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Action for REACH OUT was set up in 1993 and is a non-governmental organization in Hong Kong. Our main funding source has been The Council of Hong Kong AIDS Trust Fund. We serve local Chinese sex workers and also those who come to Hong Kong from other parts of Asia. For instance: Thailand, Philippines and Mainland China. Action for REACH OUT (AFRO) was developed to offer services to women working in the sex industry in Hong Kong. The main goal is to encourage and assist sex workers to form their own support network. We are a group of people who offer an environment of openness and honesty where women can turn in times of need.

Through outreach services and the drop-in center, we have conducted HIV/AIDS prevention programmes- Peer Education Training, Sexual Transmitted Disease Prevention Workshop and other employment opportunities, skills training program - Work for All. Every time the participants had shared with me they learnt a lot from these programs and had enhanced their personal growth in various aspects, e.g. self-appreciation, awareness on AIDS prevention and personal health care etc. As a worker myself, at the moment, it was so enlightening and encouraging that we have contributed towards their life!

In particular, around two years ago in 2000, there were so many women who came from Mainland China to do sex work on the street. In fact, it is illegal for them to work in Hong Kong, as they have no work permit. This is so-called Mobile Population. MP has been sub-classified according to the relative length of stay of the individuals in the original country of residence and the place they work. Because of "physical changes" we presumed they would stay in a unique situation of lack of social support network. AFRO last year launched a project - Pilot Outreach Programme to Female Sex Workers from China working in Hong Kong (PRC Project) in which we explored their needs and their demographic background. Through distributing leaflet, we shared negotiation skills and HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge among those of the Mainland China sex workers. After a year, we found that poverty in their province in China is the main reason they come to work. Most of them would not do sex work when they return to their own province. Meanwhile, some

of the women shared their unique story with us. They told us when they come to Hong Kong they had no idea they would do sex work. Their neighbor gave a false impression to her that if she came to Hong Kong, she lied to her that to come she can earn money. However, they have to pay an advance payment. Thus they encountered a reality where they have no choice. In fact it was serious and implied a level of trafficking. I, personally, have really much concern about when they return to their own province. Is there any psychological consultation offered to her to release her burden and are there adequate units to provide sexual health check up? AFRO will certainly explore a more appropriate way and effective approach to serve those of the Mainland China sex workers in the future.

For Australian sex workers considering travel to Hong Kong today, you should know some of the policy background on the law of Hong Kong. It is not illegal to provide sexual services to another for money and vice versa it is not illegal for a person to use the services of sex workers. However, soliciting for an 'Immoral Purpose' is illegal, as is doing sex work on a tourist visa. However, the law in Hong Kong mostly directs its attention to those involved in the management and control of persons for purposes of prostitution. In a particular year, a number of women who came to Hong Kong on a tourist visa and worked illegally as sex workers on the streets, e.g. Thai and Mainland Chinese etc. If they were soliciting for clients, they would be charged with Breach of Condition of Stay because they are not allowed to work on a tourist visa. Sometimes the penalty could be as heavy as a two to three months term in prison. If you held a false document or are an illegal immigrant to Hong Kong, then you could receive a penalty of fifteen months imprisonment. If you are interested to know more details about sex work and law in Hong Kong, then you can access a web site: <http://www.hku.hk/ccp/>. Last but not least, you are welcome to visit Action for REACH OUT and let us have a cup of tea when you come to Hong Kong, we will be glad to share with you more! For further contact with AFRO, you can email to: afro@iohk.com or by post P O Box 98108 TST Post Office, Kowloon, Hong Kong.