

Press release

German Network Women and AIDS Celebrates 20 Years of Activism

Dresden, September 18th 2012 – The German Network Women and AIDS celebrates its 20th birthday. Salaried and voluntary activists founded the national Women and AIDS Network in 1992. At a network's meeting in Dresden, activists took a look back at two decades of female-specific activities within the field of HIV and AIDS.

“By creating the Network Women and AIDS, we’ve set up a nationwide network for women with and without HIV diagnosis”, said network’s co-founder Harriet Langanke in Dresden. “The Network achieved a lot and strengthened the focal point on women specific needs connected to HIV and AIDS.”

The network supports female-specific approaches in the fields of HIV prevention, counseling and self-help. It gathers information about women and HIV and provides it to all interested parties. Within the Network Women and AIDS there are women known as “Knots” who are responsible for the distribution of HIV related information all over Germany.

The network also obtained working places for female specific work in several HIV institutions all over Germany. Network activists are engaged within the national AIDS advisory board. In addition, the network supports women living with HIV on a political level and contends against criminalization. “The Network always was a safe harbor for me. I hope it will last, because all of our activists do an important job”, Gaby Wirz, managing director of the AIDS centers union in Baden-Wurtemberg and one of the Network’s long-term activists and “knot” explains.

The association of German AIDS Centers, Deutsche Aidshilfe, facilitates meetings for the Network’s members, so women are enabled to link and to meet in person. “The Network enables me to interchange with other women in order to get things done”, said Heidi Sobotta, also one of the Network’s long-time activists and “knot”.

The Network on Women and Aids spreads information via its website and through a regular column within the magazine DHIVA originally founded as the Network's newsletter. Since 2007 the Charitable Foundation on Sexuality and Health (Gemeinnützige Stiftung Sexualität und Gesundheit, GSSG) is the legal body for the Network Women and AIDS and the DHIVA Magazine.

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