MARTA GRAÇA

SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH WITH STREET-BASED FEMALE SEX WORKERS AND AN OUTREACH TEAM

Field: Education (social sciences)

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My present job: between jobs

Abstract:
Traditional studies tend to focus on sex workers (SW) and little research has been conducted with them. This thesis presents two complementary studies embedded in a participatory action research (PAR) project. The aim of the study is to contribute to the development of a socio-educational model of intervention focused on sex workers’ rights and needs. The preliminary study has two major purposes: to analyze institutional discourses around sex work; and to identify the socio-educational practices undertaken by support services for SW, in Portugal. The second study examines the process and the results of a PAR with street-based female SW and an outreach team.

How my research is having impact:

We filled a gap in scientific literature by including an analysis of practices and discourses related to sex work in an educational perspective. We conducted PAR with SW, who are usually excluded, voiceless and without a participation tradition. We encouraged the development of more collaborative initiatives between SW and an outreach team, by promoting consciousness-raising initiatives; and challenged traditional asymmetric relationships. The findings reveal the empowering effect of including SW in designing, implementing and evaluating socio-educational projects that concern them.