

HUSTLING FOR HEALTH:
Developing Services for Sex
Workers in Europe

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HIV/STD Prevention in
Prostitution (EUROPAP/TAMPEP)
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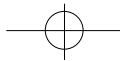
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hustling for **HEAL**

foreword

This handbook offers a snap shot of various guidelines, projects and interventions from around Europe that we hope can be put to creative use by others



This handbook is the product of a network of projects working with prostitutes, supported by the Europe Against AIDS programme of the European Commission since the end of 1993. EUROPAP and TAMPEP were independent networks initially but merged in 1996, and now collaborate closely as the European Network for HIV/STD Prevention in Prostitution (see appendix two). We are concerned with the prevention of HIV and other communicable diseases, and with sexual health more generally. We are also concerned to provide appropriate, accessible and acceptable services for sex workers across the continent. The network has extensive experience in establishing and operating such projects, based upon collaborations both among ourselves and with sex workers who have participated as advisers, educators and experts.

The material in this handbook was gathered through a series of working groups that met during 1996-1997 and attempts to present our collective experience in the form of a practical manual, with ideas and guidance for those who would like to start and develop sex workers' health projects. Not all the models and suggestions described will be relevant to everyone; but even where a method which is used successfully in one country would be unthinkable in another, we hope that the range of examples and ideas given will be of interest. Projects are diverse and they evolve rapidly; often, they have a short life span because of a lack of governmental, charitable or other support. Similarly, the sex industry in Europe has changed dramatically during the period our network has been running, and is characterised by extensive mobility and flux. This handbook cannot hope to capture the dynamism and diversity in the field but it offers a snap shot of various guidelines, projects and interventions that we hope can be put to creative use by others. The network represented experience primarily with female sex workers. We set up working groups on male, drug using, migrant and transgender sex workers in 1996-97. Important areas have been neglected, such as projects for young.

In most countries, sex work is a marginalised, stigmatised activity, and some or all aspects are against the law. Sex workers may be hesitant to approach mainstream health services, and they may not even be entitled to health care if they lack the correct insurance. Many other factors prevent sex workers from using services that would help them protect their own health and the health of their customers: for example, language differences, ignorance, fear. In addition, services are not always appropriate to sex workers' needs. Hustling for Health is based on an acceptance and tolerance of sex work, which we believe make services more effective in the field of public health. The interventions described in this handbook are intended to benefit sex workers themselves, who we consider to be part of our communities and not a separate entity from whom society needs protection.

Hustling for Health considers that HIV prevention projects should treat all sex workers with dignity, respect and confidentiality; and aim to promote their health, safety, and civil rights.

A note: Sex work is often described as prostitution. The terms "sex work" and "sex worker" are preferred in this handbook, as they refer to the occupation itself and are considered by many to be less stigmatising.