



strategic plan 2013 – 2015

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Introduction:

This Strategic Plan sets out the updated priorities of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) for the period 2013-2015. It records the outcomes of the strategic planning process undertaken by the NSWP Board in April 2013. It is intended to inform internal discussions within NSWP and conversations with donors. It will underpin all funding proposals developed by the Global Secretariat for core activities during this period.

The standard paradigms through which sex work is viewed - AIDS, trafficking, and violence against women — each fail to fully address the human rights of sex workers. It is therefore crucial that sex workers represent their own realities and fully participate in dialogues and decision making about issues that affect them. Achieving these requires sex workers to organise at local, national, regional and international levels. Local level organising helps to identify the actual issues faced by sex workers at grass roots level, and enables sex workers to respond through action with the local communities and authorities that discriminate against them. National level organising helps to feed the concerns of grassroots groups into national level forums, helps reset the agenda, and helps to identify factors such as legislation and resource allocation that affect sex workers. Organising at international (including regional) level brings local and national level experiences to bear in international debates, particularly important given the global attention to issues such as AIDS, trafficking, migration and human rights.

The NSWP has already achieved a great deal, but global acceptance of sex worker rights continues to be elusive, and is manifested by the continued abuses faced by sex workers all over the world. Against this backdrop, the NSWP plays a crucial role in supporting and facilitating sex workers voices and promoting human rights and public health.

The NSWP:

origins

A group of sex worker rights activists working in sex work projects around the world started networking in 1990 at the 2nd International Conference for NGOs working on AIDS in Paris. Two years later the Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) was launched as an informal alliance during the 1992 International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, and NSWP has had a presence at every International AIDS Conference since. All NSWP activities during this early period were implemented as partnerships with member organisations. In 2002 NSWP was registered and a secretariat established in South Africa, however following its collapse in 2004 NSWP again became an informal alliance relying primarily on individual members volunteering to continue its work – special thanks is owed to Paulo Longo, Cheryl Overs and Melissa Ditmore for ensuring the continuation of NSWP during this difficult time. NSWP undertook an extensive organisational review in 2006/7 that recommended NSWP formalise its membership by becoming a network of networks and organisations, with a transparent and accountable governance structure and a secretariat with staff, to carry out a strategic programme of advocacy, capacity building and communications. Following consultation with members NSWP registered as a not-for-profit private company limited by guarantee in the UK in 2008, and a Global Secretariat was established in Edinburgh, Scotland UK.

past achievements and activities

NSWP has achieved a great deal since its creation. It has influenced policy, built leadership among sex workers and facilitated the development of sex worker-led regional and national networks and organisations. Significantly NSWP participation in the global response to HIV/AIDS was largely responsible for the term 'sex worker' replacing 'prostitute'. More than mere political correctness, this had the important effect of shifting global understandings of sex work toward a labour framework which signposts solutions to many of the problems faced by sex workers. It also represents greater recognition of sex workers as rights bearers, with the capacity to make a difference.

As a result of NSWP advocacy over the last three decades, sex workers have presented the case for protection of their health and human rights at international forums such as International AIDS Conferences, the 4th World Conference on Women, Commission of the Status of Women, UNGASS on HIV & AIDS, UNAIDS Programme Co-ordinating Board, the Global Fund Partnership Forums and numerous UN consultations. The NSWP successfully advocated for wording of the UN convention against trafficking in persons (the Palermo Protocol) to ensure that trafficking is defined as including force or coercion. NSWP, along with its regional networks, was also successful in urging UNAIDS to reconsider its 2007 policy guidelines on HIV and sex work and co-chaired the UNAIDS Advisory Group on HIV and Sex Work, and ensured sex worker inclusion in drafting the Annexes for the updated UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work (April 2012). NSWP played a critical role in the inclusion of a recommendation to decriminalise sex work, as well as a conditional recommendation that redefines the ethical use of Periodic Presumptive Treatment among sex workers, in the guidance on 'Prevention and treatment of HIV and other STIs for sex workers' (December 2012) launched in partnership with UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO.

In partnership with local member DMSC, NSWP organised the Sex Workers Freedom Festival: the alternative IAC 2012 event for sex workers and allies in Kolkata, India as US travel restrictions meant that many sex workers were not able or willing to go to Washington. The event brought together more than 650 sex workers and allies from around the world, and despite the 9.5 hour time difference provided a platform for sex workers voices through live video links with Washington.

In addition to the above advocacy and convening, NSWP published Making Sex Work Safe (1996 & 2011); publishes a regular journal (Research for Sex Work); publishes regular briefing papers; maintains global and regional listservs; and manages a website containing some of the most influential and important work on HIV and sex work. NSWP has established and maintained strong links with other key global networks such as GNP+, ICASO, ICW, INPUD, ITPC, and MSMGF.

membership and governance

NSWP members are sex worker-led regional and national networks and sex worker-led groups. Members are from diverse cultures, and have different organisational histories and structures. Some are sex workers collectives, some are small NGOs, and others are projects within government organisations or international NGOs. All work on health issues. Some provide services, some focus on advocacy, some on mobilising to reduce vulnerability and address the human rights issues that affect sex workers health and well-being. Some member organisations work with all genders and some with only female, male and transgender sex workers. A number of member organisations work with the children of sex workers.

NSWP is committed to facilitating the voices of sex workers in both the Global North and South while recognising the factors that drive inequality and global injustice; strategies for building the capacity of sex worker-led organisations therefore focus on the Global South. The NSWP recognises there are a diversity of issues and perspectives among sex workers and strives to make a respectful and accessible space for dialogue and action.

The NSWP organisational culture and rules ensure it is led by sex workers and that sex workers are meaningfully involved at all levels. The requirement that NSWP members support 'sex worker self determination' is interpreted as placing an obligation on members and the NSWP itself to take all practical steps to ensure that representatives and participants in NSWP activities are sex workers.

NSWP is governed by a Board of Directors drawn from the networks in the five NSWP regions — Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America & North America and Caribbean. Each of the five regions has two representatives on the Board of Directors and the global membership elects a president. One regional board member rotates of the Board each year and the regions organise a nomination process - it is expected that non-sex workers will stand down each year providing an opportunity for a sex worker to be nominated. Regions are expected to take into account gender and geographical balance. All of the current Board are sex workers; 7 females, three males and one transgender; and two are openly living with HIV.

assumptions and on-going challenges

People engage in sex work for many different reasons and in many different forms; it involves many different types of men, transgender people and women as buyers and sellers of sexual services. People from diverse backgrounds work in commercial sex around the world, and they are often very different to the stereotypes and caricatures portrayed in the media. For some sex work is their only job, while many have other sources of income. Motivations of sex workers, clients and all other actors involved in the sex industry vary immensely. Very often, sex work is experienced as a bearable occupation, rather than an ideal one, which is how many, or even most, people feel about their jobs.

Despite the significant diversity, sex workers the world over face many common issues

- Sex work is rarely recognised as legitimate work and many sex workers face bad working conditions and lack occupational health and safety protection.
- Sex workers are particularly vulnerable to violence and other abuses. Much of this is perpetrated by state agents and/or facilitated by lack of legal and social protection.
- Criminalisation and other legal oppression is present in most countries, so that whatever the
 precise legal provisions, it is problematic to engage in sex work without breaking a law at
 some level, thereby increasing the vulnerability of sex workers.
- The conflation of sex work with trafficking and sexual exploitation of children is driving inappropriate responses to the sex industry that deny sex workers their basic rights.
- Stigma and discrimination create barriers to generic programmes and facilities that provide social and economic benefits within communities.
- Unethical research and interventions, particularly in the context of HIV and anti-trafficking programmes, including 'raid and rescue', arbitrary detention and deportation.
- Inappropriate programming that fails to recognise sex workers as agents in their own lives and leads to exploitation and further stigmatisation of sex workers by the very agencies that are meant to empower sex workers.
- Lack of access to general health care, including sexual and reproductive health services
- Stigma and discrimination against female, male and transgender sex workers, clients, third parties and family, partners and friends of sex workers.
- Programmes and policies for sex workers are often based on assumptions, substandard research and ideology not evidence with sex workers routinely excluded from developing programmes and policies that affect them.

Policies and programmes for sex workers frequently fail to recognise the diversity of sex workers experience, and too often they ignore male and transgender sex workers – who are also often ignored by policies and programmes for MSM. As a result sex workers and their families the world over are discriminated against and their fundamental human rights are not protected. Sex workers are frequently discussed in the context of HIV and public health, but often within a discourse of them as potential transmitters of HIV rather than as rights bearers. Similarly, discussions about trafficking cast migrant sex workers as victims of exploitation and slavery while the discourse about violence against women locates the blame for violence against sex workers in the nature of sex work itself. Underpinning these responses to sex work is the fact that, the world over, sex work is seen as immoral and none of these three approaches recognises the diversity described above or respect the human rights of all sex workers and their lived experience.

National and regional networks have developed and the principle of the participation of sex workers in HIV policy and strategy development has been accepted at many levels. As a result sex workers are now active within a number of important forums including committees of the UN and Global Fund. In a number of countries the acceptance of sex workers as advocates has been so great that the demand for meaningful participation is difficult to meet because of lack of both human and financial resources, as well as time constraints for those who are running services for sex workers. However, in many countries sex workers continue to be seen only as targets for interventions and sometimes as peer educators; but have not been supported to organise and engage.

mission, aims and core values

NSWP mission:

The Global Network of Sex Work Projects exists to uphold the voice of sex workers globally and connect regional networks advocating for the rights of female, male and transgender sex workers. It advocates for rights-based health and social services, freedom from abuse and discrimination, and self determination for sex workers.

NSWP aims:

- To facilitate opportunities for the voices of sex workers to be heard in international forums.
- To raise awareness of the health and welfare needs of sex workers.
- To advocate at regional and global level for policies and action that further the human rights of sex workers. These rights include the right to health and a safe working environment free from abuse, violence, and discrimination.
- To provide practical information and opportunities for information sharing among organisations and projects that work with female, male and transgender sex workers.
- To develop and maintain links between service providers, sex worker organisations and relevant international institutions and agencies.

NSWP members are united by common core values and principles:

- Acceptance of sex work as work
- Opposition to all forms of criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work (including sex workers, clients, third parties¹, families, partners and friends)
- Supporting self-organisation and self-determination of sex workers

advocacy and strategic focus

NSWP advocacy focuses on:

- Advocate for universal access to health services, including primary health care, HIV and sexual and reproductive health services;
- Challenge stigma and discrimination against sex workers, their families and partners, and others involved in commercial sex;
- Propose the criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work and support its recognition as work;
- Speak out about violence against sex workers, including violence from police, institutions, clients, and intimate partners, while debunking the myth that sex work is inherently violence against women;
- Critique the trafficking paradigm that conflates representations of sex work, migration, and mobility; and
- Advocate for the economic empowerment and social inclusion of sex workers as sex workers.

The NSWP conducts a mix of pro-active and re-active advocacy and technical assistance to support human rights and evidence based programming for female, male and transgender sex workers. NSWP's work will be arranged around:

a) Communications and advocacy - through continuing to develop internal network communications and consultation processes with members; drafting consensus statements and briefing papers; and enhancing access to information on sex workers human rights and health - particularly for those who do not read English. NSWP drafts, summarises, translates and distributes relevant information to its members and beyond. This is particularly important for places where there are no organised sex

The term 'third parties' includes managers, brothel keepers, receptionists, maids, drivers, landlords, hotels who rent rooms to sex workers and anyone else who is seen as facilitating sex work.

workers groups or rights-based sex work programmes. Five languages have currently been prioritised - Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. NSWP advocacy is supported by policy analysis, research and consultation with members.

- b) Building Capacity and Solidarity through providing mentoring, training and skills building opportunities for and among sex worker organisations and leaders by developing and providing tools, training, space and support on issues such as human rights, health interventions, law and policy, ethics and new technologies.
- c) Maintaining good governance, accountability and management practices through continuing the process of internal organisational development, documentation of decision-making and further development of the NSWP 'organisational development and operational handbook'.

NSWP Goals, Strategies and Activities 2013 - 2015

The NSWP Board determined that while much had been achieved in the last three years, the three overarching goals from the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan remain relevant to NSWP's mission. NSWP will therefore continue to build upon its achievements and lessons learned through retaining the overarching goals but refining and enhancing its strategies and activities as outlined below.

Goal 1. Convene, and further build on NSWP achievements as the global network committed to the realisation of sex workers' human rights

NSWP has built a solid foundation through establishing a global secretariat, expanding membership, electing a President, developing regional processes for nominations to the Board of Directors, developing an 'organisational development and operational handbook' including a code of conduct, and holding regular Board meetings and teleconferences.

Strategy i: Consolidating the infrastructure that supports the functioning of the global network

- Maintain the global secretariat in Edinburgh, including communications, financial management, human resources and membership systems and prepare funding proposals and donor reports.
- Maintain and update the resource centre as an archive of NSWP and members work and history.
- Provide members with information and opportunities to participate in NSWP activities.
- Further develop support and supervision system for secretariat consultants working remotely.
 Intended outcome: Members are both informed by and inform the work of the global secretariat.

Resources required: Personnel; communications, office and operating costs; translation costs.

Strategy ii: Maintaining credible and effective network governance procedures

- Bi-annual election of President and annual nominations of regional representatives to the Board of Directors.
- Induction and mentoring of new Board members.
- Organise Annual Board meeting and quarterly conference calls.
- Annual review and update of 'organisational development and operational handbook', including further development of policies and procedures that can be adapted by members

Intended outcome: Sex worker leadership is developed and strengthened within the global and regional networks.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operational costs; translation; copy editing, graphic design and proof reading; travel, subsistence and venue hire.

Strategy iii: Maintaining effective and informative internal and external communications

• Host and moderate global, regional and thematic listservs for NSWP members.

- Further develop NSWP website as a multi-lingual platform for sharing information, lessons learned, news and resources with members and the broader public.
- Utilise social media to strengthen advocacy efforts at national, regional and global levels.
- Publish the Sex Work Digest as a regular summary of emerging global, regional and national policy issues, debates and crises, and recent publications.
- Develop advocacy tools on issues identified annually² by the Board of Directors (including global and regional briefing papers and consensus statements) that support members' demands for the recognition of sex workers human rights and rights-based programming.
- Develop and implement a media strategy, including a media handbook for members.
- Publish NSWP resources in the five languages, whenever possible, and provide information about on-line language support services.

Intended outcome: Members are informed by community experiences and able to advocate effectively for rights-based programming.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; ICT costs; copy editing, translation, graphic design, proof reading, printing and shipping costs.

Strategy iv: Developing Research for Sex Work as a platform for collaboration between academia, community researchers and sex worker-led organisations

- Publish the peer-reviewed journal Research for Sex Work.
- Develop a platform for academics, community researchers and sex workers to engage in dialogue and critique current sex work research.
- Develop guidelines, in partnership with academics and community researchers, for ethical research from a sex worker rights and community perspective.
- Work with academics and community researchers to build the evidence base for rights-based programming and make academic research accessible to members.
- Develop the Research for Sex Work archive of research publications that uphold a rightsbased approach to sex work and critique programming that ignores or violates sex workers rights.

Intended outcome: Members are informed by academia and able to advocate effectively for rights-based programming.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; ICT costs; copy editing, translation, graphic design, proof reading, printing and shipping costs.

Strategy v: Develop and maintain global and regional alliances

- The needs and rights of sex workers living with HIV (further develop NSWP+ website and forums)
- Universal access to rights based HIV and STI testing and treatment for sex workers of all genders
- Sex work and the law: challenging the criminalisation of clients
- Meaningful participation of sex worker led organisations in the development and roll out of the Global Fund New Funding Model
- Building alliances and engaging within the women's movement and with religious leaders in building a rights based response to sex work
- Understanding and investing in community mobilisation

² 2013-14 priorities identified by NSWP April 2013

- Maintain and strengthen the alliance with the 'key population' global networks GATE, GNP+, INPUD, MSMGF and their regional affiliates, and publish collective responses on areas of overlapping concern.
- Strengthen and expand engagement with the women's movement and build strategic alliances with feminists willing to become champions for sex workers rights.
- Support members' engagement with the labour movement and explore potential for building strategic alliances around labour rights and occupational health and safety standards.
- Explore potential for building strategic alliances with religious leaders around combating the moral crusades against sex workers and sex workers rights.

Intended outcome: Members have an expanded pool of allies who amplify the advocacy for rights-based programming for sex workers.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; travel, subsistence and conference costs.

Making a difference: With a sustainable infrastructure, increased capacity and external support NSWP, regional networks and sex worker-led organisations across the world, will hold policy makers and programmers to account for implementing effective, rights-based responses and programmes.

Goal 2. Build capacity within sex worker-led networks and organisations and support emerging sex worker leaders

NSWP has played a critical role in supporting and building the capacity of regional and national sex worker-led networks and sex worker-led organisations, primarily through South-South exchanges and mentoring emerging sex worker leaders.

Strategy i: Build the capacity of regional sex worker-led networks

- Support the development of a Sex Worker Academy for Africa as a regional resource, to be hosted by Kenya Sex Worker Alliance (KESWA) on behalf of the Africa Sex Worker Alliance, through collaboration with Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers, Ashodaya Academy and VAMP.
- Support the development of an advocates training camp for sex workers from Europe and Central Asia through collaboration between Sex Workers Advocacy Network in East & Central Europe & Central Asia and the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe.
- Support the participation of sex workers in the Caribbean Sex Work Coalition.
- Integrate regional mentoring strategies into the capacity building programmes.
- Provide advice and information to emerging sub-regional sex worker-led networks.

Intended outcome: Regional networks will be strengthened through an expanded network of informed and effective advocates who are better able to engage and influence policy and programming at local, national, regional and global levels.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; translation; travel, subsistence and venue hire.

Strategy ii: Build the capacity of national sex worker-led networks and organisations

- Support the training of a national faculty of sex workers in Kenya to run the Sex Worker Academy for Africa.
- Support bi-lateral exchanges between member groups and integrate on-going mentoring where possible.
- Partner with other NGOs to build capacity of sex worker-led organisations.
- Provide advice and information to emerging national networks.

Intended outcome: National networks and organisations will be strengthened through sharing experiences and learning from other sex worker-led organisations within and beyond their region.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; travel, subsistence and venue hire.

Strategy iii: Build the capacity of sex worker leaders

- Develop and foster community mentoring strategies
- Develop and document a mentoring programme for emerging sex worker leaders supported by experienced sex worker rights advocates at national, regional and international levels. Providing opportunities for sex workers to attend meetings and work with more experienced sex worker rights advocates in order to learn through observation and participation at various levels of engagement, from national consultancies to high level intergovernmental and UN meetings
- Develop leadership training workshops in collaboration with regional networks to enable sex
 worker advocates to understand and engage with global, regional and national health and
 human rights funding mechanisms; understand and engage with the architecture of
 government, intergovernmental agencies, international NGOs, development and public health
 institutions; understand and utilise the basic theories of human rights and legal and policy
 frameworks that affect sex workers and document human rights violations; understand and
 conduct community based research, document advocacy activities, produce reports, and
 provide feedback to communities; understand and implement community-led services.
 Whenever possible workshops should also integrate English language skills.
- Seek partners in other key population networks to develop a language school that focuses on improving English language skills to enable sex workers and other key populations globally to enhance their participation and increase their ability to advocate in high level international meetings and debates and to communicate with each other.

Intended outcome: Meaningful participation of well informed sex workers in advocating for their own issues at local, national, regional and international levels.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; travel, subsistence and venue hire.

Making a difference: Capacity building not only enables national and regional sex worker organisations to engage more effectively in advocacy work and HIV programming, it also strengthens the global network by creating sustainable leadership development that will enable the movement to continue to influence policy and programming into the future.

Goal 3. Promote rights and evidence based policies and programmes affecting sex workers

NSWP has a strong track record of influencing international policy, most recently through working in partnership with international agencies in setting normative guidance such as the 'UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work' and the guidance on 'Prevention and treatment of HIV and other STIs for sex workers'.

Strategy i. Support meaningful participation of sex workers in global, regional and national level policy and programme forums related to sex work

- Engage in the UNAIDS InterAgency Working Group for Key Populations and develop guiding principles for meaningful participation and partnerships between UN agencies and key population networks at global and regional levels and support sex worker participation in the UNAIDS PCB NGO delegation to ensure that sex workers issues are represented.
- Engage in the Global Fund Advisory Group on Key Populations and support sex worker participation in the Global Fund Civil Society and Communities Delegations and Partnership Forums.

- Promote and work with regional networks to support sex worker engagement within the Global Fund national dialogues and country coordinating mechanisms.
- Promote and support members' engagement with UNDP at country level on the implementation of the recommendations from The Global Commission on HIV and the Law, ensuring that sex workers voices are heard and evidence from their lived experiences is considered.
- Promote and support the meaningful participation of sex workers networks in regional and national consultations, training and public awareness programmes on HIV and sex work.

Intended outcome: Sex workers will be at decision making tables and able to influence legislation, policy and programming.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; travel and subsistence.

Strategy ii. Conduct community consultations to identify sex workers perspectives and priorities

- Publish the NSWP members consensus statement on Sex Work, Human Rights and the Law.
- Engage in the development of the implementation tool for the Prevention and treatment of HIV and other STIs for sex workers guidelines
- Conduct a global community consultation among sex workers on new prevention technologies, including PrEP and TasP, and their potential benefits and unintended consequences.

Intended outcome: Policy and programmes will be informed by the lived experiences of sex workers and will reflect a rights-based approach.

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; travel, subsistence and venue hire.

Strategy iii. Produce community research and resources on policy and best practice

- Support members to engage with academics and community research experts in collecting evidence and documenting their work.
- Develop advocacy toolkits for members on key policy issues that impact the health and human rights of sex workers.
- Document examples of good practice of sex worker-led organisations responding to their communities' needs and priorities.
- Encourage and support sex workers participation in the International AIDS Conferences.

Intended outcome: Sex workers will have evidence to support their arguments around the effectiveness of sex worker-led rights-based policies and programming

Resources required: Personnel; communication, office and operating costs; ICT costs.

Making a difference: Meaningful participation, community consultation and community-owned research ensures that policies and programmes are rooted in the realities of sex workers lives, are accessible, and have maximum impact.

Human Resources

The NSWP requires the following personnel to implement this strategic plan:

Global Coordinator – who, as the senior staff officer, is be responsible for managing the network activities and working with the Board to develop organisational policies, protocols and tools. **Policy Team** – who are responsible for conducting consultations, undertaking policy analysis, drafting reports and developing advocacy tools.

Communication and Information Team – who are responsible for developing and implementing the communication strategy, and maintaining and updating the NSWP website and social media. **Finance and Administration Team** – who are responsible for the development and implementation

Finance and Administration Team – who are responsible for the development and implementation of administrative, office and financial management systems.

Task consultants are contracted to assist the secretariat in implementing effective information communication technology; undertaking consultations beyond the capacity of the policy team; translating NSWP resources and documents; production of publications.

Personnel are either employed as staff based in the Edinburgh, Scotland UK or as consultants working remotely in their home countries with support from their local member organisation and regional networks.

NSWP currently has personnel in Scotland UK, Kenya, Australia, Myanmar, Thailand/Malaysia, Poland, Turkey, Mexico and Canada.

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