

Thai Senate delegation on the process of public participation SWOP June 2002

Hearing the voices of sex workers-support to be heard

Sex workers need to be resourced to participate in consultation process:

1. Support needs to be provided to facilitate sex worker participation:

- 1 a. Organisations of sex workers/peers need to be funded and properly resourced with training, expertise, and access to professional development
- 2a. Barriers to sex worker participation should be minimised-
 - protection of individual privacy,
 - fears for safety/prosecution,
 - amnesty during and following process,
 - fear of stigma and discrimination
 - loss of their job, fear of retribution from co-workers

2. Skills need to be developed

Community consultation skills –

- meeting skills,
- decision making skills- (debating,voting, consensus models, recommendation models, etc)
- self-documentation through research for and by the community, - documentary video/book writing, media releases controlled by sex workers

Communication skills: written, public speaking, working with media, networking, liaising authorities or government

3. Rights and responsibilities need to be clearly set out

4. Education on the existing legislation, and regulatory system needs to be provided to all participants, sex workers, brothel owners, clients, communities, authorities

5. Sex workers should be clearly placed at the centre of the debate/consultation as they are trult the expert witnesses to the impact of public policy on prostitution

6. International declarations of rights should become the guiding principle to which consultative processes aspire: without a greater goal, there is no motivation when difficulties arise.