

# Annual overview 2013



The Red Umbrella Fund is a unique collaboration between sex worker activists and donor organisations. It is the first global fund guided by and for sex workers. The Red Umbrella Fund was launched in April 2012.

## Facts & figures 2013

Number of grants	25
Total amount granted	€462,500
Average amount per grant	€18,500

## Sex workers in the lead

The Red Umbrella Fund aims to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of sex workers' rights movements by catalysing new funding specifically for sex worker-led organisations and networks.

Sex workers participate in every aspect of the Red Umbrella Fund. One of the sex workers on the Programme Advisory Committee, the sex worker-led group that selects the new grantees, describes why this principle of participation is so important:

*"It's helpful having sex workers making funding decisions because we understand which projects or groups will really be effective towards positive change. Bottom line, it's our bodies, our lives, and we should be at the forefront of all decisions affecting us."*

## Grantmaking in 2013

The Red Umbrella Fund makes one-year grants of €4,000 to €40,000. In 2013, the Fund prioritised increasing the number of regional networks of sex workers in its grantee portfolio. Regional networks play a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening the sex workers' rights movement.

The African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA) represents African sex workers' interests at regional and international meetings. With funding from the Red Umbrella Fund, the network is expanding its membership across the continent and increasing its power to secure the human rights of sex workers.

The Red Umbrella Fund grant has also enabled the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) to hire a coordinator to develop strategies to influence policy and law-making in the European Parliament.

These and other sex worker networks in the Red Umbrella Fund portfolio are leading international advocacy and media campaigns, facilitating the sharing of expertise and building the leadership and capacities of the sex workers' movement internationally.

## Global thought leadership

After only one year, the Red Umbrella Fund is already establishing itself in the global philanthropic community. Together with other funders, the Red Umbrella Fund hosted panel discussions on the need to support sex workers' rights at two international funders' meetings (both held in the US): the EDGE Funders Alliance 'Just Giving' Conference in May and the AIDS Philanthropy Summit in December.

# Sex workers mobilise in Córdoba, Argentina

Interview with **María Eugenia Aravena**, the Secretary General of AMMAR Córdoba (Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices Córdoba). Eugenia has been an activist with this network since late 1999.

“I went to the first meeting of sex workers in Córdoba when I was 19 years old. We were protesting because the police were working with some nuns who were fighting against sex workers. AMMAR Buenos Aires came and spoke. They said sex work is not a crime and that we should organise. It had a huge impact on me to hear that we were not criminals, and there was no reason to take us to jail.

I had felt powerless. I always heard the older sex workers telling stories. They told about the cruelty and hardships they experienced in the street. Each of them had a story of abuses, beatings, and some had even been murdered. Then I heard AMMAR saying we are not criminals. I thought: Why then did my elders face so many injustices?

I knew I was a person with rights. Nobody was entitled to insult me, abuse me, take me to jail or take away my earnings.

In Argentina there are misdemeanour codes in each province. Sex work is not criminalised in the Penal Code, but in the misdemeanour codes, engaging in prostitution in public carries the heaviest punishment.

The police can arrest you, and the police chief decides how many days you will spend in jail.

We have travelled a long way in our fight against the codes. We are taken seriously by the media. The government listens to us, even as it continues to embrace criminalisation policies. The public understands more that sex work is not a crime. We report harassment and mobilise in the streets to stop police repression.

For many years in Córdoba City, sex workers have not gone to jail. But in 2013, some did because the government is becoming more repressive. Prohibitionist policies are becoming tougher all over the world. We need to unite with others and make our voices heard.

We sex workers are oppressed by abolitionist policies that confuse sex work with trafficking. Trafficking of people is about exploitation and lack of freedom. When sex work is confused with trafficking, the real victims of trafficking are often ignored.

Considering the limited options available to working class women, sex work is a practice done by choice by women of legal age. Sex workers are diverse in terms of their education, socio-economic status and vulnerabilities. We are not all the same.

Our human rights are violated when the voices of those of us who choose to do sex work are not valued. As with all other workers in this capitalist system, we work for our subsistence. We demand respect for our right to work.

All the poor are harassed when they organise. Alone we can achieve nothing. We need to join other movements and fight together. AMMAR Córdoba knows that when we fight with others, other movements come to support us, and we are stronger.



### What?

AMMAR Córdoba is a provincial level, self-led network of 1,000 sex workers determined to support the health and well-being of sex workers and advocate for the recognition of sex workers' labour rights.

In 2013, AMMAR Córdoba strengthened its collaboration with other provincial networks of sex workers in Argentina for mutual support and more effective advocacy. The network also opened a centre offering sex worker-friendly health services in the provincial capital.

### Why?

Sex work is not illegal in Argentina, but it is also not protected under labour laws. Public stigma and police abuse are condoned and make sex workers vulnerable to exploitation. Sex workers experience prejudice from health service providers and their children are discriminated against in school.

AMMAR Córdoba demonstrates solidarity with young people's rights at the 'Marcha de la Gorra' in November 2013 in Córdoba City, Argentina.

In our kindergarten, a sex worker can leave her kids for free. People from other movements – it is not just that they demonstrate with us, for instance – they also come to the kindergarten. The kindergarten is open to all the community, not only sex workers.

Our struggle is not only for the recognition of sex workers, but also for the right to land, public transportation, education and health – for all the poor. And we are getting a response. We no longer feel so alone.”

**Stopping police harassment of sex workers is fierce!**

# Grantees of the Red Umbrella Fund

## AFRICA

### Cameroon

#### Aids Acodev Cameroun

This association of sex workers mainly operates in Douala, Cameroon's main industrial and harbour city. The group provides health and HIV information and services to sex workers of all genders. Aids Acodev reaches out to potential allies and the media to bring attention to the stigma, discrimination, and rights violations that sex workers face.

€30,000

*The grant above replaced a grant awarded in 2012 that was cancelled.*

### Kenya

#### African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA)

This regional network unites sex workers' groups from 11 countries and seeks to expand its membership to include all countries on the African continent. It provides strategic advice, networking opportunities, capacity-building tools and financial support to local sex workers' groups that work to improve their access to health services and labour rights. Its membership includes groups working with women, men and trans sex workers. ASWA represents sex workers' interest in regional and international processes and platforms.

€40,000

#### Health Options for Young Men on HIV/STIs (HOYMAS)

This organisation promotes the human rights of sex workers, including access to health services for male sex workers living with HIV in Kenya. It has a membership of 1500 sex workers, and organises trainings for and by sex workers on health and human rights. The group sensitises health workers and government officials to the needs of male sex workers, and conducts media campaigns to influence decision makers to improve national laws, policies and practices that impact on sex workers' lives.

€25,000

### Mozambique

#### Tiyane Vavassate

Created in 2011, this emerging group brings together sex workers of all genders from three provinces of Mozambique to improve the human rights of sex workers, and end violence and discrimination. The group builds sex workers' knowledge in areas of sexual and reproductive health and human rights, and trains them to become advocates for their own rights. With the Red Umbrella Fund grant, the group will develop its organisational structures and capacities.

€13,000

## Nigeria

#### Women of Power Initiative (WOPI)

This emerging group of sex workers includes many migrants in the capital city of Lagos. WOPI runs a nightly outreach programme, offering HIV testing and counselling services. The group also trains sex workers in leadership skills and builds their knowledge on sexual and human rights advocacy as a strategy to counter violence and abuse.

€10,000

## Zambia

#### Engender Rights Centre for Justice (ERCJ)

This group works to protect the rights and interests of sex workers through outreach and capacity building of sex workers of all genders in the capital city Lusaka and surroundings. Three out of four members of the group are HIV positive and one of the priority areas of the group is access to HIV prevention and treatment services for sex workers. The group also trains health care workers and police on the needs and rights of sex workers.

€12,500

## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### China

#### Shen Zhen Xi Yan Communication Centre

This group is based in the city of Shenzhen and promotes access to health care and legal services for highly mobile male and trans sex workers by operating a drop-in centre and an emergency hotline. The group advocates for ending police violence such as arbitrary arrests, extortion, and harassment, by participating in seminars and debates around sex work.

€20,000

### Hong Kong

#### Hong Kong Transgender Migrant Service Workers' Network

This emerging group in Hong Kong reaches out to migrant transgender sex workers with HIV and STI prevention information, legal support, and human rights capacity-building support, provided by peer educators. The group combats stigma and discrimination faced by transgender sex workers through public awareness campaigns. The 'Don't Cut my Hair Campaign' addresses the humiliation faced by trans women in prisons in Hong Kong who are ordinarily placed in the men's department and forced to cut their hair short.

€20,000



Shen Zhen Xi Yan Communication Centre joined the Global Flash Mob for Sex Workers' Rights on International Women's Day in Shenzhen.



APNSW members from across the region demonstrate for sex workers' rights at the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) in November 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

## India

### National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW)

This network of sex workers' organisations and allies in the south of India lobbies for changes in laws and policies to improve the lives of sex workers. It has successfully campaigned to ensure that the in 2013 amended anti-rape law in India does not include prostitution as a form of exploitation. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will be used to strengthen the organisational structures and set up a sex worker-led governing board with skills to run the network.

€10,000

## Malaysia

### Pertubuhan Advokasi Masyarakat Terpinggir Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor (PAMT)

Established in 2011, this organisation supports sex workers' access to health care through peer education, condom distribution and referrals to health and social services. The group supports sex workers in setting up their own support groups, and aims to improve the living and working conditions of sex workers in the country. With the Red Umbrella Fund grant, PAMT will set up a crisis response team to support sex workers who face violence, exploitation, and arrest.

€20,000

## Thailand

### APNSW (Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers)

This regional network unites 54 sex workers' organisations in 22 countries with the aim to improve the health and rights of sex workers of all genders in the region. APNSW trains its members on human rights and advocacy strategies, and lobbies regional inter-governmental bodies and UN agencies for improved policies and programmes that affect sex workers. This grant enables the network to strengthen its organisational financial systems and skills to enable it to grow and increase its future fundraising opportunities.

€10,500

## Vietnam

### Vietnam Network of Sex Workers (VNSW)

This network unites female sex workers who are organised in peer support groups in 16 provinces. It aims to represent the voice of sex workers at the national level to improve laws, policies, and practices that impact on sex workers' lives. Sex workers benefit from the trainings in computer, fundraising and management skills organised by the network. Established in 2012, the network is developing its first strategic plan with support from the Red Umbrella Fund.

€20,000

## EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

## France

### STRASS (Syndicat du Travail Sexuel)

This national union represents the interests of sex workers of all genders and backgrounds, and from all branches of the sex industry in France through public education, advocacy and strategic litigation. The group campaigns for the legal recognition of sex work as work, and counters discrimination and stigmatisation with the aim to create an environment of respect and inclusiveness towards sex workers. Self-organisation of sex workers is encouraged through the creation of local federations in different cities.

€25,000

## Hungary

### SWAN (Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network)

This regional network unites sex workers and their allies from 18 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the struggle to promote the human rights and improve the quality of life of

sex workers. It provides a joint advocacy platform for sex workers' voices in regional and national debates on health, labour rights, and safety for sex workers of all genders and exposes violence against sex workers.

€15,500

## Kyrgyzstan

### Civil Union Shakh-Aiym

This emerging network aims to strengthen the voice of sex workers in public and policy debates in Kyrgyzstan by uniting sex workers from across the country. The network documents and speaks out against police violence. It also works to ensure that the existing law – which decriminalises sex work – is not undermined by new policies and programmes which are aimed at ending sex trafficking, which often have a negative effect on the rights of sex workers.

€15,000

## Netherlands

### ICRSE (International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe)

This network of individuals and organisations in Europe and Central Asia campaigns against the criminalisation of sex work, and the conflation of sex work and human trafficking. It serves as a platform to share experiences and solidarity, and to create alliances between sex workers' rights organisations and allies from other movements who support sex workers' rights. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will enable the network to hire a coordinator to strengthen the network and develop strategies to influence the European Parliament.

€40,000

## Turkey

### Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association

This group in Ankara documents violence and other human rights violations against sex workers and provides legal assistance to sex workers of all genders to seek justice. The data that is collected by the group is also used in public awareness raising activities targeting civil society, media and academia and in its lobbying with government officials to improve the legislation that affects sex workers in Turkey. The group also provides training for sex workers on human rights.

€10,000

## United Kingdom

### SCOT-PEP

Founded in 1989, this is the oldest organisation that is led by sex workers in Scotland. It campaigns for sex work to be recognised both socially and legally as work, and for sex workers' voices to be included in public debates. SCOT-PEP lobbies the Scottish parliament for the decriminalisation of sex work and against the 'Safer Lives, Changed Lives' policy strategy which aims to eradicate violence against women and defines sex work as exploitation, irrespective of the opinion of the women involved.

€13,500

## LATIN AMERICA

### Brazil

#### **Davida**

This organisation focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention and improving the legal status and labour conditions of sex workers in the country. A draft bill to decriminalise and regulate sex work has been named in honour of the founder of the organisation, the late Gabriela Leite. In 2005, Davida launched the fashion line Daspu, which serves as an income-generating activity and also an advocacy strategy. Davida's magazine, *Beiji da Rua*, reaches thousands of sex workers, allies and decision makers around the country.

€25,000

#### **APROSMIG** (Associação das Prostitutas de Minas Gerais)

This group reaches over 2000 women sex workers in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais through language classes, condom distribution, HIV awareness messages, seminars, and public demonstrations to bring attention to the citizenship and rights of sex workers. This group organises special meetings for new sex workers as well as for older (50 plus) sex workers. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will contribute to strengthening the organisational capacities through regular meetings and trainings for its staff and members.

€20,000

### Chile

#### **Fundación Margen de Apoyo y Promoción de la Mujer**

This group promotes the sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and human rights of women sex workers in Chile. The group reaches around 700 sex workers, most of them in the capital city, through outreach by peer educators, handing out condoms, accompanying sex workers to health centres, and informative workshops. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will enable the group to build leadership and advocacy skills of sex workers in different parts of the country.

€15,000

### El Salvador

#### **Organización de Trabajadoras del Sexo** (OTS)

This group was created in 2004 by sex workers to confront and prevent the discrimination, abuse and violence experienced daily by sex workers at work, within their families, and in society in general by educating the general public about sex workers' rights. The group reaches women sex workers working on the street and in parks with HIV prevention information and peer support. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will contribute to a field study of the needs of sex workers in 15 municipalities.

€16,000

### Nicaragua

#### **Asociación de Mujeres 'Las Golondrinas'**

Founded in 2004, this organisation works with 12 local groups of female and trans sex workers in different municipalities in central and northern Nicaragua. The group uses mass media to promote labour rights of sex workers and address stigma and discrimination. The Red Umbrella Fund grant will



The Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association demonstrated in response to the brutal murder of Dora, a trans\* sex worker in Turkey, in July 2013. The large banner reads: "Don't stay silent! Don't become part of the crime!".

contribute to core costs of the organisation and enable it to conduct trainings on sexual health and human rights for sex workers, and launch a campaign to end violence against sex workers.

€20,000

## NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

### Canada

#### **Projet L.U.N.E.**

This organisation of sex workers operates in the city of Quebec. The group reaches mostly women sex workers who use drugs and those working on the streets with practical support and advice, including peer-led trainings about condom use, accessing health services, self-defence, and human rights. Through their journal 'Les voix de la RuELLES' (The Voice of the Streets) sex workers are able to speak out and share their experiences and demands.

€16,500

### Guyana

#### **Guyana Sex Work Coalition** (GSWC)

This group provides peer-to-peer support and training to sex workers in Guyana and the wider Caribbean region to build their knowledge and confidence to stand up for their rights, including the right to be protected from police violence, to access HIV/AIDS and other health services, and for their work to be recognised as work. The group trains health providers, police, and the military as a strategy to reduce stigma, discrimination and violence against sex workers.

€20,000

### United States

#### **Red Umbrella Project** (RedUP)

This New York-based group organises theatre, storytelling and memoir writing programmes in which sex workers of all genders share experiences with a wide audience to reduce stigma and fight discrimination. The group campaigns or improvements in legislation, such as the 'No Condoms as Evidence' campaign, which aims to ban the use of condoms as evidence of prostitution-related offenses. The group builds the leadership skills and capacity of sex workers through trainings that enable them to run their own advocacy campaigns.

€10,000



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