

## AFRO e-newsletter (May 2011)

### 1 WORK REPORT

#### 1.1 May 1 Rally

On 1 May 1886, about 220,000 Chicago workers got together and strove for 8 hours of work per day. Since then, May 1 International Labour Day has become an international celebration of workers' rights and interests.

We strongly believe that sex work is work. Therefore, on 1 May this year, sex workers, volunteers and staff of AFRO joined the rally organised by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, in order to express our determination to fight for recognition of sex work as work and the rights that sex workers should be entitled to.

Suki, a sex worker who joined the rally that day, would like to share some of her thoughts.

*I participated in the International Labour Day Rally with AFRO and other sex workers concern groups on 1 May. We appealed for recognition of sex work as work and elimination of discrimination and marginalization against sex workers.*

*I believe we are not different from other workers who make efforts and provide services to make a living. Sex work therefore should be regarded as an occupation and as a work. Besides, the fact that the sex industry has been existing for a long time well indicates there is a need for the service and there is value of it.*

*Therefore, we have to call for the recognition of sex workers' rights. We should not be degraded and treated with injustice!*

*In the rally, we also protested against the abuse of police power. For instances, some police officers enjoy free sexual services when taking undercover actions, while some of them exploit sex workers who may not know their rights when reporting a case to the police. Furthermore, we fought for decriminalising sex work and omitting the legal provision "Soliciting for an Immoral Purpose". I found it very meaningful to join this rally and voice for the rights of sex workers.*



### 1.2 May Gathering: Think Positive! (25 May)

The advancement of technology may have enhanced the quality of our material life. However, it does not seem to have brought us greater happiness. In fact, statistics show that depression is getting more common nowadays. On 25 May, we organised the event “Think Positive!”. The participants enjoyed the gathering and were all willing to share their challenges and think of solution together. From the event, we have learnt how to deal with challenges positively and optimistically, and to cheer each other up.

We face pressures from all sides. If we can deal with them optimistically and live with hopes, definitely we will have a fruitful life in return.



### 1.3 Women's NGO Forum

On 7 May, the representative of AFRO attended the Women's NGO Forum organised by the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, Women's Studies Research Centre and Centre for Comparative and Public Law of the University of Hong Kong, and shared AFRO's experience of working with CEDAW (The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women). It was emphasised that sex work should be delinked from exploitation of women and the trafficking issues, and that the convention should recognize voluntary sex work as work, protect sex workers' rights as workers' rights and economic rights, and include sexual right as one of the rights that women and men can equally enjoy, same as economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

## **2 FUTURE WORK**

### 2.1 Daytime Volunteer Training

AFRO's daytime volunteer training is going to start from 10 June. We have received more applications this year and we anticipate that they can join us for outreach and promotion of decriminalization of sex work after the training.

## 2.2 June Gathering

AFRO is going to share some important information on evidence collection, procedures on crime reporting and security measures with fellow sex workers. Please feel free to call 2770 1002 for enquires and seat reservations.

Date: 29 June 2011 (Wednesday)

Time: 3:15pm – 5:15pm

Venue: AFRO drop-in Centre

Fee: Free

## 2.3 "Love Ideas ♥ HK"

"Love Ideas ♥ HK" has already accepted the second round of application. Public voting period will start on 13 June and end on 3 July. Individuals interested in voting via the Internet should set up a Voter Account using a computer or mobile handset in Hong Kong so as to vote for the "eligible projects".

AFRO has submitted two projects, which are "Outreach sexual health consultation and screening tests" and "Sexual health education and holistic support services for women involved in compensated dating girls". Hereby we would like to call for your support and vote for these programmes.

(Ref: [http://www.loveideas.hk/about\\_loveideas.aspx](http://www.loveideas.hk/about_loveideas.aspx))

## **3 AFRO NEWS READING**

### **Some educated women choose prostitution**

[http://www.upi.com/Health\\_News/2011/05/15/Some-educated-women-choose-prostitution/UPI-87561305498147/](http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2011/05/15/Some-educated-women-choose-prostitution/UPI-87561305498147/)

15 May 2011

*FAYETTEVILLE, Ark., May 15 (UPI) -- Prostitution is illegal except for a few areas of the United States, but some educated women work in the sex industry by choice, researchers says.*

*Jennifer Hafer, a doctoral student, and economics Professor Amy Farmer of the University of Arkansas say contrary to conventional wisdom that women enter prostitution because they are desperate -- they need money to pay bills or buy drugs -- many educated and affluent women are making a rational decision to enter certain segments of the "world's oldest profession."*

*However, the research confirmed women do not explicitly choose to become streetwalkers.*

*"The findings suggest that these [educated and affluent] women are not forced into the prostitution market but rather choose to enter it for many of the same reasons that people enter the conventional job market -- money, stability, autonomy and even job satisfaction," Hafer said in a statement.*

*The researchers say the prostitution market is divided into the high-quality category, such as a high-end escort service or through the Internet, and the low-quality market that includes brothels in Nevada and streetwalkers.*

*Women with less education and economic opportunities choose to enter the low-quality legal market -- the brothels in certain Nevada counties -- while women do not choose to participate in streetwalking prostitution, they say.*

Comment:

This piece of news may have challenged the broad range of popular misconceptions and stereotypes about sex work. With an open mind and heart, we shall understand that sometimes things/people may be very different from what we assumed and we should accept and respect the differences.

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