

## **AFRO e-newsletter (July 2011)**

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

#### **1.1 Protest Against Next Magazine and East Week for Abusing Sex Workers' Privacy**

AFRO noted that the cover stories of Next Magazine (this issue) and East Week (last issue) were about sex workers and both magazines did little or nothing to protect the privacy of sex workers. In Next Magazine, the faces of sex workers are clearly shown in pictures which are believed to be secretly taken, while in East Week, although the pictures have been slightly processed, faces of sex workers are still clearly identifiable. We consider this a serious abuse of sex workers' privacy and we would like to call for your attention and action.

We have drafted a statement and hope that you can co-sign to show your support. Please check the following link for the Facebook event that we have created. If you would like to co-sign, please press "I'm attending". Thank you very much!

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/event.php?eid=237085109664384>  
(Chinese)

#### **1.2 Cases of impersonating police officers in Tai Po**

Recently, it was reported that there were people impersonating police officers in one woman apartments around the Tai Po area. In doing so, these people received free sexual services, but also robbed sex workers of their valuables.

Please be reminded that anybody has the right to request a police officer to show his/her warrant card (Information on how to identify a Hong Kong Police Warrant Card can be obtained from us), and ask for his/her subordinate police stations and contact number. This is required in order to verify his/her identity.

Please also be reminded that if you pose photos of these suspects in public places, there is a risk of being accused of defamation. This may also affect future court decisions as the suspect may use the defense that these photos prejudice against him and therefore claim an unfair trial. In this case the suspects can be acquitted. It is therefore recommended that you hand over any related evidence directly to the police so as to avoid suspects from using this line of defense.

## 2 WORK REPORT

### 2.1 July Gathering – Summer Outing

According to the Chinese calendar, 23 July is supposed to be the hottest day this year. And this is exactly the day that we, all 38 of us, had our summer outing. It was surely hot and sunny! And it was fun to go out on a day when the sky was blue and the clouds were puffy and white.

In the morning we were led by a tour guide to Kam Tin Country Club. The beautiful lotus flowers attracted our full attention and became the most popular subject for photo shoots. After lunch we went to the Hong Kong Railway Museum in Tai Po. A lot of us took a side-trip to the local market nearby. The fruits, vegetables and cakes there were so nice and so cheap! We just couldn't leave without doing some shopping.



### 2.2 Love Ideas ♥ HK

The public voting period for 'Love Ideas ♥ HK' ended on 3 July. We are sorry that our applications for the projects 'Outreach for sexual health consultation and screening tests' and 'Sexual health education and holistic support services for women involved in compensated dating girls' have not been successful. We would like to express our grateful thanks for your support. Please kindly let us know if you know any other possible sources for support to these two programmes.

## **2.3 Outreach Visits and Free Voluntary Counseling and Testing for HIV and Syphilis for Female Sex Workers**

Good news! With the support from the AIDS Trust Fund, AFRO will start providing free counseling and rapid tests for HIV and syphilis to female sex workers. The new project aims to increase outreach coverage and strengthen HIV education for female sex workers who are hard to reach and have less access to prevention activities.

### **3 FUTURE WORK**

#### **3.1 August Gathering – AFRO Clinic and Sexual Health**

To cap the experience of the AFRO Clinic in the last 3 years, we will hold a talk about female sex workers' sexual health on 24 Aug. Interested sex workers and volunteers please call 27701065 for enquiry and registration.

Date: 24 Aug 2011 (Wed)

Time: 3 pm - 5 pm

Venue: AFRO's Drop-in Centre

Fee: None

### **4 AFRO NEWS READING**

#### **Prostitutes are people too, ads remind**

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/07/12/sex-work-advocacy-group-tries-to-remind-th-at-prostitutes-are-people-too/>

Jul 12, 2011

*A Halifax-based sex work advocacy group, Stepping Stone, is trying to remind people that prostitutes are people too with a new campaign featuring images such as a grandmother with the caption: "I am proud of my tramp for raising two kids on her own." Three ads have been printed in local papers, and 500 posters have been put up across the city. The campaign launches as a high-profile case involving attacks on two sex workers makes its way through Nova Scotia's courts. The Post's Greg Burchell spoke to Rene Ross, the group's executive director:*

*Q: How were the people in the ads chosen?*

*A: The images were done pro-bono by a PR group. Two of the people were from the PR company, and the other one was my grandmother. Because of the stigma around the sex trade we were not able to get any models to volunteer to do it. We have a couple of students that would have made great models for the campaign, and they didn't want people to think they were sex workers or it could impact their schooling, which they're right, it could.*

*Q: You couldn't find any sex workers' grandmothers or daughters or sisters to model for the campaign?*

*A: No, for this campaign it wasn't about who the model was or the relation, it was about the message.*

*Q: Couldn't the campaign also be seen as normalizing sex work?*

*A: We've got that feedback a bit, and what we'd say to that is we're not promoting prostitution. We're promoting people. We want to send the message that this is a campaign about people and that behind the media headlines of 'Prostitute's body found,' so many quote-unquote 'dead hookers' because there's a lot of media that still use that, that these are in fact people with families and with lives and that they also deserve the same human rights and access to justice as the rest of the Canadian population.*

*Q: The headlines you mentioned — have you actually read these?*

*A: If we look at last week's coverage of a trial a couple weeks ago, one of the headlines was all about 'prostitute,' it did not talk about anything about these women as women. 'Killer arraigned in prostitute murders.' 'Alleged attacker goes to trial for prostitute beatings.' You never hear that this is a woman, this is a mother, this is a friend. A lot of the stories and the angles continue to focus on the lives of the victims and the women and not their attackers. When we use terms like sex worker and sex advocate, it leads to more balanced stories. There still are a lot of local newspapers that use the term hooker in their headlines, and it doesn't help to get the community to realize that these are people.*

Comment :

While it is important to advocate for the decriminalization of sex work, the basic recognition that sex workers are people too is more vital. Without recognizing them as

people with families, lives, hobbies and jobs, just like any other person, stigmatization of sex workers will never end.

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