

TAMPEP **(Transnational AIDS/STI Prevention Among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe/Project)**

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English Abstract

"TAMPEP" (Transnational AIDS/STI Prevention Among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe) is a project which started in 1993, carrying out health-prevention work for migrant sex workers in four European countries: the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Austria. It is a model of intervention, reaching more than 20 different nationalities of women and transgender people from Central and Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the year 2000 Tampep extended its network to include countries from Eastern Europe as well as the member states of the European Union.

Abstract in italiano

Il progetto "TAMPEP" (Transnational AIDS/STI Prevention Among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe), fin dal 1993, sta portando avanti un lavoro di prevenzione sanitaria per prostitute immigrate in quattro Paesi europei: Olanda, Italia, Germania e Austria. Risulta un modello d'intervento che arriva ad abbracciare più di 20 nazionalità diverse di donne e di transgender provenienti dall'Europa Centrale e Orientale, dal Sudest asiatico, dall'Africa e dall'America Latina.

Area: QUALITY OF LIFE

Kind-category of project: Health, Labour

Kind-category of actor: Foundation

Country : 24 countries in Europe (The Coordination Centre of TAMPEP is located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Year.

5 key-words: migrant, sex workers, health, AIDS.

1. THE PROJECT

1.1 Description of the project

Objectives:

Some of the main objectives of "TAMPEP" are advocating for the human and civil rights of migrant sex workers, developing and implementing effective strategies of health promotion and social protection amongst migrant sex workers across Europe, increasing empowerment and self-esteem among migrant sex workers, being a

reference point for migrant sex workers as it observes the variations and dynamics of migration in the countries served by the project and promoting a non-repressive approach to sex workers and sex work.

Activities:

Outreach & Street Work

"TAMPEP" develops outreach and street work as strategies for establishing and maintaining contact with sex workers, who are hard to reach. Street work is organised according to the characteristics of prostitution in each country or city. Such interventions need to be systematic, frequent and intensive in order to build a relationship of trust with sex workers (short-term street work projects have counter-productive effects, since they raise false expectations in the target groups, and therefore, distrust). Interventions is not limited to handing out condoms, lubricants or information promoting safe sex practices but involves establishing personal contact with sex workers providing guidance and support in social, legal and psychological issues.

Cultural Mediators

"TAMPEP"'s streetwork is carried out by cultural mediators. According to "TAMPEP"'s definition, "cultural mediators are a go-between who know the motivations, the customs and the codes of dominant culture in the host country, as well as the conditions, social ethics and the scene in which a minority group finds itself". They should be individuals capable of eliciting trust from the target group, and should be of the same ethnic group and nationality as the sex workers. Cultural mediators are intercultural bridges contributing to the decoding of cultural codes in order to facilitate understanding of health and social issues.

Peer Educators

In contrast to cultural mediators, peer educators as members of the migrant sex worker community, and therefore identify completely with the target group. They play the role of leaders and articulate the interests of their peers. Their involvement provides not only interpretation and an intercultural bridge but provides a role model for other migrant sex workers, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence amongst migrant sex workers. There are some preconditions for effective peer education: per educators must have a base in the community and must be recognised as leaders, while at the same time representing the project.

Information Materials

"TAMPEP"'s educational materials are intended for use as part of an integrated multi-disciplinary approach. Much of previous information material for migrant sex workers are produced with a Western mentality, without taking into account the diversity and heterogeneity of the target group, but migrant sex workers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds need totally different approaches.

The "TAMPEP" educational materials are to be used as a tool—and not an end in itself—to engage with migrant sex workers and open up dialogue. The simple distribution of leaflets is not enough; the materials are created and developed together with the target group during workshops, street work and other kinds of regular meetings. The production of information materials is very simple and inexpensive (so that they can be modified or adapted whenever necessary), recognisable (by logo, size, colour, etc), and handy/easy to carry. They are translated to the language spoken

by the target group and include images that favour positive visions of health prevention practices.

Combining Research and Intervention

In order to develop specific methods while working with migrant sex workers, there is a need for continuous evaluation of the changes in the current situation and their effects on the behavioural patterns of the target group. "TAMPEP" has developed different strategies in order to keep the reality of migrant and mobile sex workers in Europe under continuous evaluation. Different activities are carried out simultaneously at different levels with the objective of observing and collecting data concerning the variations and dynamics of the transmigration flux, investigating the living and working conditions of migrant sex workers and their degree of access to social and health service providers as well as their social and legal situation, observing the different power relationships developed among the different persons involved in the context in order to understand what mechanisms of pressure they are exposed to, investigating the impact of external factors (immigration and prostitution policies, working conditions and the mechanisms of trafficking, etc) on the behaviour of migrant sex workers, and collecting data concerning the needs, knowledge, awareness, attitude and behaviour of the target group with regard to safe sex practices and health promotion.

These activities are undertaken through outreach work and networking. Outreach work is one of the most important tools for collecting realistic data on the target group. Therefore, outreach work must be done continuously. This allows to follow the changes that occur in migrant sex workers' reality and to recognise the needs and characteristics of this population. Regular street work, workshops, training of peer educators and the carrying out of questionnaires are all usual activities of field work. Networking is done parallel at local, national and international organisms in each country involved (in the home countries of sex workers, the countries of transit and the countries of final destination). It serves to build up a reliable directory of different services available for migrant sex workers and it is an instrument that can be used to influence policy makers towards the recognition of prostitution in its international dimension. Outreach work, practical intervention and networking complement each other and are implemented simultaneously.

1.2 Time, structure and steps of the project

"TAMPEP" is a project which started in 1993, carrying out work in four European countries: the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Austria. It is a model of intervention, reaching more than 20 different nationalities of women and transgender people from Central and Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the year 2000 Tampep extended its network to include countries from Eastern Europe as well as the member states of the European Union.

1.3 Place and context

In recent years, the role of women in all the different societies has changed enormously, mainly as a result of world-wide economic changes. The amount of women opting for migration has spectacularly increased, giving rise to what is known as "female labour migration". In this new international context, prostitution became

an important labour option for a growing number of women, men and transgender persons all over the world. Prostitution has also become a very important economic factor for other people involved in prostitution. In Europe, the impact of internationalisation of prostitution can be seen in the changes within the new structures of the European sex industry. Such changes are mainly characterised by an extensive mobility of migrants working in prostitution. This situation has led to new forms of prostitution and a continuous change of its population.

At this moment, prostitution cannot be seen as a local or national phenomenon, but as an international one, involving multi-cultural groups and international organisations. At present, the number of migrant prostitutes is superior to that of local sex workers in many countries of the EU. This process began around 20 years ago, but since then and despite the noteworthy transformation of the reality of prostitution in Western Europe, there have been no significant policy changes regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and protection measures for migrant sex workers.

Migrant sex workers do not only suffer marginalisation, stigmatisation and criminalisation for being sex workers. They also suffer the constant threat of restrictive migratory laws. On the one hand, there is demand for migrant prostitutes (therefore the constant incorporation of an increasing number of them), and on the other hand there is no legal protection for them, and they are punished by law and threatened by expulsion and permanence prohibition.

The doubly illegal status of migrant sex workers leads to their dependence on pimps, club owners and other people involved in the sex industry; their exploitation through underpayment, long working hours and unprotected and unsafe working conditions; and isolation due to cultural and linguistic issues that prevent them from having access to information about their legal and social rights. The threat of police raids force them to be in continuous movement since their visas expire and they are taken by pimps to other places of work. They suffer physical and psychological problems for being abused by both pimps and clients. Being under treatment for the STI is not considered a reason to postpone the deportation process, so they are afraid—or even not allowed—to move around the city. Due to this doubly illegal status, migrant sex workers have no access to health care systems—that are not prepared to deal with a multicultural population—and they systematically distrust all kinds of authorities—including health care services—because of the repressive policy towards them.

Migrant sex workers are highly vulnerable to health risks. The acceptance of prostitution and the process of internationalisation are important for effective health care and HIV/STI prevention for migrant sex workers. The internationalisation of prostitution can be defined as a phenomenon with a structural character which will continue to determine and map the future of the prostitution industry.

"TAMPEP"'s task is to develop models of health promotion for women and transsexual migrants who work in prostitution in Europe. The focal point is HIV/STI prevention with a view to behavioural change, the overall health of migrant prostitutes, and their social position or working conditions. "TAMPEP" considers that AIDS/STD prevention must be included in a broader framework of general health promotion, and the development of such a framework should be recognized as a present priority. A broad spectrum of community based initiatives, directed at empowerment of migrant sex workers, can have a major impact on primary prevention inasmuch as it allows sex workers more scope in their contractual position with clients, brothels and pimps.

1.4 Target

Migrant sex workers across Europe.

1.5 Methodology

"TAMPEP" is a Europe-wide project that combines research and active intervention with migrant sex workers, and sustains that health is defined taking the subject as the starting point, considering the subject "holistically" and not only as a body or an organ, or as an object of a disease. Health implies an interaction and adequate balance among psycho-emotional, physical, and social factors. "TAMPEP" sustains that the participation of members of the target group in the development of the project is a necessary condition for the effectiveness of its implementation, as well as for a permanent interaction with it. Target group involvement depends on the specific circumstances and possibilities of each target group in its context and the means of each "TAMPEP" member.

"TAMPEP" acknowledges and respects the characteristics and cultural differences of the different migrant groups, which are the basic factor to elaborate a health project within the framework of migration. They understand that a specific Health Project for migrant sex workers must be based on the acknowledgement of their situation as both migrants and sex workers, regardless of any abolitionist, moralist, or regulatory consideration; including them instead of excluding them from society. The definition of a health project for migrants should consider that migration supposes in itself the experience of culture shock and a great effort to adapt to radical changes in the new social and cultural sphere. This effort frequently produces a great physical as well as psychic tension that has negative consequences for migrants' health.

Psychological health has a great significance, added to the risks posed on physical health, due to the difficulties of integration to a new context-especially when it is aggravated by discrimination and the difficulties in the access to a legal status. This situation becomes even more critical when faced with the lack of social and cultural sensibility from the officers of health services, and the general difficulty of immigrants to have access to them (Wilfried Kamphausen, Seminar "Migration, a Health Risk" 2001).

The project works with two "TAMPEP-trained professionals": the cultural mediator, a person from the migrant community who acts as a bridge between members of that community and the social and medical institutions, and the peer educator, an active sex worker who receives training to pass on information and increase empowerment among his/her peers. Interventions for migrant sex workers need to recognise and be informed by the cultural and social values of the migrant sex workers, which require different approaches if the intervention is to be successful.

Network Methodology

As a network, "TAMPEP" has designed a network methodology that guarantees a homogeneous and cohesive work among its members. Such methodology is based on:

- The introduction and implementation of a common working philosophy of the intervention for migrant sex workers in Europe.
- The creation of a wide network of social-health care services (GO and NGO) for hard-to-reach groups of sex workers.

- The creation of region-wide capacity to implement HIV/STI prevention among migrant sex workers in the framework of health promotion in Europe.
- The drawing of a detailed and updated map of immigration movements within the prostitution industry in Europe, and assessment of factors that determine the situation of sex workers.
- The formulation of recommendations and advice to the national and international public health authorities concerning health, social and juridical policies in prostitution.
- The standardisation and adaptation of already existing information material and manuals produced by "TAMPEP" for a wide use among members.

1.6 Authors, financing and networks

"TAMPEP" members (several NGOs, associations, public and private organisations, etc. from different countries) run targeted projects for migrant sex workers in co-operation with organisations in the countries of origin, transition and destination. Programmes of social protection are integrated in health promotion activities. The Network is structured at three levels--international, regional and national--that are not separated from each other, but make a homogeneous and cohesive network. At the international level, the whole network participants have the possibility to exchange experience in a bilateral and multilateral way with the support and coordination centre of "TAMPEP" and in common meetings, conferences, seminars and mutual visits. Many members have bilateral working contacts and cooperation with projects in the mother countries of migrant sex workers.

At the regional level, the member countries of the network are grouped in three Regional Commissions: North, South and Central Europe. These commissions observe common problems at regional and trans-regional levels in order to draw a map of the prostitution scene in Europe. They also try to design common models of intervention and organise common implementation activities with the Regional Commissions (training programme for out-reach workers, production of specific material in several languages, etc). At the national level, the members are the National Coordinators of the network in their countries by monitoring the situation of their countries, supporting the creation of the national platform and implementing "TAMPEP" methodology, disseminating information and expertise and organising seminars to train service providers, influence policy makers and exchange experiences with local projects.

2. Hints for an evaluation

2.1. Strengths

"TAMPEP" prides itself of its network structure all over Europe, which both guarantees a homogeneous methodology and permits enough flexibility to adapt such methodology to each particular context. Thus, for instance, information material (guides, brochures, etc) are not only published in several languages, but also adapted to the specific circumstances of migrant sex workers from different countries of origin, transit, and destination. An interesting part of their methodology is the production of this information material in cheap formats, so as to guarantee its continuous modification at a low cost. The network structure also provides priceless information about migration movements of sex workers all over Europe. Due to the

illegal status of the migrant sex work industry, mafias do have a network structure all over Europe which they use for the permanent movement of their workers. The network structure of "TAMPEP" permits a more global analysis of the migration movements of sex workers. The migration experience of sex workers is not bipolar (from one country to another) but includes a series of endless countries of transit where migrant sex workers might get physically infected, or psychologically affected. Keeping track of those movements and the characteristics of migrant workers situations in every country of transit is a helpful tool for health care providers. It would for instance, be easier to approach migrant sex workers in a country with a culture and language similar to their own than in a completely unknown environment. This combination of research and intervention is most positive and effective when developed by the same agent.

Especially remarkable is the outreach street work developed by "TAMPEP". Most organisations aimed at helping migrants provide services to those who approach their offices asking for help. However, "TAMPEP" understands that migrant sex workers are in an especially difficult situation (i.e. they might not understand the language, might not know the city or are not allowed to get out of their work centres, are scared of any authority, and are controlled by mafias) and tries to approach them in order to offer them "TAMPEP"'s services (which are, of course, free of charge). In a sense, "TAMPEP" follows a very aggressive and individualised advertising strategy closer to the ones used by the marketing system than to those used by a non-profit organisation. In this sense, "TAMPEP" is very innovative and effective. Outreach street work is developed by what could be considered special intercultural agents: cultural mediators and peer educators. Other organisations used translators or just workers from the same ethnic origin as the target group's. However, "TAMPEP" goes much further. It recruits and trains previous migrant sex workers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (cultural mediators) who can help the organisation approach the target group and help them with intercultural issues, such as language, social rules, legal issues, etc. However, due to the secrecy and double marginal status of migrant sex workers, it is also necessary to find not only previous, but also current migrant sex workers who can help as peer educators in health issues with the target group. Such peer approach to migrant sex workers lessens their distrust of the help they are offered and increases the chances for success. "TAMPEP" makes the target group the most important part of the project not only as target group, but also as participants involved in the development of the project.

However, the most relevant aspect of "TAMPEP" is perhaps that of focus. "TAMPEP" is one of the few organisations that consider intercultural issues an important issue in health care services for migrant sex workers. Being a doubly marginalised group (for being both immigrants and sex workers) the efforts this target group requires are also doubled. Being sex workers, the target group is a risk group in AIDS prevention, but being migrant workers makes the target group especially vulnerable, since this circumstance prevents them from being helped due to intercultural impediments.

2.2.Critical points

One of the most positive aspects of "TAMPEP"'s methodology (outreach work through cultural mediators and peer educators) is also one of the most difficult ones when taken to practice. Migrant sex workers are a target group particularly difficult to reach due to their illegal status and diverse ethnic and linguistic origin. Since they

move in the difficult arena of illegal migration, human traffic, and sex industry, migrant sex workers are not only distrustful of any authority, but also scared of possible repressive measures (such as physical damage, threats concerning their relatives in their countries of origin or their own lives, seclusion, torture, etc.) that the mafias might take against them. Active intervention might cause problems not only to migrant sex workers who collaborate with "TAMPEP", but also to other "TAMPEP" workers such as cultural mediators and their families. For such cases, it might be necessary to have some action plan developed together with the police, so as to lessen risks.

The health services provided by "TAMPEP" are restricted to information and means to prevent infection in sex work, but it does not include medical treatment for those who are already infected. However, "TAMPEP" works in collaboration with other organisations (different for each partner in their countries of action) in order to supply these services.

2.3 Lessons Learnt

Results

Through this work "TAMPEP" makes HIV/STI prevention among migrant sex workers feasible. "TAMPEP" members have directly contributed to primary prevention through facilitating access of migrant sex workers across Europe to appropriate legal, health and social care services. In the last five years, "TAMPEP" national teams, consisting of cultural mediators, peer educators and street operators of different nationalities, contacted more than 50.000 migrant prostitutes while carrying out fieldwork in the four project countries. More than 300.000 interactive contacts have resulted from fieldwork. The continuous acquisition of empirical data has allowed us to draw a detailed updated map of migration movements within the prostitution industry in Europe, and a map of the demographic composition of the different groups.

Results of Network Methodology

- Identification of needs of migrant sex workers and sensibilisation of medical and social services among the countries belonging to the network.
- Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices amongst the members, identification of common gaps and the review of the situation of prostitution, carrying out of common training. Using a questionnaire as a common instrument for a national mapping in order to learn about the current trends in the prostitution scene.
- Spreading of "TAMPEP"'s information material, updating of the basic material, making the material accessible for the members of the network and production of new material.
- Participation in strategic meetings of policy makers, giving support and advice to several NGOs and Gos.

Themes

The integration of intercultural issues in health prevention. "TAMPEP" goes ahead of the health needs of its target group. It anticipates to their health problems by preventing them and to their intercultural problems by providing information adapted to their linguistic and cultural needs and also to their specific circumstances as illegal sex workers. "TAMPEP" fights for the acceptance of prostitution as part of the social

system so that it ceases to be a taboo. It also fights for social acceptance of illegal immigration as an increasingly relevant aspect of the European social composition. To this group, it is particularly difficult to integrate within a social group who is not only alien to them, but who also refuses to accept them as its components. Such acceptance is the first step towards the improvement not only of the target group's situation, but also of the community who receives them. In this sense, "TAMPEP" could serve as a model of good practice for any health-care-providing organisation.

Methodology

We would like to underline outreach street work as the most relevant aspect of "TAMPEP"'s methodology subject to be exportable to other projects. Other projects include the development of materials adapted to the cultural differences of the target groups they work for, but they wait for the target group to come to them for help. "TAMPEP" strives to find out where and when its services are needed and takes them where the target group is even when their help is rejected. To most intercultural projects, the sensibilisation of society concerning intercultural issues and immigration is a common objective. However, "TAMPEP" is innovative in their task to sensibilise not only society, but also the target group itself, who might not even be aware of their present and future needs and rights.

In this sense, the recruiting and training of cultural mediators and peer educators is crucial for the success of "TAMPEP"'s project. They are a valuable source of information for research activities and a priceless help in approaching the target group. The practice of making the target group not only the beneficiaries, but also the central agents of a project is a practice that can and should be exported to other experiences with migrant groups. In this sense, the methodology of "TAMPEP" is an example to be followed.

3. LINKS

- European Network for HIV-STD prevention in Prostitution:
<http://www.europap.net/>
- Página web de TAMPEP:
<http://www.tampep.com>
- Red ROPP
Red estatal de organizaciones y proyectos sobre Prostitución.
redropp@hotmail.com
- Cruz Roja Juventud:
http://194.224.226.158/cre_web/crjsida2002.htm
- ENMP (European Network of Male Prostitution)
<http://www.enmp.org/>