



**Global Network of Sex Work Projects**  
Promoting Health and Human Rights

## Briefing Note:

### Meaningful Involvement of Sex Workers

During a Global Experts' Meeting<sup>1</sup>, organised by NSWP in September 2017, sex workers from all five NSWP regions reviewed existing definitions and determined criteria for the meaningful involvement of sex workers in the design, development, implementation, management, and monitoring and evaluating in programming, policy and legislation. It was relatively easy for representatives from sex worker-led organisations to reach consensus on 'Meaningful Involvement', as sex worker-led organisations have been discussing and advocating for meaningful involvement of sex workers for many years, since sex workers are so often excluded from these processes. This assessment tool uses the definition of meaningful involvement from both the consensus arrived at during the Global Expert Meeting and the [Sex Worker Implementation Tool \(SWIT\)](#)<sup>2</sup> to determine the meaningful involvement of sex workers.

In 2013, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, NSWP, The World Bank, and UNDP published the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT), the international guidance on effective HIV and STI programming for sex workers, it calls for and provides evidence for the benefits of the meaningful involvement of sex workers in developing policy and programmes.

*"The meaningful participation of sex workers is essential to building trust and establishing relationships and partnerships that have integrity and are sustainable. This may be challenging for service providers [and the UN, INGOs, NGOs, Bilateral Programmes, Governments, and the Global Fund] who are more accustomed to establishing the parameters within which services are provided, and prescribing how relationships or partnerships are to be conducted. As sex workers and sex worker organizations become more empowered, there will be greater expectations of power-sharing and power-shifting."*

SWIT, Page 7

This document is a practical tool for organisations to self-assess whether they meaningfully involve sex workers, and for sex worker-led organisations to assess whether they are meaningfully involved.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Expert Meeting to develop a Community-led Evaluation Framework for the Roll Out of the Sex Worker Implementation Tool and Assessment Framework for the Meaningful Involvement of Sex Workers in Kiev, Ukraine 3-7 September 2017.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nswp.org/resource/sex-worker-implementation-tool-swit>

**MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF SEX WORKERS CHECK-LIST:**

Sex workers choose how they are represented, and by whom	Yes or No?
Sex workers choose how they engage in the process	Yes or No?
Sex workers choose whether to participate or not	Yes or No?
Sex workers have an equal voice in how partnerships are managed	Yes or No?
A transparent process for decision-making exists and allows time for consultation (between sex worker-led organisations and/or between sex worker-led organisations and their constituencies).	Yes or No?
A transparent process includes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive information about decision to be made by the community was made available in a timely manner and in the languages spoken by sex workers in the country (including migrants)</li><li>• An electronic or written communication to document the consultation that occurred with sex worker groups across the geographic area</li><li>• 1 month, at least, to allow for consultation at national level</li></ul>	
Clear Terms of Reference exist for all individuals involved in the process to indicate that they represent their constituencies, and not their personal interests	Yes or No?
Sex workers and partners have equal voice and power	Yes or No?
Sex workers are not only beneficiaries of programmes, but are involved at all levels in programmes (design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, management, advisory committees and governance) and policy development and review.	Yes or No?
Translation and interpretation is always provided to sex worker-led organisations	Yes or No?

## QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to assess the extent to which sex workers are meaningfully involved in both sex worker-led organisations and other organisations providing services to sex workers.

Sex worker-led organisations	Non sex worker-led organisations
<p>1. Are sex worker-led organisations disadvantaged in the selection of organisations to receive funding, due to specific provisions such as unrealistic experience, requirements, unequal application of conflict of interest policies, etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do the same provisions apply to non sex worker-led organisations?</li> </ul>	<p>1. Are sex worker-led organisations disadvantaged in the selection of organisations to receive funding, due to specific provisions such as unrealistic experience, requirements, unequal application of conflict of interest policies, etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do the same provisions apply to your organisation?</li> </ul>
<p>2. What steps does your organisation take to ensure that sex workers are meaningfully involved and are able to understand the process and discussions, and input?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What steps does your organisation take to ensure documents and other materials are accessible to sex workers?</li> </ul>	<p>2. What steps does your organisation take to ensure that sex workers-led organisations are meaningfully involved and are able to understand the process and discussions, and input?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What steps does your organisation take to ensure documents and other materials are accessible to sex worker-led organisations and their constituencies?</li> </ul>
<p>3. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex workers are meaningfully involved in the following stages of sex work programmes and technical assistance provided by your organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning?</li> <li>- Implementation?</li> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation?</li> <li>- Management?</li> <li>- Governance?</li> </ul>	<p>3. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex worker-led organisations are meaningfully involved in the following stages of sex work programmes and technical assistance provided by your organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning?</li> <li>- Implementation?</li> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation?</li> <li>- Management?</li> <li>- Governance?</li> </ul>
<p>4. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex workers are meaningfully involved in setting priorities when resources are limited?</p>	<p>4. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex worker-led organisations are meaningfully involved in setting priorities when resources are limited?</p>
<p>5. What steps are taken to ensure the results of community consultations are used inform policy and programme development?</p>	<p>5. What steps are taken to ensure the results of community consultations are used inform policy and programme development?</p>

6. To your knowledge, are sex workers meaningfully involved in all sex work-related policy forums?	6. To your knowledge, are sex worker-led organisations meaningfully involved in all sex work-related policy forums?
7. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex workers are meaningfully involved in sex work-related policy forums that your organisation is aware of?	7. What steps does your organisation take to ensure sex worker-led organisations are meaningfully involved in sex work-related policy forums that your organisation is aware of?
8. Does your organisation recognise sex workers and sex worker-led organisations as experts in the field of sex work policy and programming? How?	8. Does your organisation recognise sex workers and sex worker-led organisations as experts in the field of sex work policy and programming? How? - Does your organisation remunerate that expertise at the same level as other remunerated experts?
	9. What steps are taken to ensure that your organisation's sex work related documents have been reviewed by sex worker-led organisations? - Does your organisation translate sex work related documents into languages that are understood by the sex worker community?
	10. What steps does your organisation take to support sex worker-led organisations in consulting with their members where needed?