Getting stakeholders on your side !



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Getting stakeholders on your side ! community organisations A training booklet for

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0	What is this booklet about ?
0	Working with powerful stakeholders
	1. Media
	2. Funding agencies
	3. Police
	4. Government officials
	5. Politicians
	6. Local organisations in the red light area
	7. Madams and pimps

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What is this booklet about ?

What is this booklet about ?

This booklet accompanies a training module for grassroots community workers. The training module and booklet are designed to help community organisations to identify how they can convince powerful stakeholders to be helpful. Trainers can use this booklet as a source of ideas, examples, and suggestions to use while they are facilitating the activities in the accompanying training module.

Why is this booklet needed?

Community organisations play a very important role in HIV prevention and empowerment around the world. When it comes to mobilising marginalised groups, and making a difference at the local level, community organisations are doing a fantastic job that no other organisation could do. But not everything is under the control of the community organisation. Often community organisations need help from other powerful groups in society – like politicians, government officials, or the media. These groups can raise obstacles to stop you from doing your work, or they can be very helpful in achieving your goals. If you are well prepared, you may be able to convince these groups to help you. This booklet helps you to prepare.

Where does the information in the booklet come from?

In this booklet, we present useful ideas about how CBOs can win support from powerful groups around them. The ideas come from a study of 2 well-known and successful CBOs led by sex workers in India.

- VAMP is a sex workers' collective, working in Maharashtra and Karnataka, working with an NGO, SANGRAM.
- Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee

(DMSC) is a sex workers' organisation based in West Bengal, working with the STD/HIV Intervention Project.

- We have also used information from some other CBOs.
- However, we do not name which CBO each idea comes from.

DMSC and VAMP are smart in their negotiation with powerful groups. From them, we have learned about successful strategies for influencing powerful groups. We hope that these lessons are useful to you.

Who is this booklet for ?

This booklet is for people working within community organisations who have a role in negotiating with others, or training people to negotiate with others. The material in it is relevant for:

- grassroots community members (e.g. sex workers)
- employees of NGOs or CBOs.

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What kind of CBO will find this booklet useful?

The activities described in this booklet are intended to empower sex workers, and to challenge social groups who cause problems to sex workers. The booklet is designed for CBOs which have an empowering ideology, and which make the following assumptions:

- Ithat sex workers deserve the rights to control their own lives
- that sex workers have capability to lead and run their projects, including interacting with powerful stakeholders
- Ithat many of the problems facing sex workers are due to the actions of other powerful social groups, and that the actions of these groups need to be changed.

How can we get a grasp of the important stakeholders ?

⁷This booklet asks you to think about the many powerful groups around you, by asking yourself three questions

- What problems do powerful groups cause for you ?
- How can powerful groups help CBOs?
- How can CBOs get influence over powerful groups ?

What is the structure of the booklet?

- The booklet shows you some answers to these questions for 8 different powerful groups, one by one.
- We have used 3 different approaches to present each idea: a general introduction, a story, and a picture.







1. The Media

Newspaper, TV and radio reports about sex workers and about your CBO are incredibly important. These media are the window from the outside world onto your work. They have the power to make others see you in a good or a bad light. Politicians, police, funding agencies, your local neighbours, and the wider society are all influenced by what appears in the media. You can influence how your CBO is portrayed in the media. To do that, you should be aware that the media's priority is to get interesting stories.

What problems can media cause ?

- Sometimes journalists want sensationalist stories about red light areas, and focus on negative things like trafficking or violence.
- Inethical journalists sometimes print sex workers' photos or names, even though they have not asked for permission.

If you support sex workers, some misguided journalists presume that you support trafficking and exploitation.

How can media help a sex workers' CBO?

- The media can report the good work being done by CBOs, so that you get a good name among funding bodies and in the wider society.
- If you are well known in the public eye, it is more likely that powerful groups like police or politicians will listen to you and respond helpfully.
- Your cause (e.g. fighting for your rights or for a change to the law) gains wider publicity and support through the media.

How can CBOs influence the media ?

- The media wants interesting stories about sex workers and the red light area. You can offer them a bargain: They can enter the red light area and speak with sex workers only if they give a fair picture and do not stigmatise sex workers or sensationalise the issues.
- If you hold an interesting event, e.g. a World AIDS Day celebration or a blood donation camp, invite the media, and send them an interesting press release.





The toothpaste and the flood relief



The toothpaste and the flood relief : A story about CBOs making use of the media

The sex workers in X CBO were tired of being exploited by the media. They had so many bad experiences. Only a few days ago, they had been invited to come out on the street to receive some free toothpaste. When they arrived, they were confronted with a crowd of journalists, TV cameras, and a celebrity. The celebrity was trying to show that she was doing good social work, helping these 'poor fallen women'. Without permission, the cameramen were filming and sex workers' faces were being shown on TV. The sex workers were furious, and were very doubtful about any such bribery after that.

Afterwards, they talked about the event, and realised that the media rush to any interesting story. Maybe the sex workers could create an exciting story – a story that the sex workers wanted to be told, not a story that some celebrity wanted. They realised that

they were already doing something that could attract the media. At that time, there were terrible floods in their town, and poor people had lost all their possessions and had no food. The CBO was organising relief for the flood victims, with the help of their networks in the local areas. The sex workers realised that this was an unusual media story, and sent a press release to the local newspapers.

The CBO's relief efforts made a great story for the newspapers. They got a photo and a nice write-up of their efforts. Some women wondered what the big fuss was about, getting into the papers. But who reads the local newspaper? Many important people – including police, politicians and the CBO's neighbours. If all these people read positive things in the news, they will be a little more helpful next time the sex workers interact with them.



2. Funding agencies

CBOs have to ask funding agencies for funds to support their work, and then to report back to the funding agencies to explain that they have used the money well. Every funding agency has their special priorities and concerns. Often, funding agencies prioritise health and HIV/AIDS – even if you focus on sex workers' empowerment and sex workers' rights. Funding agencies are very concerned to show that their money is being used honestly, and that it has a real impact on health. For these reasons, funding agencies put great emphasis on monitoring and reporting.

What problems can funding agencies cause?

- The requirements of monitoring and reporting can be a huge burden.
- They can impose structures or activities that are 13 not in line with your ideology or your priorities. The



challenge is this: How can we follow our dreams while doing what we must do to keep the funders happy ?

How can funding agencies help a sex workers' CBO?

- Obviously, they provide the necessary funds
- Funding agencies can offer training to help you meet their requirements – this can help with other funders too.

How can CBOs influence funding agencies?

- Funding agencies are very focused on their priorities.
 Learn how to explain that your CBO meets their agenda.
- If you have strong information (numbers) that proves you are doing good work, funding agencies will be happy.

- Sometimes there is more flexibility in a funding agency's guidance than you might think. Talk to them to explain your needs and to understand exactly what can and cannot be covered under a particular category.
- Do you have a criticism of funding agencies that others also have? Join networks of CBOs/NGOs or interested activists, to make your point.
- Funding agencies often respect and value CBOs, and want to learn from them about ground realities, and about successful approaches.
- Funding agencies sometimes organise consultations where you can put your point of view across.

Getting stakeholders on your side ?



---Getting stakeholders on your side

Looking for hard facts. A story about a CBO making a good impression on their funding agency

Y CBO has been working in the red light area of a small town for 6 years. They take a rights-based approach. Empowering the sex workers is their primary ideology and goal, and HIV prevention is a big part of their work. Y CBO quickly gained a good reputation in its local area. It seemed clear to local people that the project was doing excellent work. There was a positive hustle and bustle about their clinic with lots of people coming and going, and the sex workers were more confident and organised. Sex workers had become empowered to the extent of being capable of solving local problems in a local meeting. The CBO people were proud of their work and confident that they were doing a good job.

But, after three years, the CBO had to report to the funding agency and apply for new funds. Although everybody could see that good work was being done, Y CBO could not 'prove' it to the funding agency. The funding agency was searching hard for good projects to support, because they had the feeling that many

NGOs and CBOs were not achieving very much. But to support Y CBO, the funding agency needed hard information to show that their money is having positive effects. Y CBO almost lost their funding.

Y CBO began to keep detailed and accurate records of their HIV prevention activities. It is hard work, and some peer educators protested that record-keeping wasted valuable time, which was a fair point. But the records prove the good work they are doing and funding agencies are very impressed by them. Now they also document all their empowerment activities, such as a protest rally, a public meeting, or legal awareness training for sex workers. They bring funding agencies on field visits, and know how to explain their work in the language of the funding agencies. Based on a good relationship, and the fact that Y CBO now has hard evidence of their success, they can negotiate with the funding agencies to some extent, to make the burden of reporting a little less. They are confident that they will get the funds that they need.



Police often cause big problems for sex workers. In some cases, they detain women without charge, arrest them on trumped-up charges, demand bribes, beat up sex workers as a punishment for so-called bad behaviour, or conduct raids where they arrest people without a good reason. Police should be operating within the law, and there are laws which protect sex workers. If you are aware of the law, you can insist to police that the law is followed.

What problems can police cause ?

Exploitation, violence, bribes, arrests, aggressive raids are all bad things that the police have done in the past.

3. Police

How can police help a sex workers' CBO ?

Police can help you to deal with troublemakers in the red light area. They can take your case, register an FIR, and pursue a criminal who is causing you problems.

How can CBOs influence the police?

- Police cannot deny the law. If you know the law, they will have to act accordingly. The laws are not all against sex workers. Some laws protect you. Know your rights - the police may be impressed.
- Collective strength can be useful. Although the law has the most powerful control over the police, bringing large numbers of sex workers to the police station is also impressive – and it means they cannot simply ignore you or send you away.

Create a small team of people who have training and expertise in legal and police matters. Their role is to speak to police if any sex worker is arrested or exploited. If any sex worker is arrested, she knows who to call.







A story about a sex worker who won't let the police abuse her

S is a sex worker who has become very smart at negotiating with police. Five years ago, S was terrified of police in the red light area. It seemed to her that they had the power to arrest her wherever they found her, or to beat her up if they felt like it. S had been in the lockup several times, and had to pay a fat bribe to be released.

However, lawyers know that police cannot simply arrest a sex worker for standing on the road, and they cannot freely beat up a sex worker. S's CBO organised some legal training, where a lawyer explained to the women about the laws regarding sex work, and their rights in relation to the police.

The next time a police officer tried to bring S to the lockup, she challenged him, asking "Under which law are you charging me?". Then she

remembered that a lady constable had to be present if a lady was being arrested. She asked the policeman "Where is the lady constable who should be here? You cannot arrest me without a lady constable". The police let her go, and did not come back for several weeks.

The police did not take S seriously until she started talking about the law. But when she did, they were impressed, and they realised that if they broke the law, sex workers would not just keep quiet, but would organise an embarrassing rally, or make a complaint.



4. Government Officials

Government officials are very important for your work, though you may not always come into contact with them. They are the ones who sit in different important chairs of the government, such as the ministry of health, or women and child development, or social welfare. When your CBO starts working in a new area, especially in the districts, go and introduce yourselves to the government officials of that area and maintain good contact with them so that you can turn to them in times of need.

What problems can government officials cause?

- Some of these people have very orthodox beliefs, and because of this, they may not treat you with respect at the beginning.
- They may ask for a lot of papers if you go to them, and they may seem to make the process difficult.

How can government officials help a sex workers' CBO ?

- You need to get various official paperwork done in order to run a CBO. It is government officials' job to do this paperwork.
- Government officials have the power to give access to important resources for sex workers and their children, such as voter cards, schemes for people who are below the poverty line, admission to schools, etc. Helping sex workers to get access to these things is a good way of winning their support.

How can CBOs influence government officials ?

 If you do genuine good work, and you can explain it very well, you can impress government officials. It may take some time, but if they see good work being done, and realise that you are doing nothing illegal, they are likely to help you.



Make sure you are well prepared when you go to see a government official. If you need any documents, bring them. Think carefully about what you are asking for. Remember that they are busy people.

- Part of your preparation may include getting legal advice. This can be a basis to ask officials to meet their duties and to respect your rights.
- Politicians can have influence over government officials, and can be a source of help. But government officials should help you to get what you are due by law without politicians getting involved.
- If you have a complaint against a government official, it is possible to take it to his superiors or to the media, but this is risky as it will turn the person against you. Try to resolve it another way if possible.



Surviving bureaucracy



A story about the sex workers meeting a government official for help

D is a sex workers' CBO. They have been doing HIV prevention work in the red light areas of the city for the past few years. In many areas they either run their clinics in rented rooms or share space with the local club. These arrangements have various disadvantages. So, after a lot of hard work and effort they managed to buy a room for one of their clinics. Now that was the CBO's own property, what a relief!

The next step is to get the property registered. But most of the money that was collected has already been used up for buying the room. Then from where will the registration fees come? One of their colleagues gave them an idea. He said, "Why don't you go to a government officer in the finance department and tell him the whole thing?" The sex workers were a bit apprehensive at first, but decided to try it!

They prepared themselves thoroughly because they knew that he was a busy man and they did not want to waste his time. They discussed and planned carefully what they would say, and collected together relevant documents. They took prior appointment, met the officer, explained what work they do, how and why they have bought the room, and asked if he could help them in some way! Can they get a discount on the registration fees? Is that possible? What other documents would be needed? The government officer told them that he would go through the documents that they have brought and tell them what they should do in the next meeting. The sex workers were happy to see a ray of hope.

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5. Politicians

water, construction of toilets or maintenance of roads. At a higher level, MLAs and MPs make the laws of the land. Politicians can also have an influence with other important officials. They can help with things like children's admission to school, your voter ID, ration card, or caste certificate, or your access to government schemes. Politicians are very focused on elections and might see you as a vote bank, or might hope to get good publicity by showing that they do good work for the poor and disadvantaged.

Every area has a local elected representative who

is responsible for basic facilities like access to clean

What problems can politicians cause?

Some politicians use underhand tactics like intimidation by goondas to try to get your votes or to take revenge if they do not win. Some parties are ideologically opposed to sex workers and are unlikely to support your empowerment.

How can politicians help CBOs?

- Politicians can help you through their influence on police, schools, hospitals, or government offices – and on goondas or other nuisances in the red light area.
- Their presence at your events can help to create a positive public image of your CBO.

How can CBOs influence politicians?

Politicians want to win your votes. If you have created unity within the community, you become an important vote bank. Then politicians will help you, hoping that you will vote for them in return.



Politicians are sensitive to good publicity. If they help you (e.g. improving roads or building a clinic), they may get a good name for helping these poor citizens. Can you persuade them that it is worth it?

- Ise your collective strength! Politicians may not listen to a single sex worker but are influenced by large numbers. Sometimes you can bring together sex workers, their children, regular partners, even clients.
- If you have an agenda or ideology in common with a politician, emphasise it!
- Be careful about associating yourself with one particular party: what will happen if they lose their seats at the next election?





Radha's story about being treated by politicians with respect

"Life in a red light area is not easy. Apart from the hardships and exploitation that one has to face daily, there is disrespect and ridicule from many corners of the society. Take for example the politicians. Only a few years back they would call us, that is, the women of the red light area, 'prostitutes' and look down upon them. Some of them came to us as customers at night, but would never ever speak to 'fallen women' like us in broad daylight.

But things have changed, thanks to our CBO. It has done a lot by uniting us: people now call us 'sex workers', not 'prostitutes'. Before, when we went to the politicians with small requests, asking them to give us a residential certificate or help getting our children into schools, etc., they hardly listened to us. But now it is not so. Due to our CBO, we have strength in numbers and an official status. Only the other day we had a meeting in our red light area where we had invited the politicians. They not only attended the meeting but shared the stage with us and listened to what we had to say.

The sex workers were so happy to see these politicians come and speak in our meeting: definitely we will get better treatment from them, now that we are friends! Because we had big-shot politicians at the meeting, a lot of journalists from newspapers and T.V. channels came to cover the event. Surely people will be impressed when they see these reports !"



6. Local organisations in the red light area

In red light areas, there are often groups, clubs, or organisations of men who think that they are important and control the community. They may think they have the right to tell a sex worker who to vote for, or to collect fat donations for the club's activities, or to decide who can and cannot enter the red light area. They often draw their power from their connections with political parties. They sometimes feel threatened if a CBO is gaining influence over 'their territory', and then they try to prevent the CBO from doing its work.

What problems can local organisations cause ?

- They can be prejudiced against sex workers and because of this, they harass you or obstruct your work.
- They can deny access to the red light area if they have some control over the territory.

How can local organisations help CBOs ?

Social clubs may help by offering your CBO buildings, or by joining with you for activities such as helping sex workers' children.

How can CBOs influence local organisations ?

- Try to find an issue on which you have a common concern and view, e.g. are they working for upliftment of poor people, women, children or Dalits? If you can work together, they will become more accepting.
- Build a good reputation in the local community. You can offer the general population help, e.g. with general health clinics or charity work. If you are popular locally, harassing you will be more difficult.
- Do you have some resources that the groups can use? For example, could they use some spare space in your clinic for a library or gymnasium for the local youth? This will help build a friendly relation.

- Inviting them to your events or giving them small token gifts, for example, diaries, calendars or pens in the New Year may help.
- If they refuse to change, you may need to use your collective strength to protest, such as calling a rally, protest or dharna. In the extreme case, if violence or exploitation is being done, you may need to go to the police.



Getting stakeholders on your side !





A story about how a CBO convinced local clubs to be friendly

We, P, a Sex worker CBO, often had to deal with local club members while working in our red light area. They caused unnecessary hassle. They would collect forceful donations, trouble us, throw stones at our house, etc. We tried to conduct meetings with them; sometimes we even used harsh language or tried to get violent with them. It sometimes worked for a short time, but again they would start troubling us.

We were getting desperate as the women were really suffering. We realised that these clubs saw us as an adversary who would take over their territory. But we are not really their enemy. We thought about this club. It is devoted to upliftment of Dalits. Many sex workers are also Dalits, and we also want to empower them. We thought that we could celebrate our common festival of Ambedkar Jayanti. This would show the clubs that we were not enemies and that we could work together. They accepted our invitation and heartily participated in the function. It was since then we started to develop friendly relations.





7. Madams and Pimps

Some sex workers work independently, but many sex workers rely on 'middle-men' or agents (sometimes called madams or pimps) who help to organise the sex trade. These people bring the sex workers their customers, or give sex workers accommodation and some protection. These middle-men benefit from sex workers' earnings and so they want sex workers to earn well from customers. They may be wary of a CBO if it seems to help sex workers so much that they no longer need to rely on the middle-men.

What problems can madams and pimps cause?

Madams and pimps often control who is allowed to meet a sex worker. They can prevent CBO people from meeting sex workers.

How can madams and pimps help CBOs?

- They can allow you to meet and speak with sex workers.
- Some madams may see the benefit of the CBO, and join in support.

How can CBOs influence madams and pimps?

- Do madams need the help of your CBO? Perhaps you can help madams to resist goondas or prevent violence, in return for madams promising to give you access to sex workers.
- Explain to madams and pimps that your work is useful to them. It is in their interest to have a healthy population of sex workers to do the work, and not to keep minor girls as there will be raids and arrests.
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- Emphasise to madams and pimps that your project is a humble health project, and that you

do not wish to challenge their authority. (In the long run, you might want to challenge them, but don't tell them!)

 If you involve madams in your CBO, you need to make sure that they do not take over control.
 Make a plan for how you will do this.





It is in your interest to listen to us !



Pinki's story about convincing madams and pimps to let peer educators do their work

Anyone who knows about the red light area knows how important madams and pimps are. The girls who work under them hardly have any scope to do anything without the permission of the madams and pimps who control them. We remember those days when our CBO started working in the area. We peer educators had to face huge resistance from the madams and pimps. They misunderstood our purpose and thought that we were challenging their authority. We still have not forgotten those days when hot water was thrown on us; we were almost beaten up when we tried to talk to girls about the importance of health check ups. But the situation is improving with each passing day. Not everybody has become our friend but at least there is no active resistance. We are trying to explain our views to the madams and pimps regularly. We tell them that they should send their girls to the clinics for their own benefit because the healthier the girls are, the more customers they can entertain, and the more money they will earn. We also tell them that they should never keep minor girls because that will lead to raids. Then, customers will be afraid to come and business will suffer. We hope that in the near future we will win the support of madams and pimps completely.





8. Friendly intellectuals and social movements

CBOs can achieve wonderful effects in their local area. But to influence the wider society, it is very helpful to make connections with other people who might have a louder voice than you. You are not alone in wanting to improve the lot of marginalised women. Some intellectuals and social movements already have a powerful reputation and connections to people in power. If you can link your cause with their cause, you can benefit from their prominence. Think about other voluntary groups or well-known individuals in your local area, your town or the country as a whole. Are there intellectuals (e.g. artists, writers or playwrights), activist networks (e.g. campaigning lawyers' groups, or HIV/ AIDS-related networks), or associations (e.g. trade 37 unions or employees' associations) who might be willing to join forces with you?

How can social movements help CBOs ?

- To influence laws or policies or public opinion, a collective voice is more powerful than a single voice. Joining with sympathetic social movements makes your voice louder.
- Some social movements have expertise that can help you, e.g. Legal campaigning groups understand best how to change the law.
- Some organisations, such as companies doing 'corporate social responsibility' or employees' associations, are looking for worthy causes to support. CBOs can be those worthy causes

How can intellectuals help CBOs?

- Intellectuals can be influential in changing society's views
- They can represent you in a good light on the world stage
- Their presence at your events, and them expressing their support for you, can encourage the media to cover your story in a positive way.

How can CBOs win the support of social movements or intellectuals ?

 Emphasise your common aims and ideology (e.g. workers' rights; challenging patriarchy; empowering the poor; etc)





A story about community organisations, activists and intellectuals changing the law by joining together.

Once upon a time, it was illegal for a man to have sex with another man in India. Now that all has changed. How? On 2 July 2009, the Delhi High Court over-ruled a 150-year old law, Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which made it a criminal offense for a man to have sex with another man. Celebrations were held across the country, as finally, after a long struggle, men who have sex with men (MSM) are no longer forced by the law to hide. They can no longer be threatened with arrest or intimidation. There is no legal basis to push them to the margins of society. And HIV prevention work with MSM can go ahead much more freely. This is a tremendous step forwards for MSM in India.

Such a huge change was brought about through

a campaign organised by an activist group, and supported by community organisations and other campaigning groups. The campaign was initiated by the Naz Foundation in 2000. But they could not have done it alone. They were supported by a huge number of other organisations, who represented child rights, women's rights, human rights and health concerns as well as the rights of MSM. All these groups joined together to achieve a collective voice. They had to argue against the government, who did not want a change to the law. The victory was not easy or quick, but eventually the campaigners got their reward - a change at the highest level of Indian society – a change to the law. MSM throughout India are entering a new era.



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