

POSITIVE LIVING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

#KOMESHACORONA



@KESWA

June 2nd: We mark International Sex Workers' Day by dedicating this edition to sex workers living with HIV

CHECK THIS OUT!

Share this infographic by UNAIDS and NSWP on [Sex Workers' Rights](#).

ASWA has developed [safety tips for sex workers](#) in Africa.

Scarlet Alliance Australia has a guide on [getting started in online/non-contact work](#).

Sex Work Expertise in the Netherlands is providing financial and legal information on [income support for sex workers](#).

California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance has shared a [resource for undocumented people](#), including sex workers.

[Project X, Singapore](#) are sharing tips on [how to deal with stress](#) during COVID-19.

Watch a powerful video with [practical tips](#) for advocating for sex workers' rights from Sisonke, South Africa.

TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY

Visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#) to find past editions of the newsletter and other resources.

WHAT WE ARE HEARING FROM COMMUNITIES OF SEX WORKERS

“Sex workers are largely feeling anxious, isolated and unsure of if accessing government money will then 'out' them or link the tax office to them at a later date.” - Sex worker organisation, Australia

Rising stigma and violence

- Sex workers in **Ecuador** are now not only labelled as “HIV spreaders” but also “COVID spreaders”. Those living with HIV face additional discrimination and are banned from working from their usual “houses” by the owners.
- With sex work criminalised in many countries, police are using lockdown as an excuse to raid or break down brothels. Sex workers in **Peru** are being arbitrarily detained and facing greater levels of violence.
- In **Uganda, Tanzania** and **Kenya**, with a focus on testing of truck drivers, sex workers are targets of violence and prosecution as truck drivers are some of their main clients.
- In the **US**, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are using the current crisis to gain entry into properties to detain and deport migrant sex workers who are undocumented.

Loss of livelihood and homes

- From **Canada** to **Trinidad** and **Bangladesh** to **Ukraine**, sex workers have lost their livelihoods and also their homes with brothels and hotels being shut down.
- Most governments are excluding sex workers from emergency social protection measures for workers.

Diminishing mental and physical health

- Limited or expensive public transport has meant sex workers living with HIV are unable to pick up ARV refills from health facilities.
- In **Ecuador** and **Kenya**, many report being reluctant to take ARVs on empty stomachs.
- Across **Asia**, many are reporting reduced access to condoms, lubricants, harm reduction services, as well as HIV and STI testing and treatment.
- In **Ukraine**, sex workers are experiencing feelings of isolation, helplessness, fear, as well as depression.

HOW OUR COMMUNITY IS RESPONDING

“Network wide we've distributed nearly \$60,000 to sex workers in crisis. Many of our chapters are distributing food. We've upped our national calls to every other week and our staff are working overtime on digital support. Our outreach volunteers are needed to be out in the world and providing supplies and cash, unfortunately they are unable to shelter in place.” - Sex Workers Outreach Project - USA

In country after country, sex worker-led organisations have been mobilising resources to ensure their members have food, shelter, medications and can pay their rent and bills. Many of them have also set up [emergency funds](#).



L to R: @ PLAPERTS, Ecuador; @ LEGALIFE-UKRAINE.

[LEGALIFE-UKRAINE](#), surveyed their members across 12 regions and developed an action plan to: a) set up virtual platforms to provide information, rights training and psychosocial support; b) respond to basic needs – food, PPE and medicines; and c) ensure mobile and internet access for regional leaders to better support their communities.

Consultorio de primera escucha

...Si tenés consumo problemático

Podés comunicarte con la psicóloga para atención a través de videollamada, solo debes agendar tu turno con la referente Norma.

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sumate, entre nosotras salimos adelante



[PLAPERTS, Ecuador](#) are sharing their stories online to inform the public and policy makers of the challenges they face. They are also providing emotional support, particularly for sex workers living with HIV who are no longer taking their ARVs.

[And Soppeku, Senegal](#) successfully advocated with their Ministry of Health to ensure that sex workers living with HIV received at least 3 months' worth of ARVs so they can remain on treatment. The network also linked up those living with HIV stuck in other regions with peer counsellors in that area for any health or social support.



Globally, [NSWP](#) is documenting the challenges sex workers face, with 156 responses from 55 countries so far. They are reprogramming their work to support regional networks and their national partners, and are continuing their advocacy for the recognition of sex work as work and full decriminalisation.

[KESWA, Kenya](#), are working with Community Advisory Groups across counties to provide members with food vouchers as well as accurate information on how to conduct sex work safely and prevent COVID-19. Nationally, they are raising funds, distributing masks and hand sanitisers, ensuring access to legal support, and campaigning for the safety of sex workers, brothel managers and their clients.

FAMILY PLANNING AND ABORTION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE EVEN DURING #COVID19



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THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SEX WORK DURING #COVID19



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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU AND WANT TO SALUTE YOU – LIKE HEALTH CARE WORKERS YOU ARE ALSO ON THE FRONTLINE.