

AFRO e-Newsletter (January 2010)

1 WORK REPORT

1.1 Monthly Tea Gathering with Sex Workers

From Jan 2010 on, we will have a monthly tea gathering with sex workers at 3:15 pm on the last Wednesday of every month. It will be a casual gathering with a specific topic, for which we may invite experts from particular areas to come and share us.

The first gathering was held on 27 Jan. And the topic was financial management. An independent financial advisor came and shared with us some basic ideas about financial management. He reminded all the participants not to blindly invest, and that it is very important to understand the details of each investment product and clearly identify our own needs before we make any investment decision. He also reminded us that before spending money on investment e.g. insurance, funds, stocks etc., saving from our monthly income and reserving a certain amount of money as emergency fund are necessary and fundamental, especially to people who do not receive stable monthly income, such as sex workers.

1.2 AFRO's Annual Report (2008/09)

AFRO 's latest annual report has been uploaded to:

http://www.afro.org.hk/EN/pdf/annualreport/AnnualReport2009_eng_final.pdf

Please feel free to check it out!

2 FUTURE WORK

2.1 Daytime Volunteer Training

We are now recruiting daytime volunteer (2010). There will be 7 training sessions (5 on theory and 2 on practice). For details, please check:

<http://www.afro.org.hk/news.php?date=2010-01> (in Chinese)

Enquiry: 2770 1065

Quota: 20

Training fee: \$200 (\$100 for full-time students)

Application deadline: 17 Feb 2010

2.2 Chinese New Year Gathering (24/2)

Our monthly tea gathering in February will take place on 24 Feb, the 11th day of the Chinese New Year. We will talk about how we can make the business even better in the coming year. Can Feng Shui help? What else can we do and what kind of ideas would you like to share with your fellow workers? Come and join us at 3:15 pm on 24 Feb (Wed)!

We will also have our Chinese New Year gathering at 12:30 pm on the same day. All sex workers and volunteers are welcome! Let's have 'Poon Choi' and fun games together to kick off the energetic new year of Tiger!

3 AFRO's NEWS READING

Why Ask 'Why Men Buy Prostitutes? '

Advocates Who Want to Stop Sex Trafficking Seek to Find Out Why Men Pay For Sex

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/MensHealth/study-attempts-find-men-pay-sex/story?id=9663694>

By LAUREN COX

ABC News Medical Unit

26 Jan 2010

Why do men visit prostitutes? This may seem like a silly question with a one-word answer, but advocates battling sex trafficking say the reasons are actually quite complex and could be key to understanding the changing face of prostitution in modern times.

Psychologists from international advocacy groups sat down with 700 Johns in several countries to learn why they decided to pay for sex. The study has illuminated some personal stories of loneliness, to pure desire. "No big deal, it's just like getting a beer," one man said, while others suspected that the women were held against their will.

"She was frightened and nervous. She told me she had been tricked," one man in London told researchers from the non-profit Prostitution Research & Education and the London-based charity Eaves.

Gone are the heydays of the local brothel or even the red light district. With the rise of the Internet, a new anonymity was born and with it a covert business model that blended in with local homes and businesses. Some Internet advertisements are from individual prostitutes and some are from pimps who run sex trafficking rings that exploit women captured into sex slavery through force, threats of violence or coercion.

Experts say sometimes Johns may not even know the difference -- so a coalition of non-profits dedicated to abolishing modern day sex trafficking decided it was time to shift from interviewing women about why they were selling sex to asking why men decided to pay for sex.

The answers varied. From two-hour interviews with 103 men aged 18 -70 in the London area who responded to a newspaper ad, some explanations included:

"Prostitution is like masturbating without having to use your hand."

"I feel sorry for these girls but this is what I want."

"Look, men pay for women because he can have whatever and whoever he wants. Lots of men go to prostitutes so they can do things to them that real women would not put up with.

"We're living in the age of instant coffee, instant food. This is instant sex."

*"Prostitution is a last resort to unfulfilled sexual desires. Rape would be less safe, or if you're forced to hurt someone or if you're so frustrated you j*** off all day."*

The most common reason why men said they bought sex was to satisfy immediate sexual urge; 21 percent of time men wanted to select women with certain physical racial and sexual stereotypes such as being submissive; 20 percent went to prostitutes because they were unsatisfied with their current relationship; and 15 percent went to prostitutes because there was no emotional connection or commitment.

Only 3 percent of the responders in the survey said they went to prostitutes because of a sex addiction or because they were drunk.

Melissa Farley, clinical psychologist and a co-author of the study, said she wants legislators to understand the Johns' motives to find a way to crack down on prostitution. For instance, Farley also asked what would deter the men from visiting a prostitute.

What Would Stop Prostitution?

More than 80 percent of the men said the following would deter them: being added to a sex offender register, having your picture and/or name on a billboard or local newspaper, mandatory prison time, having your picture and/or name posted on the Internet or a letter sent to family members.

Only 47 percent of men said a requirement to attend educational services about prostitution would deter them. Farley said she aims to stamp out prostitution in addition to sex trafficking because of the stories she's heard in the 12 years she spent researching prostitution.

"Our non-profit spent 12 years studying women in nine countries on five continents," said Farley who is executive director of the non-profit Prostitution Research & Education. "Women in prostitution, men in prostitution, and transgender people in prostitution all say the same thing. That is harmful to them and they would do anything else if they had the choice." Farley said previous studies show 98 percent of women in prostitution do not enjoy it.

But Ed Laumann, professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, points out that the research in the London study was far from definitive -- the sample of men was small and the responding men were skewed to those who read the newspaper or want to respond to an ad looking for Johns.

Laumann also says that there may never be a universal answer to the question of why men buy prostitutes because the "oldest profession" changes so often depending on time and culture.

For instance, large surveys have showed prostitution in the United States dropped significantly over the last century, while today 1 in 4 men report visiting a prostitute in some parts of southeastern China, according to Laumann.

Prostitution Numbers Vary Over Culture, Time

"The kinds of folks who used prostitution in the modern era are very different than the ones before," Laumann said, speaking of the results of the [National Health and Social Life Survey](#) in

1992 which interviewed a random group of 3,432 people. In that survey, which questioned people ages 18-59, about 10 percent of older men reported that their first sexual experience was with a prostitute.

"That goes to zero in the youngest cohort," said Laumann.

The reason, Laumann reasoned, is that the sexual revolution made premarital sex much more accessible. Now young men go to girlfriends for sex and vice versa instead of some young, unmarried people choosing to pay for sex at a local brothel.

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Comment:

The long history of sex industry all over the world well reflects the diversity of sexual desires and needs of human beings. It is in fact inappropriate, and unnecessary, to generalize the reasons behind the ones who sell or buy the services. What should be concerned and considered important is the safety and health of, and mutual respect between the two parties.

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