

Inception workshop: Creating Opportunities?: Economic Empowerment, Political Positioning and Participation of Sex Workers in Kenya and Ethiopia

Kenya 26-29 Sept

Present: Hoymas (John Mathenge, Dennis Nzioka and Erastus Ndunda), VU (Lorraine Nencil, Ida Sabelis and Naomi van Stapele), Keswa (Grace Kamau and Phelister Abdalla), ICRH (Nzioki Kingola).

NOTE: This is the narrative report of the workshop. It reflects the discussions we had. The outcome of our discussions, that is all decisions on all actions, research focus per activity, deadlines and persons responsible, are noted down in the matrix. The organogram adds to these two documents (the narrative report and the matrix) by giving an overview on the division of roles and responsibilities and the decision-making structures within the project. The timeline in excel gives a summary of the planning of the different activities of Phase 1 and 2.

Day 1: 26 September 2014

We started with an introduction of everyone present and a brief overview by Naomi of the project plan.

The overview of the project was followed by a brief discussion on what we mean by 'economic empowerment', and we concluded that it involves much more than 'just money' and that we aim to look for all kinds of factors that impact the economic situations of SWs. We set out to explore the many different ways in which SWs survive, develop livelihoods and cope with economic related crises on a daily basis. This includes self-help groups and other (in-)formal support networks and (im-)material help from NGOs and churches (for instance with regard to health), friends and neighbours.

Hoymas and Keswa then proceeded by giving a brief introduction of the organisations' work and histories.

Phase I

We continued the meeting with discussing the obstacles and enabling factors with regard to SW in Kenya, especially in light of economic empowerment.

The following organisations, processes (or incidents) and documents were mentioned to look into during the first phase of the research:

- Penal Codes that criminalise sex work and homosexuality.
- The Bill of Rights
- Chama Bill (self-help groups – SACCO –, and CBO Bill)
- The devolution of health care (and devolution on the whole, county-level by-laws that impact position of SWs and which contradict national laws for instance)
- Kenya National Aids Strategic Plan (most recent)
- Coercive sterilisation of SWs
- Docs that are lacking, or what is not mentioned in docs (on regulations for instance)
- Churches (that provide health services)
- Newspaper articles (Hoymas and Keswa have clippings)
- PrEP trials and SWs (big debate in Kenya).
- Bio-metric tracking of health data (google groups: resistance from key populations)

After discussing which organisations, documents and processes/incidents would be of interest to look at during the stakeholders analysis, we identified several people who – and organisations that – could be of interest to interview to analyse the disparities between regulations and dominant representations and everyday practices.

Persons of interest to interview in December:

The definite list of people to be interviewed will be compiled by Naomi with help from Hoymas and Keswa, based on the preliminary stakeholders-analysis (to be completed by mid-December).

Naomi will send a reminder to receive relevant documents for the Stakeholders-analysis by end of October, and will also ask for criteria from Hoymas and Keswa that need to be included in the job description for the research coordinator. The interview-team consists of: Naomi, Erastus and Grace. The Job Description will be send out by early November so that interviews can take place in the week of 15 December. The research assistant will be paid via Hoymas, because Hoymas is a consortium partner (requirement to account for payments).

Day 2: 27 September 2014

Phase 2

The conceptual framework of '*economy of makeshifts*' (used in analyses of homelessness in US) is a theory that could be helpful in our research. Lorraine will share the article with the research team. We discussed that we would like to look at individual economies from a more holistic viewpoint, so it reflects the reality of sex workers; that is the economies that people practise in their daily lives to survive and develop livelihoods. If we know more about these everyday practises we can later develop intervention based on this type of 'bottom-up' knowledge.

Points that were raised to look into:

- How many days do SWs work? Consumption needs/patterns (daily, weekly, monthly and so on), saving patterns, financial planning: financial literacy.
- Sources of income (other businesses for instance).
- Skills, knowledge, experience (history) with regard to businesses and financial planning.
- Part of (several) self-help groups, (different) bank accounts (check SW-friendly banks), micro-credit schemes (SACCO) government funds.
- Non-monetary contributions and support networks (child care, neighbour, friends, fellow SWs, family, organisations – clothes etc. –, health care, lovers: 'come we stay').

During the above discussion it was mentioned that it is harder for MSM than for female SWs to start businesses because of stigmatisation by potential customers. Also, Hoymas and Keswa mentioned that many SWs they work with do not even know how much they earn in a day. They stressed the importance of the data that would come out of this research for their own economic empowerment programmes and capacity building.

They differentiated between the following themes as factors that impact the economic empowerment of SWs from the perspectives of SWs themselves:

- Self-esteem
- Sense of belonging
- Knowledge about rights
- Knowledge about opportunities/ services

We agreed to focus on 50% male and 50% female SWs during the phase of Participant Observation. Both Hoymas and Keswa are interested in expanding their networks in marginalised areas (such as ghettos), and among men and women who engage in SW but who

may not identify as such. Naomi provided an example for participant observation at/ ethnographic research with a self-help group of women in Mathare who all engaged in SW without identifying themselves as SWs. Some worked in bars, others at home, and some women practised both forms of SW while other members worked on the streets. It would be very interesting to start from such a self-help group and follow these women in their daily lives.

Localities of research:

- Nairobi
- Mombasa
- Nyeri

This research will help to strengthen Hoymas and Keswa in these localities.

Diaries:

After concluding on the Capacity building workshops/Survey, and stipends for the research assistants (see matrix), we discussed the possibility of doing a Diary project at drop-in centres with male and female SWs. This was received with great enthusiasm, the potential data would be of great interest to everyone present and it would involve many more SWs in the research project.

The workshop was concluded with several suggestions for other CBOs that could help with the media training (Ghetto Film Trust) and with financial literacy training (Ghetto Foundation). These suggestions will be further explored with the team

