

## **AFRO e-Newsletter (April 2010)**

### **1 SEX INDUSTRY BIZ NEWS**

#### **1.1 Mainland Chinese Sex Workers Working in One-Woman-Apartments**

We were told by many local sex workers that recently there had been more and more Mainland Chinese sex workers working in one-woman-apartments and the competition within the industry had become more intense. Some of them wondered if they could report this to the police.

We reiterate that without a valid working visa, it is illegal for a non-Hong Kong resident to be involved in any kind of work in Hong Kong. Everybody has the right to provide information to the police, yet they have to realise that in that case he or she may be requested to provide further information and if necessary act as a witness.

In Hong Kong, sex work related laws are complicated and both local and non-local sex workers may break the laws unintentionally. AFRO will disclose relevant information only if we are a first hand witness and are requested by the police.

We understand that most workers in the sex industry are working hard to make a living for themselves and for their families. We sincerely hope that there can be more understanding and mutual help among fellow sex workers.

### **2 WORK REPORT**

#### **2.1 Fire Safety Talk (Monthly Gathering in March)**

On 31 March, a team of fire fighters came to AFRO's Centre to give a talk on fire safety and demonstrate the proper way to use a fire extinguisher and a fire hose.

Usually the lights will be affected in case of a fire. It is important for us to make sure that we are familiar with the building and are able to identify the fire exits even in the dark. We should identify the location of fire exits and staircases, make sure that they are not blocked or locked. Take the staircase (not an elevator) down to escape from a fire. If fire or heavy smoke is found below in the staircase, go back one floor up and try to take another staircase. If the corridor is already too smoky, go back to your apartment and wait for rescue. Usually the main door and the walls are to a certain degree fire resistant. Use a wet towel or adhesive tape to fill the gaps. Remember to stay close to the floor and crawl below the smoke.

Some participants in the gathering shared their views:

"Fire and disaster seem to be far from me. I seldom paid attention to the fire exits or ways to escape. This talk has raised my consciousness. I

will share what I learned with my daughter." -- KC

"The illustration was clear and detailed. I've learnt a lot from the fire fighters about fire safety and equipments." -- Kuen

## 2.2 A Talk on Cervical Cancer and the HPV Virus (Monthly Gathering in April)

On 28 April 2010, Dr. Fong gave a talk on cervical cancer and the HPV virus at AFRO's Centre. He explained in detail what HPV virus is, how it is related to cervical cancer and how HPV vaccines work. We also introduced the most updated HPV vaccine offer at AFRO Clinic for AFRO Club members (HK\$2,500 for 3 shots).

## 2.3 'Flower Boats and Working Girls - a social history of the sex trade in Hong Kong'

The Hong Kong Association of Business and Professional Women (HKABPW) organised a fund raising event for AFRO on 29 April 2010. Jason Wordie gave a talk on the social history of the sex trade in Hong Kong. All proceeds would be donated to AFRO in support of our ongoing work. About 40 persons attended the event. Once again, we would like to send our thanks to HKABPW and Jason Wordie for their support. We must also thank the Helena May for providing the venue.

## **3 FUTURE WORK**

### 3.1 AFRO Shop

The AFRO Shop has been running for 2 years and offering special discounts on condoms and lubricants to sex workers. To further develop the market, we have decided to extend our service to all AFRO's members, volunteers and friends. You must have received the catalogue and order form that we previously sent you by email. Enquiry / order: 27701061 or [shop@afro.org.hk](mailto:shop@afro.org.hk).

### 3.2 AFRO Summer Fund Raising Bazaar (1 Aug 2010)

AFRO will hold a fundraising bazaar this summer. We look forward to your support!

We are now collecting items for the bazaar. If you know any free sources of merchandise supply, please kindly contact us. We will also need a lot of hands for the event. If you can squeeze some time and work as a volunteer for AFRO on that day, please call 27701065 and let us know.

Date: 1 Aug 2010 (Sunday)

Time: 1000-1800

Venue: Pedestrian's Zone, Charter Road, Central

#### 4 AFRO's NEWS READING

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/04/29/2885604.htm?site=idx-tas>

Family group apologises to sex workers

Posted April 29, 2010 10:20:00

Sex workers want a ban on material which stigmatises their industry.

A group opposed to prostitution has been forced to apologise to Tasmanian sex workers for saying the industry is harmful to women.

The Family Protection Society also accused sex workers of "breaking up marriages" in a series of advertisements placed in a Tasmanian daily newspaper.

Jade Barker from the lobby group Scarlet Alliance says the society agreed to apologise after the alliance lodged a complaint.

"Scarlet Alliance commenced action under the Tasmanian Anti-discrimination Act of 1998 in relation to the Family Protection Society and a conciliation was held and an apology given which was published by the Family Protection Society," she said.

Tasmanian sex worker "Claire" says the society has a long history of publishing material stigmatising sex workers.

"[It says] things like prostitution harms women, prostitution disturbs marriages."

She says the apology is welcome but it is only the first step.

"Ads like these should be banned from the paper."

The Alliance is continuing to push for the decriminalisation of prostitution in Tasmania.

Attempts to contact the Family Protection Society have been unsuccessful.

Comment:

We are pleased to see there is finally an apology from people who stigmatised sex workers! Yet more hard work is needed to decriminalise sex work and eliminate all misunderstandings and stigmas.

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