Strengthening the movement

In 2015, the Red Umbrella Fund made fifteen multi-year grants in eleven countries across five regions. All grantees are sex worker-led organisations that were selected by an international panel of sex workers. This peer-led selection process is experienced by the participants as an important contribution to strengthening the sex workers’ rights movements.

The 2014 donor mapping, Funding for sex worker rights, exposed a lack of funding for sex worker-led organisations worldwide and in the United States in particular. In response, Red Umbrella Fund leveraged additional support specifically for sex worker groups in the U.S. In 2015, Red Umbrella Fund grants were awarded to local groups in the U.S., including the Community United for Safety and Protection (CUSP) in Alaska and the New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance (NJRUA), and to national networks such as Desiree Alliance and the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP).

Listening and learning

The Red Umbrella Fund conducted its first grantee perception survey in 2015. The survey provided a wealth of feedback from current and former grantees, ranging from their experience with the application process and the accompaniment support provided by staff to their perception of the impact of the fund on sex workers’ rights movements. The results highlighted the importance of working in several languages to increase the Red Umbrella Fund’s accessibility and the value of building a trusting relationship between funder and grantee. Most importantly, grantees confirm that the grants have contributed to stronger sex worker-led organisations, improved fundraising capacity and sustainability, more connections within and beyond the sex workers’ rights movements and increased visibility.

And sharing

The Red Umbrella Fund has continued to share information for and about sex workers’ rights movements through its website and social media. In collaboration with peer funders, the Red Umbrella Fund facilitated dialogue and shared its participatory grantmaking model and experiences in donor spaces such as the international donor Working Group on Participatory Grantmaking and the International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG). This effort contributed to an increased uptake of community involvement in grantmaking among funders.

In memoriam Elena Tsukerman

Ukrainian sex workers’ rights activist and leader Elena Tsukerman passed away on 13 December 2015. Since 2012, Elena served as an active member of the International Steering Committee of the Red Umbrella Fund. Her significant contributions to the Red Umbrella Fund and the sex workers’ rights movements at local and international levels are remembered and missed.
ARGENTINA
Asociación de Mujeres Meriterces de la República Argentina (AMMAR)
£35,000
AMMAR and its provincial branches across Argentina advocate for the regulation of sex work in Argentina, at both provincial and national levels. It has been active for more than 20 years and is recognised as a strong, political and influential organisation that campaigns with high reach among the community and general society. AMMAR is a founding member of Redtraxsex, the Latin American and Caribbean Female Sex Workers Network.

AUSTRALIA
Sex Workers’ Action Group Gaining Empowerment, Rights and Recognition (SWAGGERR)
£20,000
This local collective of women, men and trans* sex workers in South Australia aims to change the law that criminalises sex work. The group has an active online presence, reaches out to media, and networks with stakeholders as part of their advocacy efforts. SWAGGERR sells its own merchandise to supplement the group’s income and increase sex worker visibility.

BANGLADESH
HIV/AIDS Research and Welfare Centre (HARC)
£18,000
HARC is a sex worker-led group working primarily with venue-based women sex workers in Bangladesh. It identifies and challenges the structural factors that perpetuate stigmatisation and social exclusion of sex workers. HARC promotes the well-being and empowerment of sex workers by mobilising the community and organising capacity building opportunities. It challenges laws, policies and practices that are harmful to sex workers and provides sexual and reproductive health services – with a strong HIV focus – for sex workers.

CAMEROON
Alcondoms Cameroun
£15,000
This sex worker organisation, based in Douala, provides HIV services and advocates for the human rights of sex workers of all genders. The group unites members based in four different cities. Alcondoms organises sensitisation workshops with law enforcement and other stakeholders. With support from the Red Umbrella Fund, Alcondoms will produce a documentary about the lives of sex workers in Cameroon that can be used in its advocacy campaigns.

MACEDONIA
Association for Support of Marginalized Workers STAR-STAR
£35,000
STAR-STAR is a local sex worker organisation in Skopje that mobilises and builds capacity of sex workers to protect and promote their rights. STAR-STAR reaches sex workers of all genders, diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds and from different sex work sectors. The group advocates for the human rights of sex workers through collaborations with state institutions, the civil sector and media.

MAURITIUS
Parapli Rouz
£20,000
This group of women sex workers is active in Port Louis, Mauritius. Its priorities are HIV prevention, community mobilisation, ending stigma and violence and advocating for the rights of sex workers. The group unites sex workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds, and includes sex workers living with HIV and sex workers who use drugs.

NETHERLANDS
PROUD
£15,000
The Dutch union of sex workers PROUD strengthens the social and legal position of sex workers in the Netherlands. The group conducts peer outreach work and explicitly reaches out to sex workers in different sectors of the sex industry, of all genders, as well as with or without legal status. PROUD documents cases of human rights violations, provides direct support or referrals and advocates for the interests and rights of sex workers in national and local legislation, policies and media.

PERU
Asociación de Trabajadoras Sexuales Sarita Colonia
£15,000
Sarita Colonia is a women sex worker-led organisation based in a remote city of the Amazon area in Peru. The group reaches sex workers of different generations as well as indigenous sex workers. The group conducts peer education and capacity-building work with sex workers on human rights and HIV. Sarita Colonia aims to influence policies and laws, including regional ordinances, that impact the lives of sex workers.

TIMOR LESTE
$carlet Timor Kollektivu ($TK)
£15,000
$TK is the national sex worker organisation in East Timor. The collective works to empower sex workers to achieve their human rights, including access to health and HIV services. $TK acts as the representative and advocate for sex workers of all genders to government and other key stakeholders, particularly in response to HIV.

UGANDA
Transgender Equality Uganda (TEU)
£15,000
This trans gender sex worker group in Uganda works in a context where human rights are denied in law and practice for both sex workers and transgender people. The group builds the health and human rights knowledge of transgender women sex workers in the country through workshops and educational materials. TEU raises public awareness to address stigma and discrimination against transgender sex workers and advocates for the decriminalisation of sex work with key stakeholders at the national level.

UNITED STATES
Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)-USA
£30,000
This national social justice network is dedicated to promoting the human rights of sex workers and their communities. The network consists of 27 local chapters that vary in size and include both sex workers and allied activists. SWOP-USA focuses much of its attention on ending stigma and violence against sex workers through education and advocacy. The network is active at local levels through its SWOP chapters, as well as at the national level. Through a dedicated website and related communications, SWOP actively encourages and supports sex workers in the United States and worldwide to honour December 17 as the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance</td>
<td>€10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desiree Alliance</td>
<td>€23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community United for Safety and Protection (CUSP)</td>
<td>€32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Umbrella Project (RedUP)</td>
<td>€40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Jersey Red Umbrella Alliance

€10,000

This new alliance of sex workers in New Jersey is active at city and state level to advocate for the human rights of sex workers. The group focuses on community outreach and organising; coalition-building with related movements such as queer rights organisations and people living with HIV; documentation of human rights violations; and education of sex workers and others about the rights and issues of sex workers. The group aims to be inclusive and currently has a diversity of sex workers active in its network including people of colour, migrants and people who use drugs.

Desiree Alliance

€23,000

This network of sex worker organisations, communities and individuals across the United States is most known for organising two-yearly national conferences for sex workers. These conferences provide unique opportunities for sex workers and allies to come together to share, learn and strategise for more effective advocacy for sex workers’ rights. Desiree Alliance works together with sex worker organisation Best Practices Policy Project (BPPP) to monitor and give input into United Nations Universal Periodic Review processes.

Community United for Safety and Protection (CUSP)

€32,000

CUSP is a group of sex workers in Alaska representing diverse genders, ethnicities and backgrounds. It was set up in 2013 to increase the safety and protection of all sex workers through mutual support, education, community building and advocacy. The group actively lobbies for decriminalisation and laws against police violence and challenges harmful sex trafficking laws in media and in court.

Red Umbrella Project (RedUP)

€40,000

RedUp amplifies the voices of diverse sex workers through media, storytelling, peer-led trainings and creative advocacy programs with the aim to reduce stigma, promote human rights, increase access to justice and personal development. The group founded the successful Access to Condoms Coalition in New York to fight against the use of condoms by police as evidence of prostitution. The group monitored the activities of the Human Trafficking Intervention Courts in New York City and uses the data to lobby for better laws and policies in relation to trafficking and sex work.

STAR STAR in Macedonia marches on December 17th, International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers.