

Introduction: Aline / PPdM

My name is Aline, I'm a founder member of the youth collective Generation Abolition Portugal. We created our group after a project led by the Portuguese Platform for the Women's Rights in partnership with the Global Network Generation Abolition. We campaign in Portugal for the abolition of the systems of prostitution.

Connection: Porn + Poverty

Two things connect prostitution to youth: pornography and poverty.

First Exposure to Porn

The average age of a child's first exposure to pornography is 11 years old. Being an average, it means that it's common that kids are being exposed to porn as earlier as 5 or 7.

Not the same porn

And porn, for my generation, is not a hidden magazine under your father's bed with images of half-naked women; or a video tape. Porn is just a click away, and broadly accessible.

What they will find when they search for sex

And what these kids of 5, 7 or 11 years old will find when they search for sex, because they heard about it somewhere and they are curious, is a website fueled with images of women being gang-raped, being tied up, choked, humiliated...

What they are learning + sex education

And what they are learning there is to sexualize violence. They are learning that sexuality and violence are indissociable, that women like to be humiliated and tortured, and that getting aroused by this is precisely what will make them a man. They are learning which roles they are expected to play as boys, or girls. The industry successfully placed pornography as the main sex education reference to my generation.

Culture and Power Dynamics in Context

We can't discuss prostitution without looking to the culture and the power dynamics of the context where any kind of policy will be applied, that's why I'm talking about porn. And as porn is now a globalized commodity, this is the context pretty much everywhere.

You already taught them to objectify/dehumanized

The core connection between youth, pornography and prostitution is that it is much easier to normalize the act of buying sexual access to someone else's body if you already taught them to objectify and dehumanized others from the beginning. You already taught them, through pornography and through sexual abuse (often the first sexual experience of many girls) that is perfectly fine if someone else is raped, tortured or abused if you call it sex. They have been desensitized already. They don't recognize the person being fucked as a real person.

Porn tells boys their roles, porn tells girls their worth

Pornography tells boys what sex is, and what they are expected to do to become men. Sexual abuse tells girls what they worth, what they are for, and that they have no

boundaries. That's how we are differently socialized to be potential sex buyers or potential prostitutes, as boys and girls.

Trafficking and Femaleness

According to the UN Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, women and girls are 70% of the trafficking victims, mostly for sexual exploitation purposes. Girls were 10% of the victims in 2004; they were 23% in 2018. And populations experiencing extreme poverty are especially vulnerable. Also, images and videos of child sexual abuse on the internet have literally grown 100% from 2008 to 2018. So, if you are female and poor, you are one step in. And if you are a full-grown woman who didn't "choose" prostitution, then trafficking is always there to make sure you might end up in prostitution anyway.

Porn and the new face of prostitution for youth

Pornography is also changing the face of prostitution for young people. For instance, the "sugar baby/sugar daddy" relationship is a well-known phenomenon among youth now. There are a huge number of websites on Google; and lots of channels on YouTube in every language targeting young people to teach them how to become sugar babies. An article published this year on the Mail Online, said that more than 1000 students in Cambridge University are recurring to "sugar daddies" to pay for their student loans.

This is not Brazil // Sex work activists PT

I was in college when I first met the "sex work" activists. They were always there. I bought into their discourse back then; "This is not Brazil", they used to say to me. They said street prostitution was rare in Portugal; some people like it and choose it; and a sex work contract meant rights; and prostitutes didn't need help, they were even into college!

Free choice, middle class prostitute and college fees

This image of a young, enlightened, academic prostitute fits best to the "free choice" discourse. But this is not the reality of most people in prostitution. If it is more common to find students in prostitution in Portugal than it is in Brazil, it's because college is expensive while there it's free, and it's probably pushing young people into prostitution. It is more likely that prostitution is the last resort for many students in order to afford their education.

Poverty + male chauvinism create prostitution

Poverty and male chauvinism create prostitution, and young people are coping with this as we are growing in a porn culture where prostitution is cool and precarity is rule.

Legal recognition offers no way out

Recognizing prostitution as a "job like any other" offers no way out. It doesn't prevent or reduce harm. The harm that have already been done by pornography and sex abuse; and the harm that is necessarily done when you are in prostitution. All it does is that it perpetuates a vicious cycle of state-legitimized sexual exploitation, disguised as a job.

I reject the Professionalization for rights

So as a woman, as a feminist, and a mother of a boy, I absolutely reject that the State offers me the professionalization of sexual violence against women as an alternative to have

access to our most basic human rights: housing, health, education, food and body sovereignty.

Proper political responses conditions + Real alternatives to exit the system + Criminalize the buyer/pimp

We demand proper political responses to address the conditions that make prostitution real: sexual violence, pornography, unemployment, homelessness, the lack of citizenship rights to migrants and refugees, lack of family policy, the privatization of education. We demand real alternatives to be offered to those women who want to exit the system of prostitution, and if we agree that it is violence, as stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, then we demand those who perpetuate it, whether as buyers, sellers or procurers, be held responsible and be re-educated about it.

No Pimping of youth

We won't accept the pimping and trafficking of youth as an alternative to have access to our human rights. Not in our name.