in the activities of the CDCP was a fundamental aspect that appealed to university researchers.

Always involve sex workers in your actions!

# Raising awareness within the academic community

**Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento**  
[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

## ▶ Target

Students, in particular from universities, studying health, human and social sciences

## ⬆ Location

Portugal: city of Porto and its surroundings

## ⋯ Team

Two outreach workers from a multidisciplinary team (psychologists, nurse, social worker, sociologist, economist, cultural mediators).

## Ⓞ Materials Used

To publicise the event: posters for display in colleges, universities, and educational institutions.  
For the session: PowerPoint presentation, flyers created by APDES and prevention materials (condoms and lubricants).

## Objectives

Society's perception of sex work is still tied to stigma and condemnation. The majority of sex workers working in indoor settings in Portugal are migrants with irregular status. Very often public structures, health and social services are not sensitive to indoor sex workers' specific needs.

- To inform and raise the awareness of future health and social professionals so that they will work appropriately and respectfully with sex workers and impact positively on their quality of life.

- To contribute to the improvement of social and health services in the long term with the experience of the APDES outreach team, based on harm reduction methodology and advocacy for human rights.

This approach is still underdeveloped in academic settings that focus mainly on public health prevention and on social and professional reintegration, and less on harm reduction interventions or the recognition and promotion of sex workers' rights.

APDES believes that a comprehensive approach to the sex industry is essential.

## Preparation

- Contact with educational institutions to present the goals of the session. Universities also often make requests for presentations or training.
- Agreement on dates for presentations.
- Preparation of the contents of the presentation or training session.
- Announcement of the event.

## Materials created

Flyers normally distributed during outreach work (introducing APDES' projects, STIs, abortion, oral sex, anal sex, access to public health services, and access to legal support).

## Development

The team gives an average of ten presentations per year at conferences, seminars or training sessions. The duration of each session varies, from twenty minutes to three hours, depending on the specific objectives of the session and the number of participants.

The training and awareness sessions are held in cooperation with several educational institutions and universities, in the field of sex work and other related issues. It is

an opportunity to hold a debate on sex workers' rights, safer sexual practices, security and safety issues, and social and legal conditions in Portugal's sex industry, as well as to share field experience.

The action is primarily for students coming from the Medical, Nursing, and Social Sciences Faculties, as in the future they will be professionals dealing with issues related to sex work.

The contents of these events can differ according to the attendees, the theme of the conference or training, and the goals of the presentation. In brief presentations, the team focuses on the specific needs of indoor sex workers and on the dissemination of best practices. In training sessions, which can last three hours, they also approach methodologies, strategies, obstacles and challenges to intervention with the target group. Preference is given to participatory methodologies, permitting students to contribute and feel involved in the discussion.

### Evaluation

At the end of each training session the team requests feedback from the participants. In most cases, participants also fill in an evaluation questionnaire identifying positive and negative aspects of the training session.

### Recommendations

It is important to:

- have teaching/communication skills (promoting effective participation, discussion, and reflection);
- adapt contents and language to the particularities of the audience;
- cultivate respect for sex workers' rights;
- provide feedback to students after the training sessions.

## Promoting the project through the media

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**The Genovese group of the CDCP – Le Graziöse**  
[www.lucciole.org](http://www.lucciole.org)

### ▶ Target

Sex workers, citizens, shopkeepers and organisations in the Maddalena area

### 📍 Location

Italy: Genoa

### 👥 Team

Three social workers and counsellors;  
one peer educator.

### Objectives

The objectives were to publicise, in as fast and visible a way as possible, the group's requests in defence of sex workers in the Maddalena area who became victims of an aggressive campaign by the Municipality of Genoa; to use the media (press, television and radio) to introduce Le Graziöse, the Genovese section of the CDCP, and its objectives and projects; and to raise awareness of the difficult situations and abuses to which sex workers are often subject, and distinguish between sex work and trafficking.



## Preparation

- Creation of a group of sex workers determined to defend their rights by going public and explaining why they are against the closure of the rooms in which they work.
- Press release (distributed to newspapers, radio, and television) which stated that sex workers would take to the streets to defend their rights.
- Communication to all sex workers in the area that several journalists and television cameras would be present on the day on which the action was planned.

## Development

This action was carried out over 18 months.

The first initiative was a provocative demonstration with red flyers and umbrellas in a busy public square in the historic centre of Genoa, in protest specifically against the media.

Sex workers consented in large numbers to be filmed and interviewed (many activists participated with wigs and masks in order to maintain their anonymity).

Interviews were broadcast live, capturing public attention.

The CDCP made the request to meet with representatives from public institutions.

Subsequently, the CDCP:

- engaged in constructive dialogue with the institutions and held meetings with residents and shopkeepers
- embarked on collaboration with the Municipality of Genoa and made a joint presentation to the press of their agreement
- handled the ensuing media interest and controversies.

Contact was made with sex workers who learned about

them through the media. Debates with concerned residents and shopkeepers were held in response to newspaper articles and TV news .

In its third step, the CDCP:

- organised a captivating public presentation and outline of the CDCP's projects in Genoa; Puttanopoli, a board game previously created by the same association, served as a catalyst. They invited council members and high-ranking Genovese personalities, such as Don Gallo, to play the game with sex workers.
- involved the press in the event and held an "opening" of a red light window in order to gain maximum attention and pique curiosity. This event enabled sex work activists to contact a large number of passers-by, residents and journalists.

All these actions led to:

- definition of the collaboration between Le Graiose and other associations operating on the same territory, through the use of common spaces and collaboration on minor events.
- strengthening of the collaboration with the Municipality through an official commitment that was communicated to the press by the city council members.
- identification of a number of journalists seen to be sympathetic to the requests and objectives of the CDCP, and with whom positive relations and a communication channel could be opened.

## Materials created

- Brochures denouncing the Municipality's campaign and giving information on the projects of the CDCP
- Manifestos aimed at publicising the events and the initiatives
- Report on the events and the proposed campaigns
- Press release

## Evaluation

The pressure exerted by the media permitted the CDCP to obtain in a short time (15 days) a meeting between the sex workers and the city council members of the Municipality of Genoa.

In the course of these two years of activity, 80% of sex workers contacted knew of the activities of the CDCP and some of them sought out the CDCP themselves.

Media coverage of the CDCP's activities accelerated awareness of the association and its credibility. After its first year of activity, the CDCP is considered part of the community. It is now contacted and invited to other events, to projects relevant to its field of work and linked to standards of living and the development of the area.

The media's constant attention to the problems and rights of sex workers that are often denied has facilitated the CDCP's involvement in actions regarding the degeneration of the area and marginalisation.

## Recommendations

- Give planned events a provocative tone, by not giving too much information and leaving some ambiguity, in order to capture the media's attention.
- Take up legal actions where abuses take place. In Genoa, the CDCP assisted with the legal action of a sex worker whose image was used by several television networks without seeking permission. The image was removed from all archives.
- Always inform the sex workers of media presence, even if journalists say that they will not record (they rarely keep their word!), so that they can prepare accordingly.
- It is important to be very clear and precise in all declarations and press releases, so that they will not be distorted, used unfairly or misunderstood.



# Recommendations

Recommendations

## ... when working with and for indoor sex workers

- Always have a non-judgemental approach when working with sex workers.
- Respect the identity of sex workers. Be inclusive of transgender sex workers in all your actions. Respect the workplace, privacy and choices of sex workers. Respect their choice even if they do not want to receive your services. Respect their realities. Don't interfere in their work and do not be intrusive.
- Make sure you offer confidential and anonymous services.
- Combat the discrimination and stigmatisation of national and migrant sex workers. Ensure that your work does not stigmatise sex workers.
- Promote solidarity among sex workers. Networking and exchanges improve their self-empowerment.
- Promote health prevention and lobby for free access to testing and treatments.
- Lobby against mandatory health checks, because this is a discriminatory measure. Health checks are linked to the privacy and to the personal choice of sex workers. Mandatory health checks are against individual rights, human rights, and empowerment. This measure increases demand for unprotected sex and only targets sex workers rather than including their clients as well. It increases marginalisation.
- Fight for decriminalisation and advocate for the self-organisation of sex work
- Advocate for an end to violence against sex workers. Physical, economic, psychological, and verbal violence, exploitation, discrimination and stigmatisation, from the State, police, clients and society must stop.



Sex workers are part of the solution



## In your work

- Encourage sex workers' participation in the creation, development and evaluation of your work.
- Make sure the work is useful to sex workers: carry out a needs assessment.
- Sex work should not be approached from a perspective based on morality, but one based on labour.
- Be flexible and adapt your work for effective actions. Indoor sex workers are mobile and their locations fluctuate.
- Be aware of your own limits, your resources, and the reality of the work before and during the action. Accept your own boundaries, persevere, and be professional. Be aware that contacting indoor sex workers is time-consuming.
- Promote harm reduction ethics. Distribute free condoms and lubricants and use them as an intervention tool for health prevention and empowerment.
- When you work with migrants and minorities, include cultural mediators as part of the team on a professional basis.
- Regularly evaluate your actions, your work, your team, your activities and your approach in order to improve, adapt, and adjust your methodologies and practices.

## In your advocacy work

- Advocate for labour rights, human rights and social rights for all sex workers
- Advocate and lobby for migrants human rights
- Advocate for the empowerment of sex workers, their equal access to public health services, and appropriate working conditions
- Advocate for the recognition of sex work as work or an activity
- Advocate so that sex workers can express themselves and make their voices heard



# Definitions

## Definitions

The following definitions seek to clarify the terms used in this manual and provide a basis for a better understanding of sex work terminology.

The first definitions provided here were defined by the TAMPEP network.

The others, more specific to this manual, were elaborated by all the project partners.

### TAMPEP definitions

#### **Sex worker**

This term has been used in preference to 'prostitute'. The term 'sex worker' is intended to be non-judgemental, focusing on the conditions under which sexual services are sold. The term 'commercial sex worker' is no longer used, primarily because it is considered to repeat the same thing using different words.

#### **Transgender**

The term 'transgender' includes transsexuals and transvestites as well as others who do not feel they fit into society's gender classifications. Transsexuals are individuals who identify with a physical sex different from their biological one. Transvestites are people who wear the clothing of the other gender.

In order to draw attention to the specific needs and circumstances of transgender people, we have used three gender categories here: male, female and transgender. This is not intended to dispute the fact that transgender women have a female identity.

#### **Indoor-based sex worker**

This term refers to sex workers who establish contact with clients in an indoor setting or via the Internet. Indoor sex work is often advertised in the media or online.

#### **Outdoor-based sex worker**

This term refers to sex workers who establish contact with clients in outdoor settings. Outdoor sex work settings are not advertised, but are areas which sex workers are known to frequent.

#### **Client**

This term is used to describe those purchasing sexual services.

#### **Service user**

This term is used in preference to 'client' to describe an individual who accesses support from a sex work project or other service provider.

#### **Partner (of a sex worker)**

This term is used for individuals in a relationship with a sex worker, and should not be seen as synonymous with 'pimp'.

#### **Controller (of a sex worker)**

This term is used in preference to 'pimp' to describe individuals who determine a person's involvement in sex work and the sexual services they provide.

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**Manager (of a sex business)**

This term is used to describe individuals who run sex businesses but who do not determine an individual's involvement in sex work or the sexual services they provide.

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**Trafficker**

This term is used only when all three components of the definition of trafficking are present.

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**Trafficking**

“‘Trafficking in Persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”<sup>30</sup> Broken down into its components, the definition comprises acts, means, and a purpose. One or more elements in each of the three components must be present to meet the definition. The consent of a victim is irrelevant if any of the means are used or if the victim is under 18 years.

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**Unprotected sex / unsafe sex**

This term is used in preference to ‘risky sex’ or ‘high-risk sex’.

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**Safer sex**

This term is used in preference to ‘safe sex’ which may imply complete safety. The term ‘safer sex’ more accurately reflects the idea that choices can be made and behaviours adopted to reduce or minimise risk.

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**Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

This term is used in preference to ‘venereal disease (VD)’ or ‘sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)’ which do not convey the concept of asymptomatic sexually transmitted infections. Sexually transmitted infections are spread by the transfer of organisms from person to person during sexual contact. In addition to the ‘traditional’ STIs (syphilis and gonorrhoea), the spectrum of STIs now includes HIV, which causes AIDS; Chlamydia trachomatis; human papilloma virus (HPV) which can cause cervical or anal cancer; genital herpes; chancroid; genital mycoplasmas; hepatitis B; trichomoniasis; enteric infections; and ectoparasitic diseases (i.e., diseases caused by organisms that live on the outside of the host’s body). The complexity and scope of sexually transmitted infections have increased dramatically since the 1980s; more than 20 organisms and syndromes are now recognised as belonging in this category.

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**HIV**

This term is used in preference to ‘HIV/AIDS’, ‘HIV virus’ or ‘AIDS virus’ (unless specifically referring to AIDS). Since HIV means ‘human immunodeficiency virus’, it is redundant to refer to the HIV virus. Since AIDS is a syndrome, it is incorrect to refer to the virus as the ‘AIDS virus’. AIDS is what people die of; HIV is what they are infected with.

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**Service providers**

This term is used to describe any kind of organisations, public and private, that provide services such as health prevention, legal and social support to sex workers.

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**Public services**

This term refers more specifically to the public organisations that provide services to sex workers.

## Definitions specific to the INDOORS project

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### **Apartment**

An apartment used in the context of sex work is a place where one to three sex workers work, mostly self-organised. It may be their home as well as their workplace.

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### **Bassi**

Bassi are rooms in the historic centre of Genoa where sex work has long been practised. These rooms are located on the ground floor and have an independent entrance accessible directly from the narrow streets (vicoli) of this area. Generally they are made up of one or two rooms with no windows and a small bathroom. In the past, they were used as shops or storerooms, though in the last fifty years they have been transformed into alcoves.

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### **Bar**

In the context of the sex industry, a bar is a place to meet sex workers and have a drink. Sex workers generally go elsewhere (hotels, apartments, etc) with clients to perform sexual services, but some bars may have private areas used, officially or not, for this purpose.

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### **Brothel**

A brothel is a place where four or more sex workers work. This place is mostly organised by a third party.

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### **Club**

A club is a place to meet and have a drink, with striptease shows, and private rooms where sex workers go with clients to provide sexual services.

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### **Massage parlours and saunas**

These settings are places where the primary business is massages and sauna facilities, but where sexual services may be provided.

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### **Sex shop**

A sex shop is a commercial place selling a range of sexual accessories, with private rooms where clients can watch live or video shows and seek sexual services.

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### **Incalls**

This term refers to sexual services provided by the sex worker at his or her workplace or home. The client visits the sex worker's place to purchase sexual services.

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### **Outcalls**

This term refers to sexual services provided by the sex worker outside his or her working place. Outcalls can take place in hotels, at the client's home or in another location.

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### **Migrants**

Migrants are people who were born in another country, including EU citizens.

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### **Community-based approach**

This describes work undertaken in partnership with sex workers during all stages of the projects or actions. It implies that sex workers are active in the preparation, implementation and/or evaluation of the project. This approach recognises the skills and resources of the sex workers and does not limit them to a particular role.

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# References

## References

### Books and reports

#### **Sex Work in Europe**

A Mapping of the Prostitution Scene in 25 European Countries, TAMPEP 2009  
And its annexes:

- Annexe 1 Recommendations
- Annexe 2 TAMPEP Structure
- Annexe 3 Questionnaire
- Annexe 4 National Reports

#### **Sex Work, Migration, Health**

A Report on the Intersections of Legislations and Policies Regarding Sex Work, Migration and Health in Europe, TAMPEP 2009

#### **Annual Report**

KOOFRA

Organisation Against the Trafficking of Women, Hamburg, Germany, 2008

#### **Trafficking in Women in Germany**

KOK

German nationwide activist coordination group combating trafficking in women and violence against women in the process of migration, Berlin, Germany, 2008

#### **Rotlicht in Hamburg**

Report from Mr. Detlef Ubben, Hamburg Police Department, LKA 65, Hamburg, Germany, February 2009

### Documents

- Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, USA, June 1946
- Declaration of the rights of sex workers elaborated during the European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration, Brussels, Belgium, October 2005
- Document of the “Health and Migration in the EU: Better health for all in an inclusive society” conference, Lisbon, Portugal, September 2007
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, U.N. New York, USA, 2000

### Websites

#### **European Web Site on Integration**

<http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en>

#### **TAMPEP**

[www.tampep.eu](http://www.tampep.eu)

# Footnotes

- 1 The European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers was founded in 1993. From 1993 until 2009, it was financed by the European Commission and DG SANCO/Health and Consumer Protection, and co-financed by national governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- 2 TAMPEP 8: Sex Work in Europe Mapping Report and Annexes, Annexe 4 National reports, p 155 and 158.
- 3 The legislative frameworks are outlined on p 14 – 20.
- 4 See definition, p 127.
- 5 See definition p 126. This sex work venue is presented as an indoor venue because soliciting and sexual services occur off-street: sex workers advertise their services in newspapers.
- 6 Definition of good practices according to the European Web Site on Integration.  
<http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/practice/more.cfm>.
- 7 Good Practices on Health and Migration in the EU, Document of the “Health and Migration on the EU: Better health for all in an inclusive society” conference, September 2007.
- 8 Sex Work, Migration, Health, TAMPEP 2009, p 96.
- 9 See definition, p 126.
- 10 Sex Work, Migration, Health, TAMPEP 2009, p 89.
- 11 Information from “Trafficking in Women in Germany”, KOK (German nationwide activist coordination group combating trafficking in women and violence against women in the process of migration), Berlin, 2008. [www.kok-buero.de](http://www.kok-buero.de)
- 12 Mr. Detlef Ubben, Hamburg Police Department, LKA 65, February 2009.
- 13 Sex Work, Migration, Health, TAMPEP 2009, p 86.
- 14 Sex Work, Migration, Health, TAMPEP 2009, p 113.
- 15 Sex Work, Migration, Health, TAMPEP 2009, p 74.
- 16 More details on the development of these methodologies are provided in the section on good practices, p 69 – 121.
- 17 This observation is based on the experience of the partner organisations.
- 18 The “Sex Work in Europe” report from TAMPEP states that 87% of the entire sex worker population (outdoor and indoor) are female sex workers, p 14.
- 19 Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan.
- 20 Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia.
- 21 This number is based on the TAMPEP 8 mapping carried out in Marseille in 2008.
- 22 This number is based on the TAMPEP 8 mapping carried out in Nantes in 2008.
- 23 Sex Work in Europe: A Mapping of the Prostitution Scene in 25 European Countries, TAMPEP 2009, p 25.
- 24 According to the TAMPEP mapping implemented in France, legal status appears to be the biggest contributing factor to the vulnerability of outdoor sex workers.
- 25 See definition, p 126.
- 26 Some figures do not add up to 100% because some sex workers work in multiple venues.
- 27 Sex Work in Europe: A Mapping of the Prostitution Scene in 25 European Countries, TAMPEP 2009, p 50.
- 28 “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, USA, June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.
- 29 [www.koofra.de](http://www.koofra.de)
- 30 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, United Nations, 2000 [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/a\\_res\\_55/res5525e.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/a_res_55/res5525e.pdf)

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