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Building capacity and commitment of the business sector EVERYWHERE: HIV Prevention targeting Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in 8 European countries

General Description

The overarching aim of this workshop is to enable participants to critically explore and debate whether businesses that provide opportunities for men to have sex with men (MSM) have a social responsibility to support HIV prevention initiatives.

Rationale

HIV continues to be a major public health issue across Europe, with recent evidence suggesting that the annual rate of newly reported infections has nearly doubled between 2000 to 2007. MSM account for the largest number of new diagnoses in a number of European countries. They are vulnerable populations worldwide and are amongst the most hidden, stigmatised, and at risk from HIV infection.

Some European cities have included attempts to involve actively entrepreneurs from MSM businesses in HIV prevention and harm reduction activities. However, given the mobility of this collective and the magnitude of gay tourism, such strategies have yet to enjoy visible success at a European level. To address this issue, the EU co-funded EVERYWHERE project aims to develop and validate a European model of good practice of HIV prevention in Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). This model or way of working will be developed by creating and testing a series of activities designed to articulate an effective, sustainable, and appropriate methodology for reaching venues, spaces and activities linked to men who have sex with men.

Learning Objectives

In the first instance, EVERYWHERE is focusing on four MSM business types including websites, hotels, sex venues, and travel agencies. Participants will therefore have the opportunity to debate innovative ideas and address challenging questions around key themes relating to these business types including:

- Social responsibility and what it means for MSM businesses in European countries with regards disease prevention and promoting health.
- Developing a common language around social responsibility and HIV prevention across different: cultures, health discourses, business types, infrastructures and economies (e.g. What and who compromises? What values do we need to share and not share? What values do we need in common with businesses?)
- Consumer power and individual choice in supporting social responsibility initiatives.

Expected Results

In addition to these key themes, the workshop will also identify areas for further action and collaboration (particularly around partnership working and sustainability), and the go on to consider how these ideas could potentially be implemented in practice through the EVERYWHERE network.