

RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND SEX WORKERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A training manual for the upskilling of religious leaders for the accompaniment of sex workers

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
ARVs	Antiretroviral drugs
ASWA	African Sex Worker Alliance
HCT	HIV, counselling and testing
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IASC	UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
INERELA+	International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally affected by HIV and AIDS
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SADC	Southern African Development Community
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
SWEAT	Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

GETTING STARTED

ABOUT HANDS OFF

The Hands Off! project recognises the urgency of addressing violence as an HIV prevention strategy in Southern Africa. Sex workers constitute one group that continues to face the threat of violence. The criminalisation of sex work or aspects of sex work across the SADC region increases violence, stigma and discrimination against sex workers, as well as a general lack of access to health and other appropriate services. These challenges have resulted in sex workers becoming disproportionately overburdened by HIV and AIDS, seen in the high prevalence rates among sex workers when compared with the general population in their communities. For appropriate and adequate responses, there is a need to address the dignity of sex workers, their working environment, and their safety and security to reduce their risk of exposure to violence. Promoting the rights of sex workers, recognising that sex work is work and investing in the well-being of sex workers results in better outcomes for the whole community. This requires the input of multiple stakeholders, including religious leaders.

The Hands Off! programme, coordinated by Aidsfonds, works on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Southern Africa through prevention, care and support. The programme works with sex worker-led groups, law enforcement agencies, health and support services, legal centres and NGOs working on human rights. *Hands Off II Sex work INERELA+ | Aidsfonds.org*



ABOUT THE TRAINING MANUAL

This manual promotes the view that religious leaders can contribute to reducing violence and stigma against sex workers and the high rates of HIV that they experience. This is for the good of the sex workers themselves and for the greater good of the community.

- There are many stakeholders who have a role to play in assuring the dignity, safety and security of sex workers even though, for a long time, most of these stakeholders have actually been involved in increasing the insecurity and denying the dignity and safety of sex workers. Law enforcement agents, health services providers and religious leaders have been cited as drivers and sponsors of the vulnerability of sex workers.
- Among the key stakeholders are governments, policy makers, law enforcement agencies – the police and the judiciary, social workers, and health workers. These stakeholders have been involved for a long time, positively or negatively, with sex workers.
- A missing stakeholder group in this list is the religious leader. This training manual seeks to equip religious leaders with further skills to help mitigate the violence, stigma, exclusion, and rejection that sex workers experience in the communities in which they live and work.
- This manual makes its departure from the norm by focusing on faith leaders and faith communities as a key stakeholder in the efforts to reduce violence against sex workers and promoting wellbeing and dignity for the communities in which they serve. It recognises the reality of sex work and seeks to mobilise faith leaders and faith communities to lead in upholding the rights of sex workers. Faith leaders and faith communities are also very well placed to empower other vulnerable people in their communities.
- This manual emerges out of research carried out in five Southern African countries, namely Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. From the primary data collected, all the other stakeholders acknowledge that religious leaders are critical stakeholders because of their strategic positioning in their respective communities.

- All other stakeholders agree that religious leaders have a bigger role to play in the wellbeing of sex workers, not just as clients but particularly as faith leaders. Across all stakeholders, more than 90% of respondents said they believed that religious leaders have a role to play in the safety, security and wellbeing of sex workers.
- This manual therefore seeks to equip religious leaders to be able to minister to sex workers, and to appreciate that ministering to sex workers is important in that it acknowledges the dignity that is inherent in all human beings.

PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING MANUAL

In the previous section, we noted how religious leaders have largely been conspicuous by their absence on the lists of stakeholders involved in serving (not necessarily saving) sex workers. We also observed that other stakeholders, when questioned about religious leaders, were quick to acknowledge that religious leaders can make a difference and help those stakeholders who are already working with sex workers. The following points best sum up the purpose of this manual:

This manual seeks to provide religious leaders with:

1. Evidence-based information on sex work and sex workers (including forms of sexual exploitation that are sometimes confused with sex work).
2. Skills to critically analyse the factors that push some people – mostly but not exclusively women – to take up sex work as a means of survival or form of work.
3. Skills to identify aspects of sex work that can be impacted most by faith leaders.
4. Skills to evaluate the position of sex workers within the context of the larger community and why it is important to address problems they experience to solve some community problems.
5. Skills and information on how to understand sex work and sex workers using religious resources such as sacred texts and traditions.
6. A sound theological basis for a ministry among sex workers.

THE APPROACH TO TRAINING

When working with adults – and religious leaders are mostly adults or at least young adults – it is important to avoid “teaching them.” It is helpful to draw upon their knowledge and experience. The approach to training will benefit from being **participatory**. When a facilitator encourages participants to share and participate in identifying problems and finding solutions, this creates a sense of ownership of the whole process by the participants. Throughout the training, it is best to steer engagements towards **dialogue** and avoid debate.

A DEBATE

a contention by words or arguments, expressed by antagonists or adversaries, using words as weapons, listening in order to attack, with a motive to win.

A DIALOGUE

a conversation between two or more persons, carried out by protagonists (we are all equal, civil, polite, and open-minded), characterised by generosity with a motive to understand and resolve a problem.



TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

'Be prepared'

- *Seek to understand the objectives of this manual.*
- *It is helpful to familiarise yourself thoroughly with the contents of this manual.*
- *Resources permitting, read widely about sex work and sex workers (some important materials are indicated at the end of this manual).*
- *Be a “facilitator of learning” rather than a “dictator of education”.*
- *Your role is to guide participants through the workshop and manage the group learning process. Remember that facilitation is the process of enabling participants to solve problems themselves.*
- *Know the composition of the groups you are working with, be respectful of sensibilities without diverting from the objectives.*

On different group compositions for activities

In all activities throughout this manual, there are instances when groups have been put together based on faith, gender, or professional bases. These criteria are used to encourage unhindered participation by everyone. There are some topics that some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing with persons of a different gender, professional background or even age group. As a facilitator, knowing your participants and their sensibilities will help you decide how to assign groups for group work and what topics will need the different kinds of suggested groups. The suggestions made here on group compositions are not mandatory but proposals. The key thing is to create groups that will allow greater participation by all participants.

Tips for successful facilitation:

1. *Respect time but do not be a slave to time. Consult participants when there is a need to reassign time.*
2. *Know how to use and maximise the participatory and experiential methodologies – adults like to share and participate in the process of learning.*
3. *Listen to all contributions with neutrality, remain non-confrontational and open-minded and interact with all participants in a friendly and honest manner.*
4. *Have the emotional capacity and skills to contain strong emotional responses from participants.*
5. *Be aware that discussions about sex workers can bring out strong feelings of anger, disgust and condemnation among some religious leaders. Tread carefully.*
6. *Observe the power dynamics in the room to ensure that all participants are comfortable to make contributions. Find creative ways of asking more dominant group members to give space to quieter participants.*
7. *When participants are to work in smaller groups, always ask each group to select their moderator or chair, the group secretary and the spokesperson who will give feedback in plenary sessions on behalf of the group. It is good to have as many people as possible take on duties and responsibilities.*
8. *Be conscious of your own experiences and perceptions of sex workers, and the evolution you have gone through. Perhaps you have had more time to reflect on these issues than most of the participants, therefore be patient. Share your own experiences to encourage others to share their own.*
9. *Awareness of your own belief system will assist you to facilitate learning in a neutral and non-judgemental manner. How has your faith shaped your own views of sex work and sex workers?*
10. *Avoid unduly influencing participants through your own biases and prejudices. Be open-minded and accept differences, including of religion. When referring to “God”, highlight other names too.*

It is also very important for the facilitator to be on the lookout for issues that might compromise the training objectives such as:

Stigmatising remarks

- *Be aware that participants may not be aware of the fact that they are behaving or talking in a stigmatising way.*
- *Explain what stigma is and why a remark is or may be considered stigmatising, e.g., using the word “prostitute” as opposed to “sex worker.” Strategically, it is better to make a note of it and then bring it up as a general issue so as not to suggest that a particular participant is a “stigmatiser.”*
- *Gently suggest an alternative way of behaving or talking.*

Conflicting perspectives

- *Remember that conflicting views can generate good discussion and are not necessarily a bad thing.*
- *Remind participants that a range of perspectives is welcome, as long as they are respectfully presented.*

Disruptive participants

- *Be on the lookout for participants who dominate proceedings by being overly vocal.*
- *Disruptive participants may talk over others, pick arguments for the sake of it, talk out of turn especially if the turn has been given to someone else, or rudely interrupt other participants.*
- *It is your role to protect participants from such disruptive elements, be creative and find ways of keeping the disruptive participant*

occupied. For example, ask them to be the timekeeper or the plenary secretary, writing up items on flipcharts etc.

Hostility and emotional responses

- *You may encounter a participant who becomes hostile and/or highly emotional during training.*
- *The general stigmatisation of sex workers can trigger such emotions in some people, especially if they feel they are being asked to “accept” sex workers.*
- *It is important to present matters in an open-minded way that allows honest engagement among participants. Encourage participants to hold a dialogue rather than debate issues. In debates the emphasis is on “winning arguments,” whereas in dialogue the focus is on “acquiring a deeper understanding of issues.”*

Participants losing concentration and looking tired

- **If participants are unable to concentrate, falling asleep or seem lethargic, get them to**
 - ✓ *drink water*
 - ✓ *open the windows*
 - ✓ *play a game*
 - ✓ *do some stretching exercises*
 - ✓ *ask participants to take responsibility for an energiser.*
 - ✓ *take tea or lunch early.*

HOW TO USE THE TRAINING MANUAL

1

Step 1 – *Individual or community – you can use this training manual as an individual, but we recommend communal and community engagement. Create a group and work together using this manual. More perspectives come up when issues are discussed together.*

2

Step 2 – *We recommend following the units in order, but each one can stand alone so you could also choose to work with a specific unit, depending on the situation you are dealing with and the time available.*

3

Step 3 – *This manual acknowledges that its readers possess substantial information about sex work and sex workers already, hence it minimises the information given. Instead, it encourages you to share the information you already possess in a systematic way. Other important pieces of information are shared in text boxes and as bullet points throughout the units. Study the information given in text boxes closely but most importantly, participate honestly in the learning activities with others in your group.*

4

Step 4 – *The fact that we already possess a lot of information does not necessarily mean we possess the “right” information. Taking part in training using this manual asks for you to be open-minded, willing to dialogue with others, including with those who hold an alternative viewpoint, and where needed even revise viewpoints as we learn new things.*

5

Step 5 – *Avoid debating in your groups and encourage dialogue and discussions. This manual is most effective when it is approached as a tool for fostering dialogue. This manual is not for those who seek to win arguments but for those who seek ways to serve the people of God and the communities inhabited by the people of God.*

HOW TO CONDUCT THE TRAINING

Administrative and logistical preliminaries

- ✓ Ensure an appropriate venue for the group is secured.
- ✓ Physically inspect the venue – meeting rooms, eating and sleeping facilities (if you have residential participants).
- ✓ Confirm venue and time allocated before the training begins.
- ✓ Issue invitations to potential participants well in advance for their planning purposes.
- ✓ Check beforehand that you have the necessary equipment (listed below): Flipcharts
Flipchart stand(s)
 - Marker pens (multiple colours)
 - Workshop baseline survey forms (enough for each participant to have two)
 - Posters with relevant pictures (in particular sex workers at work, sexual networks etc.)
- Projector and laptop (to project photos and play videos if they are available)
 - Pens and A5 notepads for all participants
 - Name tags (prepared or paper to make name tags) Attendance register
- ✓ Study the meeting room and the size of the group and choose an appropriate seating arrangement to bring out a sense of collegiality, equality and togetherness (U-shaped, horseshoe, circle, round tables etc.).
- ✓ Materials listed above are useful but not indispensable. Where not available, improvise with materials that are readily available in your context.

Introductions and welcome

Participation in a workshop must begin from the first activity in that workshop: introductions. Let participants introduce themselves in a way that makes them laugh and smile and generate warmth for the group.

Self-introductions – every participant shares their name in full, name to be used during training

(one), institution represented (if any), place of abode, etc. Agree with the group what they want participants to share. Make a paper ball and throw it, whoever gets the ball introduces him/herself and then throws to somebody else until all have had their turn. You can start by explaining the method, then introducing yourself and throwing the ball.

Cross introductions – you can use different approaches to put participants into pairs or small groups of up to four. (For example: Taxi – have all participants standing, call taxi and everyone finds three other people to stand with.) In these groups, participants share their own introductions, and each participant will in turn introduce someone other than themselves.

Be creative - find other ways of carrying out introductions.

Baseline survey – pre- and post-training workshop evaluation

1. Before engaging with the substantive issues in the first training session, it is important to carry out a baseline survey of where the participants are on some key issues. **The baseline survey or impact assessment tool will be provided separately.**
1. This evaluation must then be repeated at the end of the training, to take stock of what happened during the training. For these two evaluations to work as desired, give each participant evaluation forms with the same symbol or allocate a particular symbol to each participant. This allows you to compare the two forms.
1. Explain to the participants that filling in their names is optional. They can fill in their names or they can choose not to, they just need to make sure they use the same symbol.
1. Ask participants to answer all questions honestly and truthfully because it helps in the training moving forward.
1. Give the participants time to fill in their forms (15-20 minutes). Let it be time set aside for this purpose. You can quickly browse the forms in plenary (15 minutes).

This session is very important. Since you will not have done a needs assessment study beforehand, this session becomes a needs assessment and baseline survey combined into one. The key findings can already come into play when you

look at training objectives. Where needed, you can adjust objectives or highlight why you cannot adjust them to cater for some of the particular needs in this workshop. However, once such needs are known, make an effort to create time before the workshop ends to address those that are within your reach.

Participants' expectations and workshop objectives

- Give each participant small sticky notes (if you realise that there might be participants who struggle with writing, you could do this in plenary).
- Ask each participant to write one expectation they have from this training (what do they hope to get by the end of the training?).
- Ask each participant to share their single expectation in turn, allowing for brief discussions to clarify expectations.
- When all participants have shared their expectations, share with them the training objectives.
- Ask participants to show common areas and areas where participants' expectations and training objectives do not converge.
- Where possible, try to address most of the participants' expectations without diverging from the training objectives.

Values or rules of engagement

- Ask participants to huddle in pairs where they are sitting.
- Provide the pairs with sticky notes.
- Ask each pair or group to agree on one very important rule that they believe all participants must respect during the training.
- Ask each pair to share their rule and collect the sticky notes and stick them on a wall, grouping similar rules together.
- Write the five most repeated rules on a flipchart and stick this to the wall for everyone to always be able to see them.


NB: If nobody mentions respect, or tolerance of opposing views, it is important to gently submit these for consideration by the group.

Proposed training programme

- A proposed training programme is in the appendices.
- This programme can be used in a straight four-day training workshop.
- However, where training is happening within the community, it is possible to carry out a session at a time

UNIT 1





HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE IMAGE OF GOD – EVERY HUMAN BEING IS SPECIAL

1

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Outline what makes human beings a “special creation.”
2. Closely study their own religious stories, in which sex workers are part of the cast.
3. Establish the moral lessons embedded in sex worker narratives found in the Bible and the Qur’an.
4. Compare and contrast these sex worker narratives in the past and present experiences.
5. Appreciate the Image of God in all human beings, including sex workers.

INTRODUCTION

In most religions, certainly in the religions that are dominant on the African continent, every creature in this universe traces its life back to the All Powerful, All Knowing, Ever Present Being.

**Names of the Supreme
Being in Southern Africa**
God, Allah, Modimo, Mulungu,
Lesa, Unkulunkulu, Chiuta,
Mwari, Nyadenga

What other names are used to refer to God in your community? List the other names.

- ✓ In many religions, all creatures of the universe are created by the Supreme Being, God, Modimo, Mwari or Allah.
- ✓ In many religions, human beings are a special creation by the Supreme Being.
- ✓ In many religions, every human being must be guaranteed a certain dignity simply because they are human and created by the Supreme Being.
- ✓ In many religions, the desired community is “a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God-given potential.”¹

¹ https://www.oasiscommunitylearning.org/uploaded/who_we_are/Charter/One_Oasis_Statement.pdf accessed 3 January 2021.

WHAT MAKES HUMAN BEINGS SPECIAL?

There is an agreement that human beings are a special creation by God or Allah or Mwari.

ACTIVITY I 1



TO BE HUMAN, TO BE SPECIAL

Objective: To establish the basis upon which all human beings are special

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10, and where possible divide the groups according to the different religious traditions represented in the training (Christians, Muslims, Baha'is, Hindus, Traditionalists, Jews, etc.). Where only one faith is represented, then just divide participants into smaller groups.
2. Ask each group to outline what makes human beings special beings according to their faith tradition. The following questions and statements can guide this exercise.
 - (a) Who created everything that is in the universe or on earth?
 - (b) According to your faith, what are the differences between human beings and other created beings?
 - (c) What characteristics of human beings make them special?
 - (d) Are there human beings that are not as special or who are without human dignity?
 - (e) Does it mean that all other created beings are not important to the creator?
3. After the small group exercise above, reconvene the plenary and ask participants to engage in a dialogue (not a debate).
4. As part of a dialogue, decisions will be made by consensus on the fundamental questions discussed.
5. Ask one of the participants to volunteer as secretary, writing down the ideas that have been discussed and agreed upon by the group.

In different faith traditions, human beings are special, take a look:

Creation of human beings in the Qur'an



Allah made from water every living thing (21:30) Allah has created every animal from water. Of them are some that creep on their bellies, some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills, for truly Allah has power over all things. (24:45)

Human beings are considered as a special act of creation. Islam teaches that human beings are a unique life form that was created by Allah in a special way, with unique gifts and abilities unlike any other: a soul and conscience, knowledge, and free will. The life of human beings began with the creation of two people, a male and a female named Adam and Hawwa (Eve).

We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape... (15:26)

He began the creation of man from clay, and made his progeny from a quintessence of fluid. (32:7- 8)

Creation of human beings in the Bible



Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:26

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." Genesis 2:18

So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air...

but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner... And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Genesis 2:19-23

The information in the box below is from a paper by John Mbiti²

Creation of human beings in the African traditional religions



Human beings are created by God, Modimo, Musikavanhu, Mulungu, Ukulunkulu. The general idea is that God created humans in the heavenly realms and then lowered them into this world. Alternatively, God and human beings used to live together until the actions of human beings pushed God away. Because of their divine origin, humans are seen as spiritual beings who have a special place on earth and in the spirit world, where they will become ancestral spirits. Like other creatures, they are endowed with bodies which are subject to decay, but unlike other creatures, they are endowed with a soul which is immortal. These parts of the human person are ascribed various functions in life or in death. Only human beings continue to live after death.

In all faith traditions, human beings, all human beings, enjoy a special status because they are human beings. The special status comes from the special way in which human beings were made by God. This status of a human being cannot be taken away by other human beings and whatever work we do will not remove this special status from us.

On Human Dignity

Dignity is the right of a person to be valued and respected for their own sake, and to be treated with respect irrespective of the profession they have chosen or have been forced to adopt.



“The basis for the theme of Human Dignity, the bedrock of Catholic Social Teaching, is that humans were created in the image and likeness of God. Regardless of any factors or reasons we can think of, individuals have an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity; each human life is considered sacred. This theme is about our radical equality before God that leads us to think no less of

somebody because they are from a different place or culture, because they believe something different to you, or because of their work or employment situation.”

Catholic Social Teaching <https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/themes/human-dignity/> accessed 3 February 2021.

SEX WORK IN SACRED TEXTS – HOW ARE SEX WORKERS PERCEIVED AND UNDERSTOOD?

What is sex work? Who is a sex worker?

The terms sex work and sex worker are often preferred to the more commonly used terms prostitution and prostitute.³ This manual will use sex work and sex worker and we encourage the use of these terms.

Sex work is difficult to define, primarily because sex work takes many different forms. Some sex workers work from street corners or drinking places, others use technology to find clients. Some provide a basic service and charge minimal fees while others charge higher fees which can include being put up in properties and/or receiving luxury goods. Some sex workers survive only on the proceeds of their sex work, while others engage in sex work to supplement income from their day jobs. Payment methods may also vary, with sex being exchanged for food, gifts, and subsequent favours.

UNAIDS defines a sex worker⁴ as a:

female, male or transgender adult who receives money or goods in exchange for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally, and who may consciously or unconsciously define those activities as income generating.

² John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, London: S.P.C.K, 1970.

³ Karen Mohan (2010), *Sex Work in the SADC Region: The Importance of Creating a Framework to Protect Sex Workers from HIV and Human Rights Abuses*: Faculty of Law, Lund University.

⁴ UNAIDS (2002), *Sex work and HIV/AIDS*: UNAIDS Technical Update, June 2002.

ACTIVITY | 2



RELATING RELIGIOUS STORIES ABOUT SEX WORKERS

Objective: To study the ways in which sex work and sex workers are portrayed in sacred texts and sacred traditions

Methods: small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10 and, where possible, divide groups according to faith tradition and gender. If there is more than one faith represented, have faith-specific groups. If the numbers permit (use your discretion), you can also divide the groups by gender – women-only and men-only groups.
2. Ask the groups to work on the following tasks:
 - (a) Identify sacred texts that tell a story about a sex worker or sex work (sacred texts tend to use the term prostitute).
 - (b) Identify stories that are told in the faith community about a sex worker or sex work. *(So stories not in sacred texts but shared from community members' experiences – can be communities with or without sacred texts.)*
 - (c) Is there a way/pattern/form in which sex worker stories are told in sacred texts and faith communities? What is the structure of these stories?
 - i. introduction
 - ii. identification of the main character
 - iii. the main contribution of the character (which normally contradicts societal expectations)
 - iv. the reward for the character.
 - (d) Do most of the sex worker stories follow the simple four steps of the structure outlined above? Illustrate with one story.
3. Reconvene the plenary and ask the groups to share their findings.
4. Allow for brief discussions on points presented and on interpretations of key texts suggested in the presentations.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH PARTICIPANTS – STORIES ABOUT SEX WORKERS

Some important general information

- Sex work is acknowledged as a form of work in most ancient religions. Sex work was also associated with serving some gods in the ancient past.
- Sex work was widely looked down upon in most ancient societies and is condemned in the Qur'an and the Jewish and Christian Bibles.
- Sex workers are not considered inherently evil and certainly not irredeemable.
- Sex workers are capable of doing good, becoming vessels of divine actions in societies.
- Sex workers are not irreligious people – religion and sex work are not mutually exclusive of each other.
- There seems to be no explicit prohibition stopping faith communities from working with sex workers.

The stories in Islam are cited from Virtual Mosque.⁵



Sex workers in the Qur'an

Abu Huraira radi allahu `anhu (may God have mercy on him) reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ (peace be upon him) as saying: "There was a dog moving around a well whom thirst would have killed. Suddenly a prostitute from the prostitutes of Bani Isra'il [Children of Israel] happened to see it and she drew water in her shoe and made it drink, and she was pardoned because of this." (Sahih Muslim, 2245 b) Narrated Abu Huraira (ra): The Prophet said: "While a dog was going round a well and was about to die of thirst, an Israeli prostitute saw it and took off her shoe and watered it. So Allah forgave her because of that good deed." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3467)

صلى الله
عليه وسلم

⁵ Virtual Mosque, The Parable of The Prostitute, <http://www.virtualmosque.com/personaldvlp/character/the-parable-of-the-prostitute/> accessed 5 January 2021.

The stories from the Jewish and Christian Bibles are cited from webpages published by the Jewish Virtual Library and by Bible Scandals.⁶

Sex workers in the Jewish/Christian Bible



The sex worker was an accepted though deprecated member of the Israelite society, both in urban and rural life (Gen. 38:14; Josh. 2:1ff.; I Kings 3:16–27). The Bible refers to Tamar’s temporary harlotry and to the professional harlotry of Rahab without passing any moral judgment. The visits of Samson to the harlot of Gaza (Judg. 16:1) are not condemned, but conform with his epic life. Harlots had access to the king’s tribunal, as other people (I Kings 3:16ff).

There were male and female sex workers in Israel and Judah during the monarchy, and in Judah they were, from time to time, the object of royal decrees of expulsion (cf. I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; II Kings 23:7; Hos. 4:14).

It is striking that the Old Testament doesn’t actually condemn sex workers, though it utterly condemns cultic sex workers who had sex with ‘worshippers’ at Temples of the old Canaanite gods (Deuteronomy 23:17; Jeremiah 2:20). Also, there is severe condemnation for those who make people into sex workers (Leviticus 19:29) and criticism of those who use them (Genesis 38; Proverbs 23:27; 29:3). Sex workers themselves, however, were not ostracised by society – they could own property and could even present legal cases before the highest court of the land (I Kings 3:16-27).

Proverbs 6:26 “for a prostitute’s fee is only a loaf of bread, but the wife of another stalks a man’s very life.”

Sex workers in the Christian Bible (New Testament)



The Gospels never record Jesus using a euphemism for the term sex worker, so when he condemned the Pharisees, he said: “Tax collectors and prostitutes will get to the Kingdom of heaven before you” (Matthew 21:32-33). Jesus wasn’t soft on sin, but he understood sinners. He pointed out that fantasising about a person was spiritually equivalent to acting out that fantasy because both acts are deliberate, and one can lead to the other. In fact, he said that inner filth can be worse than visible filth (Matthew 5:27-28; Mark 7:18-23). Before the Roman army took over Judea in AD 6 there would have been few, if any, sex workers in the very religious society of Palestine, but afterwards the presence of Roman soldiers created a demand for them. Paradoxically, this was because the soldiers were so disciplined – unlike other armies, they weren’t allowed to rape or even to get married, so they were forced to pay for sex.

In plenary, ask participants if they have learnt something new about sex workers and sex work in the history of their religions. What is it that they have learnt?

MORAL LESSONS FROM THE RELIGIOUS STORIES

The moral of a story is the lesson that any story teaches about how to behave in the world. Every religious story has its moral.

⁶ Jewish Virtual Library, *Issues in Jewish Ethics: Prostitution* <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/prostitution-2> accessed 5 January 2021. See also David Instone-Brewer, *Bible Scandals* <https://www.bethinking.org/bible/bible-scandals/4-prostitutes> accessed 5 January 2021.

ACTIVITY | 3



WHAT MORAL LESSONS DO WE GET FROM THE RELIGIOUS STORIES?

Objective: To unpack the morals that are embedded in sex worker stories

Method: small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipchart, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10. Where possible, it is advisable to also have gender-inclusive (different genders together) and gender-exclusive (one gender only) groups for the purposes of this activity.
2. Before allowing groups to break out, ask participants to define and express their understanding of “moral”.
3. Ask the groups to carry out the following tasks:
 - (a) From the many stories shared in the previous session, ask groups to choose one.
 - (b) Each group must indicate which story they are working with, to avoid all groups working on the same story (if there are more groups than stories, it is ok for different groups to work on the same story).
 - (c) Ask the groups to read or retell the story they have chosen.
 - (d) Ask the groups to focus on what they think the story was meant to teach the people who would have been told the story. List as many morals as you can identify in your chosen story.
4. In plenary, ask each group to share the moral(s) identified. If more than one group worked with the same story, allow the groups to share one moral at a time if they have different morals.
5. Allow all groups to give their feedback.
6. Allow for discussion in plenary on the morals identified and shared by the different groups.

Ask: “Which moral felt more challenging to the participants?”

Some relevant morals

1. Even those that we regard lowly can still be vessels of good deeds (see the Hadith on prostitute and dog (Book 59, Hadith 127), Rahab the prostitute and the Hebrew spies (Joshua 2)).
2. Sex workers can be used by God (Joshua 2).
3. Sex workers are sometimes forced by circumstances with the aim to do good (Genesis 38).
4. God sees beyond what human eyes see (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).



RELIGION AND SEX WORKERS TODAY

ACTIVITY | 4


FAITH COMMUNITIES AND SEX WORKERS – WHERE DO WE STAND?

Objective: To understand similarities and differences between older faith communities and current faith communities

Method: small groups, role play, plenary

Aids: Flipchart, markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10. Where possible divide groups into ordained religious leaders, sex workers and other stakeholders. Where this is not possible, make groups in such a way that all participants will feel safe and comfortable to share their views, especially because there is more focus on contemporary issues.
2. This activity is building upon earlier activities in this unit, by trying to understand the similarities and differences between faith communities in the past and faith communities today.
3. Ask the groups to work on the following tasks and to prepare their feedback in the form of talking points and a role play. Use the following questions for the group work:
 - (a) How have faith communities been using the stories about “sex workers” found in their sacred scriptures?
 - (b) How is sex work perceived in faith communities today?
 - (c) How are sex workers perceived in faith communities today?
 - (d) Is it in line with your faith to protect sex workers against violence, exploitation and discrimination?
 - (e) Based on the moral lessons established in activity 3 above, what can faith communities today learn from ancient stories about sex workers in those communities?
 - (f) What do you consider the most challenging aspects between how sacred texts (Bible, Qur’an) treat sex work and sex workers and how contemporary faith communities treat sex work and sex workers?
4. Reconvene the plenary and ask groups to give their feedback – highlighting the key talking points and for those that succeeded in putting part of the feedback in the form of a role play to also present their role play.

Are sex workers safer today than they were in ancient times?

To what extent do social systems and structures impact on sex workers?

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS


- Faith communities have historically struggled to engage with sex workers. There is a lot of stigma and discrimination against sex workers.
- However, as this unit has highlighted, there are some positive stories about sex workers from the different sacred texts.
- There are stories that show God deciding to engage sex workers to improve the situation of the people of God.
- Sex work is roundly condemned in sacred texts as an exploitative industry, but sex workers are not equally condemned.
- The main moral lessons from the sex worker stories from different faith traditions are: God/Allah/Supreme Being chooses to minister to any person, irrespective of their station in life or their profession; God/Allah/Supreme Being does not demand conversion in order to minister to anyone; every human being possesses the dignity guaranteed by the special relationship with the Supreme Being, including sex workers.
- If faith communities take these passages seriously, they will realise their obligation towards sex workers.

UNIT | 2



HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE WELLBEING OF SEX WORKERS

2

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Examine the intersection of human rights and human dignity.
2. Evaluate whether human rights provisions contradict religious beliefs on human dignity.

INTRODUCTION

Human rights. This concept has gained so much currency in our world today. For many people, it is a concept that has absolutely nothing to do with religion. Indeed, the most common image is that of secular human rights activists waving placards on the one hand, and religious leaders holding their sacred texts on the other. In this scenario, these two – namely human rights and religion/religious leaders – are diametrically opposed. They are thought of as belonging to two realms that have absolutely no chance of intersecting.

Religious leaders are accused of stifling human rights, for example in the condemnation of sex workers.

Human rights reinforce human dignity. As noted in the previous unit, religions teach that every human being is created with inherent dignity and must be respected on that basis.

Religious justice shows that human rights and religion go together and texts like Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:8, Qur'an 5:8, 7:181, Surah An-Nisa 4:134 demonstrate this understanding.

This unit seeks to encourage religious leaders to appreciate the close relationship that exists between religion and human rights.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS

ACTIVITY 1



WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Objective: To define human rights and to identify international agreements that protect and guarantee human rights for all

Method: Presentation, discussion

Aids: Flipchart, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure: Ask participants

1. Ask participants what they think it means when we say someone has human rights.
2. Explain that human rights are rights that every person has and is entitled to by virtue of being a human being.
3. Human rights are:
 - universal, meaning that everyone is equally entitled to them without discrimination.
 - fundamental, meaning that they are indispensable for living with dignity.
 - inherent, meaning that they are not granted by anyone; everyone is entitled to them as a human being.
 - inalienable, meaning that they cannot be taken away, given away or denied by anyone or under any conditions.
 - interdependent, meaning that fulfilling one cannot happen without fulfilling others.
 - indivisible, meaning that they cannot be divided and are all equally important.
4. Human rights have been defined in a number of international and regional treaties (also called agreements, commitments, conventions or covenants). The key ones are:
 - a. the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
 - b. the European Convention on Human Rights (1953)
 - c. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)
 - d. the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).
5. Human rights are safeguarded through these internationally binding treaties and enshrined in the national legislation (e.g. constitutions). Governments bear responsibility for protecting, respecting and fulfilling our human rights.
6. Despite the fact that governments in Southern Africa have signed various treaties that uphold human rights, human rights abuses occur in all spheres of sex workers' lives, including healthcare, housing, employment, and education - perpetrated by private individuals, state employees, law enforcement or other state actors. These direct violations of rights are often rooted in repressive legal frameworks and negative social discourses.
7. Organising is when individual sex workers come together and form a body that advocates for the rights of sex workers in line with their rights and inherent dignity.

EVERY HUMAN HAS RIGHTS



ACTIVITY | 2



THE FOUR LEGAL APPROACHES

There is an agreement that human beings are a special creation by God or Allah or Mwari.

Objective: To outline the different legal ways of addressing sex work

Method: Group work, poster presentations, plenary discussion

Aids: printed handouts, pens

Time: 40 minutes

Procedure

1. Explain that there are four legal approaches to sex work. These include:
 - ✓ criminalisation
 - ✓ partial criminalisation
 - ✓ legalisation
 - ✓ decriminalisation
2. Divide participants into four groups and give each a handout outlining the four legal approaches to sex work.
3. Explain that each group is required to take 10 minutes reflecting on their handout and creatively prepare a poster or presentation showing what the main components of each approach are.
4. Allow each group five minutes to share their poster or presentation. Take time to clarify any misunderstandings and answer any questions that may come up on the four legal approaches to sex work in the region.
5. Explain that in the next activity you will explore how these approaches are applied in practice across the region.



HANDOUT: FOUR LEGAL APPROACHES TO SEX WORK

Criminalisation: This approach makes buying and selling sex a criminal offence, as is brothel keeping and living off the proceeds of sex work. To many, this may seem like a good idea as sex work is often seen as immoral and associated with drug use, abuse and trafficking. In reality, criminalisation has a devastating impact on the people involved. Sex workers are targeted and victimised by the police, making them less likely to report crimes committed against them. It makes sex workers go underground, thereby increasing their vulnerability to violence and other crimes like trafficking and pimping. And as criminalisation gives rise to stigma, sex workers may be discriminated against by health care services, even being turned away when treatment is needed.

Partial criminalisation: This is where sex workers aren't criminalised but their clients and brothel owners are. While this approach points the finger of blame away from sex workers, the stigma around sex work remains; sex workers are still watched and harassed. The conditions that they face haven't changed. Clients may become paranoid and potentially abusive. Sex workers might also become scared to report any abuse or trafficking they may see out of fear of arrest. And laws against brothel-keeping mean sex workers can't work together, making their situation even less safe.

Legalisation: This is where sex work is regarded as legal and laws and licensing for brothels and sex workers are put in place. There is increased contact between sex workers, health services and the police. As sex work still isn't considered a job that is protected by existing labour laws, and sex workers aren't given the same protection that other workers enjoy, legalisation has the potential to make sex work a properly recognised job, guaranteeing sex workers the same rights as all other workers.

Decriminalisation: This is where criminal charges are not only removed, but sex work between consenting adults is treated just the same as any other work. Working in organised groups is encouraged, giving more power to the workers themselves - not brothel owners and clients. Sex work is brought under our current labour laws, giving workers the protection of basic health and safety, fair employment conditions and the power to unionise. And along with their rights, sex workers will have the same responsibilities as other working people - like paying tax. In addition, the burden on policing costs is eased and sex workers can pursue other occupations without the threat of a criminal record.

SITUATION OF SEX WORKERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

ACTIVITY I 3



THE LEGAL STATUS OF SEX WORK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Objective: SADC Method: Presentation

Methods: Presentation, group work, plenary discussion

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure








1. Explain that although sex work is very commonly practised and sex workers bear the greater burden of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, its legal status differs from country to country. In some countries, some aspects of sex work are not criminalised while some aspects are. Sex work per se is still criminalised.
2. Present the table below and highlight that:
 - In eight out of 16 SADC countries, some aspects of sex work are not criminalised.
 - The buying of sex is not criminalised across the region except in South Africa.
 - Within the region acts related to sex work, e.g. soliciting, procuring and keeping of brothels, are prohibited - even in countries where selling of sex is not criminalised.

The information in the picture above was adopted and adapted from the Global Network of Sex Projects' Global Mapping of Sex Work Laws (accessed 28 March 2021).

See also: www.ted.com/talks/juno_mac_the_laws_that_sex_workers_really_want

3. Ask participants to return to get into small country groups and give each group a copy of the handout: **In My Country...** Each group has 20 minutes to discuss the situation of sex work in their country and reflect on the following questions:
 - Which legal approach to sex work is used in your country?
 - What are the contradictions, if any, of the legal approach used in your country?
 - What do you think would be the best



	<i>Selling criminalised</i>
	<i>Purchase criminalised</i>
	<i>Organising criminalised</i>
	<i>Selling AND purchase criminalised</i>
	<i>Selling AND organising criminalised</i>
	<i>Purchase AND organising criminalised</i>
	<i>Selling, purchase AND organising criminalised</i>

4. Invite each group to share highlights of their discussion, noting on a flipchart each group's recommendation for the best legal approach. In plenary, discuss:
 - legal approach for guaranteeing the rights and dignity of sex workers in your country? Why?
 - Similarities or differences between countries.
 - Proposed legal approach for guaranteeing the rights and dignity of sex workers in the region.

HANDOUT: IN MY COUNTRY...



ANGOLA
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.



MAURITIUS
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.



BOTSWANA
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.
 Solicitation is illegal.



MOZAMBIQUE
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



NAMIBIA
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



ESWATINI
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.



SEYCHELLES
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.



LESOTHO
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised



SOUTH AFRICA
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is criminalised.



MADAGASCAR
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



TANZANIA
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.



MALAWI
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



ZAMBIA
 Selling sex is not criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.
 Organising is criminalised.



ZIMBABWE
 Selling sex is criminalised.
 Buying sex is not criminalised.

ACTIVITY | 4



MAPPING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Objective: : To highlight the rights of sex workers being violated in different communities

Method: Group work, plenary discussion

Aids: printed handouts, pens

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure

1. Put up poster with the eight key human rights for sex workers and explain that A Consensus Statement issued by the Global Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP) outlines fundamental rights for sex workers of any gender, class, race, ethnicity, health status, age, nationality, citizenship, language, education level, disability and other status. The following eight rights have been identified in various international and national legal frameworks and in NSWP's global consultation:



<p>The right to associate and organise – sex workers have a right to self-determine, self-organise and collectively advocate for their rights.</p>	<p>The right to be protected by the law – sex workers should have equal access to justice and ought to receive equal treatment before the law.</p>
<p>The right to be free from violence – sex workers have the right to be free from all forms of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as economic violence.</p>	<p>The right to be free from discrimination – sex workers have the right not to be discriminated against within the social system and institutions, and to be treated equally in all contexts of social and everyday life.</p>
<p>The right to privacy and freedom from arbitrary interference – sex workers should not be subjected to arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon their honour and reputation.</p>	<p>The right to health – sex workers have the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of mental and physical health.</p>
<p>The right to move and to migrate – sex workers have the right to move within their city or country, leave their country and request entry into another country.</p>	<p>The right to work and free choice of employment – sex workers have the right to freely choose their livelihood, work in fair and safe working conditions, and have equal access to labour rights and protections</p>

2. Divide participants into groups of two to six people and ask them to complete the handout.

KEY RIGHT	KEY ASPECTS	EXAMPLES OF VIOLATION OF THIS RIGHT	ADVOCACY MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENTS AND RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES
Right to associate and organise			
Right to be protected by the law			
Right to be free from violence			
Right to be free from discrimination			
Right to privacy and freedom from arbitrary interference			
Right to health			
Right to move and to migrate			
Right to work and free choice of employment			

3. Explain the exercise to the groups. They will need to go through the eight rights and come up with the following: an agreement on the key aspects of the right in question, detailing the right in brief

terms and explaining its practical implications; examples for the violation of the given rights in participants' own contexts; and a brief advocacy message to governments and key stakeholders.

4. After giving the groups sufficient time for discussion (approx. 40 minutes) and helping them with any questions they have, ask them the following questions:
 - What examples of human rights violations did you identify?
 - Do you think that there is any violation not encompassed within these key rights?
 - Were there any disagreements within the group?
5. Explain that the legal status of sex work has implications for the health and well-being of everyone. For example:



1. Criminalisation of sex work increases sex workers' vulnerability to violence, stigma, discrimination, exclusion and infections.
2. Sex workers' use of HIV prevention and treatment services are lower among those reporting arrest or police harassment in a wide range of settings.
3. Poor mental health for the sex workers.
4. The forces of criminalisation and stigma combine to create an environment in which violence against sex workers is viewed as being somehow less abhorrent than violence against women in the general population.
5. Fear of police also increases sex workers' risk-taking with clients as they have less time to negotiate condom use or assess safety prior to transacting sex.
6. Discrimination from health care providers and fear of abuse often prevent sex workers—particularly transgender and migrant sex workers—from seeking care or antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) to treat HIV and they are often discriminated against in hospitals.



CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

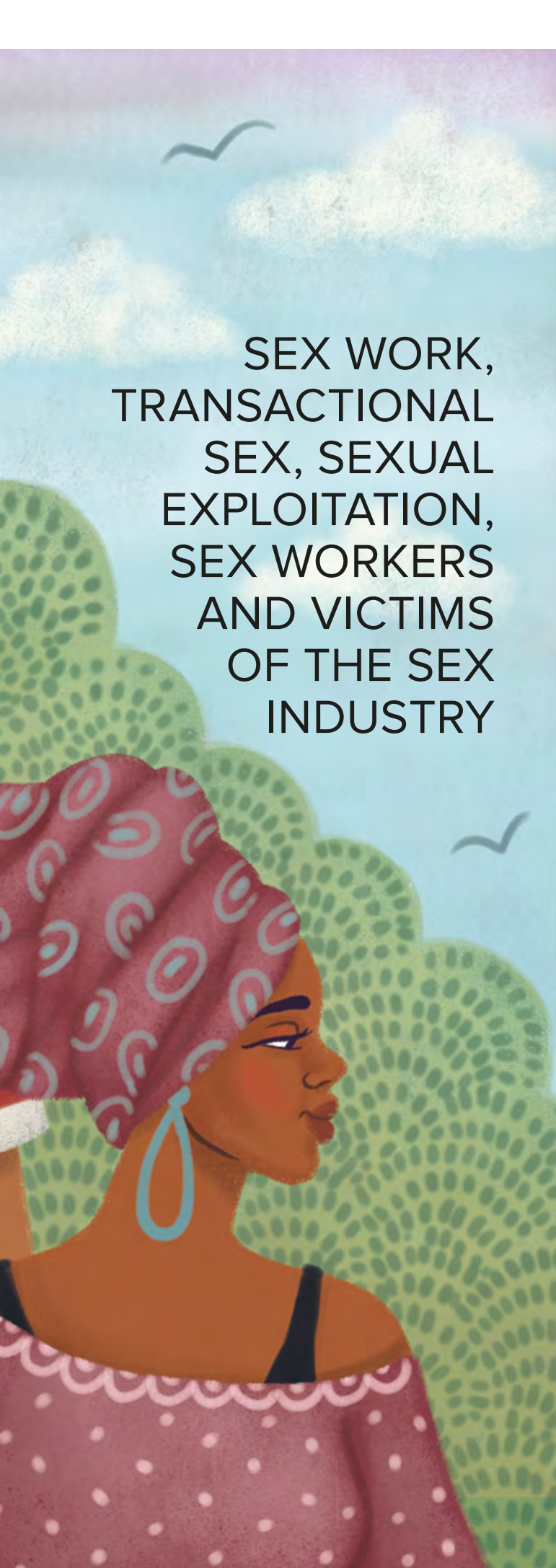
- While the concept of human rights gained a lot of momentum because it was promoted by secular institutions, especially the United Nations, this concept is not opposed to the religious concept of human dignity that is promoted by all the world's religious traditions.
- Sex workers are persons who have and must enjoy all the inalienable rights that are guaranteed to all human beings in all countries, including countries in Southern Africa.
- All countries in SADC are signatories to various international instruments that promote, protect and guarantee human rights to all citizens.
- Sex workers are among citizens of the SADC region whose human rights are routinely violated and disregarded by governments and state institutions and rarely defended by other non-state actors like religious leaders.
- Criminalisation of sex work and sex workers promotes the infringement, violation and disregard of their human rights, thereby, allowing some stakeholders to deny sex workers access to services that are guaranteed under human rights conventions.

“Criminalisation of sex work and sex workers promotes the infringement, violation and disregard of their human rights, thereby, allowing some stakeholders to deny sex workers access to services that are guaranteed under human rights conventions.”



UNIT | 3





SEX WORK, TRANSACTIONAL SEX, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, SEX WORKERS AND VICTIMS OF THE SEX INDUSTRY

3

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Define sex work.
2. Describe and distinguish sex work from transactional sex and sexual exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

- In Sex work is a form of labour performed for income, which has been chosen by a practitioner or to which some in the SADC region have been pushed due to lack of alternative economic opportunities, increased social responsibilities, gender inequality, and/or abuse.⁷
- Regardless of the reasons why an individual chooses sex work, it is a profession which represents a proportion of the female (and male) population that has been increasing in recent years and is too large to ignore. Mozambique's Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare, Joao Kandyane⁸ recently declared that it is:

“urgent that each southern African country should establish a legal framework appropriate to its own reality, in order to respect the fundamental rights of sex workers.”

DEFINITION OF SEX WORK⁹

- The term sex work has been proposed as an alternative and as a substitute to replace the term prostitution, as noted in the definition provided in earlier units. Sex work acknowledges that persons offering sexual services are labourers or workers like any other worker in any other industry.
- The definition stresses the social position of those engaged in the sex industries as working people.
- Sexual services providers are entitled to human rights, are exercising their right to work and must be protected from unfair, unsafe and exploitative labour practices and environments.

⁷ Perschler-Desai, Viktoria, *Childhood On The Market: Teenage prostitution in Southern Africa*, African Security Review Vol. 10 No 4, 2001.

⁸ Katerere, F, (2007) Mozambique: *Respecting sex work*, Agência de Informação de Moçambique (Maputo), 5 November.

⁹ Karen Mohan (2010) *Sex Work in the SADC Region: The Importance of Creating a Framework to Protect Sex Workers from HIV and Human Rights Abuses*, Master Thesis, Faculty of Law, Lund University, Examensarbete (lu.se).

Sex work refers to the provision of sexual services in exchange for an agreed material reward, mostly cash but also non-monetary goods.

Recognising sex work as a form of legitimate labour¹⁰ highlights the following elements:

- ✓ Sex work involves a willing sexual service provider and a willing client prepared to pay the determined cost for the service (sometimes cost is negotiated up or down).
- ✓ Like all other services, the cost of the service is influenced by the pressures of supply and demand.
- ✓ Some marketing strategies are used to make the service and service provider visible to potential clients.
- ✓ Sex work is commercial and not recreational.
- ✓ Sex workers are adults who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally. A sex worker can be male, female, or transgender. In most countries, sex work and activities associated with it are regarded in law as criminal acts.¹¹
- ✓ Work in the sex sector/sex trade
- ✓ Work in the sex sector/sex trade occurs in many different forms and settings, including street-based or web-based settings, escort services, and video camera work among others. Of the forms of sex work covered by prostitution laws, street-based sex work tends to be the trickiest because it is the most public and visible and therefore the most subjected to harassment, policing, and criminalisation.¹²

Negotiation and performance of sexual services for remuneration:

- ✓ with or without the intervention of a third party.
- ✓ where those services are advertised or generally recognised as available from a specific location.
- ✓ where the price of services reflects the pressures of supply and demand.

Sex work is work. This simple yet powerful statement frames sex workers not as victims, criminals or vectors of disease, but as workers. Sex work is first and foremost an income-generating activity that encompasses diverse workplaces and working arrangements.

ACTIVITY 1



DEFINITION OF SEX WORK

Objective: To define sex work

Method: Group work, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of five.
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to all the groups.
3. Ask one or two groups to list what they understand as sex work.
4. Ask one or two groups to list what they understand as sex work is work in relation to the human dignity of sex workers.
5. When they have finished the two tasks, ask the groups to present their feedback in plenary (since there is a possibility of feedback overlapping, ask each group to contribute one feature or function at a time going around for all groups to contribute).
6. Compare groups' definitions with the definitions provided in the boxes above and accept definitions that overlap in relation to the participants' contexts in their respective communities.
7. Allow for a short discussion at the end of the activity.

¹⁰ Bindman, J, (1997) *Redefining Prostitution as Sex Work on the International Agenda* - a report written with the participation of Jo Doezema, Network of Sex Work Projects.

¹¹ Open Society Foundations: *A Reference Brief: Laws and Policies Affecting Sex Work* (Undated).

¹² Weitzer, R. (2014, May 1). *Sex Work, Gender, and Criminal Justice*. In the Oxford Handbook of Gender, Sex, and Crime, Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199838707.013.0026>

DISTINGUISHING TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION FROM SEX WORK

Transactional sex is defined as non-marital, non-commercial sexual encounters or relationships primarily motivated by the implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material benefit or status.

What is transactional sex?

- Transactional sex relationships take place across the globe. The nature of and motivations for transactional sex relationships vary across context and from one relationship to the next.¹³
- Numerous in-depth studies conducted across sub-Saharan Africa confirm important insights about transactional sex. Transactional sex relationships are non-commercial. Participants are likely to describe themselves as boyfriends, girlfriends or lovers, rather than clients or sex workers.^{14, 15}
- Although sex work and the sex worker identity are nearly universally stigmatised, social approval or disapproval for practising transactional sex varies significantly and is far more nuanced. The exchange embedded in these relationships is implicit (not formally tied) and often does not link directly to an act of sex. Transactional sex relationships range from a single encounter to long-term relationships.
- The exchange of sex for material support or other benefits extends from gendered expectations in romantic or sexual relationships that men are expected to provide material resources and women are expected to provide sexual and domestic services. Many of these relationships include shared emotional intimacy.
- It must be highlighted, though, that transactional sex involving women of means and vulnerable, unemployed, young male students is also acknowledged as taking place throughout the SADC region.

Why does transactional sex matter?

The practice of transactional sex matters and requires intervention because it increases the vulnerability of women to violence, abuse, and HIV and STI infection. Young men that are also involved in transactional sex with women and men are equally vulnerable because of the exploitative nature of these relationships.

Important information¹⁶

- Transactional sex is practised by men, women and transgender people of all ages and in all regions of the world.
- Transactional sex is often seen as sex work, but it is not. Most women and men involved in transactional sex relationships consider themselves as partners or lovers rather than sellers or buyers.
- Transactional sex is more prevalent than sex work. Estimates for transactional sex range from as low as 2.1% to as high as 52% in African countries.
- Transactional sex is, to varying degrees, associated with HIV risk behaviours such as multiple sexual partners and other determinants of HIV risk including partner violence, abuse, alcohol consumption, and varying levels of condom use.
- Generalisations of women's motivations for engaging in transactional sex have included fulfillment of basic needs in economically unstable settings; attempts to improve one's social status; and the expectation that men should provide for their partners in relationships.

There are differences in views of sexual activity that is considered exploitative, including transactional sex. This being the case, below we explore what sexual exploitation is.

What is sexual exploitation?¹⁷

Sexual exploitation is a form of human rights abuse that the World Health Organization defines as “the involvement of sexual activity that a female or male does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society.”

In 2003, in response to an investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa, the UN Secretary-General defined sexual exploitation as:

“...any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.”

¹³ Standing, H. (1992): *AIDS: conceptual and methodological issues in researching sexual behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa*. Soc Sci Med. 34(5):475–83.

¹⁴ Stoebenau K, Nixon SA, Rubincam C, Willan S, Zembe YZ, Tsikoane T, et al. *More than just talk: the framing of transactional sex and its implications for vulnerability to HIV in Lesotho, Madagascar and South Africa*. Glob Health 2011; 7:34.

¹⁵ Hunter M. *The materiality of everyday sex: thinking beyond 'prostitution'*. AfrStud. 2002; 61(1):99–120.

¹⁶ UNAIDS 2018: *Transactional Sex and HIV Risk: From Analysis to Action*.

¹⁷ Global Network of Sex Work Projects: *Promoting Health and Human Rights* (Undated) www.nswp.org

ACTIVITY | 2



ON DISTINGUISHING SEX WORK, TRANSACTIONAL SEX AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Objective: To distinguish sex work from transactional sex and sexual exploitation

Methods: Two groups, interactive

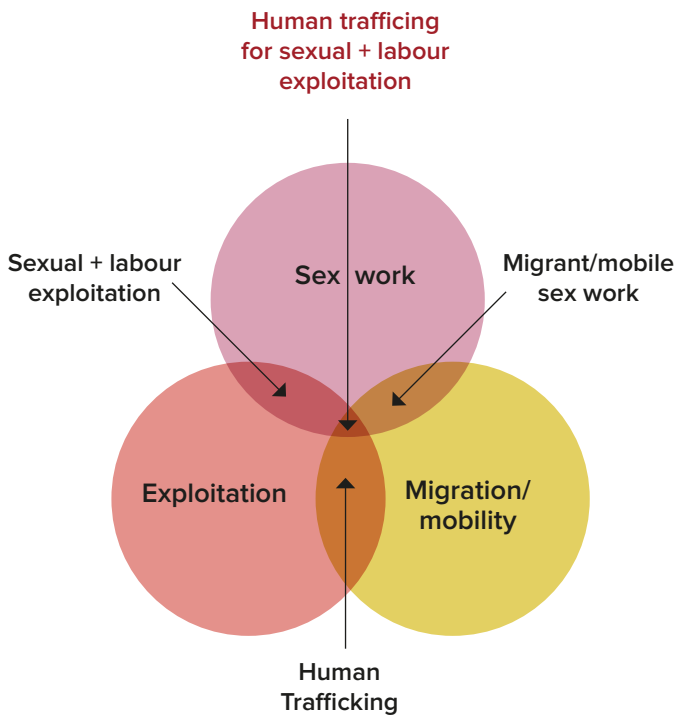
Aids: Two flipcharts with YES and NO written on them, placed in two different locations in the training room; prepared statements specific to the topic, markers.

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. This activity to distinguish sex work, transactional sex and sexual exploitation should be carried out in an interactive way. The activity also attempts to map out the different perceptions and attitudes of participants by presenting statements that might divide participants in their opinions or lead to dialogue on certain issues.
2. The facilitator should explain to participants that s/he will read out statements to them and they will have to decide if they agree or disagree with them. One corner of the room should be assigned YES, and the other NO. Depending on what they think, participants should place themselves at the appropriate place in the room – in the two places assigned YES or NO or anywhere in between.
3. Explain that at this stage there are no right or wrong answers and your role is only to read out the statements and ask questions related to participants' answers. The main idea is to ensure that all members participate freely without being afraid to be wrong.
4. Before the activity, ask if anyone has reduced mobility issues. If they do, offer the participant(s) the possibility to stay seated and give an oral indication of where they would place themselves. Some example statements include:
 - i. Transactional sex is the same as sexual exploitation.
 - ii. Sex workers are more vulnerable to HIV than people who are not sex workers because of multiple sexual partners.
 - iii. Sex work is the same as sexual exploitation.
 - iv. Only women are involved in sex work, transactional sex and sexual exploitation.
 - v. Men and women are involved in sex work, transactional sex and sexual exploitation.
 - vi. Sex work is a voluntarily chosen form of labour where workers are not coerced or forced.
 - vii. There is coercion and force in transactional sexual relationships and sexually exploitative arrangements like trafficking for sexual exploitation.
 - viii. Working on HIV should be a sex worker organisation's top priority.
 - ix. Criminalisation of sex work contributes to the increased vulnerability of sex workers to human rights violations, violence and an excessive burden of HIV and AIDS.
 - x. Transactional sex is sex work.
5. After each statement, ask participants why they have placed themselves in that particular position. Try to make connections between different arguments, but don't get involved in the debate and don't justify any opinion (*Clarify with participants that transactional sex, sexual exploitation and sex work do overlap in some areas but, overall, are different*).
6. Close the activity by summarising the main differences between sex work (providing sexual services for an agreed fee, the act is commercial) and transactional sex (a relationship in which one provides material support to another and in return sexual intercourse is given). The sexual acts are not regarded as commercial, they have no value of their own outside of the relationship. Sexual exploitation is where a person is forced to engage in sexual activities, or where children are being used to provide sexual services.

Sex work, exploitation and migration/mobility model



The diagram above shows instances where sex work, sexual exploitation, migration and human trafficking intersect¹⁸

Key facts from the diagram above:

- ✓ Not all sex work is exploitative nor mobile or migrant.
- ✓ Not all migration results in sex work or exploitation.
- ✓ Not all exploitation results in sex work or migration.
- ✓ There are intersections that we must worry about:
- ✓ Exploitation and sex work intersect to create sexual exploitation; exploitation and migration create human trafficking; sex work and migration create mobile/transit sex work.
- ✓ When all three circles intersect, an environment for human trafficking for sexual exploitation emerges.

It is important for faith leaders to understand the differences between sex work, transactional sex and sexual exploitation because the mitigation and responses to these different manifestations of sexual relationships and practices must acknowledge the differences between them.

¹⁸ N Yingwana, R Walker, and A Etchart, *Sex Work, Migration, and Human Trafficking in South Africa: From polarised arguments to potential partnerships*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 12, 2019, pp. 74-90, www.antitraffickingreview.org accessed 29/03/2021.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SEX WORKERS AND THE SEX INDUSTRY

Human trafficking forcefully converts a human being to a commodity, and it reduces a person's human dignity. One person profits by stripping rights and dignity from another person. There is no element of choice for the trafficked person; he or she is a product in a multibillion-dollar sex industry.

ACTIVITY | 3



ON SEX WORKERS AND SEX INDUSTRY VICTIMS

Objective: To appreciate the differences between sex workers and victims of sexual exploitation

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Ask participants to read the following two brief stories and then divide them into two groups and give each group one of the following scenarios:
 - **Group 1:** Agnes' story
 - **Group 2:** Samantha's story
2. Read the instructions to the participants and ask if they have any questions. Circulate among the groups while they are working to assist them as needed.



Distinguish between sex workers and sex industry victims

Instructions:

- ✓ Read the scenario assigned to your group.
- ✓ Imagine that the main person in your scenario has confided in you and asked for advice on what to do.
- ✓ Discuss and distinguish between sex workers and sex industry victims.
- ✓ Prepare to share the differences between sex workers and sex industry victims and the reasons for the differences with the rest of the group.



Agnes' story:

Agnes is 16 years old, poor, in and out of school, with no job, and wants to help her family to survive. After her mother lost her job, their family is left in terrible debt. A man who is her friend told her that he can get her a job as a live-in housekeeper in another city for a few months. She gets in the man's truck and is transported across towns where she does not speak the language and is sold into a brothel where she is forced to have sex with 10-15 men every night. Her virginity is sold for \$20. She has no money and no way to get back home.



Samantha's story:

Samantha is 26 years old; also poor, was married at 17 and has five children. After her husband left their family, it was up to Samantha to provide for them all. Without an education or job opportunities, she goes into the city and opted to engage in sex work, operating in and around drinking places. She sends part of her earnings to her mother who is raising her children. She is happy that she can provide food for her mother and children and can send her children to school. However, she is always afraid of the violence that some clients and police often inflict on her. She is afraid of those clients that force her to have unprotected sex and sometimes she is not even paid for services given because the client threatens to assault her. But every night, she goes out because it is her job.

3. After 15-20 minutes, when participants are done, invite each group to read their scenario and share their responses. If the group does not explain their reasons for the differences between sex workers and sex industry victims, ask them: why did you choose the differences? After each presentation, ask the other participants for comments and ask them if they agree with the differences the group would give. If not, why not? What do they think are better differences?
4. After all the groups have presented, ask the following questions to stimulate discussion: very often when a person chooses or is forced to be

- a sex worker or to be in the sex industry where they are abused or experience violence, they suffer in silence. Why do you think that is?
5. Close the activity with the following probing questions: What are some of the things that they might be afraid of? (Answers: may be blamed for being a sex worker or a sex industry victim; afraid of stigma; think they are at fault; nowhere to go; dependent on the abusers; afraid of losing support; abusers might harm them more; may not be believed; face rejection; don't know how to tell someone.)

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS




- It is important for different actors to have a full appreciation of the meaning and complexity of sex work.
- Transactional sex is also voluntary, involves non-married persons (though one or both of them might be married to other people), and is non-commercial even though it is motivated by an implicit assumption that sex will be exchanged for material support or other benefits. Sexual activities are not commercially valued outside of the general relationship.
- One commonality between sex work and transactional sex is that they are both normally undertaken by adults, who are largely aware of what they are signing up to (though there might be circumstances that may cloud their decision making).
- Sexual exploitation can happen to an adult male, female or transgender person BUT also to children. When a person is coerced, forced, blackmailed into sexual activities that they would not have freely consented to, that person is being sexually exploited.
- Criminalisation, unstable economic environments and gender-biased social norms are all factors that increase the vulnerability of sex workers, participants in transactional sex and survivors of sexual exploitation - resulting in disproportionate exposure to violence, disease, and stigma.



UNIT | 4





PUSH AND PULL FACTORS: WHY SOME PEOPLE BECOME SEX WORKERS

4

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Understand factors that lead some individuals to choose sex work.
2. Define factors that make sex work attractive to some people.

INTRODUCTION

- Although most people have a casual understanding of sex work, very few have actually taken time to understand the factors and complexities that characterise the field. This unit focuses on the reasons why some people take up sex work.
- There is a general statement that calls for sensitivity when seeking to understand the experiences that fellow human beings go through. It says: **“Never judge someone until you have walked in their shoes.”** Another very important declaration that is particularly helpful wh

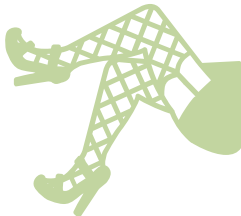
Don't judge my choices
if you do not understand
my reasons.

Indeed, most of the time,
if we are sincere and open to
new learning and experiences,
we are bound to reverse or
revise our initial judgement as it
would have been made without
all the necessary information
about the factors at play.

2. Divide participants into three groups and allow each group 15 minutes to reflect on the characteristics of a typical sex worker in their community. They should consider the following questions and prepare a three-minute presentation of their findings.
 - Are they men, women or other gender?
 - What do they wear?
 - Where do they work?
 - Do they live in a city or a rural community?
 - How old are they?



3. Invite groups to present highlights of their group work and note the common characteristics emerging on a flipchart.
4. In plenary, discuss common themes that emerge from the presentation and immediately point out any common stereotypes or misinformation that comes up.



5. Explain that the common image of a sex worker in the region is that of a woman who is paid by a man to have sex. This exchange usually occurs at night in a dark alley or car. This is not often the case in Southern Africa, and you are going to share some facts about sex work. Highlight the following important facts about sex workers:



SOME FACTS ABOUT SEX WORKERS*

- *Although most tend to be women, there are also male and transgender sex workers in Southern Africa. Male and female sex workers may accept only male or female clients, or both. However, not all transgender and gay men are sex workers.*
- *There are sex workers from different classes and cultural backgrounds, while some are migrants from other countries.*
- *Sex work pretty much happens in every village, every town and in every city in the region. In fact, sex work exists in every culture around the world and has occurred throughout history. This is why it is often referred to as the oldest profession.*
- *Some sex workers practise street-based sex work. There are also sex workers who work from establishments such as brothels, massage parlours, bars or clubs. This is referred to as venue-based sex work. Others work privately, using the internet to advertise their services and find clients, or placing discreet advertisements in newspapers' classified sections.*
- *Some sex workers work alone, but others may work in association with some type of manager who is responsible for organising clients for them. Sex workers, in turn, are compelled to pay the manager a portion of the money they earn from each client.*

* courtesy of UNAIDS



ACTIVITY | 2



WHY DO PEOPLE DO SEX WORK?

Objective: To examine reasons for engaging in sex work from case studies

Method: Storytelling, group work, plenary discussion

Aids: None

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure

1. Invite three volunteers to come to the front of the room. Assign each of them with one of the following identities and give them the relevant story handout. Next, ask each volunteer in turn to introduce the character to the group by reading the handout aloud.

2. Ask participants to get back into their previous groups, with one of the volunteers as their group leader and facilitator. Give each group 20 minutes to consider the following questions:
 - Why do Tendai, Susan and John do sex work?
 - How are they different from or similar to the ideas you had of what a typical sex worker is like?
 - Consider how they each started sex work. What other options did they have?
 - How/would you have done things differently if you had been any of the three sex workers?
 - What is one thing you would have done as a religious leader if any of these three sex workers was part of your church?
3. Lead a plenary discussion on the reasons why each character does sex work with each group sharing their responses for just the first question. Write on a flipchart the reasons for sex work

**Character 1:**

Tendai is a 23-year-old who lives in Harare. She started doing sex work while she was a second-year student at college. She has since completed her studies and works as a graphic designer for a local company. Tendai is very professional in the workplace and is often worker of the month. She sees at least two clients a week from her flat in the city centre. Tendai was raised in the church and still attends church services when she can.

No-one at her church knows that she is a sex worker.

**Character 2:**

Susan is a 46-year-old single mother of two children aged 25 and 16. She migrated from Maputo and now lives in Inhambane. Susan's parents died in the war and she grew up an orphan. She never went to school and ran away from home when she was 16 to work as a domestic worker in Maputo. Her employer treated her badly until she ran away and moved to Inhambane where she turned to sex work. Life has been hard, but she managed to educate both her children and is determined that they never do sex work like her. Everyone in Susan's community knows what she does for a living, the women call her names when she walks in the street.

She feels like God wants nothing to do with people like her.

Push factors (things that limit options for other work)

1. *Desire to improve one's income.*
2. *High levels of unemployment.*
3. *Lack of professional skill.*
4. *Social responsibilities towards parents and children.*
5. *Desire to increase income or supplement their income.*
6. *Desire for a better life.*
7. *Orphaned or neglected and have adult responsibilities thrust upon them.*



Pull factors (things that make sex work more attractive for other work)

1. *Flexible working hours allow for time to take care of children, siblings or other relatives.*
2. *Demands less time and labour than other jobs.*
3. *Can make more money in less time than in other jobs.*
4. *Can choose when, where and how to work.*
5. *Feels more empowering and dignified than working for someone else.*
6. *It can be a lucrative business.*



4. Lead a plenary discussion on how things could have been different and what they would have done if any of these sex workers were part of their faith community.
5. Explain that there is a complex range of reasons why some individuals engage in sex work. Most people choose sex work because they see it as the best option among a limited range of economic opportunities. This means that sex workers, like anybody else, weigh their options and make choices on how best to make the money they need to care for themselves and their families. Others do sex work because they like it. Regardless of why people do sex work, they have the right to

- self-determination, should be treated with dignity and deserve equal protection under the law.
6. Explain that there are victims of human trafficking who are forced to engage in sex against their will and that this differs from sex work. Victims of human trafficking (including child trafficking) are coerced and/or forced to travel from one place to another, usually by a syndicate. Sex work, on the other hand, is a deliberate choice that people make. While it is true that some people who are trafficked are then forced by the traffickers to do sex work, it is not the case that all people who do sex work were first trafficked or were forced into sex work.

ACTIVITY | 3



SEPARATING MYTHS FROM FACTS ABOUT SEX WORKERS

Objective: To understand the differences between facts and myths about sex workers

Method: Quiz

Aids: Facilitator handout

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Distribute the Myths and Facts about Sex Workers handout¹⁹ to all participants.
2. Ask all participants to answer the questions, showing which statements are FACTS (to be marked true) or MYTHS (to be marked false).
3. Go through the handout in plenary, checking which statements are facts and which ones are myths. Discuss those where there is disagreement among participants.
4. Key information on the answers is in the textbox to the right.

MYTH OR FACT?

SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON SEX WORKERS

- *While child abuse can lead to people doing sex work, this is not always the case. Not all sex workers are survivors of child sexual abuse.*
- *Some victims of human trafficking are forced to sell sex but not all sex workers are victims of trafficking.*
- *Some sex workers use drugs to numb their emotions or just for fun but not all sex workers are people who use drugs.*
- *Some sex workers in the region are migrants but not all sex workers are immigrants who struggle to find work with limited skills. Some sex workers do work in their country of origin. Sex workers are put under many pressures to engage in sex without condoms (with some clients offering to pay more), but not all sex workers engage in unprotected sex. Most sex workers use condoms with all their clients.*
- *Some sex workers may have received little formal education, but many others are formally educated. However, lack of education and marketable skills is a leading driver for sex work. Many sex workers have families and engage in sex work in order to support their children. While some sex workers do experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and end up doing sex work, this does not apply to all sex workers.*
- *Young people (below the age of 18) who sell sex are referred to as minors selling sex, but international human rights law describes this as sexual exploitation. They sell sex for various reasons that mostly mirror those of adult sex workers, i.e. unstable economic environment, family obligations, need for a better lifestyle or money etc.*
- *Sex workers can and do have private romantic relationships and partnerships. Some have intimate partners who know what they do for a living while others keep their work a secret out of fear that their partners would not accept*

¹⁹ The Myths and Facts about Sex Workers handout is in the appendices.

KEY MESSAGES

- Sex work is practised throughout Southern Africa. Hundreds of thousands of citizens of the Southern African region probably earn their income by doing sex work.
- Sex workers engage in sex work for a variety of reasons, mostly because sex work allows them to earn income in order to provide for themselves and their dependants.
- Sex workers may work alone or with managers. Sex work can be practised in brothels, via the internet or on the street.
- Criminalisation of sex work increases the vulnerability of sex workers to violence, abuse and stigma thereby putting them at greater risk of HIV, but it is a misconception that all sex workers are HIV-positive.
- Sex workers may experience traumatic events that lead to mental health issues, but most sex workers are not people with a mental illness.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

- It is particularly important for religious leaders to develop a working knowledge about the complexities of sex work.
- Religious leaders need to appreciate why some individuals end up doing sex work.
- Appreciating these push and pull factors is vital for religious leaders who seek to interact with sex workers as part of their ministry.
- This will assist in minimising harsh judgment of sex workers without appreciating the multiple factors that lead some people to become sex workers.



UNIT | 5



THE IMPACT OF THE LEGAL CONTEXT ON THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF SEX WORKERS AND THE WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY



5

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Identify the impact of the legal context on the human dignity of sex workers.
2. Understand how legal environments affect the overall wellbeing of the community.

INTRODUCTION

- Harmful legislation or a lack of legislation leaves sex workers in a vulnerable position and has a negative impact on their human dignity as a marginalised group with limited access to health care; often abused and exploited; prohibited from demanding safe working conditions; and without access to police protection.
- SWEAT²⁰ argues that the only argument against placing the rights of sex workers on a legal footing is a moral one and such an argument cannot justify the adverse effects which harmful legislation creates.²¹
- In the SADC countries, most aspects of sex work are currently criminalised, for example selling sex and organising or abetting the sex industry is widely criminalised. In most countries – except for Eswatini, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe – selling sex is not criminalised while only South Africa criminalises buying sex. *Refer to unit 3 for details.*
- This legal reality of sex work in the region has the effect of inhibiting sex workers from freely accessing health services, seeking recourse in the event of rights abuses and the dignity that they must enjoy as human beings. There is also a need to acknowledge the presence of transgender sex workers.

IDENTIFYING THE IMPACT OF THE LEGAL CONTEXT ON THE DIGNITY OF SEX WORKERS

- ✓ Ensure that interventions do no harm.
- ✓ Ensure that every individual's dignity is respected.
- ✓ Listen to the experiences of all persons and respond accordingly with love and care.

Refer to unit 2 for further details.

²⁰ SWEAT (Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce) is a non-governmental organisation based in Cape Town which provides information and education to sex workers on the issues of safer sex and human rights.

²¹ Mohan, *Sex Work in the SADC Region*, p6.

Legal factors impacting on the human dignity of sex workers

- Criminalisation of sex work and other punitive laws governing other aspects of sex work (criminalisation of third parties, clients, brothels, loitering or solicitation, public indecency, etc.)
- Repressive law enforcement strategies and policing (raids, arrests and detentions, incarceration, police violence and extortion, etc.)
- Anti-trafficking laws and policies, repressive migration laws Criminalisation/penalisation of drug use, same-sex practices, gender identity, cross-dressing, etc.



- Lack of laws protecting sex workers (labour rights, anti-discriminatory provisions, recognition of non-normative gender identities and behaviours, etc.)

The textbox below is informative:²²

The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development:

While all SADC states accept the discourse of gender equality, in some states the law nonetheless continues to discriminate against women. The SADC Declaration provides that States undertake to engage in “repealing and reforming all laws, amending constitutions and changing social practices which will still subject women to discrimination, and enacting empowering gender-sensitive laws.”

Historically, sex work has been a form of labour dominated by women. However, it is often condemned by various segments of society with sex workers being stigmatised.²³ Surprisingly, in the sex industry, society condemns the service providers while showing an indifferent attitude towards the buyers of the sexual services who are predominantly male. As an occupation which is generally carried out by women, sex work should be looked at in the broader context of their economic positions in the SADC region where women often have limited opportunities and few skills, and sex work serves as a viable means of survival, or in some cases supplements otherwise meagre wages.

- Below is the impact of the legal context on the dignity of sex workers, thus:
 - ✓ Sex workers are often arrested under laws that criminalise different aspects of sex work.²⁴
 - ✓ Sex workers report that the police confiscate

condoms, undermining health initiatives. In addition to this, they report a high level of police abuse, including threats, beatings and rape. A study carried out by the International Institute of Social Studies and SWEAT found that 63% of those interviewed have been sworn at by the police, while 47% had suffered abuse.²⁵

- Sex workers are often subjected to exploitation and abuse and have very little recourse to the law. Most street-based sex workers have experienced being abandoned many kilometres from safe spaces by abusive clients. They also experience abuse and stigma from health service providers.
- The criminalisation of sex work in countries has a huge impact on the dignity of sex workers and most sex worker organisations have called for the decriminalisation of the industry.
- Jo Bindman argues that laws which frustrate and criminalise aspects of sex work severely impact on the welfare of the sex worker. They are often the reason for the underground nature of sex work. In addition, because of the illegality of the profession, sex workers will often be forced to conclude negotiations quickly and work in areas which will protect them from police detection but may place them in more danger from client abuse.²⁶

²² LAC, (2002) *Whose Body Is It? Commercial Sex Work and the Law in Namibia*, Austrian Development Fund, p. 9.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ South African Law Commission, (2002) *Sexual Offences: Adult Prostitution*, issue paper 19, p. 127.

²⁵ Gould, C; Richter, M, (2010, March 23) *The Need for Evidence to Assess Concerns About Human Trafficking During the 2010 World Cup*, ISS Africa.

²⁶ Bindman, Jo., (1997) *Redefining Prostitution as Sex Work on the International Agenda*, a report written with the participation of Jo Doezema, Network of Sex Work Projects.

ACTIVITY | 3



THE IMPACT OF THE LEGAL CONTEXT ON THE DIGNITY OF SEX WORKERS

Objective: To understand the impact of the legal context on the dignity of sex workers

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

The aim of the activity is to initiate discussions on the impact of the legal context on the dignity of sex workers.

- The facilitator should divide participants into small groups. Ask each group to answer the following questions (*in your responses refer to unit 2 where necessary*):
 - Why do criminal laws against sex work or some aspects of sex work pose a challenge for the entire community?
 - Do police and health service providers take advantage of the “criminal laws” to commit crimes against sex workers? List some of the crimes that are committed against sex workers.
 - Why do you think most sex workers do not report the crimes committed against them?
 - What do you think is the effect of police confiscation of condoms from arrested sex workers?
 - Do you think the current legal framework appreciates and defends the dignity of sex workers as human beings created by God/Allah/Supreme Being?
- Ask each group to share their feedback in plenary.
- As you close the activity, ask participants to come up with a powerful advocacy statement on the criminalisation of sex work or the dignity of sex workers.

“Do you think the current legal framework appreciates and defends the dignity of sex workers as human beings created by God/Allah/Supreme Being?”

UNDERSTANDING HOW LEGAL ENVIRONMENTS AFFECT THE OVERALL WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY

There are different legal approaches (refer to unit 2) to how sex work is legislated in the region. As long as sex work or some aspects of sex work remain criminalised, sex workers will remain vulnerable to abuse, violence, discrimination from service providers and law enforcement agencies as well as clients.

Access to healthcare²⁷

Access to health care and services is also impacted by the legal frameworks that are operational in the region:

- ✓ The confiscation of condoms by the police, as evidence for being a sex worker, discourages sex workers from taking necessary steps to protect themselves from infections.
- ✓ Since sex workers are perceived as criminals, they are often stigmatised and discriminated against by health care workers, resulting in negative health-seeking behaviours among sex workers.
- ✓ Most sex workers, including those living with HIV, do not have consistent and discrimination-free access to prevention, testing and treatment services.
- ✓ Access to condoms from health service departments contributes to better health outcomes for sex workers and other members of the community.



²⁷ Karen Mohan, *Sex Work in the SADC Region*.

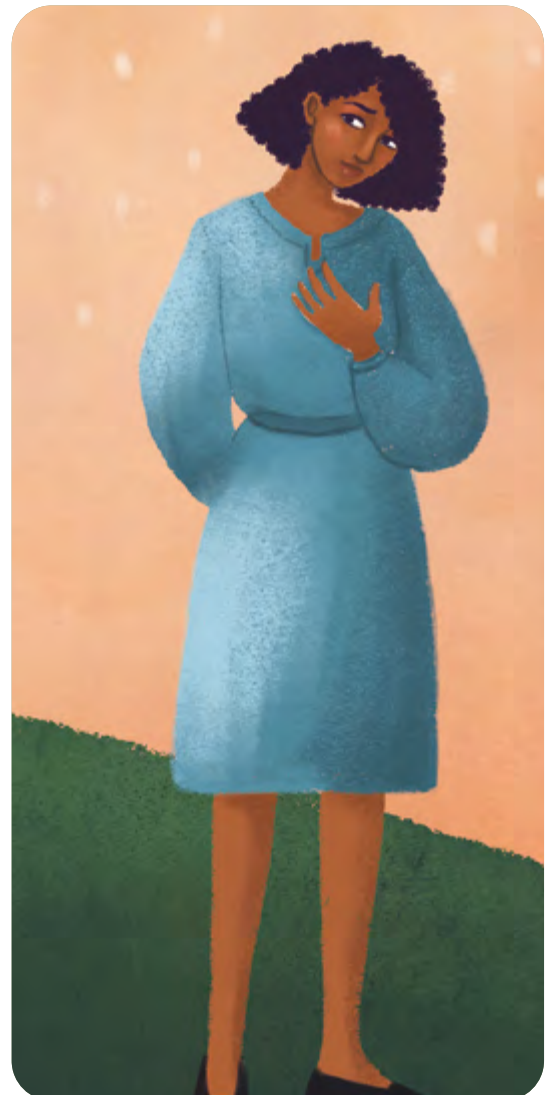
Human rights abuses²⁸

- ✓ The legal frameworks operational in the region are also contributing to the human rights abuses suffered by sex workers.
 - ✓ The violations are mainly inflicted by both state and non-state actors, namely the police and health services, as well as clients. Sex workers have been sexually abused, raped, arbitrarily detained and arrested, as well as being physically and emotionally battered.
 - ✓ Female sex workers are the most vulnerable, even though male sex workers also suffer these violations.
 - ✓ Sex workers fear reporting abuses because they are perpetrated by persons that are supposed to enforce their human rights, e.g. the police.
- The data available from the studied countries indicates that although sex workers are one of the most vulnerable groups in communities, there are very few organisations focusing on securing and protecting them from human rights abuses. And most of the organisations working with sex workers cover mostly urban areas, meaning that rural-based sex workers go unsupported. The predominant attitude towards sex workers in the studied countries is largely discriminatory, with sex work commonly seen as an immoral occupation.
 - Given the widespread human rights violations, it is important for religious leaders to activate their far-reaching influence to tackle the institutionally sanctioned discrimination of sex workers.



The need for a more progressive legal framework (refer to unit 2)²⁹

- ✓ *There is a need for the decriminalisation of sex work in the region, which will improve the working conditions of sex workers as well as protecting their dignity, access to health services and the ability to seek recourse for human rights abuses.*
- ✓ *One of the primary ways in which sex workers can protect themselves from abuse is through unionisation. This has been the experience of sex workers in some developed nations. However, in order to unionise, sex work needs to be categorised as work.*
- ✓ *It should be noted, that in a social climate which is not receptive to sex work, as is the case in the studied countries, it may be difficult for sex worker unions to integrate into larger established organisations.*
- ✓ *For a start, human rights organisations and religious leaders must lobby SADC governments and advocate for basic recognition of the human rights and human dignity of sex workers in the region.*



²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

ACTIVITY | 2



THE IMPACT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS ON SEX WORKERS

Objective: To examine the different ways in which laws affect the general life of sex workers

Method: Small group discussions, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

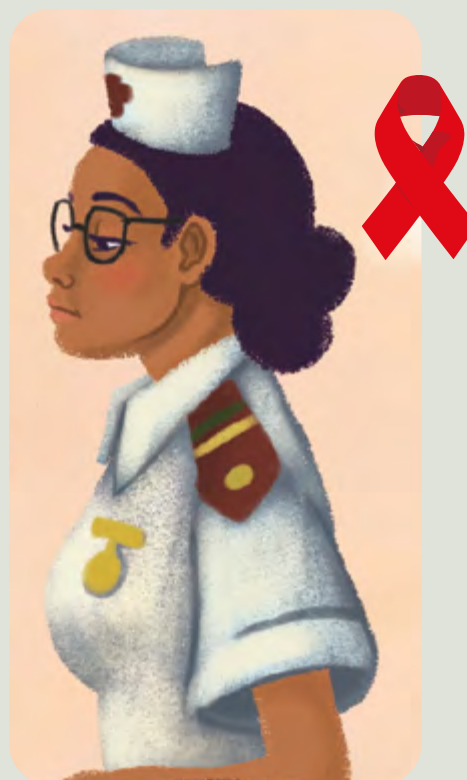
The aim of this activity is to examine the different ways in which legal frameworks in the SADC region affect the lives of sex workers, especially in the areas of access to health services as well as recognition of human rights.

1. The facilitator should divide participants into groups of up to 10 people depending on the number of training participants.
2. Ask participants in each group to list two or three grounds upon which a sex worker can be arrested in their countries.
3. Ask the groups to examine how each of these grounds contribute to:
 - a) Sex workers opting for high-risk behaviour and practices.
 - b) Sex workers developing negative health-seeking attitudes.
 - c) Service providers abusing, stigmatising and discriminating sex workers.
 - d) Sex workers' reluctance to report abuses.
4. Ask the groups to discuss whether criminalisation of sex work, or aspects of sex work, has helped in realising the dignity of all persons, and the wellbeing of the entire community?
5. Ask the groups to discuss whether the decriminalisation of sex work can help in realising the dignity of all persons and the wellbeing of the entire community?
6. Ask the groups to share their feedback in plenary.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS



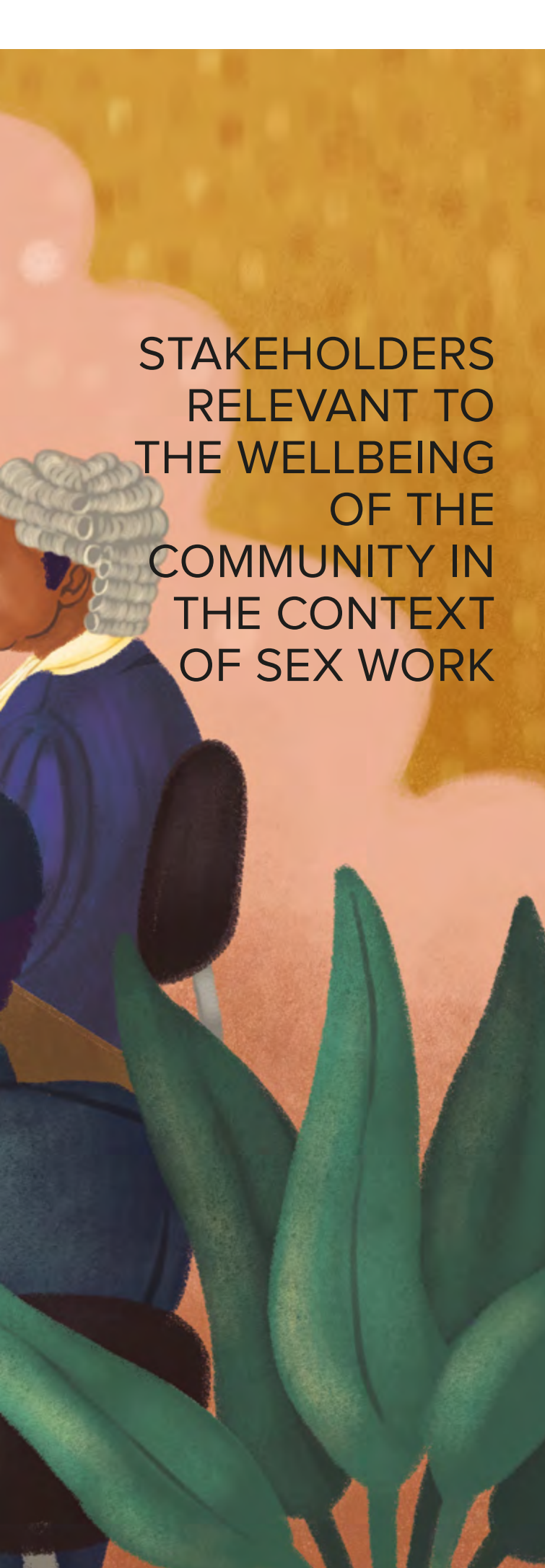
- Criminalising sex work impacts on the dignity of sex workers who are trying to earn an honest living in an environment characterised by limited employment opportunities and ever-rising costs of living.
- Criminalisation has the effect of increasing the vulnerability of sex workers to violence, human rights abuses, unfriendly health services and a disproportionate exposure to and burden of HIV and other diseases.



- Religious leaders can play an important role in developing support structures that can work with and among sex workers to defend and protect the dignity of all persons.
- While decriminalising sex work might require time, communities can engage in progressive behaviour such as challenging violence against sex workers.

UNIT | 6





STAKEHOLDERS RELEVANT TO THE WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SEX WORK

6

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. appreciate the community as an eco-system.
2. define and describe factors that sustain healthy and inclusive communities.
3. identify stakeholders that are or can work with and among sex workers.

INTRODUCTION

- “No person is an island” is a popular statement which reminds human beings of how interconnected they are. In Southern Africa, this is articulated in the concept of *Ubuntu*, namely *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. That is to say, a person is a person through others, or in *kiSwahili Mtu ni watu* - a person is incomplete without people. It is an idea that expresses solidarity in the community. Essentially therefore, “we belong together.” Different faith communities share the notion that individuals are tied to others, creating a secure community (ideally).
- It is important to realise that there are many stakeholders who are relevant to a healthy, inclusive and dignified community, including in the context of sex work. Each one of these groups has the responsibility to contribute to upholding the individual dignity of every person in the community, including sex workers. This is for two main reasons, namely:
 - a. because every person is born with inherent dignity (says religion) or human rights (human rights law).
 - b. by protecting the dignity and rights of every person in the community, including sex workers, the community will simultaneously be promoting its collective dignity.

This unit examines the role of the different stakeholders in achieving this.

“In Southern Africa, this is articulated in the concept of *Ubuntu*, namely *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*.”

ACTIVITY | 1



THE COMMUNITY AS AN ECO-SYSTEM

Objective: To examine the breadth of interconnectedness in communities

Method: Group work, presentation

Aids: Markers, cards or sticky notes

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Ask for a volunteer to come forward and stand at the centre of the room. The volunteer will represent a young woman, Bongji, aged 21, during this activity.
2. Have the volunteer sit in the middle of the room and ask participants to think about who the important people are in determining Bongji's life and future. Write each actor on a card and place it in a circle around her.
3. With the volunteer still sitting in the middle, explain that you will place these people into categories depending on the roles they play in Bongji's life. Show them the flipchart you have prepared beforehand with the following categories:



- **Interpersonal:** family, friends
- **Organisational:** school teachers, church leader
- **Community:** community elders, health providers, etc.
- **Government:** Member of Parliament, councillor, etc.

Individual:
genotype,
knowledge,
beliefs,
experience

A Social-Ecological Model



4. Allow participants to rearrange the actors they have identified according to the four levels/ circles, using whatever materials are available to demarcate the concentric circles around Bongi's chair. Point out and discuss any actors you notice have been misplaced or where there is disagreement over where they belong.
5. Next, ask participants what role they think actors in each circle play in Bongi's life. Note the main points down on a flipchart.
6. Explain that as human beings we are all connected, no one is an island. The interconnected circles that participants have just created around Bongi represent what is known as a socio- ecological model, a framework to better understand how individuals relate to those around them and to their broader environment. Briefly explain each of the five levels of the model.
 - i. **Individual:** At the centre is the individual level of internal determinants of behaviour, such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills.
 - ii. **Interpersonal:** This level comprises an individual's collective network of family and friends and other close associations.
 - iii. **Community:** This includes one's broader networks that can be defined by geography, membership, heritage or affiliation, e.g. faith communities. Social norms, social identity and role definition operate at this level and can influence life choices.
 - iv. **Organisational:** Considers the institutions that bring together interpersonal connections and provide key services such as the workplace, schools, health care etc.
 - v. **Policy and law:** Describes the authoritative decisions made by local and national governing bodies that can influence all the other levels, e.g. laws, policies.

Close by emphasising that everyone in a community is connected to and influenced by others. As such, we are all stakeholders when it comes to addressing sex work and its impact on the individuals who practise it and the broader community as a whole.

ACTIVITY | 2



THE IMPACT OF THE CRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Objective: To examine the impact of the criminalisation of sex work on different levels of relations

Method: Gallery walk and plenary discussion

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure

1. Explain to all participants the connection between criminalisation of sex work and the prevalence of unsafe sex work, which has consequences not only for sex workers but the community as a whole.
2. Hang seven flipcharts on the wall, each with one of the following titles:

women men girls

boys family

religious community

the whole community

3. Explain to participants that in this exercise we will explore the impact of the criminalisation of sex work in the context of the wellbeing of the community, including women, men, girls, boys, families, faith communities and the broader community.
4. Draw participants' attention to the flipcharts on the walls showing the seven categories and explain that participants should walk around the room and write single words or phrases on the posted flipcharts to describe the effects of the criminalisation of sex work on the individual sex workers involved, their families, faith communities, the broader community and the nation as a whole. Ensure that there are no questions and begin the exercise. Has helped in realising the dignity of all persons, and the wellbeing of the entire community?

WHEN THERE IS CRIMINALISATION OF SEX WORK

IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL	IMPACT ON THE FAMILY	IMPACT ON FAITH COMMUNITY	IMPACT ON BROADER COMMUNITY	IMPACT ON THE NATION
Emotional disorder, i.e. stress, hopelessness, depression, unhappiness and fear	lack of family harmony and happiness	absence of sex workers from church/ mosque activities	lack of social cohesion	lack of peace
Risk of HIV infection and unwanted pregnancy	tension, poor relationships with children	congregants failing to live according to the Bible/Holy Qur'an	increased burden of HIV and unwanted pregnancies	high HIV prevalence
Risk of violence, injury, imprisonment	family break ups	difficulty attracting new members	burden on social services (police, health care providers, local leaders)	more resources spent on health care and social services
Isolation, stigma and lack of love and connection	isolation, stigma and lack of connection	religious leaders required to intervene and mend family relationships	lack of community development	lack of national development



- Review the seven flipcharts with the whole group. After every flipchart, ask: "Are there any comments or questions? Does anyone want to add something to this list of effects?"
- Close by highlighting that we are all interconnected, hence the need to ensure that every member of the community is well looked after.

ACTIVITY | 3



TOWARDS A COHESIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Objective: To create an experience of interconnectedness resembling a real community

Method: Group activity

Aids: Masking tape, chalk or something else that you can use to mark/draw on the floor

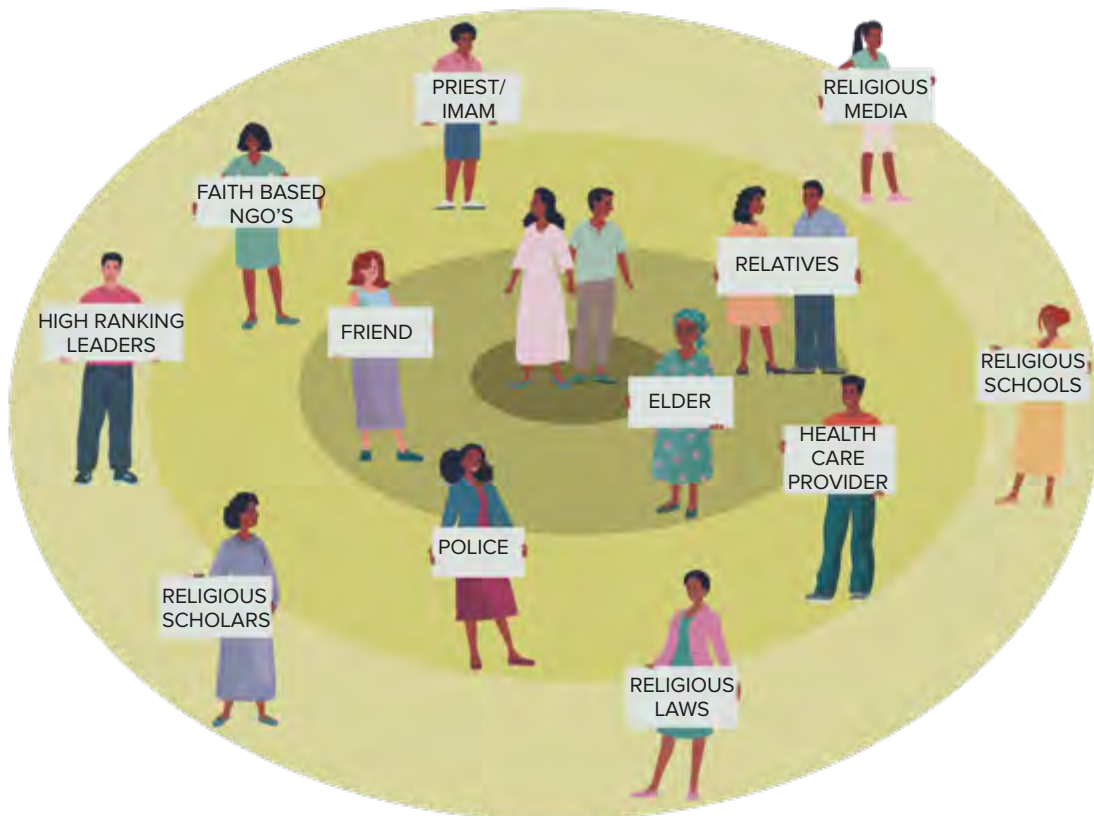
Time: 90 minutes

Procedure

1. Mark or draw four concentric circles on the floor as shown in the drawing.³⁰
2. Photocopy and cut out the character statements, provided at the end of these instructions. Fold the character statements in half so no one can read them.

3. Welcome participants and explain that in this session we will explore how different stakeholders can contribute to affect lasting change.
4. Ask the participants to come and take one character statement (folded piece of paper). Tell them they can read their pieces of paper, but only to themselves. If there are less than 30 participants, you can give each person more than one character statement, provided they are from the same circle of influence, e.g. both characters are from the same relationship level.

Note: If your training group has trouble reading the character statements, you can either ask participants to help each other or simply hand out name cards (friend, religious leader, etc.) but do not hand out the character statements.



³⁰ SASA! A Guide for Faith Communities to Prevent Violence against Women and HIV. Kampala: Raising Voices, 2016, p. 72.

5. Ask the participant who has chosen the character of Mary/Sam to stand inside the smallest, innermost circle and announce to participants: “This is Mary/Sam. They belong to our faith community. Mary/Sam, please introduce yourself to the group by each reading the first sentence on your piece of paper.”
6. Once Mary/Sam has introduced her/himself, ask participants:
 - a. “All of you who have numbers 2 to 6, please stand in this next circle around Mary/Sam.”
 - b. “All of you who have numbers 7 to 13, please come stand in this next circle.”
 - c. “All of you who have numbers 14 to 17, please come stand in this outer circle.”
7. Explain the first part of the exercise as follows:
 - a. “I will ask a participant to introduce her/himself and to read their first sentence aloud to Mary/Sam.”
 - b. “That participant will then tap another participant who will do the same, until all participants have had a turn to read their first statement only.”
8. Start the exercise by randomly choosing one of the participants to go first.
9. Once everyone has had a turn to read their first statement, conduct a short debrief using the following questions (make sure participants remain in position): Which circle do you think has the most influence on Mary/Sam and why? Do any of the circles not have any influence on Mary/Sam? Why or why not? What does this mean for our faith efforts?
10. Summarise key points:
 - a. Everyone in our community is influenced by many factors and people, sometimes without even realising it.
 - b. We are usually influenced the most by the people who are the nearest to us.
 - c. Even faith community members who are not as close to us as friends and family influence how we think and act.
 - d. Broader societal influences – like the religious and lay media, religious law, national laws and international conventions – also affect individuals, even if it isn’t as direct or immediate.
 - e. Around all of us are circles of influence: family and friends, faith community members and society.
11. Explain to participants that they will now continue the exercise as follows:
 - a. “The faith-based NGO member will read her/his second sentence aloud to Mary/Sam.”
 - b. “That participant will then tap another participant who will do the same, until all participants have had a turn to read their second statement.”
 - c. “She/he will then go and tap one person on the shoulder and return to her/his place in the circles.”
 - d. “The person who was tapped on the shoulder will read their second sentence.”
 - e. “The game will continue like this until everyone, except for Mary/Sam, has read their second sentence.”
12. When everybody has read their second sentence, it is Mary/Sam’s turn to read theirs. Debrief the game by asking the following questions:
 - a. What happened when more people were convinced of the benefits of engaging positively with sex workers?
 - b. What can we learn about effective faith community mobilisation from this exercise?



FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Close by summarising the following key points:

- a. Faith communities can change and adopt healthy norms. It is up to all faith community members and the leadership can play a key part in role modelling love for others and promoting respect for diversity.
- b. Everyone has a role to play. It is up to everyone in the faith community to create a supportive environment for new behaviours and norms.
- c. The more people who take on this issue, the more likely we are to succeed in positive engagement with sex workers in upholding their dignity and to improve our response to HIV.
- d. Unity is a key to peace in our faith community. When we remain close to each other, we can easily inspire our neighbours, friends and all faith community members to respect and treat sex workers with dignity in our communities.”

The character statements below are general representations of different positions that have been known to exist in most faith communities (here represented by Islam and Christianity). One set represents the older and more conservative understanding of what faith communities are, while the other set represents a dynamic and more liberal and transformative understanding of faith communities. It is the latter that is better placed to initiate and sustain social transformation.



CHRISTIAN CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE: CHARACTER STATEMENTS³¹

<p>i) My name is Mary/Sam. I am a 19-year-old sex worker. I dropped out of school when my mother died because there was no money and, being the eldest, I had to look after my siblings. In my community no one offered us any help. People here know my story and they call me names.</p>	<p>ii) My name is Mary/Sam. I am now respected in my community. Women from the local church help us with food and I have people I can talk to now. I do not feel desperate and lonely anymore.</p>
<p>i) I am your father. We were raised knowing that men can have multiple relationships with no consequences. Your mother was never my wife and I have a lot of other responsibilities anyway.</p>	<p>ii) I am your father. It is not acceptable for me to not look after my family. The Bible shows examples of what it means to be a good father. God is a good father and I should be too.</p>
<p>i) I am your father's friend. I see how my friend neglects his children and has looked aside while you do sex work in order to survive. But it is normal for men.</p>	<p>ii) I am your father's friend. When my friend, your father, is irresponsible I tell him to be a better man and encourage him to buy you food and pay the school fees so you can just be the child you are.</p>
<p>i) I am an elder from your family. You respect and fear me. I ensure you respect the family customs. In our family, if a girl does not behave, we disown her. It is tradition.</p>	<p>ii) I am an elder from your family. I encourage you to come to me if you need anything. We are united as a family.</p>
<p>i) I am your friend. You and I discuss everything together. My situation is similar to yours— life is hard, we have no option.</p>	<p>ii) I am your friend. Life is what you make it. With hard work and faith, you can overcome anything.</p>
<p>i) I am a fellow member of your church. I heard about you turning to sex work after your parents died. It isn't my business.</p>	<p>ii) I am a fellow member of your church. I let you know that I know about your situation and invite you to come over if you need any help.</p>
<p>i) I am a priest/pastor. I keep silent. God will take care of things.</p>	<p>ii) I am a priest/pastor. I understand your situation and know that God loves you despite everything. I regularly give sermons about God's love for the vulnerable and socially neglected.</p>
<p>i) I am a health worker at the Christian health clinic. I take care of your injuries but don't ask anything. It is not my business.</p>	<p>ii) I am a health worker at the Christian health clinic. We organised a workshop to help nurses and doctors to learn more about sex work and health. We now run special sessions for sex workers every Wednesday to meet their specific needs.</p>

³¹ Adaptation of *SASA! A Guide for Faith Communities to Prevent Violence against Women and HIV*. Kampala: Raising Voices, 2016, p.76.



<p>i) I am a leader of the church women's group. I see you soliciting in the night. I fear for my husband.</p>	<p>ii) I am a leader of the church women's group. At the last women's group meeting, I proposed that we set aside time to talk about the issues affecting orphans and widows in the community and how we can help.</p>
<p>i) I am a member of the church's pastoral council/ church leadership. I think a girl should be chaste and pure before marriage to honour God and her family.</p>	<p>ii) I am a member of the church's pastoral council/ church leadership. I made a presentation at our last meeting about how we are all saved by Christ's grace and should be welcome in the church.</p>
<p>i) I am the choir director. I lead the church choir and many respect me in our church. If a woman decides to live in sin, she has no place in the church and that is her fate.</p>	<p>ii) I am the choir director. I think my respected position allows me to promote respect and tolerance in our community because people listen to my counsel.</p>
<p>i) I am a teacher in the religious school. Telling my students if they don't work hard, they will become like you is just for fun; it doesn't do any harm.</p>	<p>ii) I am a teacher in the religious school. I role model to my students that, despite their work, sex workers are equally valuable, and that harassment is not okay.</p>
<p>i) I am a social welfare officer in your community. I see young sex workers in the community, but I mostly focus on children in families. Some children are just a lost cause.</p>	<p>ii) I am a social welfare officer in your community. I deal with children in all their diversity. On my next round of home visits, I talk to you about your circumstances and how my department can help.</p>
<p>i) I am a judge. Sometimes girls come to court facing charges of soliciting for sex. Children are so wayward these days.</p>	<p>ii) I am a judge. In my court I take all cases seriously. When a child does sex work, it is a sign that they are lacking family support and guidance, so I take the matter further and get them the right help.</p>
<p>i) I represent the Bishops Conference network of pastors. I monitor progress on church social justice issues, but I don't see the connection between sex work and ??</p>	<p>ii) I represent the Bishops' Conference/network of pastors. Sex work is closely connected to the health of our faith community. I'll ask leadership of churches how they are responding to these issues.</p>
<p>i) I am the president of the seminary. I don't see what sex work and HIV have to do with the teachings of the Bible.</p>	<p>ii) I am the president of the seminary. I ensure there is a class for our clergy that helps them to respond to sex work and HIV. They practise using quotes from the Bible to help encourage respect and tolerance in our faith community.</p>
<p>i) I am a radio announcer. You hear my messages every day. We joke about women who sell sex for a living – what's the harm?</p>	<p>ii) I am a radio announcer. I organise a talk show in which many different people come to talk about the sex work in our community and what we can all do.</p>



MUSLIM CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE: CHARACTER STATEMENTS

<p>i) My name is Amira/Asad. I am a 19-year-old sex worker. I dropped out of school when my mother died because there was no money and, being the eldest, I had to look after my siblings. In my community no one offered us any help. People here know what I do for money and they call me names.</p>	<p>ii) My name is Amira/Asad. I am now respected in my community. Women from the community help us with food and I have people I can talk to now. I do not feel desperate and lonely anymore.</p>
<p>i) I am your father. We were raised knowing that men can have multiple relationships with no consequences. Your mother was never my wife and I have a lot of other responsibilities anyway.</p>	<p>ii) I am your father. It is not acceptable for me to not look after my family. The Holy Qur'an shows examples of what it means to be a good father. Allah is a good father, and I should be too.</p>
<p>i) I am your father's friend. I see how my friend neglects his children and has looked aside while you do sex work in order to survive. But it is normal for men.</p>	<p>ii) I am your father's friend. When my friend, your father, is irresponsible, I tell him to be a better man and encourage him to buy you food and pay the school fees so you can just be the child you are.</p>
<p>i) I am an elder from your family. You respect and fear me. I ensure you respect the family customs. In our family, if a girl does not behave, we disown her. It is tradition.</p>	<p>ii) I am an elder from your family. I encourage you to come to me if you need anything. We are united as a family.</p>
<p>i) I am your friend. You and I discuss everything together. My situation is similar to yours— life is hard, we have no option.</p>	<p>ii) I am your friend. Life is what you make it. With hard work and faith, you can overcome anything.</p>
<p>i) I am a fellow member at your mosque. I heard about you turning to sex work after your parents died. It isn't my business.</p>	<p>ii) I am a fellow member of your mosque. I let you know that I know about your situation and invite you to come over if you need any help.</p>
<p>i) I am an Imam. I keep silent. Allah will take care of things.</p>	<p>ii) I am an Imam. I understand your situation and know that Allah loves you despite everything. I regularly give sermons about Allah's love for the vulnerable and socially neglected.</p>
<p>i) I am a health worker at a Muslim health centre. I take care of your injuries but don't ask anything. It is not my business.</p>	<p>ii) I am a health worker at a Muslim health centre. We organised a workshop to help nurses and doctors to learn more about sex work and health. We now run special sessions for sex workers every Wednesday to meet their specific needs.</p>



<p>i) I am a teacher in the Muslim school. Telling my students if they don't work hard, they will become like you is just for fun; it doesn't do any harm.</p>	<p>ii) I am a teacher in the Muslim school. I role model to my students that, despite their work, sex workers are equally valuable, and that harassment is not okay.</p>
<p>i) I am a member of the mosque's leadership. I think a girl should be chaste and pure before marriage to honour God and her family.</p>	<p>ii) I am a member of the mosque's leadership. I made a presentation at our last meeting about how every human is saved by Allah's mercy and compassion.</p>
<p>i) I am the Muezzin. I lead the call to prayer, and many respect me in our mosque. If a woman decides to live in sin, she has no place within our community.</p>	<p>ii) I am the Muezzin. I lead the call to prayer, and I think my respected position allows me to promote respect and tolerance in our community because people listen to my counsel.</p>
<p>i) I am a social welfare officer in your community. I see young sex workers in the community, but I mostly focus on children in families. Some children are just a lost cause.</p>	<p>ii) I am a social welfare officer in your community. I deal with children in all their diversity. On my next round of home visits, I talk to you about your circumstances and how my department can help.</p>
<p>i) I am a judge/Qadi. Sometimes girls come to court facing charges of soliciting for sex. Children are so wayward these days.</p>	<p>ii) I am a judge. In my court I take all cases seriously. When a child does sex work it is a sign that they are lacking family support and guidance, so I take the matter further and get them the right help.</p>
<p>i) I am a Mufti /interpreter of Sharia law. There are no religious decrees or pronouncements specifically about sex work and violence against women—that's a private matter. I pass down fatwa/ rulings that do not respect the rights of women.</p>	<p>ii) I am a Mufti /interpreter of Sharia law. The Holy Qur'an talks about justice. Violence and intolerance in our community is not tolerated. I pass down fatwa/ rulings to protect the well-being, health and rights of women, in keeping with our laws and policies.</p>
<p>i) I represent the Muslim Council/network of Muslim leaders. I monitor progress on mosque social justice issues, but I don't see the connection between sex work and what I do.</p>	<p>ii) I represent the Muslim Council/network of Muslim leaders. Sex work is closely connected to the health of our faith community. I'll ask mosque leadership how they are responding to these issues.</p>
<p>i) I am a Mujtahid/ interpreter of the Holy Qur'an. I don't see what sex work and HIV have to do with the teachings of the Qur'an.</p>	<p>ii) I am the Mujtahid/ interpreter of the Holy Qur'an. I ensure there is a class for our clergy that helps them to respond to sex work and HIV. They practise using quotes from the Qur'an to help encourage respect and tolerance in our faith community.</p>
<p>i) I am a women's prayer leader. I see you soliciting in the night. I fear for my husband.</p>	<p>ii) I am a women's prayer leader. At the last women's group meeting, I proposed that we set aside time to talk about the issues affecting orphans and widows in the community and how we can help.</p>
<p>i) I am a radio announcer on a Muslim radio programme. You hear my messages every day. We joke about women who sell sex for a living – what's the harm?</p>	<p>ii) I am a radio announcer on a Muslim radio programme. I organise a talk show in which many different people come to talk about the sex work in our community and what we can all do.</p>

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS



- Every stakeholder has the responsibility to uphold the dignity and rights of all persons, including sex workers.
- When sex work is demonised by the community and sex workers experience violence and marginalisation, the dignity, humanity, mental and physical health of sex workers is compromised.
- However, when every member of the community acts in solidarity with sex workers, their dignity and health is enhanced.
- Simultaneously, this also translates to the dignity, health and well-being of the community.
- Faith communities must therefore play a key role in ensuring that all the stakeholders play their part in protecting sex workers and promoting their dignity.



UNIT 17





NETWORKS AND LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

7

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Define interdependence and networks in the context of community life.
2. Describe different networks and how they impact life in the community.

INTRODUCTION

Communities are socio-ecological systems made up of interconnected networks and relationships. Simply, this means that in any community all persons are connected and interdependent. As religious leaders and faith communities, this reality of the community is best understood in terms of the “body” metaphor. The community is like a body – human body, animal body or even a plant body. All bodies are made up of different members. While each member has a specific role, the body is only a body when, ideally, all the members are present. That body will be healthy if all the members are healthy, and it will be sick if any member of the body is sick. Each member of the body has its own dignity and value, which must be acknowledged and respected.

“Each member of the body has its own dignity and value, which must be acknowledged and respected.”

ACTIVITY I 1:



REFLECTING ON INTERDEPENDENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Objective: To highlight that every person needs others, and the community needs all persons

Method: Small groups, plenary, role play

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. In plenary, ask the participants to share their understanding of the body metaphor as it is used in their different religious traditions.
2. Ask a few to share the lessons that are taught when leaders teach using the many parts of the body and oneness of the same body.
3. Divide participants into small groups of up to 10 and give each group a flipchart and markers.
4. Ask each group to list activities in their communities that demonstrate that the community is like a human body, showing the different parts and their roles in the (faith) community.
 - a. List activities that show interdependence at business or social level.
 - b. List activities that show interdependence at religious level.
 - c. List activities that show interdependence at sexuality (intimate relationships beginning at conception until death, not just sexual intercourse) level.
5. Encourage the small groups to do short role plays to demonstrate their understanding of interdependence in communities. This would be building up on (4) above. How are members of society interdependent at the family, business/social, religious levels?
6. Ask one or two groups to volunteer to do their role plays in plenary and allow for plenary comments and discussion on the role plays and the message on interdependence.

Interdependent – relying on one another.

A socio-ecological system – consists of a bio-geophysical unit and its associated social actors and institutions (A unit that brings together different actors, each with different roles but acting in common purpose).

Metaphor – a figure of speech that, for rhetorical effect, directly refers to one thing by mentioning another.

The human body metaphor

“The members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.” (I Corinthians 12: 23).

1. Do you have texts or stories in your faith tradition that make use of the human body to explain the importance of all members of a community? Explain and share.
2. Has this metaphor helped you understand the importance of some groups of people that you may have thought were not important before? Explain.

My Body worksheet: unity in diversity – many but one

1. My body is made up of _____ (one/many) parts.
2. When some part or parts of the body are not working, I am classified as _____
(able bodied/disabled/living with a disability/living with a disabling condition).
3. What body parts are most celebrated by people? Make a list.
4. What body parts are least celebrated by people? Make a list.
5. Name ONE part that without which you would not be human.
6. Name ONE part that has no function in your body.
7. What does the human body need to function normally and efficiently?
8. Can you list different members of your community that could make your community be understood through the human body metaphor?

Some important information to note:

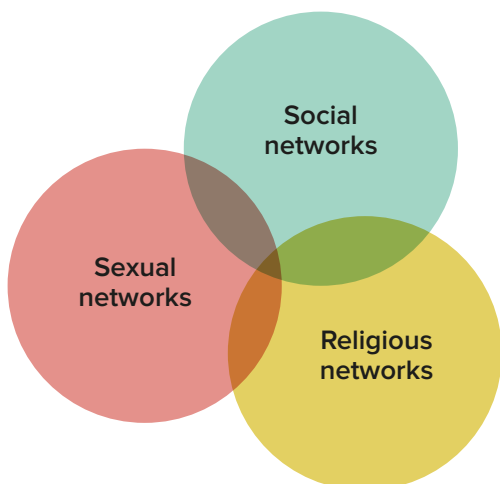
Describing a person as “disabled” is now widely considered stigmatising, because it defines someone by what they might not be able to do as opposed to recognising their humanity.

We recommend using the phrase “living with a disabling condition” – this acknowledges the person’s humanity as primary but also realises that that some conditions (physical, medical, mental, emotional) may affect their capacity to be fully active.

The key point is that there is no member of the community who is less complete or incapable of contributing. In the specific case of sex workers, the emphasis is on their being integral members of their communities; key members of the one body.

THE COMMUNITY NETWORKING SYSTEM

- Every community, big or small, developed or developing, is a socio-ecological system, made up of many different parts.
- The different parts form different networks that are interconnected and interdependent. Teachers, preachers, doctors, police, drivers, builders, farmers, labourers, employers, the rich and the poor all form social networks that make up the same community, the same socio-ecological network.
- In such socio-ecological networks, there are other networks that are formed by these groups, for example the food network, the entertainment network and others. What is important to note is how these networks show that we all belong together, that we are all interdependent, we are members of the one body.
- In the diagram below, we show the three most dominant networks in any given community, especially communities in the SADC region.



SOCIAL NETWORK

refers to a set of relations whose central uniting feature is membership to a social group or society in general. Every member of society belongs to one or more social networks that are in their society, ranging from family (which is the most primary social network in any society), to educational networks, professional and political networks. Social networks feed off the other networks, but also supply ingredients for the other networks (religious and sexual).

RELIGIOUS NETWORK

refers to a set of relations whose central uniting feature is faith or religion. In Southern Africa, around 99% of the population is considered religious, meaning 99% of the population belongs to some religious networks. These networks range from specific faith community to global interfaith networks in order to satisfy the religious, spiritual and sometimes moral needs and aspirations of these communities. Religious networks feed off the other networks, but also supply ingredients for the other networks (social and sexual). In another perspective, religious networks can be understood as belonging to the broad category of social networks.

SEXUAL NETWORK

refers to groups of persons who are connected to one another sexually. Studies suggest only 1% of the total population is born asexual, meaning 99% of the population is born sexual, and belongs to some sexual networks throughout their lives or at some point in their lifetime. Sexual networks range from the monogamous closed circles to wide and deep networks that are the result of multiple concurrent partnerships that expand the circle of those who are unknowingly connected sexually to each other. In communities where having multiple sexual partners is practised, whether it is accepted or not accepted, sexual networks can become opaque, operating under the veil of secrecy. Sexual networks have the potential of connecting many individuals without them knowing how large their network is because most of the other persons are hidden from them. While we have separated these networks above, social network can sufficiently cover the other two categories. These networks are not independent of each other. Instead, they are all interconnected, just as the actual people making up these networks are also interdependent.

Do you know your sexual network?

More than one partner means many routes for HIV to travel. Your sexual network may be bigger than you think.

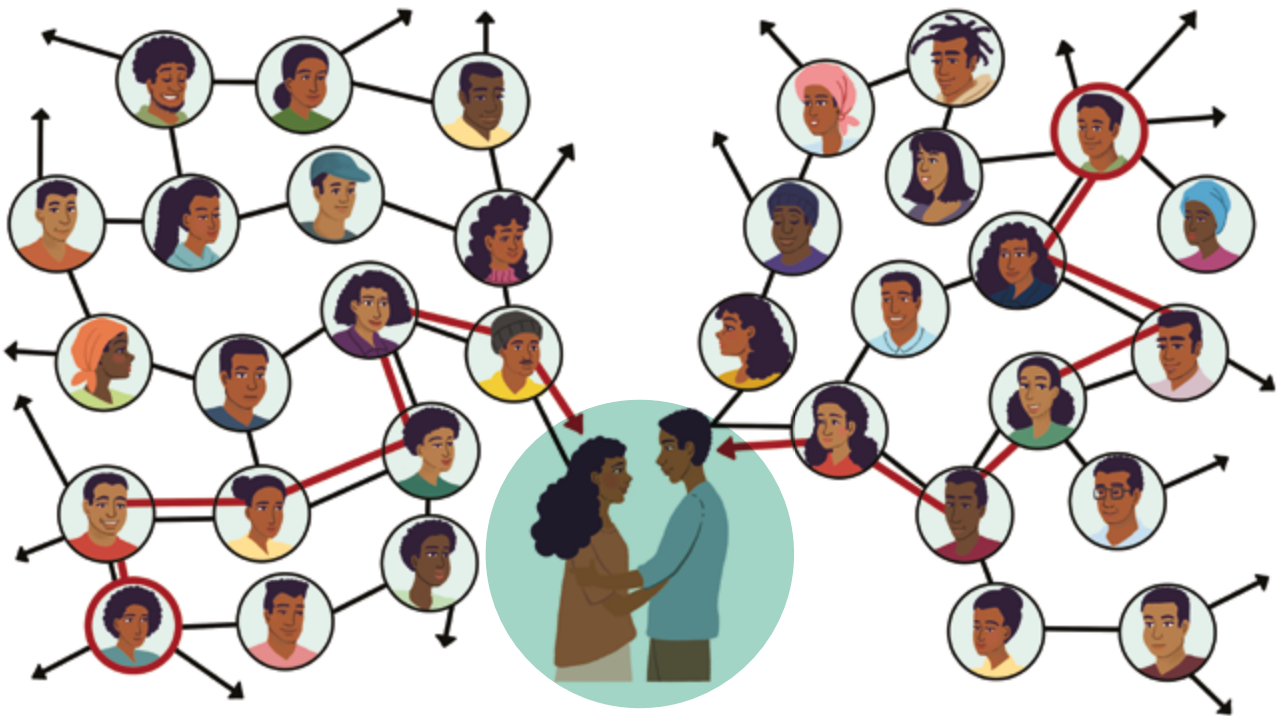


Diagram showing the complex nature of sexual networks³²

SEXUAL NETWORKS IN COMMUNITIES

Social network analysis entails the study of ties among people and how the structure and quality of such ties affect individuals and overall group dynamics. Although ascertaining complete sexual networks is difficult, application of this approach has provided unique insights into the spread of STIs that traditional individual-based epidemiological methods do not capture.

(Doherty (et al), *Determinants and Consequences of Sexual Networks as They Affect the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections*, *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 191(Suppl 1), 2005,

- ✓ Sexual networks refer to groups of persons who are connected to one another through direct or indirect sexual relationships.
- ✓ A sexual network can include married couples, unmarried partners, long-term committed partners, one-night stand partners, friends with benefits, sex workers, sexual abusers, sexual assault victims and survivors, professional men and women



“A sexual network can include married couples, unmarried partners, long-term committed partners, one-night stand partners, friends with benefits, sex workers, sexual abusers, sexual assault victims and survivors, professional men and women.”

³² SACEMA, [Coital frequency and condom use in monogamous and concurrent sexual relationships in Cape Town, South Africa](#), accessed 30 December 2020.

ACTIVITY I 2:



SEXUAL NETWORKS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Objective: To understand the subtle but far-reaching nature of sexual networks

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

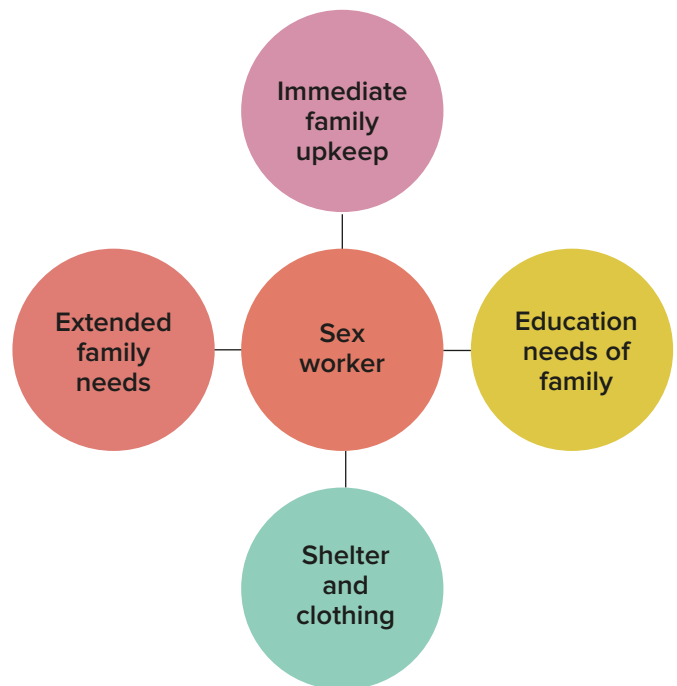
Time: 30 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into small groups of up to 10, and where possible, have gender-exclusive and gender-inclusive small groups for this activity.
2. Ask the groups to study the diagram on sexual networks above and attempt the following tasks.
3. Make a list of different groups that might be represented in the network above (your list must focus on the roles of the various professions (not actual names of people) – for example, teachers, sex workers, faith leaders, etc.).
4. Do people in a sexual network possess human dignity? Explain.
5. Do you think the couple in the middle is aware of their sexual network?
6. Do you think there are people in this network who might not know they are in a sexual network?
7. Do you think these kinds of networks are possible in your own community? Share experiences.
8. How could sexual networks complicate responses to pandemics and diseases (HIV, COVID-19, STIs) in some communities?
9. Is anyone totally safe in a community with sexual networks?

Sex workers are mothers, grandmothers, wives, husbands, fathers, steady partners, faithful members of the faith community, professionals, outstanding members of the choir or praise and worship.

- ✓ Many people are involved in sexual networks; as noted above, sex workers are just one of the many groups that are all part of the networks.
- ✓ Sex workers are at risk of being infected by a partner the same way other community members are at risk of being infected. The fact that sex workers are known to have multiple partners increases their vulnerability.
- ✓ Sex work is an important livelihood strategy and approximately two-thirds of female sex workers in the sub-Saharan region report being responsible for dependants.

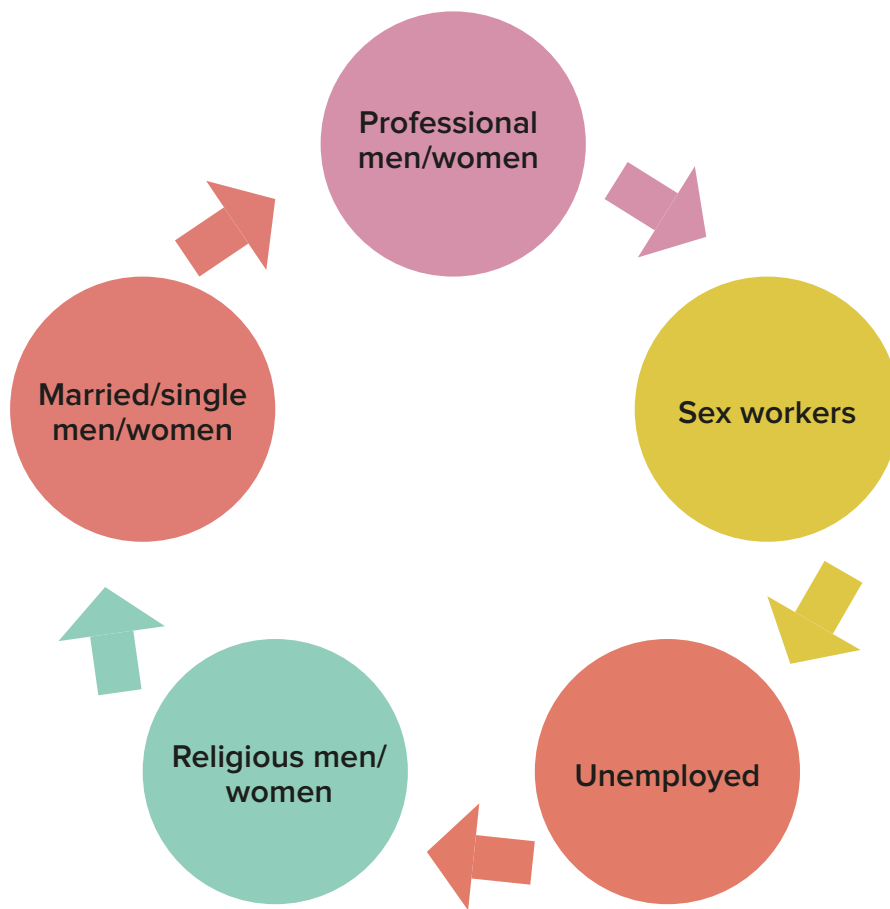


SEX WORKING IS NOT THE WHOLE, WHO ARE THE SEX WORKERS?

In the previous session, we noted how sexual networks connect many community members, directly and/or indirectly.

- ✓ Pleasure and entertainment appear to be among the least important factors for engaging in sex work for most sex workers. Social responsibilities, sustainable earnings and lack of alternative opportunities are cited as the most pressing factors.
- ✓ Sex workers provide sexual services to a wide range of people in communities. They are linked to different persons, who also have their own links to others. Recognising the need to uphold their rights is therefore important.

For example:



Two important aspects to understand and appreciate about sex workers are that:

- ✓ They are benefactors of many community members because their earnings find their way into many homes and businesses.
- ✓ They are like all other community members, sharing with others in many networks but earning their survival from a profession not widely acknowledged as a form of work.



ACTIVITY I 4:



WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF ISOLATING SEX WORKERS?

Objective: To examine the consequences of isolating sex workers in community programmes

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 30 minutes



Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10 and, where possible, have gender-exclusive and gender-inclusive groups for this activity.
- 2.
3. Share the following dialogue topics:
 - (a) Every person is important in responses to pandemics and diseases in our community.
 - (b) Criminalisation of sex work helps preserve the dignity of the community.
 - (c) Stigmatisation stops people from being sex workers.
 - (d) All human beings have dignity irrespective of the work they choose to do.
3. Ask the groups to list three points for each topic and three points against each topic.
4. Ask groups to present their arguments (in plenary), choosing only one side of the discussion and sharing their other points if they are not captured by other groups presenting on the other side.
5. In their smaller groups again, ask the participants to list diseases and other conditions that could negatively affect the community unless sex workers are included in community programmes.

“Religious leaders can help in creating a tolerant, inclusive, supportive and understanding community, as critical opinion-makers and influencers who have the ear of all community members.”




CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

- Communities are not made up of isolated, stand-alone individuals.
- They are made up of closely networked people whose fate is interconnected. This is best expressed by the image of the body that runs through all religions of the world.
- Sex workers are like any other part of this one body that constitutes society. Sexual networks are built on the same image of being interconnected and interdependent.
- The wellbeing of the entire society is dependent on securing the wellbeing of all members of society, including sex workers.
- The vulnerability of sex workers is the vulnerability of the whole community. Religious leaders can help in creating a tolerant, inclusive, supportive and understanding community, as critical opinion-makers and influencers who have the ear of all community members.



UNIT | 8





RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THE DIGNITY OF THE COMMUNITY

8

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able:

1. To examine the role of the religious leader in mitigating violence, stigma and exclusion suffered by sex workers.
2. To outline the advantages of progressive religious leadership and what they can do in addressing sex work and HIV in communities.

INTRODUCTION

A vibrant community is made up of many actors, each of whom contributes towards the dignity and well-being of the community. There are those who provide various services, either as private companies/ individuals or as government. These services include health, education, communication, food, security, legal and other services. On their part, religious leaders from diverse faith communities provide spiritual, psychosocial and material support services. It would be naïve for one group of service providers to claim to be able to do without others since they are complementary. When all the different actors collaborate effectively, there is a better chance for the community to flourish. But what is community wellbeing? Thus: ³³

Community wellbeing is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfil their potential.

When these conditions are met, every human being is accorded their individual dignity and together the community enjoys dignity, since a community is the sum of its parts. Where some members are denied their dignity, such a community lacks dignity as well.

³³ <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/what-community-wellbeing#:~:text=Community%20wellbeing%20is%20the%20combination,flourish%20and%20fulfill%20their%20potential.&text=We%20can%20explore%20each%20of,that%20contribute%20to%20community%20wellbeing>

- The unit has this underlying message: by creating an environment in which sex workers are not violated, stigmatised, or excluded from community programmes (developmental, health, or spiritual), religious leaders are investing in the human dignity of sex workers and, by extension, the entire community.

The background to this unit is that, more often than not, religious leaders themselves and many members of the community do not realise that sex workers do not exist in a vacuum, or out there, on their own. If anything, sex workers are right here, among us, and very much part of us. Usually, the marginalisation of sex workers is made possible through the use of language that serves to “other” them, for example saying “those sex workers.” Such language has the power of suggesting that sex workers live and exist elsewhere, outside the community. Yet, closer analysis reveals that sex workers are integral members of the community. Their clients are also very much integral members of the community. Thus, sex workers are not strangers: they are everyday people who constitute part of the whole. Consequently, it is important for religious leaders to recognise that in the final analysis, how religious leaders might or might not feel about the rightness or wrongness of sex workers is not the most important consideration. Acting to promote the dignity and wellbeing of the community is the most important consideration.



ACTIVITY | 1:



WHAT DO THE SACRED TEXTS TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN THE COMMUNITY?

Objective: To examine and outline the role of religious leaders through interpretation of sacred texts

Method: Creative thinking, group discussion

Aids: Flipcharts, markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Explain that even though they are often not identified as a key stakeholder, religious leaders have an important role in creating, promoting and defending an inclusive, tolerant and fulfilling society.
2. Ask participants to share passages from their religious texts that speak about the responsibility of religious leaders within the faith community and in broader society. Ask them to discuss what this means to them as religious leaders today.

Facilitator resource

Scripture 1: Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

Scripture 2: Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 5: 17)

Scripture 3: Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

Scripture 4: Indeed, Allah commands you to deliver the trusts to their [rightful] owners, and, when you judge between people, to judge with fairness. Excellent indeed is what Allah advises you. Indeed, Allah is all-hearing, all-seeing. (An-Nisa' 4:58)

Find teachings/proverbs in African culture that discourage judging others and promote solidarity, compassion and accompaniment. *These suggested texts are not exhaustive, ask for more texts from participants. All faith communities have such texts or traditions on leadership. Allow all represented faiths to share their own.*

3. Explain that religious leaders and faith communities are the largest and best-organised civil institutions in the world, claiming the allegiance of billions of believers and bridging the divides of race, class and nationality. Religious leaders are respected and listened to by community members and political leaders. At family and community level in particular, they have the power to raise awareness, influence behaviours and transform social norms around key issues relating to human dignity and community wellbeing.
4. Note that all religious texts encourage tolerance and divine grace even when one is regarded as having strayed from the straight path as defined by her or his religion. In many faiths, when we see others doing wrong and we respond by judging and acting like we are better than them, it is like we are also in the wrong.

“Above all, keep loving each other earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4: 8)

“And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an 4:25)

5. Write the word ALLY on the flipchart paper and ask participants to think freely for two to three minutes about all the words that come to mind when they read this word. Record their responses on a flipchart. Ask the participants to look at the words they have come up with and discuss how these words are related.
6. Use these words and ideas to create a collective working definition for the word ALLY and explain that it is part of the duty of religious leaders to be allies and shepherds to all people, to show love and tolerance, thus role modelling the grace of God/Allah. [Text can be changed, as long we make the point that the role of the faith leader isn’t to judge and excommunicate but to love and role model Christ/or uphold the values articulated by Allah “the Merciful, the Compassionate.”]
7. Now ask participants to think of a time when they stood up for someone else or a time when someone else stood up for them. How did this make them feel? Ask them to write down the challenges and benefits of being in that situation on a piece of paper that they will then share with a partner. Examples may include:
 - ✓ I told someone to stop beating up his wife/children.
 - ✓ The challenge was that I was afraid the person would turn his anger toward me.
 - ✓ The benefit was that I felt good about myself for doing what I thought was right.⁸
 Have participants pair up to share their responses with someone else. Ask for volunteers to report back the challenges and benefits of sticking up for someone and/or of having someone stick up for you.
9. Record the responses on the board in two pairs of columns – the challenges and benefits of being an ally and the challenges and benefits of having someone be an ally to you.
10. Ask participants to discuss what they notice from their responses. The following questions might be helpful prompts:
 - (a) Is it easier or harder to be an ally or to have someone be an ally to you?
 - (b) What makes someone a good ally?
 - (c) In what kinds of situations is it easier or harder to be an ally?
 - (d) Does it matter who else is present? Whether you’re interacting with friends or strangers?

ACTIVITY | 2:



RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND THE CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE AND DIGNIFYING COMMUNITY FOR ALL

Objective: To understand how religious leaders can help in creating inclusive communities

Method: Presentation, group work, plenary discussion

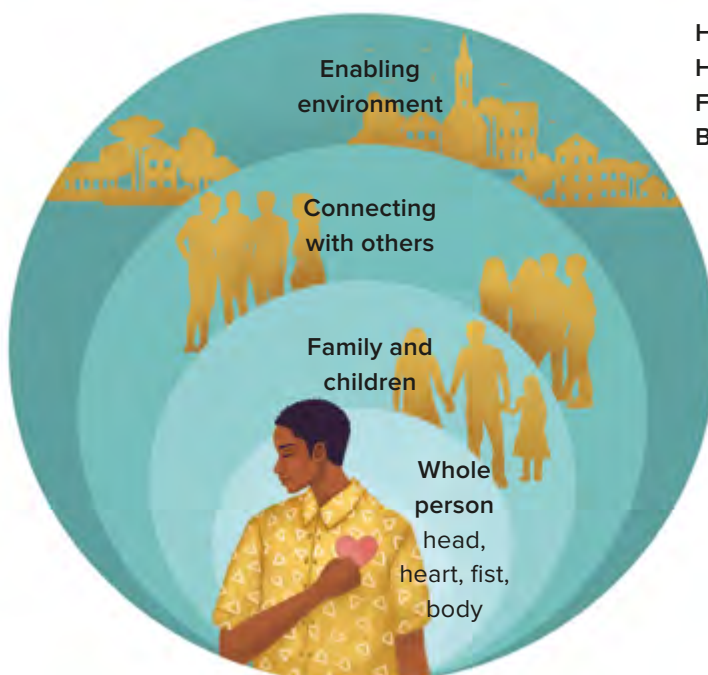
Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Explain that often people within faith communities and broader society marginalise, stigmatise, exclude and deny some people's human dignity. Most communities exclude some persons based on different reasons, e.g. menstruating women, people living with disabling conditions, women, young people, the poor, and the unemployed. Sex workers are among the many groups that are excluded, stigmatised or shamed in communities. Some service providers also use their private convictions or moral values to refuse or compromise the service they offer to sex workers.
2. Point out that religious leaders have a lot of social and religious capital that could be used in advocacy and lobbying for changes in attitudes and behaviours towards vulnerable groups in their communities. There are no religious leaders who are meant to open their arms for all and others who are not meant to do the same. It is our choice as leaders whether to be inclusive, non-discriminating and understanding leaders or to be exclusive, discriminating and intolerant leaders. **We can instigate change, the vulnerable cannot.**
3. Progressive leadership is needed to scale up programmes which holistically target all vulnerable people, including sex workers, and to understand that – beyond sex work – sex workers are mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, steady partners, and faithful members of the religious community. Creating support structures to mitigate the risks faced by sex workers is to create support mechanisms for the people around them, many of whom may be vulnerable individuals – young children, elderly parents.
4. Highlight that sex workers have concerns not exclusively linked to the risk of HIV and that individuals need to be understood, acknowledged and treated in a holistic manner. As such, it is critical that religious leaders take a whole person approach when working with sex workers.

THE WHOLE PERSON APPROACH TO WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE, INCLUDING SEX WORKERS



HEAD – knowledge and skills development

HEART – emotional and psychological support

FIST – empowerment and human rights

BODY – health and HIV

1. Key components of a whole person approach include:

Emotional and psychological support: All sex workers have basic needs such as safety and security, self-esteem and access to the same services as others, to live free from stigma and to have a sense of belonging to their families and their communities and to be able to disclose their work to them.

Knowledge and skills development:

Apart from the usual information about HIV prevention and health promotion services, sex workers need information about their human rights. Sex workers also have a need for general education to help empower them and to build their human capital.

Health and HIV: Effective sex work programmes need to focus on the factors that increase the vulnerability of sex workers, as well as promoting the dignity of sex workers as human beings. Stand up for the inclusion of sex workers in all health and empowerment-related community programmes.

ACTIVITY 13:



THE WHOLE PERSON APPROACH

Objective: To outline possible interventions by religious leaders using the whole person approach

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10 people.
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to all groups.
3. Ask the groups to reflect on what religious leaders could do to intervene on behalf of vulnerable people, including sex workers. The following questions can help in this reflection exercise:
 - a. What can religious leaders do to challenge and transform some social norms that disadvantage vulnerable people, especially sex workers?
 - b. What kind of psychosocial support services can religious leaders offer sex workers?
 - c. What kind of spiritual support can religious leaders offer sex workers?
 - d. How does the one body metaphor influence our whole person approach to working with and among sex workers?
4. Ask the groups to share their feedback in plenary.
5. Allow for open discussion on various points raised during the feedback session.



CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

- Religious leaders are central to the dignity and wellbeing of the community.
- Although many actors tend to minimise the significance of religious leaders, it is clear that they are very well placed to be at the frontline of community transformation and flourishing.
- Through working with sex workers with sensitivity and understanding, religious leaders can make a significant contribution to the dignity and wellbeing of all members of the community.
- Building on religious teachings that emphasise compassion, solidarity and accompaniment (being present to others in their hour of need), religious leaders will be promoting community cohesion and a sense of everyone prospering.

UNIT | 9





PASTORAL AND PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

9

Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, it is expected that participants will be able to:

1. Define outreach and its importance in the life of the faith community.
2. Examine possible pastoral interventions that could make ministry within the community and addressing sex work possible.
3. Examine and outline possible practical psychosocial-spiritual interventions to uphold the dignity of sex workers in the context of the larger community.

INTRODUCTION

- Faith communities are known for their various ministries or services that they offer their members and the general communities in which they live and work.
- At the heart of faith communities is the desire, calling or commitment to reaching out to other people who are in different circumstances, especially those that are vulnerable, in order to provide such people spiritual, material, emotional and other forms of support.

In Islamic theology, the purpose of da'wah is to invite people, Muslims and non-Muslims, to understand the worship of God as expressed in the Holy Qur'an and the sunnah of the prophet Muhammad and to inform them about Muhammad. "Whoever calls to guidance will receive the same reward as the one who follows him without any decrease in the reward of his follower."

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mat 28:19-20)

Bringing people together is what I call "Ubuntu", which means: "I am because we are." Far too often people think of themselves as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.
Desmond Tutu.

NB: Pose the following questions to the group in plenary and ask them to reflect on them, and to keep them in mind because they are important for this unit and the activities that follow.

- Who are the groups of people in our communities that are beneficiaries of our outreach services and ministries?
- Are there people that are beyond the reach of our pastoral and practical services? Who are such people and why are they beyond the reach of our pastoral ministries?



ACTIVITY 1:



OUTREACH MINISTRY: DEFINING AND PLANNING ACTIVITY

Defining and illustrating outreach

Objective: To define and outline strategies of carrying out pastoral and practical outreach ministries

Method: small groups, role play, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide the participants into groups of up to 10. For the purposes of this activity, it will be helpful to have ordained leaders and other stakeholders in separate groups. If the numbers permit, it would also be valuable to have sex workers in their own group.
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to the groups.
3. Explain to the groups that they must prepare their feedback in the form of talking points as well as visual illustrations in the form of role play to show the meaning of outreach.
4. Ask the groups to attempt the following tasks, for which they must come up with the talking points as well as the role play:
 - (a) In your (faith) community or profession, what is outreach?
 - (b) Why do faith communities engage in outreach activities?
 - (c) Who are the targets of outreach activities in your community or from your community?
 - (d) Is outreach inward or outward looking in your community? Explain.
 - (e) What are the strategies that you use to carry out outreach activities?
 - (f) Who benefits from outreach activities? (*Those receiving the service or those doing outreach or both those doing outreach and those benefitting from the outreach service?*). Explain.

(g) Why is outreach an important strategy for ministering in your faith community?

5. The role play can focus on (a) showing targets of outreach activities, (b) strategies for carrying out outreach activities, or (c) the advantages and disadvantages of outreach activities.
6. After 30 minutes, reconvene the plenary for a feedback session, allowing each group to contribute their talking points and later on to perform their role plays.
7. During feedback, it is important to allow questions and discussions to happen where others have not fully understood some aspects.

Some important information

- *In our work, we positively engage without judgment with people irrespective of caste, creed, colour, gender or sexuality and seek to be inclusive of all. This is built on an understanding that God does not discriminate but views all of us as different but equal. On occasion, even today, the Bible is used to promote exclusion, but we find any form of exclusion to be inconsistent with an overall understanding of most sacred texts, including the Bible and the Holy Qur'an.*
- *Outreach takes a variety of forms, with interventions tailored to each person and to the setting. A key part of outreach is adapting services and making them more accessible/appropriate/flexible by taking the services directly to the service user.³⁴*

³⁴ UK Network of Sex Work Projects, [Good Practice Guidance: Working with Sex Workers: Outreach](#), UK, 2008, accessed 10 December 2020.

Outreach is first and foremost about connecting to your community – connecting with the sick, connecting with prisoners, connecting with students, connecting with professionals (nurses, doctors, police, social workers).

If your community knows you as the group that cares about the community, people will show up, people will trust you, and people may even make changes to their lives. Beneficiaries of outreach services mostly become outreach activists.

- Strategies for outreach**
- physical meetings
 - social media, print and electronic media campaigns, flyers and brochures
 - taking services to the targeted groups at appropriate times
 - providing accessible suggestion boxes for targeted groups to share their views and offer suggestions developing an appropriate message, activities and material help for the targeted groups.

Carefully study the design template below, you will need to create an outreach programme. Ensure that you:

1. identify sex workers/the community’s needs.
2. engage sex workers in the design and implementation of your programme.

Outreach design template

1. Define goals and objectives – what do you want to achieve in a broader sense (growing the group, reducing the vulnerability of the group to disasters, diseases, etc.). Your objectives must be specific and preferably measurable: for example: to receive two new members every month to reduce prevalence of STIs in the community; to increase the uptake and use of condoms by sexually active members of the community where necessary.
2. Identify your outreach targets – outreach must be tailored for a specific group. It is possible to have several outreach activities, therefore identify and isolate the potential targets for your outreach activities. You can create criteria to help isolate different target groups, e.g. age, profession, gender, nationality, migrant and residence status, marital status etc.
3. Develop your outreach message – once you have identified your target, it is time to develop an appropriate message for the specific target group (catchy and relevant to the target group). What do you want to say to the target group? (For example: “you are an image of God, God loves all persons irrespective of class, education, faith, etc., violence can never be justifiable, no matter who the target is.”) An outreach message can never be **one size fits all**, because **all have different sizes**.” Your target group must be actively involved in this process.
4. Packaging the message – now that you have your message, in what form are you going to make that message accessible to the target group? Packaging the message is important because different groups may like messages packaged differently - #hashtags, printed t- shirts, hampers, flyers, brochures, posters, social media posts, theatre, photography, videos, GIFs are all possible ways of packaging the message. To settle on the best package, consider cost-effectiveness, accessibility, ease of dissemination, etc. Research shows positive messages attract people more than negative messages.
5. Disseminating your message or carrying out your outreach activities – with the message now packaged, it is important to ask the strategy question: how do we get the message to the

target groups? How do we carry out the activities that will get us closer to the target groups? How and who will give out flyers, brochures? Who will put up the posters in the strategic locations? Who will create our social media platforms and post videos, photos and GIFs on those platforms? Who will participate in the theatre group? Who will distribute the printed t-shirts and how?

6. Monitoring and evaluation – Always take stock. What has been done to date? What was supposed to have been done but has not been done? Why did we not do all that we intended to do? What have been our major successes? What challenges have we faced? What strategies have not worked well? What strategies have worked well? How can we improve? Your target group must be actively involved in this process.

Adapted from Family Pride's *A step-by-step guide: creating an outreach plan*, <http://www.orgwise.ca/sites/osi.ocasi.org.stage/files/resources/A%20Step%20by%20Step%20Guide%20to%20Creating%20an%20Outreach%20Plan.pdf>, accessed 10 January 2021.

Pose the following questions for reflection and dialogue in plenary:

Are we sure that God does not want sex workers to have fulfilling lives?

Is the "good news" too good for sex workers?

Dialoguing around these questions will necessarily lead to critical reflections on the importance of including sex workers within the purview of faith leaders and faith communities. Religions are universal and seek to/are mandated to include everyone in their focus.

PASTORAL SUPPORT INTERVENTIONS FOR THE DIGNITY OF VULNERABLE GROUPS INCLUDING SEX WORKERS

ACTIVITY 1 2:



UNDERSTANDING PASTORAL DUTY AND THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF PASTORAL INTERVENTIONS

Objective: To define pastoring and outline different pastoral interventions to vulnerable groups

Method: Small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10, distributing ordained ministers across all the groups to help in clarifying the meaning of pastoral and pastoring to other participants.
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to all the groups.
3. Ask the groups to reflect on the meaning of pastoring and to write down their definition of pastor, pastoring and pastoral.
4. Ask the groups to discuss and come up with two to three pastoral interventions that religious leaders could use to offer support and create a supportive community that cares for vulnerable persons, including sex workers.
5. Reconvene the plenary and ask the different groups to present their feedback, beginning with the definitions (until all groups have given their feedback). Allow for discussions on the definitions and only write them on flipcharts when there is some agreement on them.
6. After definitions, ask groups to contribute their suggested pastoral interventions. (To encourage greater participation from all groups, each group must contribute only one intervention at a time). Allow discussion on the interventions.
7. To close the session, you can pose the question: is there a fundamental difference between pastoral interventions for doctors, teachers, police officers and sex workers? Can we not use the same pastoral interventions that have worked with soldiers, politicians and teachers when we work with sex workers?

Some important information

The word **pastor** (used here to represent an office called by different names like priest, bishop, apostle, prophet etc., in Christian communities) derives from the Latin noun pastor which means “shepherd” and is derived from the verb pascere, a verb which means to lead to pasture, set to grazing, cause to eat. A pastor is an individual who is religiously entrusted with caring for the needs of persons that are put under their care by a community of believers. From this general understanding, it is possible to think of all religious leaders who shepherd their faith community members as pastors. However, we must acknowledge that pastor is now almost exclusively Christian in usage, while other faith communities use different names like imam in Islam, rabbi in Judaism. Ask participants from other faith traditions to share the names they give to their spiritual leaders.

If pastor is the equivalent of shepherd, then **pastoring** must mean doing what a shepherd does with his/her flock. That’s to say: finding places with the right pastures, directing the flock to the right pastures, defending the flock from predators that may cause harm to the flock. Pastoring is the work of providing each person what they need – pastures to the hungry, water to the thirsty, protection to the defenceless. The different needs call for different pastoring strategies or interventions; it can never be one size fits all.

Pastoral is an adjective that describes the noun pastor, it is used to describe the work of religious leaders when they give help and advice to persons facing different challenges in life. A religious leader’s pastoral duty is to offer spiritual, emotional and material support to persons in need of such services. While the concept of pastoral intervention is now almost limited to Christian leaders’ work, it is a concept that can apply to Christian as well as non-Christian spheres; it can even be extended to cover non-religious spheres. It focuses on an individual’s welfare and their social and emotional needs, rather than their purely spiritual needs.

Pastoral interventions can include the following:

- Opening faith community buildings and resources for use by people who may or may not necessarily be members of the community, for planning meetings, as centres for informal and formal learning.
- Praying for and with persons that are in need of spiritual accompaniment and sharing words of encouragement including providing counselling sessions.
- Mobilising food resources to feed the vulnerable.
- Training peer educators for further engagement with the vulnerable – peer educators can reach people in spheres that may not be easily accessible to religious leaders.
- Using religious premises to bring together vulnerable groups like sex workers with law enforcement agencies, policy makers, health service providers to allow for candid engagements.
- Raising awareness within the community about the different challenges affecting some members of the community and mobilising support from the larger community.
- Setting up or becoming part of multi-stakeholder crisis response teams to support survivors of violence.
- Providing funeral services or masses to deceased sex workers.
- Ensuring a welcoming and supportive environment for sex workers (opening up churches/mosques, advocating in religious exhortations/preaching).
- Create understanding of the real lived experiences of sex workers, etc.
- Inviting sex workers to speak on the importance of decriminalising sex work. See, for example, this article involving the South African sex worker organisation Sisonke: <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/cape-town-church-calls-decriminalisation-sex-work/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CJesus%20was%20the%20first%20to%20decriminalise%20sex%20work%E2%80%9D%20says%20church%20banner&text=According%20to%20the%20Sex%20Workers,sex%20work%20in%20South%20Africa.>

- Provide spiritual and psychosocial support to sex workers who are survivors of violence. This is best done in collaboration with other specialists. For example, North Star Alliance works with crisis response teams whereby health care providers, sex workers, influential community members, religious leaders, border patrol officers and law enforcement officers team up and provide support to sex workers who are survivors of violence. They refer them to support services, and religious leaders provide spiritual or psychosocial support. See this webpage: <https://aidsfonds.org/community-led-crisis-response-systems>



PSYCHOSOCIAL-SPIRITUAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO SEX WORKERS: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ACTIVITY 13:



PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS IN MITIGATING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SEX WORKERS

Objective: To develop some practical intervention activities that can mitigate the violence, abuse and exclusion suffered by sex workers

Method: small groups, role play, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 90 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10 and where possible, have your groups organised along the lines of ordained faith leadership and other stakeholders (if numbers permit, have sex workers in their own group as well).
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to all the groups and remind each group to choose their own chair, secretary and spokesperson.
3. Inform the groups that they are expected to provide feedback in plenary – and the feedback will be in two forms – talking points written on a flipchart and a role play to be performed by the group.
4. Ask the groups to be guided by the following questions and statements in their discussions:
 - (a) How can religious leaders offer psychological support to sex workers and their dependents as well as their clients, law enforcement agencies and health service providers?
 - (b) How can religious leaders offer social support to sex workers and their dependents?
 - (c) How can religious leaders offer spiritual support to sex workers and their dependents (*without necessarily seeking to convert them*)?
 - (d) How can religious leaders advocate for a community that does not tolerate violence, stigmatisation and exclusion of sex workers in community development and health programmes?
 - (e) How can religious leaders work with sacred texts that appear to authorise the discrimination of sex workers?
5. After 60 minutes, reconvene the plenary and ask for group feedback. Allow questions and discussion as groups give their feedback.



Below is a case study. Study this case study and reflect on whether that could apply to some sex workers in your own community. If it does, does this reality help you to understand the need for outreach to sex workers? What surprised you the most from this case study? Do you think it is important to know what sex workers want or need?



I met Nadine when first working in faith-based outreach, and we got to know one another over the next few years. I found her to be a gracious and caring human being who had an amazing faith and knowledge of Jesus. She loved literature and philosophy and was a musician and semi-professional photographer. She and her partner were practising Christians who loved God, prayed regularly, and were always open to deep discussions of scripture. Nadine was also a sex worker who over the years had developed a small and select clientele, forming very personal relationships with each of her customers and sharing faith, life and intimacy. In time Nadine indicated that she was a sex worker because it suited her lifestyle and gave her a great deal of flexibility and control around her customer base as well as an excellent income. With her incredible potential, creativity and caring as well as deep faith, I became determined to help her 'escape' the sex industry which was holding her back from reaching full potential. For months, years even, I – along with other Christian workers – actively encouraged her to make the move away from paid sex. Urging her to live a frugal life, we encouraged her to reach out for something better and were determined to see her succeed. After yet another morning of discussing job training options, she stated frankly stated: "I don't want you to help me leave prostitution, I want you to help me get through this day". Eating and praying together, discussing theology, being creative as well sharing our ups and downs were what she

"Nadine was determined to deal with her daily circumstances, finding redemption in the midst of life. She desired relationships that were supportive, direct, present, faithful and loving."

valued. Where the Christians in her life had focused upon a fixed outcome (leaving prostitution) as a sign of healing and redemption, Nadine was determined to deal with her daily circumstances, finding redemption in the midst of life. She desired relationships that were supportive, direct, present, faithful and loving. In essence, she demanded that we participate in a rich fellowship of Christian community that also encompassed her.

Cited from Lauren Nancy Margaret McGrow, *Missionary Positions: Sex Workers, Faith-based Outreach in Australia and a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (A thesis submitted to Charles Sturt University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy), 2014 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), <https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/9313349/64767> accessed 2 December 2020.



Below is a case study that describes aspects of the lives of sex workers. Study the case study and see if it helps you to understand sex workers differently from your pre-conceived ideas about sex workers. Is there something you have learnt from this case study about the reality of sex workers? Is there something in the case study that you think calls for an outreach project for sex workers?



Case study – the story of sex workers: selfish or selfless?

A hint of perfume and cigarette smoke precedes the tapping sound of stiletto heels on the tarred road. Patricia Dlamini*, 27, from a village in northern KwaZulu-Natal Province, comes into the light from one of the windows and takes a long draw of her cigarette. “Business is bad right now. The police follow our clients - take money from them. We get few people now.” Moving out of a shadow, her friend Nolu Mpfu* interjects harshly: “They also take money from us – one hundred Rands [just over US\$13] every week.” (**names have been changed*)

Dlamini says: “When business is good, I make R500 [around \$65] in a night. Some days I get nothing. If we don’t have the money, the police lock us up.” It starts pouring with rain. Umbrellas appear out of their tiny handbags and the three of us huddle beneath them, giggling. A couple of cars slow down, then drive off. I am a bit concerned - perhaps I am disrupting their business? They assure me I am not. A few cigarettes later, Dlamini relaxes and opens up. “I only started doing this [sex work] a year ago. Every evening when I get ready and leave my baby [a six-year-old daughter] with my neighbour to come here, I wish it was not me.”

Dlamini dropped out of school to support her parents and two younger siblings. She moved to Johannesburg two years ago and had been working as a waitress until the restaurant decided to downsize. “We were sleeping on the streets; I could find no work. There is no work - so many people I know lost work last year.” Then a friend introduced her to sex work. “It was hard, but I could make money - I can send up to R1,500 [almost \$197] at month-end to my mother.” Her voice chokes a bit but then she regains control and says: “You know, my brother has now graduated from the science and technology institute.” There is pride in her voice. “I helped him through university.” So is it now his turn to support her? “Hah! You know boys!” There is a hint of contempt in her voice. “I have a little sister who is still in school - I have to help her.” Her eyes fill with tears. It is quiet. Another car slows and Mpfu, who has been chatting

with the security guard outside a corporate’s headquarters, walks towards the car but it drives off. Perhaps there are too many people around.

A car from a private security firm slows down and the driver rolls down the window. Dlamini, Mpfu and the driver greet each other. “We know him,” Dlamini assures me. “It is very dark here - he comes to see if we are okay.” They seem to have a support network. “It is good to have someone - when you work on the streets there is no one to look after you.” She prefers to work on the streets even if it leaves her vulnerable to abuse. “When you work in a house [brothel] you have to give what you make to them.” Still, there are advantages to working in a brothel. “The house sees what kind of clients come - here you know nothing,” says Mpfu. She looks at Dlamini, who does not reply. A few minutes later she says, “I was raped last week. After they [two men] finished, they threw me in the bush in the North West [a neighbouring province] in the night.” She found her way back to Johannesburg but did not go to a clinic. “I don’t know about my [HIV] status,” she says. She is worried. “I am very careful always - I was raped last year too. I went to the clinic and went for tests and took medicine. I did not get HIV.” Most of the clients in this wealthy suburb are well-behaved. “That is why we work here - the white men, the old black men - they are all okay. It is the young ones who give us trouble,” Dlamini adds with a snort.

It does not seem to be a good night for business. It is still drizzling. Dlamini mellows - she found love last year when one of her clients fell in love with her. “He was a Zimbabwean. He used to phone me all the time, he wanted to marry me,” she says wistfully. “He taught me to drive - even got me a driving licence - then I found out he was already married!” So is she off men then? “No. I want to make lots of money - buy a house, a car, and when I am settled, I will get married. That way, even if he leaves me, I will still have a house.” Dlamini and Mpfu reckon business could pick up during the World Cup, “but the police will still take money

from us.” Besides, there is competition - some of the unemployed women migrants from Zimbabwe, Angola and Malawi also work the streets. “Don’t you think you could do something about the police for us?” Dlamini asks. Legalising sex work will help them, she says. “We hear some people in the government say the police must not arrest us, but they still do it.” A minibus pulls up. The women seem to know the driver and they pile in, the door slams shut, and they drive off into the night. “Sex work is illegal in South Africa. Cape Town-

based Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) has been campaigning to decriminalise sex work for the past 12 years”, said spokeswoman Vivienne Lalu. Rights activists say legalising sex work would protect the workers and their clients from HIV and abuse; there are moves afoot to review the Sexual Offences Act. “But,” Lalu says, “we are still some years away.”

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 The New Humanitarian, [A day in the life of a sex worker](#), 22 January 2010, accessed 11 January 2021.

A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PASTORAL INTERVENTIONS FOR SEX WORKERS

There are compelling reasons why faith leaders must seriously consider engaging in pastoral interventions targeted at sex workers in and around their communities. Based on what we learned and have done throughout the sessions, the following are important and compelling reasons for pastoral interventions.

Why pastoral interventions for sex workers are not optional

1. Sex workers are divinely created like all other human beings, hence their dignity and worth must be acknowledged, asserted, protected, and defended.
2. Sex workers are part of our communities, directly and indirectly. Standing up for them is standing up for the community.
3. Most sex workers are victims of failures greater than their individual choices; they need social and spiritual accompaniment, and they need relationships of trust. Religious leaders can lead communities in providing these pillars of support.
4. The violence that is suffered by sex workers filters into the general violence in our communities. Eradicating violence against our daughters, wives, sisters and mothers must naturally include or even begin with eradicating violence against sex workers.
5. Many sex workers are living double lives of believers by day and sex workers by night because of the judgmental attitude exhibited by religious persons towards sex workers – an attitude that does not understand the stories of most sex workers.
6. Sex workers are benefactors of many people in our communities, providing shelter, food, clothing, education, health care and many other needs. What in these roles is lacking dignity?

“The violence that is suffered by sex workers filters into the general violence in our communities. Eradicating violence against our daughters, wives, sisters and mothers must naturally include or even begin with eradicating violence against sex workers.”

The following statistics are also critical in demonstrating that pastoral interventions for sex workers by all stakeholders, including faith leaders, cannot be delayed any further.

- Criminalisation of sex work has been found to put sex workers at greater risk of contracting HIV and AIDS.
- 70% of sex workers in Southern Africa experienced violence in the past year [2012]. 36% of sex workers, upon arrest, experienced violence by the police in the past year [2012].
- 34% of sex workers living with HIV do not have regular access to treatment.
- Slowing HIV transmission among these groups, through prevention and through improving access to and retention on HIV treatment, is a critical component for all countries to meet fast-track targets for reducing new HIV infections and reaching 90% or more of all people living with HIV with life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART).
- More than 90% of sex workers and other service providers (police, health, judiciary and social workers) acknowledge that faith leaders can play an important role in the lives and work of sex workers.*

Aidsfonds, *Facts about sex work and violence in southern Africa*, undated.
Gender links, Policy Brief: Sex Work, April 2013.
SADC Parliamentary Forum, *Rapid Situational Assessment on the Legal, Policy and Programmatic environment for HIV and SRH programmes for Key Populations in the SADC community*, 2019.

*From primary data collected in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe for this project.

ACTIVITY I 4:



THE KEY COMPONENTS OF A THEOLOGICAL BASE FOR PASTORAL INTERVENTIONS FOR SEX WORKERS

Objective: To outline the theological foundations for pastoral interventions for sex workers

Method: small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups of up to 10, and preferably have faith leaders in exclusive groups. If there is more than one religious tradition represented, discuss with the leaders whether they want to work as separate faiths or if at this stage they are happy to work in collaboration (we recommend interfaith engagement at this stage and exclusive faith work in the following activity).
2. Distribute flipcharts and markers to all the groups. Inform the groups that they will be expected to give feedback in plenary.
3. The groups will work with the following guidelines to accomplish the current task:
4.
 - (a) How is God/Allah/Modimo/Mwari involved in the life of sex workers?
 - (b) Is there a precedent of God accomplishing divine plans through the agency of sex workers in your faith? Was there anything special about the said sex workers or were they like all other sex workers?
 - (c) Why do the Bible and the Qur'an condemn sex work and not sex workers? Can this help in opening up outreach avenues to sex workers? (*Check the textbox below after your own discussion to gain more insight*).
 - (d) What do we want to achieve when we reach out to sex workers?
 - (e) Is quitting sex work a pre-requisite for God to intervene for sex workers or for us to reach out to sex workers?
 - (f) How is outreach to sex workers living out the commitment to your faith's mission and charge?
4. After 40 minutes of group work, invite the groups to reconvene in plenary and ask each group to give their feedback (*central in the feedback session is to see how each group integrates God/Allah/Modimo/Mwari in their responses – because this stage is more to do with theology*).
5. Allow for participants to raise questions of clarification and discuss grey areas as different groups present their feedback.

Key theological bases for outreach to sex workers

- Every human being, irrespective of their profession, is created by God/Allah and has equal worth with all other human beings. Believers are called to reach out to all human beings.
- The life of a sex worker is as much in need of divine protection and intervention as the life of all other persons who may encounter adversity in the line of doing their work (soldiers, nurses, game wardens, teachers, preachers, etc.).
- There are many heroic stories of sex workers that performed good deeds that saved their communities and helped the plans of God to be realised – God does not perfect those that God decides to use, why should we demand perfection from others?
- Sex work is work like any other work, where women, men and transgender persons sell sexual services to different kinds of people.
- However, in most societies sex work was practised by persons that were forced or enslaved and hence was widely condemned alongside all other unjust forms of exploitation (investigate condemnations of exploitative employment in your sacred text or oral traditions). Sex workers are not given a blanket condemnation in most sacred texts because they are not inherently evil people and do not engage in sex work for evil purposes (robbers, corrupt leaders, profiteering merchants and landlords, etc.). List different areas where people engage in activities for selfish and not generous reasons. In most cases, sex workers seek survival for themselves and their families. Rarely do they seek luxurious living, they seek basic living necessities. Sex workers in the region are mostly victims of failing economic and social structures.
- Converting sex workers must not be the primary motive for pastoral interventions for sex workers. We can intervene to acknowledge the worth of sex workers as human beings, to accompany them as they struggle with their life (like all other people we accompany through their different struggles), to give them the good news of listening and understanding, to help sex workers see their own position in the social networks of your community so that they can take up their responsibilities to the community as a whole.

“Remember your central role is that of accompaniment, that is, walking with someone on a journey. It is the person who is travelling who sets the tone or speed of the journey. Your role is to listen with love and to accompany with understanding.”

Key principles to uphold

The full and active participation of sex workers in the design and implementation of any pastoral accompaniment programme is absolutely critical in order for it to be effective.

One of the globally accepted principles in representation is **nothing for and about us without us**. Thus, religious leaders need to partner with sex workers and sex worker organisations in engaging with sex workers.

- Therefore, consult sex workers to make sure that you address their needs. Recruit a core group of sex workers to design the outreach strategy with them.
- Remember your central role is that of accompaniment, that is, walking with someone on a journey. It is the person who is travelling who sets the tone or speed of the journey. Your role is to listen with love and to accompany with understanding.
- More than 90% of sex workers and other service providers (police, health, judiciary and social workers) acknowledge that faith leaders can play an important role in the lives and work of sex workers.*

Aidsfonds, *Facts about sex work and violence in southern Africa*, undated.
Gender links, Policy Brief: Sex Work, April 2013.
SADC Parliamentary Forum, *Rapid Situational Assessment on the Legal, Policy and Programmatic environment for HIV and SRH programmes for Key Populations in the SADC community*, 2019.

*From primary data collected in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe for this project.



ACTIVITY I 5:



A PASTORAL JOINT ACTIVITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Objective: To develop an action plan for pastoral accompaniment with sex workers

Method: small groups, plenary

Aids: Flipcharts and markers

Time: 90 minutes

Procedure

1. Divide participants into groups that acknowledge the doctrinal differences among participants (avoid interfaith groups; among people of the same faith you can also follow internal fault-lines, e.g. among Christians (mainline churches, Pentecostals, African-initiated churches, etc.). It will also be beneficial to have gender-exclusive groups (not all groups must be gender-exclusive but it is important to have at least one all-female and one all-male group).
2. Distribute the flipcharts and markers to the groups and remind each group to choose their own chair, secretary and spokesperson.
3. Explain to the groups that this session is about translating everything they have learned throughout the sessions from day one into an actual outreach (pastoral intervention) plan. At the end of this session, each group will have produced a one-page document outlining what they will do, why they want to do it and how they will do it. Remind them of the outreach design template that we saw earlier in this unit and of the basic guidelines on sex worker involvement/engagement.
4. Use the following questions to guide your planning exercise:
 - (a) What aspect of a sex worker's life in your community do you want to make the centre of your attention?
 - (b) What is your aim for engaging in this outreach activity to sex workers?
 - (c) What is the sex workers' need/needs that you have identified? And what will be your central message?
 - (d) How will you package the message?
 - (e) How will you disseminate the message?
 - (f) How will you measure success and failure of this outreach?
5. Give the groups 60 minutes to design their outreach plan and then to share their plan in plenary. There is a strategic plan template in the Appendices that groups can also use in developing their action plan.
6. Allow for questions and discussions during the feedback session.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS



- Religions are informed by care and compassion to all the people of God. This includes those who are stigmatised and marginalised. Faith communities need to invest in outreach to sex workers. This will bring them closer to sex workers and help them to make an impact in their lives.
- This unit has outlined the practical and theological reasons for religious leaders and communities of faith to bridge the distance between them and sex workers. Since all religions place emphasis on solidarity with those who suffer social exclusion, outreach to sex workers must become a priority to religious leaders in Southern Africa.



APPENDICES

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SEX WORKERS			
#	STATEMENT ABOUT SEX WORKERS	FACT	MYTH
1	All sex workers were abused as children.		
2	Sex work and human trafficking are the same thing.		
3	All sex workers have human dignity.		
4	Sex workers are all people who use drugs.		
5	Some sex workers have freely chosen sex work as their preferred work.		
6	All sex workers are immigrants.		
7	Sex workers do not use condoms.		
8	Some sex workers do not enjoy their work but still do it because they have no options.		
9	Sex workers are all uneducated.		
10	Sex workers are not parents.		
11	Sex workers are victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).		
12	Sex workers are misguided teenagers.		
13	Sex workers are not able to have stable, loving relationships.		
14	Sex workers are spiritual and religious persons.		
15	Men and women who buy sexual services from sex workers are not as stigmatised as sex workers.		
16	Sex workers rape children.		
17	Sex workers do not trust religious leaders.		
18	Some sex workers are active members of faith communities.		
19	Men and women in faith communities can be sex workers.		
20	Sex workers are husband snatchers and home-breakers.		
21	Some sex workers have day-jobs or other professions.		
22	There are no sex workers among members of faith communities.		
23	Some sex workers pay tithes and pledges to the faith community from their sex work earnings.		
24	Sex workers do not believe in God.		
25	Religious men and women do not use the services of sex workers.		

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SEX WORKERS (FOR FACILITATOR)			
#	STATEMENT ABOUT SEX WORKERS	FACT	MYTH
1	All sex workers were abused as children.		X
2	Sex work and human trafficking are the same thing.		X
3	All sex workers have human dignity.	X	
4	Sex workers are all people who use drugs.		X
5	Some sex workers have freely chosen sex work as their preferred work.	X	
6	All sex workers are immigrants.		X
7	Sex workers do not use condoms.		X
8	Some sex workers do not enjoy their work but still do it because they have no options.	X	
9	Sex workers are all uneducated.		X
10	Sex workers are not parents.		X
11	Sex workers are victims of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).		X
12	Sex workers are misguided teenagers.		X
13	Sex workers are not able to have stable, loving relationships.		X
14	Sex workers are spiritual and religious persons.	X	
15	Men and women who buy sexual services from sex workers are not as stigmatised as sex workers.	X	
16	Sex workers rape children.		X
17	Sex workers do not trust religious leaders.	X	
18	Some sex workers are active members of faith communities.	X	
19	Men and women in faith communities can be sex workers.	X	
20	Sex workers are husband snatchers and home-breakers.		X
21	Some sex workers have day-jobs or other professions.	X	
22	There are no sex workers among members of faith communities.		X
23	Some sex workers pay tithes and pledges to the faith community from their sex work earnings.	X	
24	Sex workers do not believe in God.		X
25	Religious men and women do not use the services of sex workers.		X

SEX WORKER OUTREACH PROGRAMME					
#	OBJECTIVE	TARGET GROUPS	CENTRAL MESSAGE	STRATEGIES	TIME LINE
1	To end violence against sex workers	-Sex workers	Violence in whatever form, against whoever, is evil	-Printed T-shirts	To begin in 3-6 months
		-Police		-Stakeholder meetings at faith community premises	
		-Health workers		-Pastoral visits to sex worker workplaces	
		-Sex worker clients			
2	To help sex workers organise themselves into social groups capable of demanding respect and rights				
3	To be prayer-mates for sex workers				
4	To provide additional forms of employment to sex workers				
5	To provide monthly material assistance to sex workers and their dependents				

HANDS OFF outreach to sex workers training for religious leaders programme

DAY ONE – HUMAN DIGNITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IMAGE OF GOD			
SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES/ FACILITATOR
0830-0845hrs	Morning devotion		
0845-0915hrs	Opening and welcome remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To put training in the larger Hands Off! context 	
0915-1000hrs	Getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work on the preliminaries 	Training manual ³⁵ / appendices
1000-1030HRS	Health break		
1030-1300HRS	Human dignity and the Image of God – religious stories about sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To interrogate the humanity of all human beings, including sex workers To evaluate the breadth of the Image of God and whether it covers sex workers as well Moral lessons from the religious stories 	UNIT 1
1300-1400HRS	Lunch break ³⁶		
1400-1600HRS	Sex workers and human rights – human rights and the dignity of sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To interrogate the intersection of human rights and human dignity To evaluate whether human rights provisions contradict religious beliefs on human dignity 	UNIT 2
1600HRS	Housekeeping, close of business for the day		
DAY TWO – UNDERSTANDING SEX WORK AND PEOPLE SURVIVING ON SEX WORK			
SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES
0845-0900hrs	Morning devotion		
0900-0930hrs	Recap of previous day's sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give participants an opportunity to restate key issues from previous sessions 	
0930-1030HRS	Recap of previous day's sessions Sex work, transactional sex, sexual exploitation and sex workers and victims of the sex industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To define sex To distinguish sex work from transactional sex and sexual exploitation 	UNIT 3

³⁴ This training manual should be the main resource for training workshops. Other resources, such as those from Aidsfonds, Pathfinder, ASWA and many other organisations working with sex workers can also be consulted and, when available, be shared with participants as well.

³⁶ Lunch break can be delayed to 1330hrs to allow for the session to run uninterrupted, but it is important to discuss this option with participants and the venue staff, if that will not create problems for them.

SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES/ FACILITATOR
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To distinguish between sex workers and victims of the sex industry 	
1200-1300hrs	Push and pull factors for people opting for sex work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand factors that force individuals to choose sex work To understand factors that make sex work attractive to some people 	UNIT 4
1300-1400hrs	Lunch break		
1400-1430HRS	Push and pull factors for people opting for sex work (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give feedback 	
1430-1600HRS	The impact of the legal context on sex workers and the health of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify the impact of the legal context on sex workers To understand how legal environments, affect the overall health of the community 	UNIT 5
1600HRS	Housekeeping, close of business and prayer		

DAY THREE – SEX WORKERS AND THE WELLBEING OF THE COMMUNITY

SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES
0845-0900hrs	Morning devotion		
0900-0930hrs	Recap of previous day's sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give participants an opportunity to restate key issues from previous sessions 	
0930-1030HRS	Stakeholders relevant to a healthy community in the context of sex work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To appreciate the community as an eco-system To define and describe factors that sustain healthy and inclusive communities To identify stakeholders that are or can work with and among sex workers 	UNIT 6
1030-1100hrs	Health break ³⁷		
1100-1130hrs	Stakeholders relevant to a healthy community(continued)		
1130-1300hrs	Networks and life in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define interdependence and networks in the context of community life Describe different networks and how they impact life in the community 	UNIT 7

SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES/ FACILITATOR
1300-1400hrs	Lunch break		
1400-1530hrs	Religious leaders and the dignity of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To examine the role of the religious leader in mitigating violence, stigma and exclusion suffered by sex workers To outline the advantages of progressive religious leadership and what religious leaders can do in addressing sex work and HIV in communities 	UNIT 8
1530hrs-1630hrs	Religious leaders and the dignity of the community (continued)		
1630HRS	Housekeeping, close of business and prayer		
DAY FOUR – TOWARDS AN OUTREACH MINISTRY TO SEX WORKERS			
SESSION	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVES	RESOURCES
0845-0900hrs	Morning devotion		
0900-0930hrs	Recap of previous day's sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give participants an opportunity to restate key issues from previous sessions 	
0930-1030HRS	Pastoral and practical interventions among sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define outreach and its importance in the life of the faith community Examine possible pastoral interventions that could make ministry to and among sex workers possible Examine and outline possible practical psychosocial- spiritual interventions to uphold the dignity of the sex worker 	UNIT 9
1030-1100hrs	Health break ³⁷		
1100-1200hrs	Outreach ministry to sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To design a plan of action to launch an outreach to sex workers 	UNIT 9/APPENDICES
1200-1220hrs	Post-training evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow participants to evaluate the training process and content 	APPENDICES

³⁸ This health break can be delayed to allow the session to run uninterrupted. However, this option must be discussed with participants and venue staff before being implemented.

NB: This programme is a suggestion; facilitators and groups can agree to amend it. Further, we think it is possible for groups living in the same community to spread the training and learning over a period of time hence it is possible to do one session at a time. For example, this could be done on a particular day, once a week. A group can therefore follow this programme but only do one session every week until they have gone through the entire training manual. It is also possible for groups in a community to jump straight to a particular unit because of a pressing need in their community. The units are related but also fairly autonomous so that they can be followed independently.



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