



AIDS Prevention missing in the 2014 Brazil World Cup -
ABIA expresses its views on the findings of the World Cup study released by the
Observatory of Prostitution

The Brazilian Interdisciplinary Association for Aids (ABIA) expresses its concern about the results of the survey -- released by the Observatory of prostitution in partnership with us--, which assessed the effects of the 2014 World Cup on the Brazilian prostitution landscape, during the 32 days of the event.

In more than two thousand hours of ethnographic observations and 116 formal interviews in strategic areas of prostitution in Rio de Janeiro, the survey did not identify any government intervention for HIV prevention - neither distribution of condoms, nor the circulation of informative posters or flyers. The researchers have also visited the public health stands installed in Fan Fest – the most important place for interaction between tourists, be they Brazilian or foreign, and locals during the games in Rio de Janeiro – and did not find condoms being distributed either.

ABIA does not corroborate recent governmental approaches to HIV prevention in large events and expresses its opposition to the conservative stands that have been adopted by the Brazilian state in respect to the supposed increase of prostitution and "sex tourism" during the so called mega events. During the World Cup, the almost exclusive focus of the government discourse on sexual exploitation of children and adolescents has concealed other critical dimensions of social and sexual life, which should also have been the object of attention of the state, especially in what concerns the promotion of health and rights amongst the prostitutes in Rio de Janeiro.

Several sex workers who have been interviewed – especially those who can remember the systematic HIV prevention interventions adopted in the past by the Ministry of Health in in the context of big events – have openly criticized the abandonment of these health promotion measures during the World Cup 2014. ABIA deeply regrets this regressive policy trend, which implies the violation of people's rights in terms of access to information and sexual health, especially in the case of people engaged with sex work. We therefore fully share the indignation expressed by Lana, a prostitute who works in downtown Rio, and who was interviewed in the case study:

“It’s absurd. The media and the government have talked so much about prostitution before the event. The issue was in every paper! *‘Ah, the gringos are coming! Ah, sexual tourism! Ah, it’s going to be an orgy, and everything else!’* All that blah blah blah about prostitutes...and then nothing, nothing about condoms. Nobody has distributed condoms. There is nothing! We have to go ourselves to the public health clinics to pick them up. OK, it’s good that they provide condoms, that is great, if you have time to go there. But what about the women who don’t have time available? And what about the naïve women who are just starting sex work now and don’t know where the clinics are, much less how to put a condom on properly? As whores we also pay taxes and we, therefore, want to get our part. But it was as if the Ministry of Health has entirely forgotten that we existed.” (Lana, sex worker at a venue in downtown Rio)