

SMART SEX WORKER'S GUIDE

TO CHALLENGING THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NORDIC MODEL

The 'Nordic Model' is used to describe the approach of criminalising the clients of sex workers. It aims to eradicate sex work completely. Under this framework all sex workers are viewed as victims lacking agency, and sex work is seen as something that is impossible to choose or to consent to.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NORDIC MODEL:



LACK OF A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Within the Nordic Model, sex workers are denied rights, their preferred terminology or the space to voice their narratives.



MORE RAIDS ON SEX WORKERS' WORKPLACES

Sex workers are vulnerable to having their assets and funds seized. In some cases, religious organisations profit directly from fines levied by courts.



LACK OF ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

In countries where the Nordic Model has been introduced, sex workers face increased barriers to accessing healthcare.



INCREASED SOCIAL STIGMA

While the aim is to shift the 'blame' onto clients under the Nordic Model, stigma against sex workers has not been removed but has increased. Stigma and discrimination against sex workers has been officially encouraged by governments.



THE EXCLUSION AND DISMISSAL OF SEX WORKER PERSPECTIVES

In an environment where sex workers are seen as unqualified to consent, discussions around sex work law reform are hijacked by non-sex workers.



INCREASED POWER TO POLICE, POLICING AND SURVEILLANCE

The Nordic Model requires substantial financial resources to enable increased racial profiling and deportation of migrant sex workers. Increased levels of discrimination and state intervention in sex workers' lives.



LACK OF STATE RESPONSIBILITY

Reducing demand is over-simplistically represented as a way to address the lack of labour and human rights protections for workers. 'End Demand' offers a way for states to absolve themselves of responsibility for rights violations and exploitation, and allows them to avoid addressing the structural issues necessary to ensure equality.



THE VICTIM NARRATIVE

Sex workers' human right to free choice of occupation is ignored, their voices silenced and disregarded. Sex workers' experiences of harm are weaponised against them, used as an argument to promote the Nordic Model which harms them.



ATTITUDES AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS AND POLICE

Community-based research from Sweden showed that sex workers' biggest concerns were prejudice from authorities – especially social services and the police – resulting in sex workers being less likely to report crimes committed against them, to seek support or legal assistance.

CHALLENGING STRATEGIES

CHALLENGING THE LANGUAGE

Terminology is instrumental in building up the propaganda necessary to push for the introduction of the Nordic Model. Existing stereotypes and misunderstandings are used to maintain state control over sex workers and exclude them from policy debates.



LEGAL PRINCIPLES

The Nordic Model is presented as a 'middle ground' between decriminalisation and criminalisation. This is a complete misrepresentation as it causes significant harms to sex workers and is a misuse of criminal law to restrict the sexual autonomy of adults. Even if introduced through 'anti-trafficking' law, trafficking is already illegal so additional criminalisation is redundant.

VISIBLE PROTESTS

In many countries, taking to the streets is a way sex workers can bring attention to their cause if they are denied other platforms. Through protest, sex workers demonstrate agency, defying the victim narrative underpinning the Nordic Model.



USING NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS TO CHALLENGE THE NORDIC MODEL

Sex worker-led organisations in many countries have used their national constitutions as a key tool in challenging the Nordic Model and advocating for their rights.

SHARING PERSONAL NARRATIVES TO DISPEL MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Personal stories resonate with audiences and can help the public understand why sex workers do not want the Nordic Model. It is important to ensure a diverse range of voices that cannot be narrowly labelled or stereotyped.



RESEARCH

The Nordic Model is based on assumptions, stereotypes and misconceptions. Therefore it can be challenged by research and evidence, including research conducted by sex worker-led organisations to advocate and present their perspective.

SEX WORK IS WORK: SEX WORKERS SAY **NO** TO THE NORDIC MODEL!

To learn more about challenging the Nordic Model, read NSWP's Smart Sex Worker's Guide to Challenging the introduction of the Nordic Model www.nswp.org/resource/smart-sex-workers-guide-challenging-the-introduction-the-nordic-model or at <http://bit.ly/nswp-nordic>

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Global Network of Sex Work Projects
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