



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

SWAN NEWS, Issue 25, 2009

IN FOCUS: Conferences and Events Calendar

Summer is not only a season for vacation, but also a time to take stock of the events since January and to plan for the months ahead. In this issue we provide a review of the upcoming conferences and events so that you can apply and plan for fund raising in advance.

SWAN team apologizes for the delay of this issue. We hope you will enjoy it and look forward to the next one which is coming soon.

XVIII International AIDS Conference (IAC 2010)



It will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 18 to 23 July 2010. The organizers believe that this conference will be an important event as it coincides with "the deadline by which world leaders have committed to ensuring universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support". This conference will give an opportunity to analyse and discuss what has been achieved and what still needs to be done to achieve the goals. The conference plans to have about 25,000 participants and 2,500 media in attendance. The topics covered by the conference are divided between six program tracks.

Apart from the main program satellite meeting will take place in the conference venue together with exhibitions by AIDS service organizations, non-commercial organizations and NGOs in the Global Village.

The conference secretariat is looking for 1,500 to 2,000 local, dedi-

cated volunteers from Vienna and the surrounding region to help at the XVIII International AIDS Conference. Volunteers will help to coordinate the conference and other related programme activities by assisting with registration and material handling; act as guides during the conference; staff various offices; help in the Speaker and Media Centres and perform other crucial tasks.

Sex workers had a great representation in the previous AIDS Conference in 2008 which took place in Mexico-City, Mexico. It was also the time when the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW) received the 2008 international Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, the award, which recognizes outstanding individuals and organisations that protect the rights and dignity of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. You can read the report about the 2008 AIDS Conference in SWAN News, Issue 20 (<http://swannet.org/node/1137>).

Read about application details and deadlines on AIDS Conference official website in English and Russian. <http://www.aids2010.org/>

- Track A:** Basic Science
- Track B:** Clinical Sciences
- Track C:** Epidemiology and Prevention Sciences
- Track D:** Psycho-social and Behavioral Sciences
- Track E:** Economics, Operations Research, Care and Health Systems
- Track F:** Policy, Law, Human Rights and Political Science

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.

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Calls and Announcements

The International Harm Reduction Conference



The conference theme for 2010 is 'Harm Reduction: The Next Generation' and will be held in Liverpool, England from the 25th to the 29th of April. More

The last two and a half decades of harm reduction experience has generated much evidence on how effective and possible it is in a wide variety of social and cultural settings. This conference will focus on addressing new challenges as harm reduction enters its 30th year. How adequate are the models of harm reduction that have been developed? Is the 'comprehensive package' of harm reduction for HIV sustainable in low and middle income countries? How can we expand harm reduction to cater for all psychoactive drugs? When we 'scale-up' harm reduction, should we just replicate and expand pilots and projects or work to integrate harm reduction into health systems? How does harm reduction intersect with, and change, drug control systems? What new opportunities are there for harm reduction in terms of human rights, security, development and other sectors?

Why do sex workers participate in a harm reduction conference? There is an ongoing debate whether it is appropriate use the term "harm reduction" in the context of sex work and what will be the connecting points with harm reduction in drug use. In short, sex work is not harmful by itself. It is stigma and injustice that surround sex work that bring harm and violations of rights. In this sense there is a common issue of ignored voices and experiences of marginalized communities and systematic human rights abuses. These are the issues which sex worker activists and their allies try to voice at the International Harm Reduction Conferences in the past 3 years (read the Statement from International Harm Reduction Caucus 2008 here).

Over five days, the annual IHRA conferences include around 60 sessions – including:

Opening and Closing Sessions – featuring high-profile addresses and speeches from key international figures, dignitaries from the host country, and key activists and advocates.

Plenary Sessions – which help to set themes and tones for the rest of the conference and are the focus of the programme at that time, attract over 1,000 delegates.

Exhibitions

Major Sessions – which show-

case key issues and topics in more detail, and run in sets of three at a time, each attracting around 350 delegates.

Concurrent Sessions – which run in sets of six sessions at a time, each attracting around 100 delegates, and allow for a range of different subjects and issues to be explored in the programme.

Workshops – which run alongside the Concurrent Sessions and allow for skills building and a more informal setting in which to discuss and debate specific issues.

The format of these sessions varies, but typically involves four presenters speaking for 15 minutes each based on an abstract that they have submitted online. Overall, the conference aims to accommodate around 250 oral presentations and 400 poster presentations over the five days.

To register for the conference, please click on the following link <http://www.ihraconferences.com/2010/>

Film Festival

The [7th International Drugs and Harm Reduction Film Festival](#) will be integrated as a parallel track in the conference programme for Harm Reduction 2010. For the seventh year in a row, the [Film Festival Team](#) aim to collect a huge range of films – from animations to documentaries, art house to education – provided they relate to drugs and harm reduction. The Festival provides an ideal stage for film makers to showcase their latest work.

If you are interested in submitting a film for 2010, please complete the Submission Form (including a 250-word synopsis of the film). All Forms must be accompanied by either hard or electronic copies of the films themselves, and must be received by January 25th 2010. All submissions will then be subjected to a review by an expert panel before possible selection. If film-makers are also able to attend the conference, there may be opportunities to formally present and discuss their work. <http://www.ihra.net/Liverpool/FilmFestival>

For 2010 (as in previous years), the exhibition area will be located in the conference venue in the same room where the meals and refreshments are served to delegates. This ensures a lot of 'traffic' through these areas. As such, the conference is an excellent opportunity to promote your organisation and its services and products in a highly interactive atmosphere. Click the link below to see the sponsorship, advertising and exhibition opportunities for the 2010 conference.

<http://www.ihra.net/Assets/2221/1/HarmReduction2010SponsorshipBrochure.pdf>

(continued on next page)

The Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF)

Advocates, service providers, researchers, artists and all others working for the health and human rights of men who have sex with men are invited to attend the bi-annual MSM Pre-Conference immediately preceding the International AIDS Conference in Vienna, 2010.

Attendees will be invited to present posters of their work, attend plenary sessions, network

with others, and participate in a wide variety of workshops. Look for our upcoming survey to give your input on how to make this MSM Pre-Conference the best one yet!

Location and time to be determined. Registration info coming soon!

<http://www.msmsgf.org/>

http://www.msmsgf.org/documents/Savethedate_Russian.pdf

NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK



Bulgaria: research on Bulgarian sex workers

July 2009, Sofia – An in-depth analysis of prostitution in post-socialist Bulgaria is now available on the “Liberal Review” website. The author of the study, Tihomir Bezlov is a sociologist, an independ-

ent researcher of criminal processes in Bulgaria and the founder and leading specialist in the Democracy Research Center in Sofia, Bulgaria. This document is one of the rare and current research projects that treat sex work as a separate phenomenon, apart from trafficking. According to main participants in sex industry – ex-sex workers, sex workers, pimps and owners of “public houses” – women who are forced into sex work constitute not more than 10% of all sex workers.

The survey attempts to answer three main questions: 1. What is the share of Bulgarian prostitutes among all prostitutes in Western Europe? 2. What are the reasons that force women to migrate for prostitution to Western Europe? 3. Is it the social and economic situation or the structure of organized crime that determine the unusually high share of Bulgarians among the victims of trafficking?

The first part of the survey analyzes the situation surrounding the emergence and evolution of Bulgarian market of sex services, as well as suggests a classification of sex work in the country nowadays. The author argues that the increased popularity of sex work by the end of the 1990s was explained by the number of factors, which included both global historical events (such as collapse of the USSR and Yugoslav wars), and local economic misery. By now the market of sex services is set and is firmly divided between three “tires”: street prostitution, club prostitution and elite prostitution. These forms of sex work in turn give rise to export prostitution and sex services for tourists in resort areas.

The second part of the report is dedicated to the discussion of trafficking definitions, as well as to attempts to estimate the scope of trafficking with the purpose of sexual exploitation. The author

argues that the estimates of the number of victims of trafficking from Bulgaria (for example, those given by European Institute for Prevention of Crime – 3000 to 4000 annually) are too low as they cover only those women who turned to police for assistance. It is also difficult to provide a single definition of trafficking that would set a boundary between it and other crimes and migration for sex work. The majority of victims is young, poor, with low or no education and is coming from socially marginal families. Even though the organized crime is not the only institution that “manages” trafficking, currently it is the one that plays the most important role. If earlier violence was part of the process of forcing women and girls into sexual exploitation, stabilization of social and economic situation in neighboring countries and Yugoslavia has led to the changes in the nature of trafficking. Currently less force is being used and victims are usually aware about the kind of work they are going to perform. In such a situation, “trafficking” is being used by competing groups, that are shipping women abroad, to squeeze each other out of business. Analyzing different data the author also shows that while a lots of Bulgarian women travel abroad for sex work, numbers of Bulgarian prostitutes are not extraordinary high (about 0,32% to 0,39% of total population) and do not exceed the sex worker ration in other European countries. Only 10% to 15% out of them are involuntary sex workers.

The third part of the report deals with the involvement of organized crime into the structuring and running sex workers migration from Bulgaria. The author describes roles, structures and policies, surrounding the process.

To conclude, the report provides ample evidence that voluntary sex work, rather than forced sex labor, dominates Bulgarian market of sex services. In such situation it is the rights of sex workers rather than the rights of innocent victims that are being violated and are in need of protection.

Contact person: Tsvetelina Oreshkova

About HESED

Email: t.oreshkova@hesed.bg

Albania: media publishes results of survey with sex workers



July 2009, Tirana --- Aksion Plus, an Albanian NGO and SWAN member since 2006, worked in cooperation with one of the main media outlets in Tirana to publicize interviews and focus group discussions with sex workers.

Aksion Plus invited a journalist from one of the biggest newspapers in Tirana to participate in conducting interviews with sex worker groups. The journalist held interviews together with Aksion Plus' peer-educator and social worker. The discussions took part in the office of the organization and in the street. The interviews revealed that conditions under which sex workers provide their services are far from being good in terms of hygiene. Also social support and childcare are lacking. The contingent of sex workers varied; there were representatives of Roma community and transgender among the respondents. The interviewees reported that their clients vary from young, to married, to old and to rich VIPs with luxurious cars.

It was also reported that some clients do not pay for the services and act violently towards sex workers. To solve this problem, sex workers started to unite into solidarity groups or alliances to protect themselves and each other from assaults of the police and violence from clients. This is especially crucial since most of street sex workers are independent and do not work for pimps, says Genci Mucollari, representative of Aksion Plus, SWAN member from Albania.

"The media as always has been sympathetic and realistic in reflecting sex work issues. In many cases they have been interviewing sex workers, have been writing their life stories, and have been calling for more rights and conditions for this vulnerable group. Anyway, changes in law are needed, and maybe we will follow on this track after the general elections that were held in 28th of June." – says Genci Mucollari.

Contact person: Genci Mucollari
Aksion Plus
Email: gencaxionp@albmail.com

Macedonia: Police raid and forced testing of 23 sex workers in Skopje - UPDATE

After the police raid that took place on 20-21st November, 2008 in Skopje, Macedonia during which 23 sex workers were detained and tested for HIV, HEP B and HEP C, both national and international human rights groups, sex workers groups, supporters and allies took a wide range of actions to raise awareness on the issue, protect the sex workers involved and prevent similar future violations. A coalition of NGOs and activists took the following steps to respond to the unjust and inhumane treatment of sex workers during the police raid: they hired lawyers, made official complaints to every human rights protective mechanism in the country (Ombudsman, Sector for internal control within Mol, Commission for human rights within the Parliament etc.), alerted and collaborated with international allies, sent letters to the Government, maintained regular contacts with media, provided legal and psychosocial support to sex workers, among other actions. None of these yielded the desired effect and it is now apparent that the only way to seek justice remained to be through court.

Since March 2009 the lawyers have been working with the human rights and ECHR experts on a civil suit against the Republic of Macedonia on account of alleged existence of objective liability of the state in this case. They claim that the responsible bodies did not take adequate actions nor did they carry out full investigation both in this case and in instances when sex workers reported violations on human rights.

Additionally, 13 sex workers submitted complaints to the Directorate for Personal Data Protection, in regards to having their identities released to the public without their consent. In three instances, television companies have already been found to be in violation of the right to privacy, meaning a precedence for a favorable judgment has already been established.

In the meantime, proceedings against 7 persons who tested HEP C positive, according to article 205 from the Crime Code ("... intentionally spreading infectious diseases..."), have been initiated. Several hearings took place, the decision being expected in September 2009.

For additional information, please contact: Marija Tosheva
Email: marijat@hops.org.mk
HOPS, Macedonia



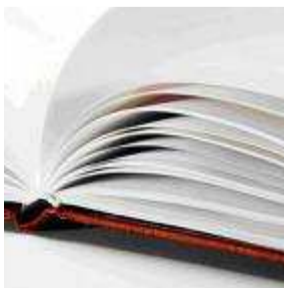
Hungary: MPEE holds survey on public opinion

September 3, 2009, Budapest -- The Association of Hungarian Prostitutes (MPEE), a member of SWAN in Hungary held a press conference to highlight the results of a recent survey on the opinion of mainstream population about prostitution in Hungary.

The Association of Hungarian Prostitutes has recently conducted a survey in partnership with the FACT institute. This survey was intended to study and understand what the Hungarian people think about the phenomena of prostitution. In addition, the survey investigates what people think about discrimination against prostitutes by the Hungarian authorities.

According to the 1000 people asked, prostitution is only the fourth most problematic issue after crime, poverty and the "Roma issue". Attitudes towards prostitution depend on education, religion, age and gender. Women, religious people and people with lesser education tended to be more prejudiced towards prostitution. It also became apparent that current knowledge on prostitution is insufficient: 92.4% of respondents were well aware of the fact that they know only a very little about prostitution and majority of them (54%) identified prostitution as such with the street prostitution.

Attitudes towards prostitution depended on the extent of knowledge about it and direct experience of it: those who saw prostitution in a more sophisticated light and/or have their own experience or heard about experiences from friends had less prejudice towards the sex workers and prostitution. Simultaneously the knowledge should not



be coming from sensationalist TV programs as those respondents are more liberal towards prostitution, who consume less news in TV and radio.

One out of ten people thinks that discrimination towards prostitutes is acceptable. Only a little bit less people think that discrimination by the authorities is also acceptable. Additional one third of the adult population participating in the survey does not care about discrimination by the authorities against prostitutes. There is a significant portion of people in Hungary who either accept or do not care if there is a discrimination toward minority groups.

It should be noted that more than two thirds of the questioned people think that prostitutes are more discriminated by the authorities than the rest. According to the opinions the churches, the court of guardians and the police have the most negative attitude towards prostitutes.

And at last, according to the survey, the average adult population in Hungary believes that ministers and associations, dealing with prostitutes should be responsible to do something about this situation in Hungary.

To access the whole survey report in Hungarian visit the official website of MPEE www.prostitutak.hu

Contact person: András Szabó
Email: mpeeandras@gmail.com

Slovakia: C.A. Odysseus runs cafeteria for sex workers on the street

C.A. Odysseus, SWAN member in Slovakia, has introduced a new element in their outreach services for street sex workers. Street cafeteria though still a novelty, has already proved to be a successful step in making social work more accessible and involving for sex workers.

"From July 2009 we started with street based cafeterias during our outreach work on Slovnaft-ska street.", says Lubica Tornoczyova from Odysseus. *"Slovnaft-ska is the area where street sex workers work and this part of the city is famous for trucks parking places. It is an area, which is very close to one of the busy road to the city center. There is a lack of any other services like drinking water, public phones, restaurants or other possibilities where sex workers might possibly refresh themselves or relax after work."*

Odysseus therefore decided to buy a few sun umbrellas, chairs and tables. Outreach workers of-

fer coffee, fresh water and soup for those who are interested. Sex workers can sit in this small cafeteria, chat to each other, speak with outreach workers or read magazines.



"We have very positive feedback from our clients and we hope that warm weather will last until October. This cafeteria gives a great opportunity not only for rest, but also for some kind of creation of space for self-support among sex workers and it's also a great tool for consultations with sex workers.", adds Tornoczyova.

Contact person: Lubica Tornoczyova
Odysseus
Email: podchod@ozodyseus.sk



Kyrgyzstan: A Case Story– transgender migrant sex worker

The following story was documented and shared at the 24th Program Coordinating Board (UNAIDS) Meeting, Thematic Segment *People on the Move* in June of 2009 by Gul-

nara Kurmanova of *Tais Plus*, a SWAN member from Kyrgyzstan with the assistance from Selbi Jumayeva and published on (http://www.nodo50.org/Laura_Agustin/case-history-transgender-migrant-sexworker-kyrgyz-republic) the blog of Laura Agustin *Border Thinking on Migration, Trafficking and Commercial Sex*. The story tells about the surviving of sex workers - and in particular of migrant transgender sex workers - on the streets of Bishkek.

About Kyrgyzstan: Kyrgyzstan is very poor. Recently it became the poorest country in Central Asia which is the poorest region of the post-soviet world. The country is corrupt. Many people in the country have no stable source of income and must think every day about food and a roof. The majority of those who think about them are young women and men who have no education or needed skills but have families who need their support.

About people who sell sex. For these women and men, sex work becomes an income-generating activity and way of surviving. Many of them seek an opportunity to sell sex to earn a lot of money (in their dreams) and at least some money for bread for their children and a place to sleep (in their reality). Many sex workers I know personally are braver and more enterprising (in order to become financially independent, self-sufficient and to survive) than their peers who are housewives and suffer their husbands and mothers-in-law in villages. Sex work is work; this is an income-generating activity.

Case of Venera, a 31-year-old transgender woman who is a sex worker. Five years ago she came to Bishkek from a small village in the north of the country. Her mother died giving birth to her younger sister. She lost her father because of tuberculosis when she was still a kid. She had changed schools and been placed in an orphanage in the village near the bigger town of Talass. Venera didn't receive her secondary school diploma; like many others, she is embarrassed to say she is barely literate. She has no chance to get a good job in a nice place. At the same time she has dignity; Venera wants to be the woman she sees herself to be. Unfortunately, street sex work is the only space where she can come close to being herself. She is ok with earning money by selling sex. As a sex worker, she cannot work in her village because neighbors know her and judge her. She cannot work in Talass because she cannot wear women's clothes there, a city

with old Muslim traditions. Venera came to the capital city, Bishkek, to do sex work.

Currently Venera lives and works in Bishkek. She has problems with the police often, once or even two times a month and recently every week. The police arrest and detain her 'because she has no passport.' She prefers to say that she lost her passport, because her passport is a man's passport, and her appearance is a woman's appearance. For these reasons, she is currently an undocumented migrant. The police tell her that she is arrested for doing sex work and that she is not a human being anymore since she is a prostitute. She cannot argue that sex work is itself decriminalized in Kyrgyz Republic, because she is nobody to the police: she has no passport. The police use her vulnerability to extort as much money as they can. She feeds the police, not herself, because they extort almost all the money she earns. Maybe the passport and resident permit could make her life better, but it is too expensive to pay for trip to Talass where she originally got her passport, and it would take months to collect all the necessary documents.

Her clients and street hooligans beat Venera often because of her feminine appearance. They think that she is not a human being anymore if she neglects 'men's honor'. Last October she faced a life-threatening situation when young men dragged her to their fancy black Mercedes without plates and took her to the outskirts of the city. They beat her severely, her face, her chest, her genitals; they raped her, burned her eyelashes, nipples and genitalia and threatened her with a gun. They said they would kill her if she told anyone. She wanted to file a report with the police, but they insulted her for being transgender and for sodomy and did not accept her complaint. Now she trusts the police even less.

Venera learned about a health problem three years ago but didn't believe those who tested her. She didn't receive proper pre-testing counseling. She doesn't visit a doctor because she doesn't believe in any governmental institutions and tries to avoid contact with them. She knows from her experience that there is no confidentiality in governmental clinics and her secret could be revealed. She thinks that in this case she will be not able to work any more and lose her only source of income. She knows that other sex workers prefer to move to another city to be tested there. She is going to do the same later when she earns enough money. But if it is revealed that she needs expensive treatment, how will she pay for it?

Tais Plus works in collaboration with Labrys, a local LGBT NGO. Contact: taisplus at gmail.com.



SEX WORKERS REPORT

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

This interview with Victoriya, a sex worker from Kazakhstan from June 2008, provides a unique perspective on the local sex work situation. She touches on sex workers' relationship with the police, the changing nature of the profession and the little-discussed phenomena of heterosexual male sex workers selling sex to women. While the interview is frank and honest, she seems optimistic and has some words of encouragement for her fellow sex workers.

Read full interview on <http://swannet.org/node/1569>

Sex Work

Can you tell me about sex work in Kazakhstan ?

About two years ago, you could see girls on the street. Right now, the Department of Internal Affairs is trying to convince people that there is no prostitution in Kazakhstan so most sex work takes places in saunas, cafes, clubs, private flats or by call. In saunas though, men get drunk and beat up girls and force them to do things they have not agreed upon against their will.

What recourse does a sex worker have in that situation ?

There are some groups you can contact after for medical and social help.

Saunas will tell men who are notoriously dangerous that "All the girls are occupied."

Will management of a sauna support a sex worker who is being attacked ?

The security guards will throw him out if he is considered to be "disturbing the order".

If there is security, why is there so much violence in the saunas?

Some of the girls work for pimps and some work for the police. Before, the police would take [sexual] services and not pay. Now some police pay, and are frequent clients. But when police demand sex, the girls are afraid of the police and don't know the law. They are afraid if they resist or refuse that he will have the power to put them in jail. So they do it out of fear.

What would you do to make the abuse stop ?

First of all, you should talk about sex work as work. It is the same as a shop owner who sells bread. Or doctors. I am selling a service too. It is work. People don't go into the hospitals and beat up the doctors for doing their job ! Media should do coverage on discrimination [against us] and develop peoples' tolerance.

By the way, if a client comes to us, it is to get a sexual service not to beat someone up. If you want to beat someone up, go to boxing.

It could also be great if sex work was legalized. Part of the money could go to the state and there would be no violence. Usually, sex workers are arrested for not having proper documents: registration in the town where we work or live, passports, visas. This way we could have visas or papers to work legally.

Why do the authorities in Kazakhstan want to pretend there is no prostitution ?

It is an issue of national mentality. In Asian countries, it is not appropriate if a woman -never mind sells sex- but even just shows her body before marriage. And the police are lazy enough, so they benefit from being able to live off of us, taking all our money.

in Kazakhstan

Do police treat

migrant sex workers differently ?

Migrant sex workers are treated differently. The authorities say they are not contributing to the economy but just being prostitutes. They are taken by the police and held until police find out who they are and where they are from and if there is a problem with documents. I know of 3 cases where sex workers were deported. But it doesn't always happen. It depends on how she settles the matter...

You said that most sex work in Kazakhstan is now in-doors in saunas, cafes, clubs, flats or by call. Can sex workers advertise these services in the media ?

Yes. They don't say "sex work" because maybe the police would start checking in on them. They say "Beautiful charming ladies waiting for a charming prince" or "I can do everything and I will do as I wish !" Also, the internet is popular. There are websites where people can meet and under heterosexual contacts there is a spot "I provide sex for money".

Has sex work changed over the years ?

It has. Before men came for classic intercourse but in different positions they couldn't have with their girlfriends. Now, they want S/M, some oral, but anal sex is more interesting to them. I don't offer it, but others do. Also, role-playing is in demand. Popular role-plays are "French maid", "nurse", "waitress" and certain animals, like a woman pretends to be a cat.

Are there any men who sell sex to women ?

In our city, there is one sauna but where this happens but many men want to provide services to women.

Are the prices the same ?

No, it can be twice as expensive because there are fewer men who sell sex to women. The usual prices are so high an ordinary girl can't afford them. So a richer woman could, a woman who lives alone but the biological need for sex is still there. Sometimes young women too, if they are wealthy, but often older, like in their 50s. The male sex workers are young, about 25-35. If the women are afraid to go to the sauna, the men can go to their flat.

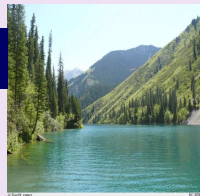
Do police bother male heterosexual sex workers ?

I don't know. They probably don't realize that they are selling sex.

Are there sex workers who sell gay or lesbian sex ?

Yes. There are man-man services and woman-woman services. Not only in the saunas but in general too. Women can also sell sex to heterosexual couples. There is also group sex. But a woman will make more selling to men, because there is more interest and more opportunities.

My message to all the sex workers who read SWAN News is: it doesn't matter what kind of sex you are doing, the most important is for it to be safe!



SEX WORKERS' ADVOCACY SCHOOL

What is Advocacy?



Advocacy is defined by the International Advocacy Campaign as “taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain the services they need” [*]. While this may seem like it requires special skills or talent, the truth is that most of us have some advocacy experience from our daily lives. As parents, friends, family members, citizens, employers and employees, whether we do it for ourselves or on behalf of others, we have all made use of advocacy at one time or another.

Advocacy is guided by the principle that every person should be valued, and ensures that people are not ignored and excluded because of the prejudices they face, that lead to lack of respect from others. Advocacy places the person in the centre of its aims and goals, while holding to the principle that everyone has the right to be respected, listened to and involved in the decision-making process, especially on issues that affect their lives. Because it focuses on helping people be heard and getting what they need, advocacy is closely associated with the principles of social justice, civil and human rights. It provides a means for people to build a true culture of democracy, where collectively we can forge a common future together, creating and changing policies. That being said, advocacy is most effective when combined with action, and in particular non-violent action. While it is important to clearly state goals, objectives, and express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it is equally important to back up a position with concrete actions to achieve goals and objectives.

* www.advocacyresource.org.uk



There are many advocacy models that various organizations and people use. They include:

Citizen Advocacy

Citizen advocacy is a one-to-one ongoing partnership between a trained advocate and a person who is not in a strong position to exercise or defend their rights and is at risk of being mistreated or excluded. Citizen advocates are free from conflicts of interest with those institutions or politicians being targeted and represent the other person's interests as if they were the advocate's own.

Legal Advocacy

Legal advocacy is work undertaken by lawyers - usually in the form of litigation and judicial reviews - on behalf of a person or a group in quasi-legal settings like an ombudsman's office, tribunals or in court.

Paid Advocacy

Professional advocates are people that are paid to provide an advocacy service, usually focusing on particular issues.

Self Advocacy

Self advocacy essentially means 'speaking up for yourself'. Self-advocacy involves a person who expresses their own needs and concerns and representing their own interest.

Group or Collective Advocacy is a form of self advocacy that occurs when a group of people experiencing similar difficulties or situation come together in a formal way to support each other. Collective advocacy may consist of individual members supporting each other regarding specific issues and/or; the group as a whole deciding to tackle an issue or problem that affects the membership. Groups can become lobbying organizations, involved in awareness raising and often provide training and other resources to members, government institutions etc... on issues that are relevant to them. The line between self-advocacy and collective advocacy is often times blurry. Many of the social movements that we have seen in the past have started because one person or a small group of people decided to speak up for themselves.

[How to - Advocate For Yourself.pdf](#), written by Vedna McGill and Dorothy McKenna, is a very helpful guide to self advocacy that you can access on the womanspace.ca website. Here, the authors have outlined these useful tips for effective individual self-advocacy that can also be applied to other forms of advocacy:

- No matter how upset you may be or how badly you have been treated, try to stay calm. It may be helpful to talk with a friend about what happened to upset you. Your friend(s) can offer support and advice.
- Don't give up once you have started. Remember that you have the right to ask for what you want or need.
- You don't have to go it alone. There are many organizations which may

be able to help you with your situation by saving you some steps and by speeding up the process.

- Remember that you have the right to :

○ Be treated as a competent individual.

Speak to someone who has the authority to make decisions.

- Remember that you have the responsibility to:

○ Request to see a supervisor or a decision maker if you want to do so.

Be honest with the person you are dealing with (a politician, judge, law enforcement officer, an ombudsperson, etc...) and to tell them the whole story, even if some of the story shows you in a bad light



Non violent action is any technique of action used to apply pressure or using power without resorting to violence. Non violence is hardly passive, inaction or submission. It is simply any action that does not involve violence. Non violent action many involve*:

Acts of omission—that is, people may refuse to perform acts that they usually perform, are expected by custom to perform, or are required by law or regulation to perform;

Acts of commission—that is, people may perform acts that they do not usually perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden to perform; or

A combination of the two.

The Albert Einstein Institute has a link to 198 methods of non violent action** that not only shows how diverse non violent action can be but also demonstrates how an individual or a collective can be assertive and proactive without resorting to violence. Some of these include letter writing, boycotts, sit-ins, hunger strikes, mass imprisonment to overload bureaucratic structures, soft pickets, guerrilla theatre, general strikes, marches, music, producing informational material for the general public and media appearances. Non-violent action can be and often are radical, socially disruptive (blocking traffic, picketing, etc...) and challenge the way things are very assertively.

*<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations4421.html>

**<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations103a.html>

Advocacy, Non-Violence and You

Ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things. Rosa Parks was a secretary, Ghandi was a lawyer, Martin Luther King Jr. was a pastor, Aurelia Browder was a seamstress, and Claudette Colvin was a student. Some like Jackie Robinson, who was already a distinguished athlete, were in the public eye, but many of the contributors to the fight for social justice, civil and human rights are not widely known. This does not make their contributions to causes or movements any less important. Think of the nameless faceless people who fought segregation in the United States for almost a century. Or the thousands of civilians who fought the Nazis by singing traditional songs. Or the people in our own countries who fight everyday against injustice and discrimination. Each of us can be advocates for issues of importance to us and use non-violent actions – no matter how small - to do as Gandhi said and "Be the change you want to see in the world."

SEX WORKERS' ADVOCACY SCHOOL (continued):

History offers many examples of how effective advocacy has often been coupled with concrete non-violent actions have advanced the battle for civil and human rights globally: The Hungarian resistance to Austrian rule from 1850-1867 included "passive resistance" actions like refusing to pay taxes, and refusing to serve in the military or in the Austrian government; The women's suffrage movement in the United States from 1913 to 1919 made use of cross-country processions of horse-drawn carriages,, public burnings of presidential speeches, hunger strikes and disruptions of congress events. Some of the most well known examples of non-violent action and advocacy are: the 1950s and 60s American civil rights movements (the actions of Claudette Aurelia Browder, Susie McDonald, Jackie Robinson, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louise Smith, and Rosa Parks), key aspects in the movement to end South African Apartheid and the Indian independence movement from the 1920s to 1947 and in particular, Mohandas Gandhi's involvement in both these movements. *



While violent action and the power that comes from it has nothing to do with conviction or legitimacy, non violence demands much more from the people using the latter method of action rather than the former. Gandhi was definitely right when he said: "There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit, and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does."

Tactically speaking, non violent action is much more effective than violence for several reasons. Firstly, the successful execution of non violent action, from the perspective of the activist, does not depend on material resources or weapons. The success of non violent action depends on courage, conviction, assertiveness and tenacity.



These qualities cannot be bought or sold and thus are available to the most disenfranchised and marginal groups. Secondly, violent action causes the focus to be on the illegal nature of the action, taking the focus off the message behind the action or the goal of the action itself. Thirdly, violent actions, even if successful in achieving a goal, make reconciliation with opponents difficult and breeds mistrust. This is especially true when people not targeted are on the receiving end of violent actions. Violence makes cooperation and trust very difficult. Both these things are needed if EVERY-ONE is to benefit from a more just and equitable society.

*<http://www.aeinstein.org/organizations/org/brochure.pdf>



CALLS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Participate: Say NO to Violence against Women!

Last year 5,066,549 people from around the world, [civil society organizations](#) and [governments](#) signed on to Say NO, sending the urgent message to governments everywhere that ending violence against women and girls must be a top priority.

This November, UNIFEM will take the initiative one step further and launch a new platform for action, **Say NO–UNiTE to End Violence against Women**. It is UNIFEM's contribution to the UN Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women involving governments, civil society and the entire UN system. Say NO–UNiTE will count and showcase actions taken by individuals, organizations and governments worldwide to end violence against women. Whether you volunteer at a shelter, reach out to students, advocate for better laws and policies — every action counts.

Add your name to become part of a global community rising to say NO to violence against women and girls here <http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/sayno/>

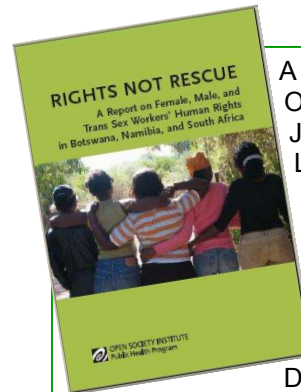


"From us to us" published by STAR, a Macedonian sex workers' rights activists group covers local and international news about sex work and provides an overview of various opinions on trafficking. Read Issue 7 and Issue 8 in Macedonian.

*<http://swannet.org/node/1626>

*<http://swannet.org/node/1501>

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



A report supported by OSI and authored by Jayne Arnott and Anna-Louise Crago

covers issues of human rights violations of female, male, and trans sex workers in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa.

Despite enormous challenges, sex workers are organizing to protect their rights and demand an end to violence and discrimination. In addition to the published report, sex workers who participated in the research and related [roundtable discussions](#) describe through audio taped interviews the effects of these rights abuses and how they are organizing to respond. Read and listen in English here http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/sharp/articles_publications/publications/rights_20090626

Rights, Not Rescue!

WOMEN'S NET Newsletter

In its summer issue Women's Net Newsletter publishes the results of a writing workshop organised by Sisonke (Johannesburg) and the Wits Writing Centre and supported by the Reproductive Health & HIV Research Unit (RHRU) and the Tswaranang Legal Advocacy Centre. Five personal stories written by African sex workers are brought together under the title **Johannesburg Sex Workers Speak Out**. Read the stories here in English. <http://www.womensnet.org.za/newsletter/womensnet-newsletter-01072009>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"People don't go into the hospitals and beat up the doctors for doing their job !"

– from an interview with a sex worker from Kazakhstan

Acknowledgements

SWAN project would not have been possible without the financial and information support of Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP) and Health Media of Open Society Institute (OSI).

Public Health Program
Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP)

Public Health Program
Health Media