



Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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IN FOCUS :

Meetings and debates: Fighting trafficking. Who bothers to consult sex workers?

The safety and wellbeing of citizens should be and, in most cases, is of great concern to the majority of countries. Stopping the exploitation and trafficking of people is one of the issues that states have been trying to address. Unfortunately, the practice of using the terms "trafficking" and "prostitution" interchangeably affects the formulation of laws in a way that threatens the safety and wellbeing of citizens. Sex workers are still among those whose voices and experiences are ignored by the state officials and academicians, when a new law or national strategy is introduced. In this section, we share the news on how state agencies and NGOs try or fail to include sex workers in decision making and strategy development processes and how sex workers find a way to be heard in different parts of the world.

Australia: Salvation Army apologizes to sex workers



Scarlet Alliance, communicated to the Salvation Army that the ad is capitalising on community unease about sex work, and perpetuating discrimination and prejudice against sex workers. The ad also equates sex work with smuggling and put in jeopardy the relationship that Scarlet Alliances members have with the Salvation Army. She also pointed out that the ad takes advantage of a rare and dramatic situation that the Salvation

May 23, Australia -- In a lead up to its major Fundraising campaign, the Salvation Army of New South Wales Australia, launched an offensive add on May 22nd 2009. It read: "To get Rick out of prostitution, we had to resort to smuggling. This is the door that saved his life. When Rick left a message on a computer screen inside our Oasis van we had to act fast. Disguised as a client, we picked him up, took him to the airport and flew him interstate to one of our rehab centres, miles away from the heroin and hustling...Months later, Rick lives a new life, one of rehab and training. A diet of self-belief and hope has helped Rick build his confidence, and he walks through life, like everyone else. With our help, his wounds are starting to heal."

Army does not deal with normally, whereas the Scarlet Alliance and its membership do this work everyday. Since, the Salvation Army is not an organisation that specialises in sex worker support, Elena pointed out that they were collecting money under false pretences.

Not only did the Salvation Army apologize publicly at the press conference that was organised to launch the fundraising project, they also pulled the ad from the media outlets that were set to run it. The Scarlet Alliance was present at the press conference and used the opportunity to talk about anti-discrimination laws, stigma in advertising, and the fact that sex workers are not the cash-cow of cash-strapped organisations. The message that was sent loud and clear

was: It is not ok to use sex workers to raise funds!

Immediately reacting to this blatant capitalisation on stigmas associated with sex workers, the Scarlet Alliance (<http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/>) snapped into action and contacted the PR company handling the campaign. Elena Jeffrey, the President of



Video reportage is available on LIVE NEWS <http://livenews.com.au/multimedia/video/its-not-ok-to-use-sex-workers-for-sympathy/229>

SWAN newsletter is the voice of the Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network, a network of civil society organizations engaged in advocating the Human Rights of the sex workers in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Currently SWAN consists of 17 member-countries of the region. If you wish to learn more about SWAN activities, please visit WWW.SWANNET.ORG.

In this issue:

In Focus: Meetings and debates: Fighting trafficking. Who bothers to consult sex workers?

- Australia: Salvation Army apologizes to sex workers
- Hungary: Criminalize clients. Don't ask prostitutes
- Cambodia: MTV no EXIT campaign indirectly supports abusive anti-trafficking law
- OSI and partners organize anti-trafficking and sex worker rights meetings

News from SWAN Network

- Lithuania: popular TV show discusses sex work situation in the country
- Kyrgyzstan: sex workers get together to learn and unite
- Ukraine: LEGALIFE meets again
- Serbia: JAZAS drop-in center for sex workers introduces new fun activities
- Serbia: sex workers meet with theater actors in Belgrade
- Macedonia: sex workers can be good educators too!

Sex Workers' Advocacy School

- Documenting police brutality and misconduct

Sex Workers' Report

- Sweden: "We want to save you. And if you don't appreciate it, we will punish you!"

Calls and Announcements

IN FOCUS (continued):

April 30, 2009, Budapest -- Though prostitution has been legal in Hungary for 10 years anti-trafficking organizations in are pushing for the introduction of Swedish type of legislation, according to which the client commits a crime when buying sexual services from a prostitute.

MONA is an anti-trafficking organization which believes that all prostitutes are victims. This is why it talks about "victims of trafficking and prostitution" together and claims that "any act of prostitution is rape". In 2009 this organization has held two out of three planned meetings with Hungarian NGOs and officials. The two meetings were organized for NGO representatives and held separately from those for decision-makers, to present the results of a survey done in 7 European countries. The participants were also expected to discuss possible ways of cooperation in addressing trafficking and helping the "victims of trafficking and prostitution" and introduction of end-demand legislation. The third meeting is supposed to bring the results of the two previous meeting together.

The organizers of the first meeting, called "Development of interdisciplinary cooperation in Hungary to support the fight against trafficking in women, prostitution and violence against women", stated that they are aiming at looking at various experiences of working with "victims of trafficking and prosti-

tion". Indeed, they invited a variety of 15 organizations starting from a Baptist shelter, organization working on Roma issues, a health provision center for drug users, a national crisis and information hotline, IOM, representatives from an AIDS center and the anti-trafficking department of national police. HCLU/TASZ was also invited to the meeting as a human rights organization hosting an international Network of SWAN. No local sex workers were included into the participants list.

It was mentioned several times by the organizers at the meeting that there is a need to study the reasons women turn to prostitution. Yet, none of 10 000 prostitutes working in Hungary were asked to join the meeting. the organization representing interests of prostitutes in Hungary (MPEE) was not invited either. As the organizers pointed out, "their views on prostitution differed too much".

Nevertheless, SWAN/HCLU project coordinator, Aliya Rakhmetova, joined the meeting to give a short presentation of SWAN's disapproval of end-demand legislation and to stress that there should not be any confusion between provision of sex services and exploitation/trafficking. To make the Hungarian prostitutes' voices heard, a letter from MPEE was distributed to the participants at the meeting.

Besides introducing the idea to

**Hungary:
Criminalize clients.
Don't ask prostitutes**

end the demand on prostitution, another item on the agenda of the first meeting was a presentation of ARETUSA/ENATW report on "Implementing gender equality principles to combat trafficking and to prevent sexual exploitation of women and children" which was based on the interviews with politicians, health specialists, police and state officials in 7 European countries. (Read review of the report at <http://swannet.org/node/1522>).

Due to the time constrains, almost no time was left for discussion.

When HCLU contacted MONA to find out about the participants, time and place of the next meeting, organized for the decision-makers, the organizers refused to provide the information, explaining that the list of participants and the venue had not been finalized and that the results of that meeting would be available on MONA's website.

To read SWAN position on introducing Swedish end-demand legislation in Hungary go to

- http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/SWAN_statement_for_MONA_eng.pdf



Cambodia: MTV no EXIT campaign indirectly supports abusive anti-trafficking law

2009, Cambodia – Cambodian sex work activists are outraged at the way MTV is advocating for fight against trafficking at the expense of safety and rights of local sex workers.

MTV EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking) is a project of the MTV Europe Foundation - a London-based registered charity - to raise awareness and increase prevention of human trafficking and exploitation. The Foundation's mission - Free Your Mind - is to utilize and maximize the power of MTV Europe's network and brand to inform European youth, and adults, on critical social issues. As the MTV Asia site explains, "MTVEXIT is about freedom of movement. We're not trying to tell young people, 'Don't do this, don't do that.' The messages are 'Go out and live your dreams, do travel, do have ambitions, do improve your lives.' But make sure you do it with the right information. Our messages are about taking action to help put a stop to trafficking."

The MTV EXIT Asian-Pacific campaign is part of a two-year project

funded and produced in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), based on the same premise as the European version: exposing sex and labour trafficking, forced prostitution and forced domestic servitude in Asia and the Pacific and is comprised of two phases. The first phase was a 30-minute documentary, in which they interviewed trafficked women from Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. The second phase consists of a full blown concert series that kicked off in Cambodia in November 2008. EXIT's campaign manager, Matt Love, explains that "we chose Cambodia as a testing ground [for the concert series] because our documentary was received really well here."

In April 2008, the government of Cambodia passed an anti-trafficking bill which outlawed prostitution and classified all sex workers as a victim of trafficking. This bill was sponsored by USAID. The government's motivation behind the bill was to avoid being considered a tier 3 trafficking country, which would bar it from receiving millions of dollars in financial aid from the US government. Women accused of being prostitutes are illegally detained and sent to 'rehabilitation' centres where gross human rights violations are heaped upon their unlawful detention such as: deprivation of medical care, rape, torture and starvation. Detainees of the rehabilitation centres are 'taught' to sew and become sweatshop/garment factory workers, where 72 hour work-weeks are the norm and salaries are equivalent to 36 USD a month.

(continued on next page)

Through its association with USAID, MTV EXIT has placed itself in the middle of a battle waged by sex workers and garment workers for the right to work and the right to fair wages. Unfortunately, MTV EXIT through its concerts presented a message that potentially made the situation worse for Cambodian sex workers.



These measures only push sex work further underground which exposes sex workers to more danger and makes STI prevention campaigns much more difficult to carry out. The MTV EXIT campaign only reinforces the government's position within the public eye, adding to the marginalisation of sex workers.

By conflating prostitution with trafficking, prostitution is reduced to sex slavery and is painted as a degrading and abusive profession. Within this pattern of thought, prostitutes are not considered women with agency who have freely chosen their profession, but instead are considered victims in need of 'saving'. Critics have pointed out that the MTV EXIT campaign will be seen by audiences as reinforcing the Cambodian government's anti-trafficking law and agenda. Audiences seeing the documentary will not realise that sex work is being conflated with trafficking, taking the focus away from people who are actually trafficked and from the human rights violations that Cambodian prostitutes are subjected to.

While trafficking is hardly a simple issue, it is far more complex in Cambodia given the unholy alliance between USAID and the Cambodian government. While USAID seems solely concerned with trafficking, it ignores that equating sex work with sex slavery within the Cambodian legislation has worsened the conditions of sex workers and garment workers in Cambodia. While the European version of the EXIT film focused on support and help for trafficked women, the campaign in Asia and the Pacific ignores the plight of garment and sex workers whose rights are abused and violated because of Cambodia's absurd and counterproductive legislative initiatives of brothel raids, forced detention and totalitarian-style 'rehabilitation'.

Sex workers and garment workers actively campaigned against the MTV EXIT Asia-Pacific campaign, using No Exit as their slogan. In a meeting with MTV EXIT manager, WNU (Women's Network for Unity - <http://wnu.womynsagenda.org/>) and APNSW (Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers - <http://apnswdollhouse.wordpress.com/>) explained their concerns and received the assurance that MTV EXIT would work with sex worker organisations in the future and that future broadcasts would not contain messages that could make the plight of sex workers worse.

Watch No EXIT video done by sex workers here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsFBRFQYwJg>

For more info, check out MTV No Exit on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=39176319005>

Source:
DigiActive http://www.sexworkeurope.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=263
and The Phnom Penh Post
<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/>

December, 2008 – Two meetings were organized by SHARP/OSI in collaboration with the Program on Human Trafficking and Forced labor, CREA (Creating Resources of Empowerment in Action) and NSWP (Network of Sex Work Projects). While the first meeting brought together sex worker activists and experts on trafficking issues to discuss concerns of rights violations in the already implemented anti-trafficking approaches, the second meeting was dedicated to creating a space for a dialogue between donors, sex worker rights activ-

ists and anti-trafficking activists to discuss possibilities to support sex workers' rights within anti-trafficking framework.

The first meeting was hosted by SHARP and organized by Ann Jordan, from the Program on Human Trafficking and Forced Labor at American University's Center on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, brought together a dozen experts on trafficking and sex work for a briefing with Joy Ezeilo, the newly appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children.

Public Health Program
Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP)

OSI and partners organize anti-trafficking and sex worker rights meetings

Discussions focused on the impact of legal and regulatory frameworks relevant to trafficking and sex work, and how the conflation of prostitution and trafficking affects non-prostitution related anti-trafficking work. Given the concerns about rights violations in some existing anti-trafficking approaches, one recommendation was further research on effective, rights-based anti-trafficking strategies.

Donor-Activist Dialogue on Sex Work and Trafficking, which brought together 35 donors, researchers, anti-trafficking activists, and sex worker rights activists from around the world to exchange views and generate ideas on supporting sex worker rights within anti-trafficking frameworks. A summary of these meetings is available in the Sexuality Policy Watch newsletter.

Following this briefing, SHARP worked with Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA) and the Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) to organize a

Source: Open Society Institute website - http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/news/donordialogues_20081211%20

NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK



Lithuania: popular TV show discusses sex work situation in the country

May 4, 2009, Vilnius --- the analytical TV show „Balsas.lt“ which is broadcasted through TV3, one of the most popular commercial television channels in Lithuania, featured the sex work situation in Lithuania. Sex workers, police officers and MPs were interviewed.

„According to unofficial data there is a dozen of illegal firms dealing with prostitution in Vilnius alone. Their annual turnover reaches millions of Litas. According to the statistics, the economic recession is a very good time for sex industry. Sex workers perceive this and wish to be protected by law. Why do politicians ignore the existence of sex work business that has been flourishing in Lithuania for centuries? How often do politicians and prominent persons who publicly declare being Christian, finance sex industry by using the services of sex workers? Are famous names in sex worker clients lists just a myth?“, - says the annotation of the TV show.

While preparing this program the journalists conducted interviews with sex workers, police officers and several members of parliament. Sex workers were asked about the contingent of their clients and the response was that there are people famous in Lithuanian Society. The biggest emphasis was on the question "Is it voluntary or forced work" and almost all

girls said that they have chosen such work freely, that nobody forced them. They chose this way in order to take care of their families, children, etc.

Despite the fact that the topic of sex work topic was presented quite professionally, the main problems were outlined and proper terms were used, and the conclusions of the show were (indirectly) leaning towards the sex work liberalization approach, some activist working in the field of sex work weren't satisfied with the show.

"There was an ordinary attempt to make a sensation by disclosing politicians who use services of sex workers. The authors of the show promised to cover the faces of the girls interviewed but this wasn't done well. Every elections campaign is followed by reports about prostitution. I'd rather it focused more on the human rights dimension", - said a member of the I Can Live Coalition Svetlana Kulsis, who works in medical counseling and drop-in centre for sex workers.



Coalition I Can Live
Contact person: Erika Matuzaite, email: erika@pic.lt

Тайс Плюс



Kyrgyzstan: sex workers get together to learn and unite

May 15-16, 2009 – Sex workers participated in a seminar on empowerment and strategies to increase efficiency of

HIV prevention among sex workers of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan organized by Tais Plus, SWAN representative in Kyrgyzstan. But this was not the only goal of the meeting. Participants used the opportunity to discuss ways of uniting and creating a nationwide network of sex workers after having voted unanimously for the necessity to have such a network in Kyrgyzstan.

Sex workers from 8 cities and towns (Bishkek, Karakol, Balykchi, Tokmok, Kara Balta, Osh, Jalalabad and Kyzyl Kija) gathered together and proposed topics for the seminar which included sharing best practices and improvement of peer-education techniques. Regional health service organizations supported the idea of involving sex workers from different parts of the country.

Part of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of creating a sex workers' network in Kyrgyzstan. Sex workers learnt about other existing networks, their activities and about participation of Tais Plus in the work of international networks. Through a game, the participants could understand what network is and how it functions. Then they themselves developed plan of action for the future network and how the information will be disseminated within this network. There were many interesting suggestions and ideas.

At this meeting, the participants expressed the concern that it is difficult to solve some problems being



Serbia: JAZAS drop-in center for sex workers introduces new fun activities

Since the beginning of 2009, the drop-in center for sex workers, which is run by JAZAS, SWAN member from Serbia, has successfully introduced new activities.

Since the New Year, there has been a significant increase in sex workers who visit the drop-in center. This increase in visits has enabled JAZAS to put to fruition new programs, such as English and Italian language lessons and fitness. These language courses are aimed at providing sex workers with conversational language skills and they also serve to create an atmosphere of learning and cohesion.

During fitness lessons, sex workers have the opportunity to work on flexibility, muscle tone and weight loss, but also learn about the importance of physical fitness, how to stay in shape and how to keep healthy.

Also, the drop-in center visitors have started working on ideas about their own community newsletter. So keep your eyes open for the coming issue!

JASAZ and Educational Center JAZAS
Contact person: Stasa Plecas, email: ecjazas@gmail.com

isolated and alone. United efforts would have more power in addressing sex work issues in the country.

Naturally, it will take time and effort to organize and officially register the network. Right now the participants are developing the mission of the future network and are very enthusiastic about the idea of uniting and getting new exciting experience.

Tais Plus, Contact person: Shahnaz Islamova, email: taisplus@gmail.com

NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK (continued)

Ukraine: LEGALIFE meets again

May 26-27, 2009, Kiev – Sex workers initiative group "League LEGALIFE" got together with the support of UHRA, SWAN representative in Ukraine, and International AIDS/HIV Alliance in

Ukraine. Representatives of five major regions of Ukraine met in Kiev to discuss the perspectives of the League, its further development, strategic plans and potential problems.

With the help of a consultant from UHRA, the League's initiative group identified several strategic directions among which are:

- Mobilization of sex work community,
- Prevention of HIV, STI, TB and substance dependence among sex workers,
- Rehabilitation and re-socialization of women victims of violence (sex workers, victims of domestic violence)
- Prevention of involvement of minors in sex work,
- Protection of rights of sex workers who became victims of trafficking,
- Organizational development of the League

The League is planning to create and further strengthen local sex worker groups, raise legal literacy among sex workers, develop skills of safe sexual services, ensure access to medical services, including HIV, TB and STI testing, create crisis centers for women victims of violence, increase awareness among students and minors, develop partnership with other organizations, develop skills on NGO management and fund-raising, create a more tolerant attitude in the society towards sex workers.



Currently the League is applying for official registration of their initiative group.

To learn more about the League LEGALIFE please contact Irina Mishina (uhra-mishina@ukr.net) and Elena Tsukerman (vantala@ukr.net)

Serbia: sex workers meet with theater actors in Belgrade



Recently JAZAS' self-support group facilitators and 6 sex workers went to the theater in April to watch the play "Suma blista" (Wondrous forest) which touches upon issues of trafficking and prostitution. The daughter of one of the facilitators acts in the play, and they thought it would be a great idea to arrange for sex workers to come and see the play.

The play was very emotional, and the sex workers mentioned that they identified with several scenes. The story takes place in a roadside bar. A waitress, who had fallen in love with an older man, finds herself in an abusive relationship with him. The sex workers identified with this, as they had found themselves in situations in which the person they trust and love is abusive and violent towards them.

Further on in the storyline, a group of girls show up at the bar, with a man who is supposed to take them across the border through the forest. The sex workers identified with this quest for a better life, sometimes this better life is imagined somewhere else, where they think there are more liberal policies towards them and where they could work legally without fear. In some of the scenes

May 20-24, 2009, Skopje – 13 sex workers from 3 cities met for a peer-assist training organized by H.E.R.A. and HOPS, SWAN member in Macedonia, and supported by UNFPA-Macedonia.

Sex workers were invited to a training on peer education and outreach work principles lead by local outreach experts as well as by a guest trainers from the Netherlands. According to the participants, the training was great, they learnt a lot of useful strategies of peer-work and cooperation, the trainers were simply marvelous and "these 5 day will be unforgettable for some sex workers"!

Besides sharing methodology and tips on educating peers on prevention, this meeting gave space to the STAR members to present the mission and activities of this initiative group as well as their next issue of STAR Newsletter. In addition to this, discussion touched on the need to stay connected and united and on problems and issues around sex work and health in Macedonia and the Netherlands.

Learning activities were proportionally mixed with team building and other fun tasks, which created a friendly atmosphere and helped the participants develop professional relationship with each other which they hope to keep after they return to their cities. There is a high probability that the STAR will expand in number.

It should be noted that for some of the participating sex workers such a training and meeting with peers was a new positive experience and all the participants left for home enthusiastic and in high spirits. HOPS is planning to build up on the newly created team and further involve sex workers in helping to design and implement some of the projects.

HOPS, Contact person: Marija Tosheva, HOPS, email: marijat@hops.org.mk
Contact STAR, email: sexworkers_mk@yahoo.com



Macedonia: sex workers can be good educators too!

the girls waiting to be taken across the border are fighting, in others they stick together as friends and colleagues; this type of bickering and sticking together is something that sex workers experience daily, however, at the end of the day they are like a family.

This was the first time that JAZAS organized an activity outside of the drop-in center. This was also the first time for most of the sex workers to go to see a play. After the play, the group was invited to the theater café where they spent time with the actors from the play.

This was a very important outing, as the sex workers felt like equal citizens who got an opportunity to be part of a cultural event and to feel accepted. Some of the SW shared with group facilitators that this was one of the most exciting days in their life.

JAZAS intends to plan events like this more regularly in the future.

To watch parts of "Suma blista" go to <http://fr.truveo.com/Suma-blista-3/id/3966496543>

JASAZ and Educational Center JAZAS
Contact person: Stasa Plecas, email: ecjazas@gmail.com

SEX WORKERS' ADVOCACY SCHOOL



In this issue we will talk about what is police brutality and misconduct and how some groups fight it with the help of simple use of mobile camera.

Documenting police brutality and misconduct

By Aliya Rakhmetova and Arielle Reid

The task of enforcing the law and keeping peace and order on the streets is a difficult and honorable task. It is also a big responsibility, because the officer when wearing his or her uniform represents the law and the state and every his/her move and word is official. In fact in all countries police has a set of standard procedures of what phrases to say and what steps to do when arresting a person. The task of a police officer is to stop the suspect and to deliver him/her to the judge and never it is the responsibility of the police to actually judge and punish the suspect in one way or the other.

In this article we do not state that all the police officers are brutal and bad. On the contrary, we advise civil society to help the Ministries of Interior to clean up their ranks and to filter out persons who are not suitable to serve the society.

In this column, SWAN News publishes articles that can help sex workers rights advocates in their daily work: how to challenge the myths surrounding sex work, how to fight abolitionists, how to work with media, communicate, create an effective message and get it across.

What is police brutality and misconduct?

Sadly, sex workers, drug users, physically challenged people, representatives of LGBTQ and ethnic minorities become objects of violence and brutal treatment more often than other members of the same society in every country. And such treatment can sometimes come from the law enforcement units, the very people who actually gave a pledge to promote peace and order in the country and to protect its citizens.

In simple terms, police brutality is the intentional use of excessive force, usually physical, but potentially also in the form of verbal attacks and psychological intimidation, by a police officer. It is one of several forms of police misconduct.

Police misconduct is a broader term and it includes:

- false arrest,
- intimidation,
- racial profiling,
- political repression,
- surveillance abuse,
- sexual abuse,
- police corruption.



Why document it?



There are many situations when exposing a video camera, or even a small photographic one, may be enough to change the situation to worse and put yourself and the abused person in graver danger. In these cases you may want to just turn to something as simple as a mobile. Using mobile phones is easy and most of the phones now are equipped with small cameras with which you can take short videos or pictures.

Use your camera to make a difference in this world.

- Your video evidence can help prove that this particular officer is guilty
- Your video evidence can start a public discussion of police behavior in your country
- Your video evidence can help prevent abuse by this same officer in future
- Your video evidence can help to finally stop police brutality in your country

Case study 1: Year 1991. Rodney Glen King (born April 2, 1965 in Sacramento, California) is a Black American who, on March 3, 1991, was the victim in an excessive force case committed by Los Angeles police officers. A bystander, George Holliday, videotaped much of the incident from a distance.

The footage showed LAPD officers repeatedly striking King with their batons. A portion of this footage was aired by news agencies around the world, causing public outrage that raised tensions between the black community and the LAPD and increased anger over police brutality and issues such as unemployment, racial tension, poverty, and numerous other social inequalities in the black/African-American community.

The jury found Officer Laurence Powell and Sergeant Stacey Koon guilty, who were subsequently sentenced to 30 months in prison, while Timothy Wind and Theodore Briseno were acquitted of all charges. (read more on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodney_King).

Case study 2: Year 2009. At approximately 2:15 AM on New Year's Day, Oscar Grant, a young, unarmed black man was shot by police officers while laying face-down on a BART subway platform in Oakland, California. This is one of the many videos that are circulating online about the incident. The videos document Grant being restrained, laying face-down on the platform and with two officers restraining him - one with his knee on the back of Grant's neck. Within seconds, the second officer restraining Grant rises to his feet, unholsters his gun and fires one shot into Grant's back. Grant died seven hours later in a nearby hospital. (report on WITNESS <http://hub.witness.org/en/node/11825>)

The shooting spawned public outrage and a string of protests that led to more than 100 riot-related arrests.

Currently former BART police Officer Johannes Mehserle is supposed to stand trial for murder in the New Year's Day shooting death of an unarmed man, as Alameda County judge ruled several days ago. The case is not closed yet. Video update on the Grant case is at http://current.com/items/90080125_bart-shooting-case-centers-on-video-footage.htm



What do you do with the video?

SEX WORKERS' ADVOCACY SCHOOL (continued):

- Pass the video to the person who had been abused so that he or she can use it as evidence in court,
- upload it to one of the websites or blogs dedicated to fighting police misconduct,
- pass a copy of the video to media and make this incident visible to whole society.

Various community groups have criticized police brutality.

These groups

often stress the need for oversight by independent citizen review boards and other methods of ensuring accountability for police action. Tools used by these groups include video recordings, which are sometimes broadcast using websites such as YouTube.

Copwatch (www.copwatch.org) is a U.S.-based network of organizations that actively monitors and videotapes the police to prevent police brutality. Umbrella organizations and justice committees (often named after a deceased individual or those victimized by police violence) usually engage in a solidarity of those affected.

Communities United Against Police Brutality (www.cuapb.org) - This organization was created to deal with police brutality on an ongoing basis. We work on the day-to-day abuses as well as taking on the more extreme cases. We work to combat police brutality from many angles, including political and legislative action, education, research, and providing services and support for victims and their families.

Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org) is another organization active in the issue of police brutality.

WITNESS (www.witness.org) - is a United-States-based organization that uses the power of visual presentation to open the eyes of the world to human rights abuses in an effort to "catalyze grassroots activism, political engagement, and lasting change". The organization has developed a Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism which walks you through all stages of video making, from the strategy and preparation to advocacy and distribution of your video. (Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and Russian (available for free download on the WITNESS website).

News portals sometimes create sections dedicate to state injustice. For example a Russian news portal "**Novaja Gazeta**" (www.novayagazeta.ru) provides coverage of police misconduct in Russia.

The Observers (<http://observers.france24.com>), France, is another news portal that highlights cases of police brutality across the globe and provides coverage and update of the story TV journalists hold investigations to expose corruption and use the video to start a public debate.

See a reportage (http://tsn.ua/ua/bin/video.php?media_id=119818§ion_id=7&subtype_id=4&subtype=tsnnews%20) on Ukrainian police caught pimping sex workers in the street.

How do you film it?



If you are witnessing a case of police brutality or misconduct and you wish to document it, here are some tips on how to make a good video and how to avoid getting in trouble for what you do. It is important to note that taking videos or pictures in public is legal, as long you are on public property. Stay a safe distance away from the intervention so as to protect yourself and to make it possible for you to record what is happening without getting in the middle of an arrest or incident. When you observe police remember that you don't want to make the cop more nervous than they already are. Keep your hands visible at all times. Don't approach an officer from behind or stand behind them. Don't make any sudden movements or raise your voice to the cop. Try to keep the situation calm. You don't want to get the person in more trouble. If an officer tells you to step back, tell the officer that YOU DO NOT WANT TO INTERFERE, YOU SIMPLY WISH TO OBSERVE.

The experience of Copwatch could be useful in our case:

- Be polite to everyone you meet including the police. Don't insult or incite them. This is counterproductive.
- Don't carry anything illegal or give cops an opportunity to bust you for something unrelated to you documenting a police intervention.
- If a stop escalates into unnecessary use of force use whatever tools at your disposal to record and document the situation.
- Try to be helpful to the citizen being stopped without making his/her situation worse. The goal is to defuse the incidents of harassment and violence, not escalate them.

Here are some other pieces of advice on the ways of filming. For instance, **Guerrilla Documenting website** (<http://www.brighthub.com/multimedia/video/articles/13362.aspx>) suggests taking

snap shots with your mobile phone camera if the situation does not allow to use a professional video camera. If you are filming with your mobile, the best way to keep unnoticed will be to pretend that you are typing a text message or dialing a phone number. To do this you need to keep it below head level, but try and make it as vertical as possible to retain directness of images. If people become aware of you and your phone you can easily make it look as though you were preparing for a phone call. With more technically advanced mobile phones, it is possible to make audio recording, this can be great if you cannot bring out your phone at all. With this you can set it to record and have it act as an audio device. It is not as good as having video or photos, but it is some form of documentation.

Remember to immediately send your captured media to someone else, preserving it if anything happens to you or your phone.

One African filmmaker (<http://mobileactive.org/african-film-makers-censorship-and-mobile-phones>) found a creative way around government restrictions and censorship on filming in Congo to avoid exposure of corruption, abuse and poverty in the region. He tied his cell phone to a toy car, set it to recording and gave the toy car to a girl to pull it behind her by a string as she walked along the streets of the town.



What if you are the object of police brutality?

SWAN news published some ideas on urgent actions to police abuse: read **Documenting Police Abuse** (<http://swannet.org/node/905>).

Communities United Against Police Brutality suggest the following:

1. If you are being arrested, try your best to remain calm. Do not make sudden movements or pull back. If not handcuffed, keep your hands visible and away from pockets. State clearly and repeatedly "I am not resisting arrest."
 2. Do your best to get police officer names, badge numbers, and squad car numbers. If necessary, shout them out and have someone else write them down. If anyone is ticketed or arrested, at least some of this info will be on the ticket and/or police report.
 3. Get names and phone numbers of all witnesses.
 4. If you are injured, get health care right away. State to the caregiver that your injuries were caused by police and be certain that it is noted in your medical record. Take a copy of your medical record with you when you leave the health care facility.
 5. Have your injuries photographed immediately, using good quality color film. If a health care facility takes pictures, take a copy of the pictures with you or, better yet, have them take pictures with your camera and take it with you when you leave.
 6. Sit down right away and write down every detail about your incident. Call and ask all witnesses to do the same. Collect the statements from the witnesses.
 7. If your incident involves anything more than police officer rudeness, see a lawyer before reporting to Civilian Review Authority or Internal Affairs Division. Do not share any evidence such as videotapes or witness statements with above mentioned divisions without advice of a lawyer.
 8. As soon after the incident as possible, go to the police department and request copies of all police reports.
- In addition, **Street medics** (http://medic.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page), or action medics, provide some tips on how to make a better picture if you are documenting injuries:

How to photograph injuries

Even the marks of severe injuries can disappear quickly. Generally, the darker your skin is the less your injuries will show up on film, and the more important it is to follow these guidelines.

- The better your camera and film is, the better your pictures will turn out. A regular 35mm camera is better than a disposable one, but if that's all you have, don't wait to get a 35mm before you start taking pictures.
- The first picture should be of your whole body. After that, the photographer should get close to the injury, taking pictures as they're getting closer to it. This proves that you're the injured person in the pictures, and you don't just have close-up pictures of someone else's bruised arms.
- Take pictures as close as possible to the injury to show the most detail. Be aware of the limitations of your camera – it'll get fuzzy the closer you get, especially if it's a disposable camera. The label on your disposable camera should tell you how close you can take pictures with it. For regular cameras, the best distance varies with your equipment, but three feet is a safe distance.
- If it's a small injury, it's even more important to get a good photograph of it. Try taking pictures of it from different angles, with different light (direct sunlight, indirect lighting, etc.).
- Be careful not to use a flash when taking a close-in picture. Flashes, bright light and spotlights right on the injury tend to reflect off the skin.

- If it's a big injury, put a ruler next to it in one of the pictures to show how big it is (but make sure you take some pictures without the ruler, to show you aren't hiding anything). If you don't have a ruler, use something with a standard size, like a dollar bill.
- Don't rely on any one picture to show your injury. You should take at least six pictures of any one injury.
- Right after the incident, take a full roll of pictures of all your injuries.
- Keep taking pictures every day or every other day to show how they change. For example, bruises can take a few days to fully darken.
- Keep taking at least six pictures of each injury.
- Keep a diary of who took the pictures and when you took them, so you know that photo #22 is from the sixth day after you were attacked and your mom took the picture.
- You should have a blank wall behind you in the pictures – no clutter or personal items in the background.
- Don't smile or frown in your pictures. Try to have a neutral expression. Also, don't flex your muscles or pose more than you have to show your injury.
- Do the same for every injury you have.

- The good news is that doctor's testimony is given a lot of weight by the courts and by the press, and having a doctor's report on your injuries, especially ones you can't see, can really help your case.
- Go to a doctor you can trust as soon as possible. If you can't afford to pay for one, check the phonebook for clinics where you can get treatment for free.
- A lot of injuries disappear quickly and are hard to see – like the marks handcuffs leave when they're put on too tight. When you go to a hospital (and if you feel safe), tell every nurse, technician, and doctor who looks at you about each of your injuries (including less severe ones) and how you got them.
- It's important, especially in a free clinic, not to let doctors or medics rush you so that you can't tell them about each of your injuries and how you got them. Ask them to write down your injuries in detail, especially injuries you can't take pictures of, like sprains, strains, and things like broken noses or ribs.
- Doctors see injuries all the time, and might not remember yours if they don't document them on the spot.

Talking to doctors to document injuries

- If the doctor recommends follow up treatment or appointments, it's important to

go. This will give you more credibility and let the doctors keep documenting your injuries.

- Hold onto any forms you get from anyone at the hospital/clinic.

Warning

It can be risky going to a hospital right after you're injured by the police. Emergency room workers sometimes call the police when people come in looking like they've been in a fight – especially if they're poor or of color.

However, there are steps you can take to keep yourself safe. For example, you can go to a doctor you have a relationship with, or be dressed up nice when you go. Of course, if it's a potentially life-threatening injury, consider taking the risk of going to the closest hospital immediately. If you've already been cited and released or gone to jail and been released, you don't risk as much by going to a hospital and telling them exactly what happened to you.



SEX WORKERS REPORT



Pye: My name is Pye Jacobsson, I'm a sex worker since twenty one years. I'm also a sex worker activist for fifteen years.

Nothing about us without us is a message repeated more often than ever before by sex workers around the world. This column in the SWAN News provides an opportunity for sex workers to express their opinions, tell us about their lives, problems and dreams. Contributions are welcome: write to sexwork@tasz.hu

Sweden: "We want to save you. And if you don't appreciate it, we will punish you!"

In this issue of SWAN News we present a video (<http://swannet.org/node/1512>) interview with a Swedish sex worker and activist Pye Jacobsson about the legislation around prostitution and its impact on sex workers' lives in Sweden.

What is more politically correct: 'prostitution' or 'sex work'?

Pye: Politically correct in my opinion is 'sex work'. First of all because sex work is an inclusive term, it includes everybody in the sex industry, and I don't like exclusive terms. Because some people working as prostitutes will identify as prostitutes, some people only working with domination stuff will identify as something else, women working indoors will identify as escorts, there are so many words.

Is sex work a free choice?

Pye: Everything comes back to radical feminism, you know? In every country you have radical feminists, in Sweden radical feminism is the norm, and if you really go way back in radical feminism, they say that any penetration is like rape.

Now it actually says, in the context of the law, it says that no prostitution is prostitution out of free will. It means that everybody is a victim. If you scream and shout that you're not a victim you are suffering from a false consciousness. And if you try to convince them that you're not even suffering from a false consciousness, they will say: 'Well you're not representative.' And the fact is that I'm very representative. I'm middle aged, Swedish, working indoors, which is a very typical Swedish sex worker.

And the fact of the matter is that most people in the sex industry chose it for whatever reason. It maybe suits their purposes, their way of living, or the money, or for whatever reason. And then you will also get, especially here in Sweden, people will challenge you and say: 'so what's a free choice?' Yeah, but ask someone working as an assistant in a hospital, working with old people, cleaning the faeces the whole day, if that was a free choice. She probably wanted to pay her rent. There are a lot of occupations that we take because we need to survive.

What does the Swedish law say on sex work?

Pye: The law says that its illegal to purchase, or get oneself, a temporary sexual service. There are several problems with the law that they had to correct, because first of all, what's a temporary sexual service? Because many people working have regular clients. Some people have clients they've been having for twenty years. They outlasted several marriages. So what's temporary? But then they decided each

time you pay is a temporary time.

And then they had to decide what's a sexual service, and they had some problems with that also, because they wanted to include private posing, and strip tease, and porn films, but they couldn't, so in the end they decided that if one person touched the other persons genitals.

And then its also in exchange for something, which could be money, which could also be drugs, of course, and because alcohol is considered a drug it is also in exchange for alcohol. Which means that basically every one night stand in Stockholm is probably a crime, if you would look at it that way.

So the whole concept of the law is very very weird. I mean its not very functional. When they sent the proposition for the law out on consultation, ninety eight out of a hundred came back and said no. Especially from the legal system, because they said that this law is going to be completely impossible to implement. We are not going to be able to use it. But they didn't care, they just went ahead anyway.

And if you are accused of this law and sentenced, you will get a fine, or up to six months in jail. Which is the same as for petty theft, like going to the grocery store and stealing chocolate.

What is the impact of the Swedish legislation?

Pye: Well for most people I know, you know like me, between thirty and forty, indoor workers, Swedish, the law has been good in some ways. Because we can charge more, because the clients feel they are more safe if they go to Swedish workers than foreign workers. But the stereotype of sex workers is even worse, and suddenly because the whole Swedish population is so aware of that, all people --well women, because we only talk about women even though there are loads of men selling sex-- all women in sex work are victims.

So now if they suspect that a neighbor is selling sex, they will, like good citizens just call the police and tell them about it. Which means that the woman will lose her apartment, because the landlord is obliged to throw her out, otherwise he will get charged with pimping. So, and also there are numbers of cases where sex workers --and I'm not even talking about, you know, people working in prostitution, but also women working in strip tease or in porn films, they lost their kids, because they are unfit mothers. Not because they are sex workers, but because they are sex workers that don't understand the 'need to stop'.



SEX WORKERS REPORT (continued):

Sweden: "We want to save you. And if you don't appreciate it, we will punish you!"



So you are a victim until you say that this is not a problem for me, and if you insist on working, and insist on continuing doing this, then you are 'bad' and will be punished. 'We want to save you, you don't understand, we want to save you, and if you don't appreciate it you will be punished one way or another.'

We have a very weird pimping law, there are cases with grown up children, that have been accused of pimping because they have been living for free, while studying, with their mother. And also if two women chose to work together in an apartment, even if one is not taking money from the other, just the fact that one doesn't have to pay the rent all by herself, they will be charged of pimping each other. Which means that women are now working alone. Which is of course more unsafe.

The more stereotyped you are, the more dehumanized you are. Very much the same as when it comes to drugs. The whole concept of drug use in Sweden is really dehumanized. You are like an evil person, potentially that will steal everything your family owns. And with sex work, its as stereotyped. Which means that for the clients you are also less of a person. So therefore you can be treated like a non-human, so of course you become more vulnerable.

Especially for the women in the street this has been very very bad because before they had this classic thing, hanging into the car window, having the discussion 'this is what I'm willing to sell, this is what I'm willing to do', they don't have that time anymore because their clients are so jumpy, so they have to get into the car, drive off, and then negotiate. And then they are already in the car. Also, the good clients, which means the safe clients, the non-dangerous clients, they think --which is true-- the risk of getting caught is bigger in the streets, which means that they turn in to indoor workers, even if they prefer buying sex from outdoor workers. Which left the outdoor workers with the bad clients, the dangerous clients, which they before had the opportunity to turn down, but now they can't afford to because many of the good clients are gone.

In the sex industry there are people that are being abused, that are suffering, that are trafficking victims etc. But the normal way for the police to find out is not from sex workers, its from clients. Because there are clients who are actually not assholes, they will say 'this doesn't look good', they will call the police. And of course now they don't call the police anymore, because if they call the police they will be accused of a crime.

Did the law reduce sex work since 1999?

Pye: Well if you talk with the police they won't say that it really reduced it because there are no numbers prior to the law. The only numbers they have are based on street prostitution, and street prostitution in Sweden, the numbers have always been very low, because its cold, okay? We don't want to stand in the street.

Even United Nations CEDAW Committee asked Sweden to evaluate the law, and Sweden didn't do it. Now they are doing an evaluation, but only to see how they can make the law more effective.

The politicians in Sweden have decided, sex work is a social problem. But yet they try to solve it with a criminal law, and they did not give any money to social resources. So they say they want to have, well women because its a gender neutral law but we still only talk about women, they want to have women out of prostitution, yet they offer them nothing. No exit programs, no specially trained social workers, they are not interested to have any contact with political sex workers. Because Sweden's always had this self proclaimed thing of being the perfect society, but there are two groups who really prove that in their world its not perfect: drug users and sex workers. So lets hide them!

And even in the European Parliament, they did first this declaration on children's rights, that children should always be consulted in matters that concern them, on an international, national, and local level. All the politicians in Sweden were like: 'fantastic, good, of course' and signed onto it. So they did the same thing with sex workers. You know, sex workers should always be consulted in matters that concern them, on an international, national, and local level. And all our politicians in the European Parliament voted against it. Our minister of justice said in Parliament: 'that's against everything that Sweden stands for.' Which means that our opinions are less valued than the opinions of children. Which kind of says it.

Credits:

SWAN

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Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

2009

Interviewer: Peter Sarosi

Filmed and edited by: Istvan Gabor Takacs

Music: Antony Rajekov - When Waves Trying to Catch a Marvel

Filmed in Stockholm, at the Swedish Drug Users Union in January 2009

CALLS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

New format of SHARP's newsletter

SHARP is pleased to present its updated newsletter format. The newsletter will be released quarterly and will focus on SHARP's activities and grantees. To subscribe to our newsletter, please visit: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/newsletter>.

ISHR has just re-edited its Simple Guide to the Treaty Bodies. The updated edition can be downloaded here (<http://ishr.list-manage.com/track/click?u=97549cf8cb507607389fe76eb&id=92ec35b154&e=39fa8f9f41>).

The Simple Guide contains information that defenders may find useful, such as the relationship between the treaty bodies and other international human rights mechanisms, relevant developments re-

lated to the harmonisation of the working methods of the treaty bodies, and a glossary and e-resources for further reference.

The latest edition of the Simple Guide has been updated to include the first meeting of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in February 2009 and the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



STAR newsletter Issue 6 is now available

Macedonian group of sex workers STAR has developed the 6th issue of their community newsletter. In this issue: a story of a prostitute, sex work and economic crisis, peer-training in Skopje, basic human rights, and more! Download Issue 6 in Macedonian here (http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/STAR_odnazanas6.pdf) . Download previous Issue here (http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/STAR_issue_5.pdf) .

Recruitment for five delegates to the UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation

PCB NGO Delegates represent the perspectives of civil society, including people living with HIV, within UNAIDS policies and programming. NGO delegates actively seek input from their respective communities on key issues related to UNAIDS policies and programs, and advocate with members states (governments) and cosponsoring organisations (the United Nations organisations that make up the UN-AIDS 'family') for meaningful improvements in the implementation and evaluation of AIDS policies and programmes. More.. <http://swannet.org/node/1506>

Give the women of Europe the right to free abortion!



All around the world, women are denied their right to free, legal and safe abortions. Even in Europe, women are deprived of the control over their own bodies and the number and spacing of children. It is the everyday reality facing women in Ireland, Poland and Malta. Nowhere in the world should a woman be forced to use a hanger, eat washing powder or see a quacksalver to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, when safe abortion methods are available. A cornerstone of the European Union is to work for gender equality and health. Therefore, women who lack the access to free, legal and safe abortions in the EU-countries such as Ireland, Malta and Poland, can no longer be ignored. The governments of these countries must be put under pressure. It is time for the EU to secure the right to free, safe and legal abortions and render it a human right. Liberal Women of Sweden, headed by Birgitta Ohlsson, member of the Swedish Parliament (Liberal Party) is hereby initiating a petition for Europe's women's right to free, legal and safe abortions - Make Noise for Free Choice. Read more and send a letter of support (on <http://swannet.org/node/1507>).

STELLA' latest issue of ConStellation magazine is now available

Here is the latest ConStellation magazine. More than 80 interviews have been done in the sex industry, months of research before printing this really really amazing issue! As you'll see, the articles are not all online, they have been censured for the general public. But the publishers will send you a PDF version of it with all the texts included, if you ask them directly. Read English version [here \(http://www.chezstella.org/stella/?q=en/constellation2009\)](http://www.chezstella.org/stella/?q=en/constellation2009).

Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN – www.swannet.org) is looking for partners in Poland and Azerbaijan. We invite civil society organizations who work with sex workers to learn more about SWAN and it's founding principles (<http://swannet.org/principles>) and send their letters of interest to SWAN@TASZ.HU not later than July 20, 2009.

SWAN is expanding the network



Participate in sex workers art exhibition!

Asian Pacific Network of Sex Work plans to organize a Sex Worker Art Exhibition called 'The face of sex work'. This will be a space for visual art. The organizers plan to set up a multi-media exhibition where sex workers messages on HIV and Human rights issues are presented directly from our communities to conference goers in an unmediated format- the Sex workers speaking for themselves. This will allow non English speaking sex workers to present their issues through art and performance and communicate sex workers issues and ideas.

This exhibition will include film, multi-media, interactive/online pieces, photography visual arts, installation and performances. APNSW would love to collect and curate the material and will produce original multi-media artwork that links the pieces together. Also we can try to webcast some of the performances and work to have interactive sessions with sex workers who are unable to attend the conference via webcam.

Anyone who already have materials which you think will fit in this exhibition or anything you think should be included in it, please contact Dale at kongmont@gmail.com, skype: ckongmont or facebook: payu pinn [an activist beagle]. Also any suggestions & comments or other ideas would be welcome.

To read International news please visit SWAN website at <http://swannet.org/en/taxonomy/term/2>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“In a society governed by laws and not individuals, no one should be above the law. This includes the police.”

– From the website of Communities United Against Police Brutality.

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Public Health Program
Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP)

Public Health Program
Health Media