



nswp

Global Network of Sex Work Projects
Promoting Health and Human Rights



STRATEGIC PLAN 2016–2020

2016–2020

Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets out the key directions for the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) in 2016–20. It outlines how – in those five years – NSWP will build on its significant achievements and lessons to date, while also strengthening critical areas of its work and responding to a changing and challenging environment.

The Strategic Plan 2016–20 is the result of extensive consultation among NSWP’s members, as well as other stakeholders – Board, staff, donors and partners. The consultation was led by an independent Global Consultant. They were supported by independent Regional Consultants who, in turn, coordinated local Key Informants to carry out in-depth national consultations with NSWP members in selected countries.

The consultation process included a comprehensive Strategic Review of the network’s strengths and weaknesses in 2010–15. The Strategic Review Report and Summary Report are available on NSWP’s website: www.nswp.org/resource/nswp-strategic-review-2010-15.

NSWP ACHIEVEMENTS

NSWP has made a vital contribution to changes that have brought concrete benefits to the lives of sex workers.

Achievements at global level and in international policy include:

- Shifting global understanding about sex work as labour through successfully advocating for the use of the terms 'sex worker' and 'sex work' rather than 'prostitute' and 'prostitution'.
- Advocating that the *Palermo Protocol* (2000) – the UN convention against trafficking in persons – define trafficking of adults to involve force or coercion.
- Co-chairing the UNAIDS Steering Committee on HIV and Sex Work and the updating of the *UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work* (2012) to ensure rights-based approaches.
- Securing recommendations to decriminalise sex work and empower sex worker communities in international normative guidance – *Prevention and Treatment of HIV and Other STIs for Sex Workers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Recommendations for a Public Health Approach* (2012) – produced by WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS and NSWP.
- Organising, in partnership with members in India, the *Sex Worker Freedom Festival*, an alternative International AIDS Conference 2012 event, bringing together more than 650 sex workers and allies from across the world.
- Ensuring sex worker communities are driving the development and operationalisation of *Implementing Comprehensive HIV/STI Programmes with Sex Workers* (2013) – the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) – produced by UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, the World Bank and NSWP.

NSWP's continuous efforts and achievements also result in:

- A wide range of advocacy tools, including briefing papers, global consultation reports, and statements, in line with NSWP members' priorities.
- *Research for Sex Work* – a peer reviewed journal featuring community led research on specific themes related to sex work.
- Sex worker representation in international policy forums.
- Strengthening the capacity of regional sex worker-led networks and mentoring emerging sex worker leaders.
- Supporting South-South exchange and learning through connecting regional networks and supporting developments such as the Sex Worker Academy Africa (SWAA).
- Between October 2008 and July 2015, NSWP membership grew to 236 member organisations across 71 countries.

NSWP

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 NSWP was formally launched as an alliance of sex workers' rights activists and sex work projects during the 1992 International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam.

NSWP, as an alliance of individuals and organisations, continued to advocate for the health and human rights of female, male and transgender sex workers until 2006–7, when a review recommended a shift to a membership structure based on sex worker-led organisations and networks (rather than individuals), to a regional governance structure, and the establishment of a Global Secretariat. In 2008, after consultation with members, NSWP registered as a not-for-profit private company in Scotland, United Kingdom.

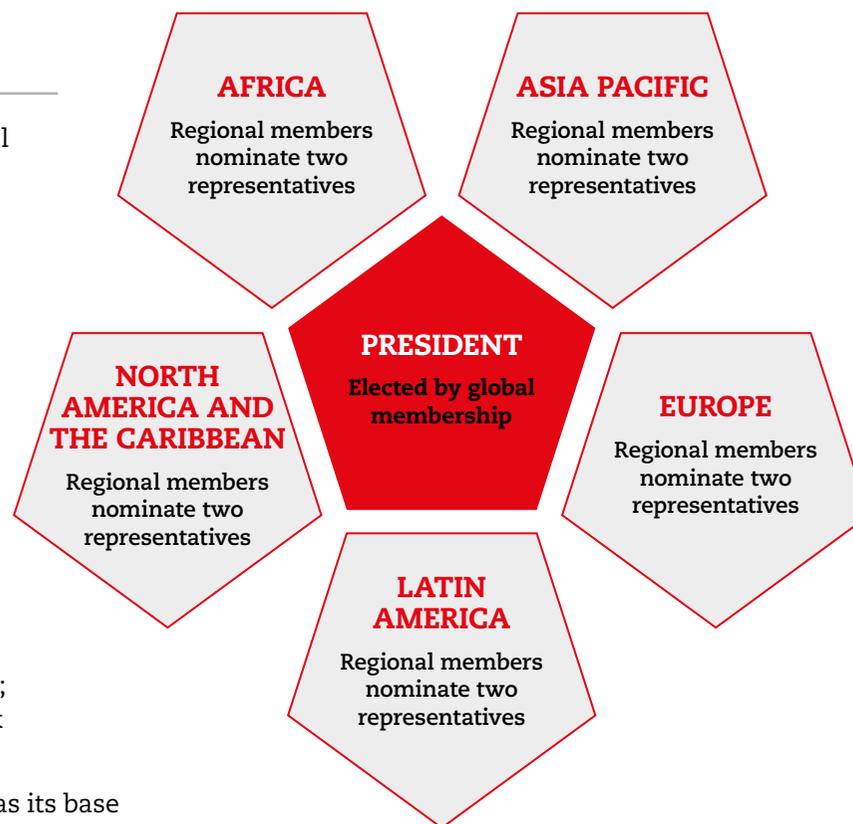
NSWP's **MEMBERS** are local, national and regional sex worker organisations and networks, across five regions: Africa; Asia Pacific; Europe (including Eastern Europe and Central Asia); Latin America; and North America and the Caribbean. All member organisations are required to endorse NSWP's core values and *Consensus Statement on Sex Work, Human Rights and the Law*. Only sex worker-led organisations have voting rights¹.

REGIONAL NETWORKS are pivotal members of NSWP. NSWP works with and through the regional networks to, in turn, enable them to support national networks and local organisations. Examples of regional networks include the: Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW); African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA); Caribbean Sex Work Coalition (CSWC); International Committee for the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE); Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN); and Latin America Platform of Sex Workers (LAPS / PLAPERTS).

NSWP's **GLOBAL SECRETARIAT** has its base in Edinburgh, Scotland. It comprises of a core team of management, finance, policy, and communications staff, working both from Edinburgh and remotely in their home countries.

NSWP is governed by a **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**. As shown, it comprises a President (elected by the global voting membership) and two representatives from each of the five regions (selected by NSWP regional membership).

Further details about the history, current membership, Secretariat and governance of NSWP are available at: www.nswp.org



¹ Organisations/groups must meet at least two of the three following criteria to qualify as sex worker-led organisations with voting rights, regardless of their self-definition:

1. Decision-making body: 50% or more of the decision-making body must be sex workers (former and current, with an aspiration to include current sex workers although not an absolute requirement). If not, what is the mechanism that ensures sex workers are in control of the organisation's activities and advocacy?
2. Spokespeople: 50% or more of the spokespersons must be sex workers. If not what is the transparent mechanism for ensuring it is the voices of sex workers that are heard?
3. Staff: 33% or more of the staff are sex workers and have the same contracts and working conditions as other staff in the organisation – not only as peer educators paid honorariums or incentives.

MISSION

The mission of NSWP is 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; freedom from punitive laws, policies and practices; and self-determination for sex workers.

CORE VALUES

NSWP's work is based on three core values:

- **Acceptance of sex work as work.**
- **Opposition to all forms of criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work (including sex workers, clients, third parties², families, partners and friends).**
- **Supporting self-organisation and self-determination of sex workers.**

² Managers, brothel keepers, receptionists, maids, drivers, landlords, hotels which rent rooms to sex workers and anyone else who is seen as facilitating sex work.

GOALS

NSWP's work aims to contribute to the following goals:

- 1 Human rights:** Sex workers' human rights are promoted and protected.
- 2 Health:** Sex workers have universal access to health services, including for HIV.
- 3 Labour:** Sex work is recognised as work.
- 4 Stigma and discrimination:** Sex workers live free from stigma and discrimination.
- 5 Criminalisation and legal oppression:** Sex work is not criminalised and sex workers do not face legal punishment.
- 6 Violence:** Sex workers live free from all types of violence.
- 7 Trafficking and migration:** Sex work is not conflated with trafficking and sex workers can move and migrate freely.
- 8 Economic empowerment:** Sex workers have free choice of employment and economic security.

Theory of Change

NSWP's Theory of Change is provided on the following pages – first as an illustration, second as a diagram. Both versions highlight how, as a global network, NSWP's work focuses on roles such as 'convening', 'strengthening', 'enhancing', 'building' and 'promoting'. Combined, these foster a dynamic and united global sex workers' rights movement that, ultimately, brings positive changes to the lives of sex workers.

NSWP THEORY OF CHANGE

PROBLEMS

DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS
STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE
PUNITIVE LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES
SEX WORK NOT RECOGNISED AS WORK
UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS
LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES
LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

STRATEGIES

1

Convening and strengthening NSWP as a global network committed to the realisation of sex workers' human rights

2

Enhancing the capacity of regional sex worker-led networks and emerging leaders

3

Promoting rights- and evidence-based policies and programmes, for and by sex workers

OUTCOMES

Sex worker-led organisations and networks work as a united global movement

Enhanced capacity to influence policy and programming at regional and national levels

Enhanced sex worker leadership and representation at national, regional and global levels

Improved engagement in policy-making and programming

Policy-makers and programme managers develop and implement rights-based practices

IMPACTS

INCREASED RESPECT FOR SEX WORKER RIGHTS

DECREASED STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

BETTER LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

GREATER RECOGNITION OF SEX WORK AS WORK

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

BETTER ACCESS TO SERVICE AND SUPPORT

INCREASED MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

INPUTS

SEX WORKERS VOICES

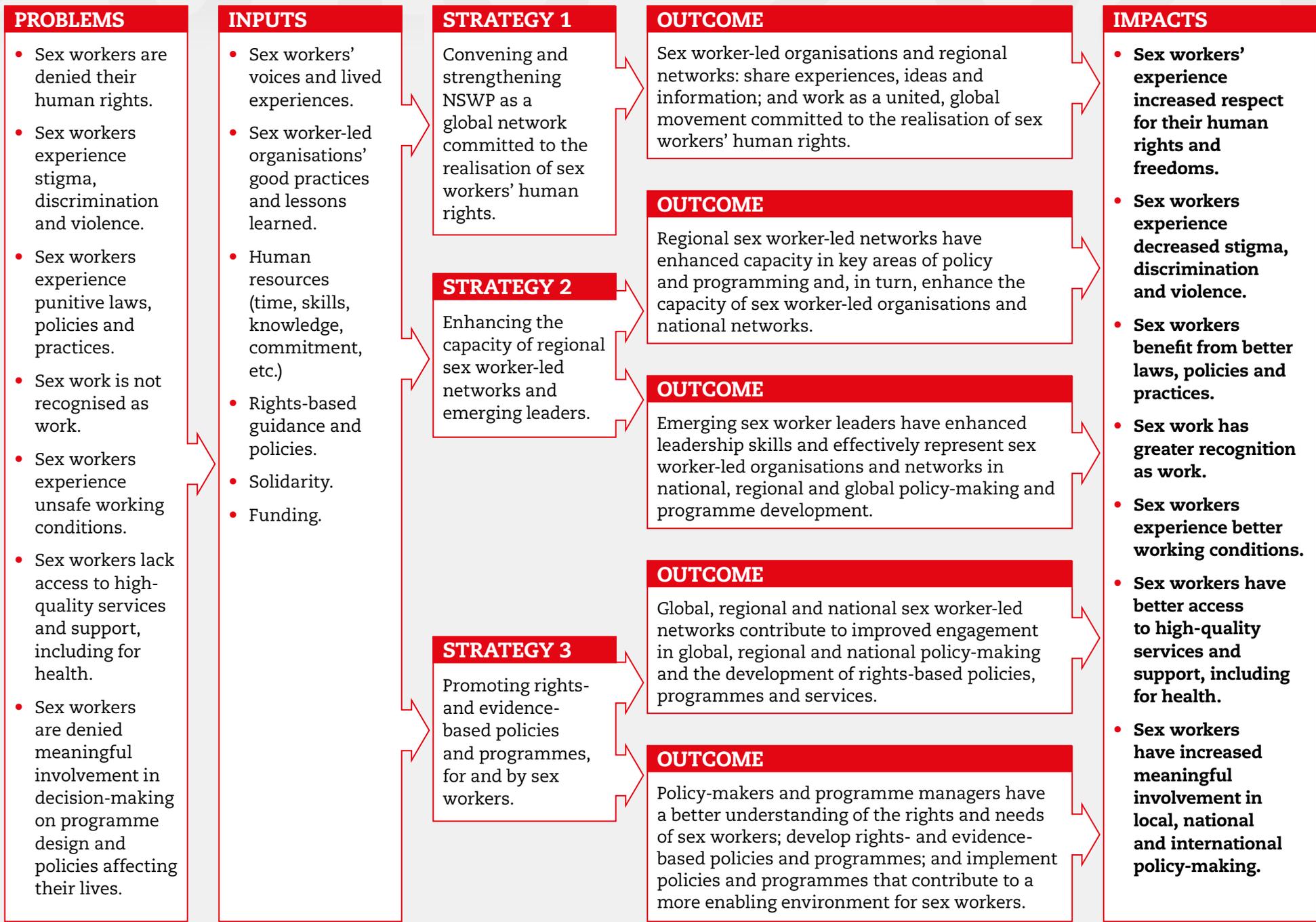
HUMAN RESOURCES

GOOD PRACTICE

RIGHTS-BASED GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

SOLIDARITY

FUNDING



THE PROBLEMS

NSWP's Strategic Plan responds to major challenges faced by sex workers across the world. According to consultations with NSWP's members, these challenges are expected to continue – and, in some cases, worsen – in 2016–20.

As individuals, sex workers are routinely denied their human rights. In most contexts, they face punitive laws, policies and practices. Within their daily lives, they experience stigma, discrimination and violence. As a result, sex workers often lack access to appropriate and quality services and support, including for health. This can have significant negative consequences. For example, evidence indicates that, worldwide, HIV prevalence is 12 times higher among sex workers than the general population³.

A fundamental challenge is that sex work is not recognised as work and that sex workers experience unsafe working conditions. Furthermore, sex workers are persistently denied meaningful involvement in decision-making on the programmes and policies that affect their lives.

As organisations, sex worker groups and networks also face multiple challenges. They often operate in hostile environments – where it is illegal and/or highly challenging for them to register and obtain funding to undertake advocacy and provide services. They frequently face disrespect from other stakeholders. Some also have limited access to capacity building in fundraising, financial management, governance and other skills needed to secure resources for their work and advocate for their rights.

NSWP's Strategic Plan will be carried out in a changing and complex external environment. The world is turning its attention from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is also accelerated action for specific targets, such as the United Nations' strategy to 'fast track' the global response to HIV, including by prioritising countries and setting ambitious targets for treatment⁴. It is critical that, within such initiatives, countries and marginalised communities – including sex workers – are not left behind.

In many countries, criminalisation and oppressive legislation against sex work – such as the 'Nordic model'⁵ – will likely continue or be introduced. There will be changes in the scale and patterns of funding, including among institutions – such as The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – that are vital for sex work projects. Meanwhile, individual donors and governments may maintain harmful anti-prostitution policies.

As outlined, in 2016–20, to address these multiple challenges, NSWP will focus on eight goals. These provide a broad agenda to advocate on the full breadth of sex workers' rights and needs. Each year, NSWP's Board of Directors will identify priorities to be set out in an Annual Advocacy Plan.

³ *The Gap Report*, UNAIDS (2014).

⁴ *Fast Track: Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2015*, UNAIDS (2014)

⁵ Through this model, countries criminalise clients and third parties, while sex workers are not directly criminalised.

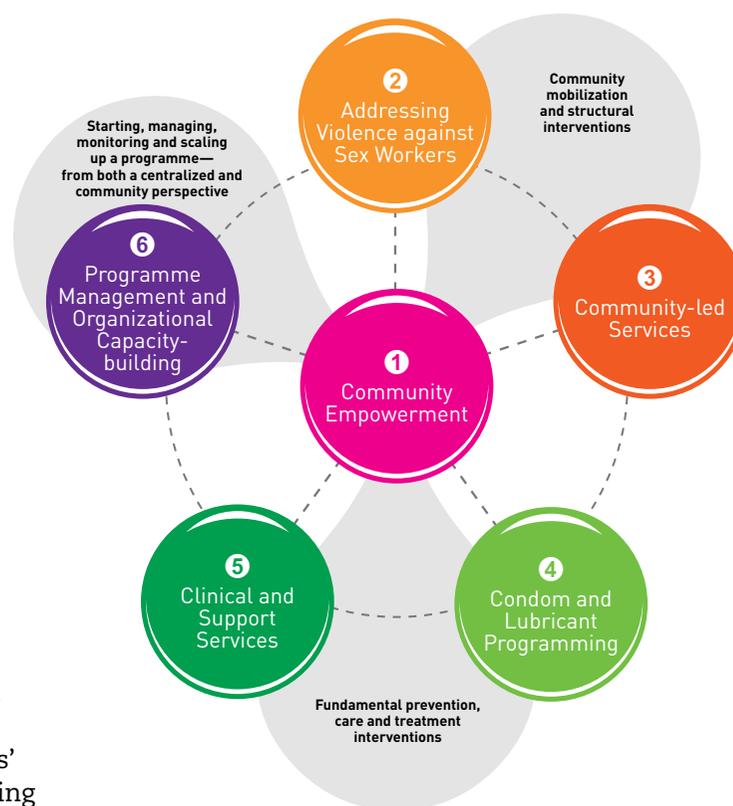
THE INPUTS

While the challenges facing NSWSP are immense, sex workers – and their organisations and networks – bring a powerful wealth of resources to their response.

At the heart of NSWSP are the voices and lived experiences of sex workers through our membership. Their fundamental understanding and expertise have produced core advocacy tools, documented good practices and influenced normative guidance that now form the foundations of NSWSP’s work (see box). NSWSP will continue to advocate for the utilisation of rights-based guidelines and continue to build partnerships and alliances to achieve that end.

As of 2016, NSWSP members may benefit from the growing willingness of some donors to fund evidence-based sex worker-led programmes. They may also benefit from some decision-makers’ commitment to respecting and promoting existing policies and conventions that promote sex workers’ rights.

SWIT: A rights-based approach to programmes for sex workers should include these six components:



Core foundation documents and normative guidance

In 2016–20, much of NSWSP’s work will focus on dissemination, advocacy, capacity building, rolling out and scaling-up good practice and guidance. Important examples that will inform NSWSP’s work include:

- **The Consensus Statement on Sex Work, Human Rights and the Law** produced by NSWSP after an 18-month global consultation among NSWSP members. This addresses eight fundamental rights of sex workers and sets out agreed positions on how those rights can be respected, protected and fulfilled.
- **The Sex Worker Implementation Tool (the SWIT)** produced by UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, the World Bank and NSWSP, with significant sex worker participation, including an NSWSP consultation in 40 countries. This outlines six components that add up to a comprehensive, rights and evidence-based approach to programmes for sex workers.
- **Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations** produced by WHO and bringing together existing guidance relevant to five key populations.

THE STRATEGIES, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

STRATEGY 1:

Convening and strengthening NSWP as a global network committed to the realisation of sex workers' human rights.

OUTCOME 1:

Sex worker-led organisations and regional networks: share experiences, ideas and information; and work as a united, global movement committed to the realisation of sex workers' human rights

Strategy 1 will be achieved through action in the following areas (with examples of activities):

1.1 NSWP membership

- Maintaining an accountable and transparent NSWP membership system.
- Better articulating the benefits of NSWP membership and encouraging more organisations to join both the regional and global networks.
- Strengthening the links between NSWP members in countries and the regional sex worker-led networks.

1.2 Communications

- Improving the accessibility of NSWP publications, including by producing advocacy tools that target different audiences and are shorter and simpler.
- Strengthening the systematic dissemination of NSWP publications, including among members.
- Maintaining and moderating NSWP's multi-lingual website, listservs and social media.
- Developing thematic communication platforms for members, such as NSWP+ (for sex workers living with HIV).
- Maintaining and managing NSWP's system of Regional Correspondents (who provide first-hand coverage of issues specific to their country or region).
- Developing and implementing an internal and external Communications Strategy.
- Developing an NSWP Style Guide to support the consistent use of language and reference to core sex worker-led tools.

1.3 NSWP Secretariat

- Maintaining high-quality NSWP Secretariat functions and systems, including in: membership management; operational management (including finance and administration); and programme management (including resource mobilisation, donor relations, technical support and policy analysis).
- Maintaining the NSWP server and archive.
- Reviewing and updating the NSWP *Organisational Development and Operational Handbook*.

1.4 NSWP governance

- Organising an annual meeting of the NSWP Board of Directors, including preparing the agenda.
- Facilitating the election of the NSWP President and the nomination of the regional representatives on the Board of Directors.
- Strengthening the functioning of the NSWP Board of Directors through improved induction and a skills audit.
- Strengthening information sharing systems both: between the NSWP Board of Directors and the NSWP Secretariat; and within the NSWP Board of Directors.

- Strengthening the connection between the regional representatives on the NSW Board of Directors and the regional sex worker-led networks.

1.5 Institutional alliances

- Building solidarity for sex workers by maintaining strong working relationships and ensuring close alignment on common issues with key international partners. Notably, this includes the global networks representing other key populations – people who use drugs, gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, and people living with HIV.

MAKING CHANGE:

Strategy 1 – By ensuring a strong infrastructure of membership, Secretariat, governance, communications and institutional alliances – will ensure that NSW is a robust and well-informed global network. It will have the people and systems needed to advocate for and support the implementation of evidence and rights-based responses for sex workers.

ACHIEVING IMPACT:

Strategy 1 will contribute to NSW's overall, positive impact on the lives of sex workers. This includes that sex workers:

- experience increased respect for their human rights and freedoms;
- experience decreased stigma, discrimination and violence;
- benefit from better laws, policies and practices;
- benefit from sex work having greater recognition as work;
- experience better working conditions;
- have better access to high-quality services and support, including for health;
- have increased meaningful involvement in local, national and international policy-making.

STRATEGY 2:

Enhancing the capacity of regional sex worker-led networks and emerging leaders.

OUTCOME 2a:

Regional sex worker-led networks have enhanced capacity in key areas of policy and programming and, in turn, enhance the capacity of sex worker-led organisations and networks in their regions.

Strategy 2 will be achieved through action in the following areas (with examples of activities):

2.1 Regional sex worker-led networks

- Providing tailor-made technical and organisational support to address the needs and build the autonomy of individual regional sex worker-led networks. Examples include in relation to: governance; membership; financial management and budgeting; organisational development; change management; strategic planning; proposal development; donor reporting; development of sub-regional network structures; and alliance-building with other regional organisations.
- Supporting South-South and peer-based capacity building by regional and, in turn, national sex worker-led organisations – to enhance their evidence and rights-based advocacy and programmes. Examples of key approaches include:
 - The Sex Worker Academy Africa. This started through collaboration between regional sex worker-led networks in Asia Pacific and Africa. The model – developed by the African Sex Workers Alliance and combining a comprehensive curriculum (delivered by sex workers) and demonstration sites – has significant potential for scale-up and adaptation.
 - Peer-led training in partnership with technical partners, such as capacity building workshops on The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that are run by regional sex worker-led networks in collaboration with external resource people – to foster partnership and mutual learning, while building the expertise of national organisations and networks.
- Continuing to coordinate the involvement of sex worker organisations in multi-region programmes, such as Bridging the Gaps, that address the intersection of sex workers and other key populations.
- Continuing to coordinate consortia of global and regional sex worker-led organisations to develop and implement collaborative programmes to provide core and programmatic funding, such as through the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund.
- Ensuring that all NSWP capacity building is based on agreed good practice approaches and tools, such as the *Sex Worker Implementation Tool (the SWIT)*.

OUTCOME 2b:

Emerging sex worker leaders have enhanced leadership skills and effectively represent sex worker-led organisations and networks in national, regional and global policy-making and programme development.

2.2 Emerging sex worker leaders

- Facilitating mentoring, capacity building (such as on network management) and learning opportunities (such as participation in international meetings) for emerging sex worker leaders. Based on peer learning (rather than a formal training programme), such as with established regional sex worker leaders mentoring emerging national leaders.

MAKING CHANGE:

Strategy 2 – by providing sex worker organisations, networks and emerging leaders with increased capacity – will ensure that regional and national sex worker movements have the high-quality knowledge and skills needed to successfully engage in policy-making and programming. This, in turn, will strengthen and sustain the global sex workers' rights movement.

ACHIEVING IMPACT:

Strategy 2 will contribute to NSWSP's overall, positive impact on the lives of sex workers. This includes that sex workers:

- experience increased respect for their human rights and freedoms;
- experience decreased stigma, discrimination and violence;
- benefit from better laws, policies and practices;
- benefit from sex work having greater recognition as work;
- experience better working conditions;
- have better access to high-quality services and support, including for health;
- have increased meaningful involvement in local, national and international policy-making.

STRATEGY 3:

Promoting rights- and evidence-based policies and programmes for and by sex workers.

OUTCOME 3:

Policy-makers and programme managers: have a better understanding of the rights and needs of sex workers; develop rights and evidence-based policies and programmes; and implement policies and programmes that contribute to a more enabling environment for sex workers.

Strategy 3 will be achieved through action in the following areas (with examples of activities):

3.1 Policy and programme forums

- Promoting and ensuring the fulfilment of the principles of sex worker self-determination and meaningful involvement in policy and programme forums at all levels.
- Ensuring that NSWP advocacy is consistent with the identified needs of sex workers, through systematic use of the *Consensus Statement on Sex Work, Human Rights and the Law*.
- Working with national, regional and international agencies to develop and/or implement good practice and rights-based guidance for sex workers, such as the *Sex Worker Implementation Tool (the SWIT)*.

- Influencing the development of good practice international policies – and the implementation of good practice resources, such as *Sex Worker Implementation Tool (the SWIT)* – through global and regional sex worker engagement in the UNAIDS Steering Committee on HIV and Sex Work.
- Ensuring that The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is responsive to needs of sex workers through engagement in the Community, Rights and Gender Advisory Group and other national, regional and global mechanisms, and through promotion of the *Sex Worker Implementation Tool (the SWIT)*.

3.2 Community consultations

- Coordinating consultations across all five of NSWP's regions to identify the lived experiences and good practices of sex worker-led organisations in relation to key advocacy themes.
- Continuing to use NSWP's established consultation method (of global consultants, regional consultants and national key informants) and to ensure inclusive processes, such as in relation to gender and key populations.

- Ensuring the on-going promotion and use of reports resulting from NSWP consultations. These may address the on-going, core work of the network (such as sex worker-led HIV programming) or shorter-term, technical issues where rapid input is needed (such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for sex workers).

3.3 Advocacy tools

- Developing a range of thematic advocacy tools to support sex workers, including community guides that are short and in plain English.
- Producing *Smart Guides* for sex workers that are in plain English, provide a clear and step-by-step breakdown of information (such as on sustainable funding or The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) and support community advocacy.
- Developing a dissemination plan and supporting sex worker-led regional networks and national organisations to promote, translate and roll-out the use of NSWP's advocacy tools.

Reflecting and learning

The NSW Strategic Plan 2016-20 is supported by a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that enables the network and its members to reflect and learn as they implement the strategy. The Framework provides a tool for NSW to assess and report on its results and progress. It includes indicators by which to measure the network's outcomes. It also outlines how NSW will produce detailed and analytical case studies of key initiatives – to show how its Theory of Change operates in practice and to demonstrate the impact of its work on the lives of sex workers.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is available on the NSW website.

3.4 Specific advocacy actions

- Coordinating and/or leading advocacy campaigns to support action by other global organisations (such as Amnesty International) in support of the rights of sex workers.
- Coordinating and/or leading advocacy campaigns to support NSW members in contexts where it is unsafe or unfeasible for the organisations to take action themselves.

3.5 External information sharing

- Producing publications to inform and influence external stakeholders in relation to sex work and related issues. Includes the Sex Work Digest – a compendium of news articles and recent publications.

3.6 Alliances with other movements

- Further exploring and developing alliances with movements of relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals – such those related to women, labour, human rights and religious leaders – to build a broader base of support for sex workers' rights.

3.7 Global mobilisation activities

- Strengthening the coordinated promotion of relevant global mobilisation events, such as the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers (17 December).

MAKING CHANGE:

Strategy 3 – by ensuring meaningful and well-informed sex worker engagement in policy-making and programming, combined with the mobilisation of other stakeholders and movements – will ensure the development and implementation of policies and programmes that are rooted in the realities of sex workers lives and, in turn, bring them concrete benefits.

ACHIEVING IMPACT:

Strategy 3 will contribute to NSW's overall, positive impact on the lives of sex workers. This includes that sex workers:

- experience increased respect for their human rights and freedoms;
- experience decreased stigma, discrimination and violence;
- benefit from better laws, policies and practices;
- benefit from sex work having greater recognition as work;
- experience better working conditions;
- have better access to high-quality services and support, including for health;
- have increased meaningful involvement in local, national and international policy-making.



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