

Sex Talk

July 2016 – 21st International AIDS Conference

Issue 03



What did I hear today at the IAC

A diversity of speakers at different sessions regarding 'key populations' calling for decriminalisation of sex work.

Edwin Cameron calling criminalisation of sex work in South Africa a 'profound evil'.

That Prevention is still the cheapest option.

That funding does not support gender diverse programming.

That 15 million girls are forced into marriage every year, which is one girl being married every two seconds...tick, tick.

That internalised stigma has its source on the outside.

That as activists we were and are good at pushing and mobilising around access to treatment but we are lagging behind with regards to uniting around a fundamental human rights agenda.

Our government gives us condoms and then we get arrested for having them.

According to the report released by the Women's Legal Centre (WLC) the main instigators of violence against sex workers are the police themselves.

Why are the children of sex workers invisible in discussions regarding sex workers.

What did you hear today?

For more news & highlights on the #AIDS2016 conference, follow us:

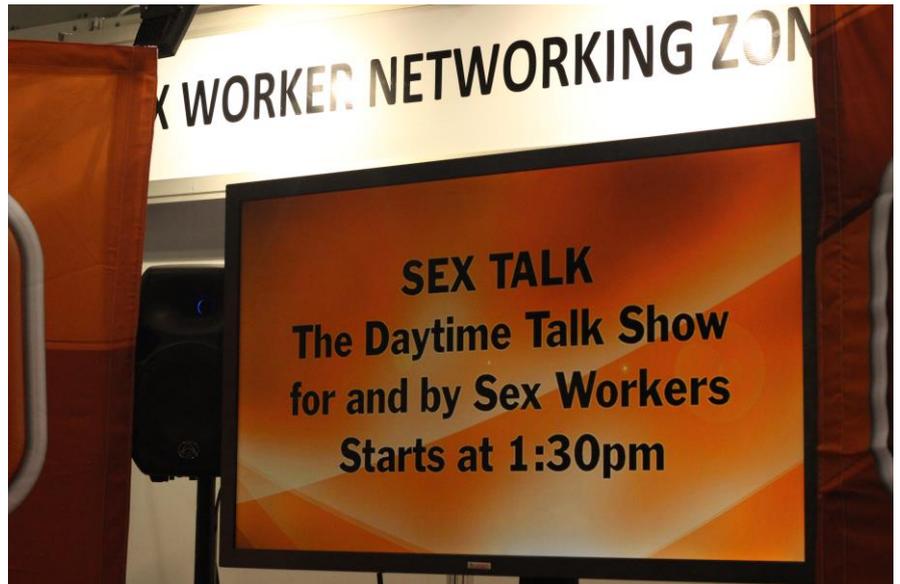


@SweatTweets



Sex Workers Education & Advocacy Taskforce

Sex Talk Daily Show Reflections



The Talk show yesterday was exhilarating. The host Ms Constance had three panellists. The topic was on the decriminalisation of sex work and the labour laws around sex work. Her first panellist was a male sex worker from France. France has recently criminalised clients and have programmes for clients. Although selling sex is not a crime, migrant sex workers are targeted and when they are arrested they are not arrested under any laws around sex work but migrant laws. What this means is that instead of spending a day under arrest, now they face spending between 30 – 40 days. This stood out for me and reminded me of how sex workers in South Africa get picked up and then migrant sex workers are locked up for days on end until they are processed by immigration.

Criminalising clients does more harm for sex workers than good. As this means that sex workers who are not regarded as criminals are forced to go underground to protect their clients. Do clients reduce? Yes some clients especially in the first few weeks probably will reduce but what this means is that clients who do come to seek services are:

- Want to pay lower rates are they are now the ones risking being arrested
- Means that sex works have less negotiating powers

So yes sex workers will make less but this does more harm as one has to work longer and take more risks so that they can still earn a decent living wage.

So if criminalisation is meant to protect sex workers the FACTS AND REALITIES show that criminalisation does more harm than good. So stop and rethink. To protect sex workers we need better laws that ensure that sex workers are able to exercise ALL their rights and are able to work and earn without fear of being regarded as criminals. Where sex workers can access their labour and health rights.

VISIT DAILY



Sex Workers
Networking
Zone

Booth: 619



SWEAT
Exhibition
Space

Booth: 323



Networking
Zone for
Transgender

Booth: 613

Police report launched

SWEAT & Sisonke partner Women's Legal Centre (WLC) launched the Police Abuse against Sex Workers at the Sex Worker Networking Zone on Tuesday, 19 July 2016. This report draws on reported cases from sex workers who approached the WLC between 2011 and 2015 for information, guidance and legal assistance to access their rights.

The analysis highlights the gap between the rights enshrined in the South African Constitution and the treatment that sex workers experience.

"The extent of human rights abuse suffered by sex workers in South Africa is alarming. This research shows that much of the abuse that sex workers experience is from the police." Says Stacey-Leigh Manoek, an attorney at the WLC and one of the authors of the report.

Criminalisation is an expression of stigma against sex workers, and this stigma is fuelled by the police.

Presentation of the Asijiki Award for Courage & Initiative to Sir Elton John and the Elton John AIDS Foundation

Today, the Asijiki Coalition for the Decriminalisation of Sex Work in South Africa will award Sir Elton John and the Elton John AIDS Foundation the Asijiki Award for Courage & Initiative. This award recognizes unwavering and outspoken public advocates for their commitment to sex worker rights.

Asijiki is a broad-based advocacy coalition that brings together sex workers and human rights advocates for agitation on sex worker human rights, and specifically for the decriminalization of sex work. *Asijiki* is the isiZulu term for 'no turning back'!

The Asijiki Award for Courage & Initiative allows us a moment to step back and recognize our allies, show our appreciation for their bold work towards our common cause, and share with others our appreciation of their efforts.

Today we will present this inaugural award to Sir Elton John and the Elton John AIDS Foundation for their enduring public support of sex workers rights. The award is intended to acknowledge those whose peers often take a less brave stance and are overall under-recognized for their advocacy, specifically on issues of sex work. We were particularly inspired by Elton John and the Elton John AIDS Foundation's steadfast and public support of Amnesty International's position on the decriminalisation of sex work, for funding sex worker projects internationally, as well as speaking out against the indifference and hate that fuels the AIDS epidemic.

We are proud to present this award today, and we will continue to move forward fearlessly and vigorously towards our vision of a world where sex worker rights are safeguarded and all sex workers are treated with dignity and respect. We salute our allies and supporters.

When: Wednesday, 20 July 2016
Where: Sex Worker Networking Zone
Time: 12 for 1pm



Mothers for the Future at the AIDS Conference



The project

This project was started to address some of the challenges faced by mothers who are doing sex work such as being a mother. Mothers who are doing sex work like other sex workers experience a lot of violence and increased HIV risks. This is mainly because of the stigma and discrimination they face because of the work that they are doing. What people don't know is that mothers who are doing sex work love their children and sacrifice a lot for their children like none sex work mothers. In my presentation I played a video and let the audience hear how proud mothers are about taking care of their children and why they are advocating for the decriminalisation of sex work. Decriminalisation will bring good change and make a difference.

Our main asks

We are asking funders to support us and the work that we are doing. This is a project that was started by sex workers to address a need that we saw in our community.

We ask other organisations to go back to their countries and start working with sex workers and support their children because right now many organisations are only focusing on human rights, marginalised groups and key populations but they leave out sex workers and their children.

Currently we know that some children of sex workers face a lot of stigma and discrimination within their communities and at school ranging from other pupils and even teachers including their school principals.

Impact of the conference to date

There has been a positive response from people after the presentations and the sessions and some are concerned about the children of sex workers. Many people have shown interest in the work that the mothers are doing. We have received many contacts from people including funders who we can apply for funding from and organisations that we can partner with and see how we can support the programme. Some of the positive comments from organisations is how they want to go back to their different countries and see how they can start to do the work. The good thing is that some peoples' minds have shifted to think about sex workers and their children.

PEPFAR's "Anti-Prostitution Pledge" and the impact on sex worker health programs: *the Who, the What, the How*

Learn about the pledge, its impact on activities and services, and effective advocacy to respect and protect sex workers' rights.

Conference Workshop

Wednesday, 20 July
11:00 – 12:30
Global Village Session Room 2

Global Village

Thursday, 21 July
19:00 - 20:30
Global Village Session Room 1

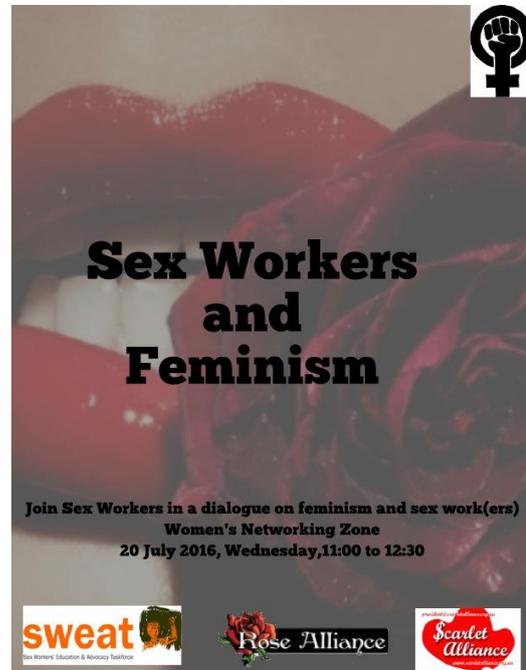
Facilitated by: **Kholi Buthelezi**, Sisonke | **Anne Cathumbi**, Open Society Foundations
Deon Haywood, Women with a Vision | **Grace Kamau**, Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA)
Constance Mathe, Asijiki Coalition for Decriminalisation of Sex Work in South Africa
Marlise Richter, Sonke Gender Justice | **Beirne Roose-Snyder**, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Jasmine Tyler, Open Society Foundations



Decriminalisation of sex work is possible and it can be achieved

I slept with our heart broken after the Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development made his presentation on the update of, sex work in South Africa. In his presentation I felt the spirit of hate towards sex workers and no hope of any positive law reform for sex workers. As we gathered outside ICC earlier to do a direct demonstration, we had hope that in few hours sex work we would hear positive strides being made around law reform on sex work. We hoped that after waiting for so long that we would maybe be given a glimpse of report and what the Department might be doing in the next few months in South African. Instead of that we were told what we already know about the process that will be followed. Songs of victory were sang in the auditorium and red umbrellas were in the air. It was a heated moment. We waited with our finger crossed. He boldly said "sex work will continue to be criminalised in South Africa but there is a process that is being followed but the options don't look that promising" - I was shattered. This was a new hope for me and maybe for sex workers globally. Decriminalisation of sex work is possible and it can be achieved.

However, my hopes rose again as I met Charlize Theron at the sex workers network zone I said to her Charlize, "We are not free yet, women are still not enjoying their rights to be what they want to be". In her work she promised that she will engage and make sure that freedom that is represented by South Africa is enjoyed by all. This was a new hope for me and maybe for sex workers globally. Decriminalisation of sex work is possible and it can be achieved.



Sex work(ers) related sessions schedule

<i>Wednesday, 20 July 2016</i>			
Title	Organisers	Venue	Time
Scaling-up Access to HIV Viral Load Testing		Session Room 11	07:00-08:30
Advocacy Tactics I: High Level Meetings, Sustainable Development Goals, and Grassroots Activism	UNAIDS, HIV Justice Network	Session Room 3	11:00-12:30
Sex Workers and Feminism	Womens Networking Zone	Womens Networking Zone	11:00-12:30
PEPFAR's "Anti-Prostitution Pledge" and the Impact on Sex Workers Health Programs: the Who, the What, the How	Change, Sonke Gender Justice, Open Society Foundation, Women with Vision	Global Village Session Room 2	11:00-12:30
It Takes a Community: Leadership, Engagement and Innovation	Poster presentation	Session Room 13	13:00-14:00
HIV Prevention Landscape for Women: A look at new & emerging prevention options including PrEP, vaginal rings and new products in development	AVAC	Global Village Session Room 1	13:00-14:30
PrEP Implementation: From Clinical Trials to Clinical Care	WITS, Fenway Health	Session Room 7	14:30-17:00
A Revolution Against Stigma! What Works to End HIV-related Stigma NOW!		Session Room 13	14:30-17:00
Utilizing Existing Structures to Reduce Stigma and Strengthen Positive Health Dignity and Prevention for People Living with HIV		Global Village Session Room 2	16:00-17:00
Pulling the Levers: Policy, Advocacy Approaches to Influence		Session Room 12	16:30-18:00