

MANAS, A PEER-LED PROJECT AMONG WOMEN WHO USING DRUGS AND DOING SEX WORK

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Background:

Founded during the pandemics, MANAS (SISTERS) is a peer led project by women and non-binary people surviving violence promoting mutual support and a safer space for and by vulnerable women using drugs and doing sex work. Since the launch of the documentary “6 Women, 1 Seed” we have become a group of women and trans women using drugs, sex workers, homeless women and non-binary people, some of us living with HIV, who meet weekly in a cultural association, Sirigaita, scenario of coexistence among drugs, sex work and tourism at the heart of Lisbon.

Description of model of care/intervention:

Fostering self-managed spaces through intersectional bottom-up approaches actively contribute for the inclusion of gender base violence in innovative in cost-effective harm reduction approaches, improving linkage to care and social services, expanding access as well to sexual and reproductive health and bringing to the center women who use drugs voices. Furthermore, it is a project that employs all the participants in each session as capacitation, training and artistic workshops are paid as part of a low-threshold employment grant in partnership with other feminist collectives.

Effectiveness:

The group consolidated the construction of identity, contributing to a joint to a diagnosis of needs and aspirations and extended its activities to artistic and holistic practices, promoting community care, and activist manifestations in public space that permeate the right to live with freedom, questioning power relations and defining new advocacy agendas for innovative contributions in the field of public policies.

Conclusion and next steps:

Generating a social movement among women using drugs has contributed to the visibility and employability of MANAS’s participants namely through new projects and partnership that aim to employ the group’s participants in a permanent self-managed feminist library.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *See example below:*

We acknowledge the need of transparency. Nothing to declare.