

# Condom promotion for sex workers

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# Obstacles to condom use by sex workers

- US funding restrictions
- Availability and affordability
- Resistance to condom use by clients
- Not using condoms as a mark of love and trust with frequent or non-paying partners

US funding restrictions are applied idiosyncratically depending on the organisation and personnel involved.

# Responses to US restrictions

- Rejecting funds
- Seeking clarification about what is in violation
- Signing and not changing activities
- Preemptive capitulation
- Using US policy to discriminate against sex workers

# Responses to US restrictions

- Rejecting US funds is not sustainable, although small organisations have been able to recoup all the funds and more. Some have been scapegoated for rejecting funds.
- Seeking clarification is an attempt to force the USG to specify what is contrary to the policy.
- Signing and not changing is not sustainable - do not rely on USG ignorance.

# Responses (2)

- Preemptive capitulation - not working with sex workers - can only lead to higher rates of HIV and lower rates of condom use among sex workers. (Bangladesh)
- The policy has been used to deny medical care to sex workers at a clinic in Thailand and to fire outreach workers who reach out to sex workers in Cambodia.

# Why and where are there man-made condom shortages?

- Abstinence promotion and preemptive capitulation
- Need for production capacity
- Inadequate distribution
- Sex workers require more condoms for regular condom use than most people, so these needs affect sex workers sooner and with greater urgency than many people.

# Additional issues

- Sex workers must be included in the planning of programmes for sex workers to ensure that they are relevant, useful, and well-implemented. Sex workers are part of the solution!
- Programmes that impose fines or punishment for not using condoms often violate the rights of sex workers.
- Health programmes should be implemented in line with human rights of sex workers and all people of all genders.

# Further additional issues

- Lubricant is expensive in many places.
- Sex workers - of all genders - have the same difficulties using condoms with spouses and regular partners as others.

# What works?

- Peer based distribution
- Subsidisation to affordability (not free)
- Adequate numbers of condoms
- Condom buying cooperatives and selling schemes
- Subsidized social marketing of lubricant
- Eroticisation of condoms and clandestine use of condoms
- These strategies are useful for many people beyond sex workers.

Thank you.