



**INTERNATIONAL  
SEX WORKER  
HARM REDUCTION  
CAUCUS**

**STATEMENT**

Prepared for the International Harm Reduction Association's 19th International Conference  
Harm Reduction 2008  
Barcelona, Spain, May 11 to 15, 2008

The International Sex Worker Harm Reduction Caucus is a working group of sex workers and sex worker rights advocates who are committed to increasing the participation of sex workers and their organizations in discussions of harm reduction at the international level. We are pleased to present the following key messages about sex workers rights and harm reduction issues to delegates and participants in Barcelona:

► **Human rights for sex workers:** Recognizing and ensuring the protection of sex workers' human rights is essential to promoting health and safety. Ensuring that sex workers have full enjoyment of their human rights is the best way to reduce or eliminate the discrimination and abuse to which sex workers are often subjected and to improve access to health and social services.

► **Sex workers are part of the solution:** Sex worker leadership and empowerment are essential in fighting HIV and discrimination. Sex workers are their own best resource—they should be at the forefront of developing and implementing the programs and policies that impact their lives. It is only by empowering sex workers to speak for themselves and developing sex worker leadership that stigma and rights violations will be stopped.

► **Support self-representation of sex work experiences and culture:** A rich tradition of cultural representation (books, films, online presentations, festivals, dance) exists in sex worker communities and organizations all over the world. This year in Barcelona we inaugurate our first sex work and harm reduction film festival to celebrate sex worker self-representation on this topic. Cultural expression makes the aims of our rights based movement more accessible to people who may not be familiar with the realities of sex workers' experience and is an essential part of our struggle for rights and change.

► **Sex work is work, not "harm":** Sex work (itself) is not inherently harmful. The reasons people engage in sex work vary widely, as do the reasons people chose a variety of other jobs. Many sex worker health and rights organizations use a harm reduction framework when they address the needs of sex workers. Other sex worker organizations have a less comfortable relationship with harm reduction because "harm" is sometimes erroneously defined as sex work or sex workers (themselves). We are resolute that any harm associated with sex work results from repressive environments in which sex work is not recognized as work, and because sex workers lack basic human rights and access to appropriate health services.

► **Labour rights for sex workers:** Sex work should be recognized as work in order to ensure safe and appropriate working conditions. The lack of labour rights leaves sex workers vulnerable to abuse and poor working conditions. Sex work should not be "over-regulated" or subject to special restrictions because of discriminatory fears about sex work and sex workers. Sex work should be treated like other forms of labour.

In addition, following consultation during *Harm Reduction 2008: IHRA's 19th International Conference* we would like to affirm that sex workers are key players in promoting human rights and harm reduction, and are pleased to do so in conjunction with allies who share our philosophies and commitment to justice.

**"Nothing about us, without us."**

## Organizations

GENERA  
LICIT  
Best Practices Policy Project  
Different Avenues  
Sex Worker Outreach Project (SWOP)  
SWOP-LA  
SWOP-Chicago  
SWOP-USA  
SWOP-Las Vegas  
Desiree Alliance  
New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC)  
NZPC Palmerston North  
NZPC New Plymouth  
NZPC Tauranga  
NZPC Christchurch  
NZPC Dunedin  
Stella, Canada  
Phoenix Plus  
Murmansk  
Ukrainian Harm Reduction Association  
Dora Weiner Foundation  
Femmes de droits, droits des femmes  
International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE)  
Homeless Youth Alliance  
Power Inside  
Sahayatrika Network for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Women  
Collective of Sex Workers and Supporters (COSWAS)  
Sex workers concern organization in Hong Kong  
Prostitution, Alternatives, Counseling and Education (PACE)  
Scottish Prostitutes Education Project  
Public Foundation ASTERIA  
Bay Area Sex Workers Advocacy Network  
Sex Worker Action New York (SWANK)  
Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS)  
Citiwide Harm Reduction, NY  
Karnataka Sexworkers Union  
Sangama  
Aneka  
International Union of Sex Workers  
HIPS (Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive)  
VIP LOUNGE  
Davida - Prostitution, Civil Rights, Health  
Scarlet Alliance, the Australian Sex Workers' Association  
Zi Teng  
SWAN  
Intermedicina

## Individuals

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