SEX WORKERS BEAR A DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND HIV
STOP MARGINALIZATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS
Sex Workers are largely stigmatized and face all sorts of violence
WHO ARE WE?
WE FACE VIOLENCE
PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, ECONOMIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL

Sexual, Psychological, Physical

“They knocked on the door and abused us saying ‘randi bhalu’ (‘whore’). Then they took us to the toilet and made us naked… The clients had already run away. We thought that they would not catch us because the clients were not there. They kicked us with their boots and beat and hit us with sticks. I sprained my leg. They also took Rs.4000 (42 USD).”
– a disco based female respondent in Nepal.

Economic

“When I asked for my fee from the client, he showed me a gun and a police officer’s ID card.” – female respondent from Indonesia
AND ALL SORTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

In Health Care Settings

“When I went to hospital (after being raped) the medical personnel did not respond properly. Blood was coming out of my anus. It needed stitching but the staff did not take it seriously. They asked why I was doing anal sex, being a boy… But one woman said that (the staff) had to behave in a good manner. Then they put in the stitches.”

– male respondent from Nepal?
AND ALL SORTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE
By society and family

“I was helping at a funeral. People are preparing to cook (a special dish). I was trying to help in cutting onions. One lady stopped me and told me to wear gloves. She is an old lady and she can tell me my hands are not clean but didn’t ask me to wash with soap and water. But she asked me to wear gloves. I wore gloves and cut onions. When I look at other people, none of them wore gloves.” – transgender respondent from Myanmar
AND ALL SORTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

Because of being HIV +

“When I told the doctor I was HIV positive, immediately he… put on a mask and gloves and chased me from there, saying that HIV positive people were not treated there.” - female respondent
AND ALL SORTS OF DISCRIMINATION

Being judged for who we are or what we do

“Four police opened my clothes asking ‘are you boy or girl?’ and beat me with a long bamboo stick… Some of them slapped my face with their hand. Then they called me (abusive names).– transgender respondent from Nepal
WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?
It’s what this project is about
STRONG COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

“This research format is good because it engages the community. You are asking the community to be the participant and also facilitate information gathering. They are the best in understanding sex work and violence “

[Mona, TG peer researcher, Indonesia]
"I learnt how to face difficult situations while interviewing, reading the body language of the interviewee. The role play helped a lot."

[Eric, MSW Peer researcher, Indonesia]
WORKING TOGETHER
Learning from different people and different perspectives
WAY FORWARD
USE THE EVIDENCE

TO increase everyone’s awareness of the violence we face, which affects our daily lives and our basic rights as human beings.

TO create alliances and work in partnership to protect our rights.

"Human rights are rights that cannot be forced by anybody or rights that cannot be bought by anything because they are obtained by human beings at the time they’re born, without considering their gender, ethnic group or race. … As a good citizen, we all possess all rights given by the Government, although we are sex workers.“

Transgender respondent from Indonesia.
STOP MARGINALIZATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS
CLOSING REMARKS
SEX WORKERS BEAR A DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND HIV
WE NEED TO SCALE UP THE RESPONSE TOWARDS IMPROVING SEX WORKERS RIGHTS
WE NEED TO SCALE UP THE RESPONSE TOWARDS IMPROVING HIV SERVICES FOR SEX WORKERS
WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN
WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

Why do a research on violence against sex workers?
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1- Documenting the evidence
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
2- Building Partnerships
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

3- Generate Change

TRANSFORM THE FINDINGS INTO POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES THAT WILL PROTECT SEX WORKERS FROM VIOLENCE
HOW HAVE WE DONE IT?
FIRST – SEARCHING FOR REGIONAL PARTNERS

We needed

Strong Community Involvement and Participation

Alliances in the UN: one agency can’t do it alone

Strong Technical expertise
SECOND – IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL COUNTRIES

We needed

Strong networks of sex workers

Good capacity in Government and UN country offices

Balanced geographic distribution

Indonesia
Myanmar
Nepal
Sri Lanka
THIRD – BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Formed Steering Committee

ROLE: Overall management, strategic and technical guidance, Oversight
OVERALL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

NWG = National Working Groups

**Regional Steering Committee**
UNDP APRC, UNFPA APRO
APNSW/CASAM, P4P

**ROLE:** Overall management, strategic and technical guidance, oversight

**Indonesia NWG**
Co-chairs: NAC & OPSI
Lead Researcher: Pak Gambit

**Sri Lanka NWG**
Co-Chairs: UNFPA and SW rep
Lead Researchers: Jodi Miller & Nilu Abeyratne

**Myanmar NWG**
Co-chairs: UNDP and NAP
Lead Researcher: Cath Slugget and Dr KSSH

**Nepal NWG**
Co-chairs: NCASC & JMMS
Lead researcher: Annie George and Sumi Devkota

**ROLE NWG:** Multi stakeholder ownership of the research in country
WHAT HAVE WE DONE?
PRIMARY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH SEX WORKERS ON VIOLENCE

Qualitative interviews

HIV +

Myanmar
Nepal
Sri Lanka
Indonesia
Involvement of peer sex workers in implementing the research forced us review the methodology anew. How do you break up the technical language so that sex workers internalize and understand it? We needed to transition the peer researcher from being an activist to becoming a researcher, those are fundamentally different approaches.

[Laxmi Murthy, Regional Steering Committee Member CASAM]
Built a multi-layered partnership

REGIONAL & COUNTRY LEVEL

Regional Steering Committee

Communities

Countries

Writing up the research
OUTPUTS

1. Regional Report on the Findings
1. Regional Report on the Process
4. National Reports on country findings
WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN SEX WORK?

When I was working as a maid, washing and ironing clothes, I only got paid for 200,000 IDR [20 USD]. How can I afford my daily needs? My child had to drink two cans of milk in a week; I had no money to visit my home in the village. That’s why I asked a friend about another job and she suggested that I get into this job. - Female respondent from Indonesia.
ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FEMALE, MALE AND TRANSGENDER EXPERIENCES?
IMPUNITY TOWARDS PERPETRATORS

“I think that other people are violent towards us because of police behaviour. Police hate us and punish us, and therefore, the general public has negative attitudes towards us.”
LESSONS LEARNED
“We had different perspectives on how the validation process must be conducted with the community. Building from the Indonesia experience we fine tuned the model and introduced it to other countries.” [Meena Seshu, Regional Steering Committee Member]
MULTI LAYERED COMPLEX ISSUES
We were faced with the challenge of turnover of consultants on the project. We consistently re-engaged, re-briefed people, got them to engage with the complexity of the initiative. RSC members took on the responsibility of inducting new people, allowing for some amount of seamless transition.

[Julia Cabassi, UNFPA, RSC Member]
PLANTED SEEDS TO BUILD A NEW FUTURE
FREE OF VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION
THANK YOU