



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF THE GAP (GAY AIDS PREVENTION) NETWORK
1999-2000**

Agreement N. S12.84016 05F03 (99CVVF4-008-0)



***EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Programme of Community Action on the Prevention of
AIDS and certain other communicable diseases***

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SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT (AIMS, WORK CARRIED OUT, OBTAINED RESULTS)

The European Commission has supported a programme submitted by the GAP Network in 1999 and 2000. This programme aimed at:

- Implement a programme on the European level dealing with issues that could not be dealt on the national level alone or were difficult / cost ineffective to implement by local authorities. GAP has created and consolidated a Network between 15 organisations from different 12 countries, providing the opportunity to share expertise throughout Europe, since this expertise is forwarded also at the different national levels.
- Monitor the effects of the new therapies on prevention. The Network has closely monitor the ongoing research on the topic in order to take action when necessary. This information has been made accessible to GAP partners, and in its turn to other local organisations working either on general AIDS prevention or Health Promotion and HIV Prevention targeting MSM. The feared effect doesn't seem to appear in such a dramatic level as expected, but the perception of risk might change. Even if awareness is still quite high, less educated groups should be focused on.
- To stimulate exchange and collaboration. GAP has allowed us to change our approaches to prevention. Qualitatively and quantitatively the prevention work targeting MSM has visibly improved in Europe, there is more spontaneous collaboration in projects related to similar topics, information on projects and interventions is easily accessible and there is exchange of final products, contributing to European-wide messages related to MSM and HIV prevention. We're being witnesses of standardisation of HIV prevention for MSM throughout Europe
- To provide a clearing house, an on line overview of developed interventions and research and on line discussions to support exchange and collaboration. GAP has developed a site which facilitates the exchange of concepts, outlines and evaluation of projects on gay HIV prevention. This website www.mindthegap.org is constantly improving its accessibility so it can be a useful instrument and a reference for professionals, NGOs and volunteers in the field of HIV prevention. We've seen frustrated our goals on interactivity at the website, like test of projects on line, or chat sessions with experts on certain topics. This depends a lot on economical resources. This is a priority function for the GAP website, as most GAP partners reported. To date, the website has been useful for most GAP partners in terms of exchange of concepts, methods, evaluation, etc.
- The Newsletter "mind the GAP" has played a relevant role in the promotion of the GAP Network and the GAP website, making accessible the GAP information to those places or organisations where there was still no access to the world wide web, or where it is not frequently used. The distribution of the newsletter reaches also non-MSM oriented agencies,

which might facilitate global thinking and would guarantee that the MSM reality is being taken into account.

To stimulate monitoring research. GAP has seen that there are more and more studies concerning MSM, but comparisons remain difficult. GAP members have been making contacts with different researchers to this end and the Network interacted with the scientific community at the Amsterdam Conference in 2000, but somehow there has been a lack of response, or no commitment was made. We do not doubt however that researchers are aware of the importance of facilitate comparisons throughout Europe.

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