



POSITIV LEBEN!

**Statewide Working Group
Women and HIV/Aids in NRW**

Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids in NRW (SWG)

The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids in NRW founded itself in 1995. It is a working group of Aidshilfe NRW e.V., the state association of all Aids-assistance offices in North Rhine-Westphalia.

- The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids provides a network for and offers cooperation with all Aids programmes specifically designed for women in North Rhine-Westphalia. It also offers the opportunity for a joint public relations work. Participants are provided with experience data from existing programmes and regional items. Questions concerning the work on-site are also discussed.
- The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids opens up the possibility of professional exchange on the basis of different working methods, experiences and approaches.
- Discussions and technical interchange help develop new quality standards for the work in the women and Aids-prevention sector in North Rhine-Westphalia.
- A representative of the Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids belongs to the State Commission AIDS, a body advising the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia on questions of HIV and Aids.

After ten years of successful work in the field of women's issues it was time to present the schemes especially designed for women on a more public level to a broader audience. Despite the impact of the issue AIDS and even in spite of the effective day-to-day work of the many AIDS-Hilfen and other institutions, the public awareness connected to the work in the field of women and AIDS is still not wide enough.

It is the aim of the SWG communications campaign XXelle, designed in 2005 for the whole of North Rhine Westphalia, to change exactly that. XXelle, Initiative Women and Aids in NRW, provides the umbrella for all participating women and Aids schemes in North Rhine Westphalia.

Main aims

Our basic understanding of the term „health“ is not only expressed as a lack of illness or disease but does also comprise the emotional, social and physical well-being of a woman. In this context, health can be influenced by the social, political and financial situation of a woman as well as by biological and physical factors.

Women as a group in our society have to face and to deal with specific unpleasant facts. For women with HIV/Aids, they become even more urgent and their situation makes these problems even more painfully aware: increasing poverty, growing lack of social, material and existential resources, the effects of the cost-cutting programmes in the health service and protection against illness, increasing restrictions of services and payments for chronic diseases, worsening working conditions as well as a lack of training opportunities and specific programmes for women.

The main goal of the Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids is to publicly name the facts of discrimination against women with HIV/AIDS as well as their causal structures and help surmount them. It fights for blanket coverage of women's schemes in North Rhine Westphalia.

This is why women commit themselves to the work at the Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids:

In the field HIV/AIDS

- strengthen the self-help opportunities for women with HIV/AIDS
- fight for the acknowledgement of political and social achievements of women with HIV/AIDS
- help initiate the discussion about HIV/AIDS at consultancy and advisory services for women, especially those that do not originally work in the field of HIV/AIDS programmes
- support sensitive and diverse work in the field of AIDS prevention without moralizing content and based on realistic living conditions of girls and women
- fight for an unbiased decision of women with HIV/AIDS for or against pregnancy

In the field of drugs

- Due to the great number of institutions, the opinions on this item vary and differ throughout the SWG. Some institutions e.g. work mainly on the decriminalisation of drug users while others e.g. fight for the legalisation of up to now illegal drug.

In the field of health

- make people respect the women's decisions as a patient
- help support the development of medical research in women-specific areas
- improve medial treatment under consideration of typical problems for and of women
- improvement of out-patient and in-patient treatment under consideration of women's living conditions
- establish an equal relationship between doctor and patient

In the field of migration

- fight for consequent and generous application of the Law of Residence considering residence permits
- change the Law for payments to persons seeking political asylum in order to improve the living conditions of applicants to asylum.

In the field of profession/working conditions

- Improve working conditions for women with HIV/Aids

In the field society

- Work for the possibilities of equal participation of women and girls in politics and society
- Help build understanding for and acceptance of the variety of female ways to live

How to get involved

The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids consists of positive (infected) female activists, female honorary workers and employees of the Aids-advisory offices), other non-government entities and groups working basically in the field of women and HIV/Aids. The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids elects two spokeswomen who represent the SWG publicly.

The Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids is very interested in building a network with new female activists and programmes relating to women and Aids in North Rhine-Westphalia. Working in the Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids means commitment and liability as well as stamina for everybody involved. Meetings take place four times a year, one of these meetings is scheduled for two days.

Coordination

Aidshilfe NRW e.V., the AIDS advisory organization in North Rhine-Westphalia, coordinates the Statewide Working Group Women and HIV/Aids. Further information concerning the SWG in North Rhine Westphalia as well as concerning the Infopool Women and Aids can be obtained from:

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