

Policing

This infographic series produced by the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) and the International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific aims to raise public awareness about the deeply negative impact of ‘End Demand’ laws on the human rights of sex workers, and to encourage collective action to demand State accountability for violations of sex workers’ rights.



Profiling, surveillance and policing

It is sex workers, not clients, who experience the majority of profiling, surveillance and policing – not only while working but also in their day-to-day lives.

Outing of sex workers

Police are frequently accompanied by media on raids of sex workers’ workplaces, resulting in the outing of sex workers.



Coercion

Police have systematically coerced testimony against clients from sex workers.

In Nepal, police routinely force sex workers to file cases against clients and establishments. Sex workers in Canada, France and Sweden also report being threatened with criminal charges, detention, or physical violence, and harassed to act as witnesses against their clients.

Impact on safety

Police surveillance results in clients and outdoor sex workers moving to more isolated areas to avoid detection, and deters outdoor sex workers from working together for their own protection.



Tolerance of violence

‘End Demand’ legislation not only perpetuates and exacerbates stigma; it also influences how police handle reports of violence from sex workers.

In Norway, sex workers reported multiple instances of police failing to respond to reports of violence or threatening situations. There are concerns that police would use such reports as a pretext to intimidate and harass sex workers.

Access to Services

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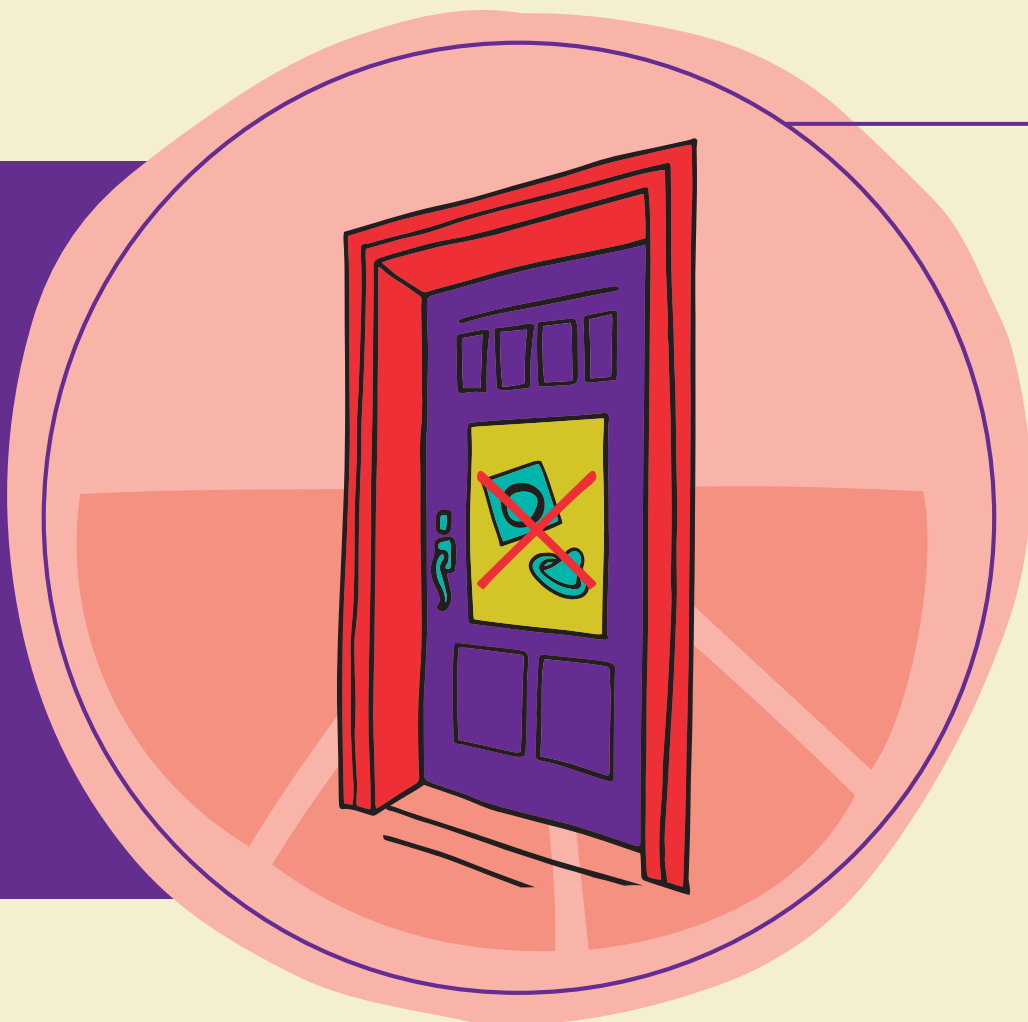
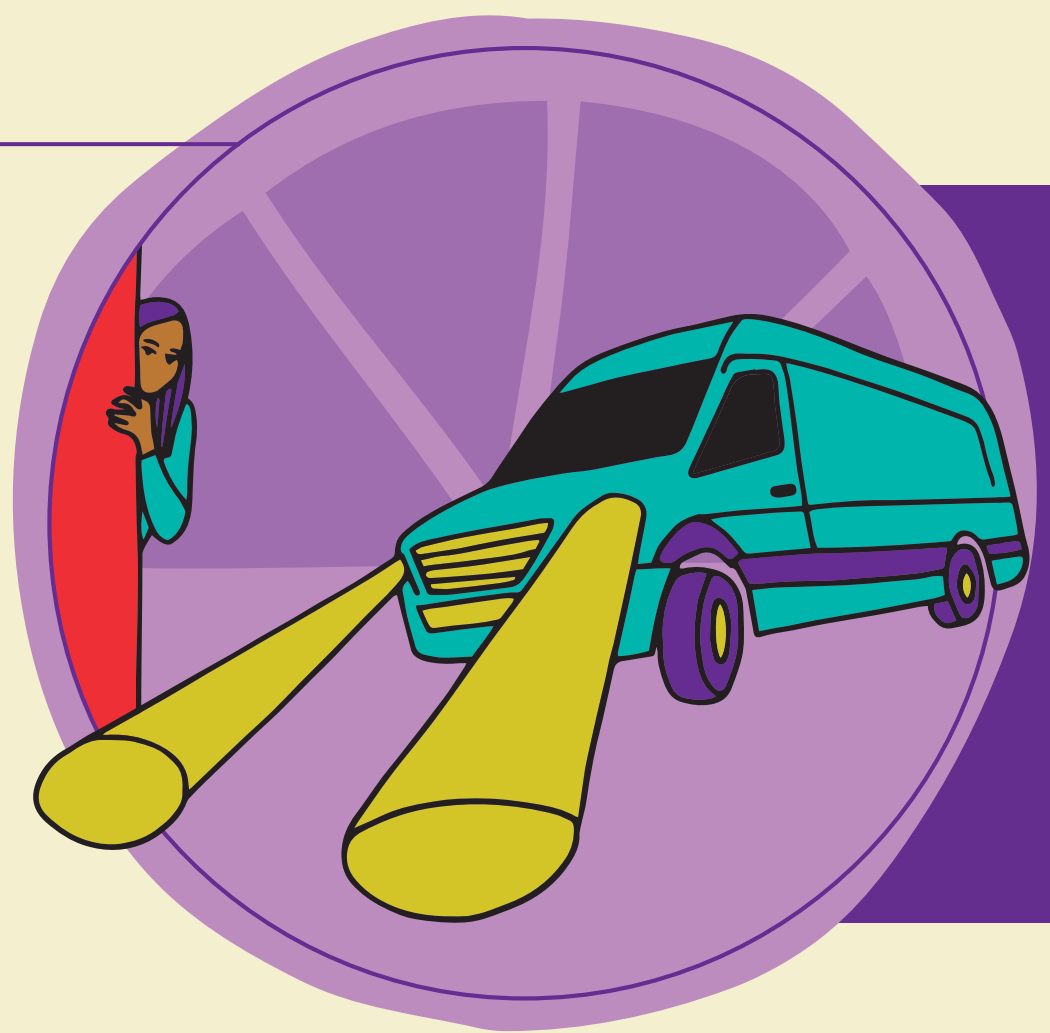


Unfair treatment by service providers

Sex workers experience various forms of poor treatment when engaging with service providers. These include shaming and denial of services if they continue to engage in sex work or do not identify as victims; denial of condoms, or requirement of clinic visits in order to obtain them; and assumptions that they are unfit parents.

Limiting outreach

Surveillance of sex workers, and their resulting displacement, has severely hampered outreach programmes.



Reduced access to protection

Many venues, such as brothels, will avoid keeping stocks of condoms as these may be used as evidence of sex work.

Discrimination by landlords and financial institutions

These laws disproportionately expose sex workers, rather than clients, to discrimination from landlords and financial institutions, undermining sex workers’ right to secure housing, own property and access banking, loans, and other financial instruments.



Violations of the right to housing

Sex workers face rental discrimination, and are forced to pay exorbitant rents to secure homes. In Norway, ‘Operation Homeless’ was set up by police with the aim of systematically evicting sex workers from their homes. More than 400 sex workers, primarily migrant women, were evicted from their apartments between 2007-2014. In Sweden, police report sex workers to their landlords, threatening prosecution if they fail to evict. Sex workers found to be engaging in sex work in their own properties lose their legal right to ownership, facing eviction on failure to sell and vacate the property.

Safety at Work

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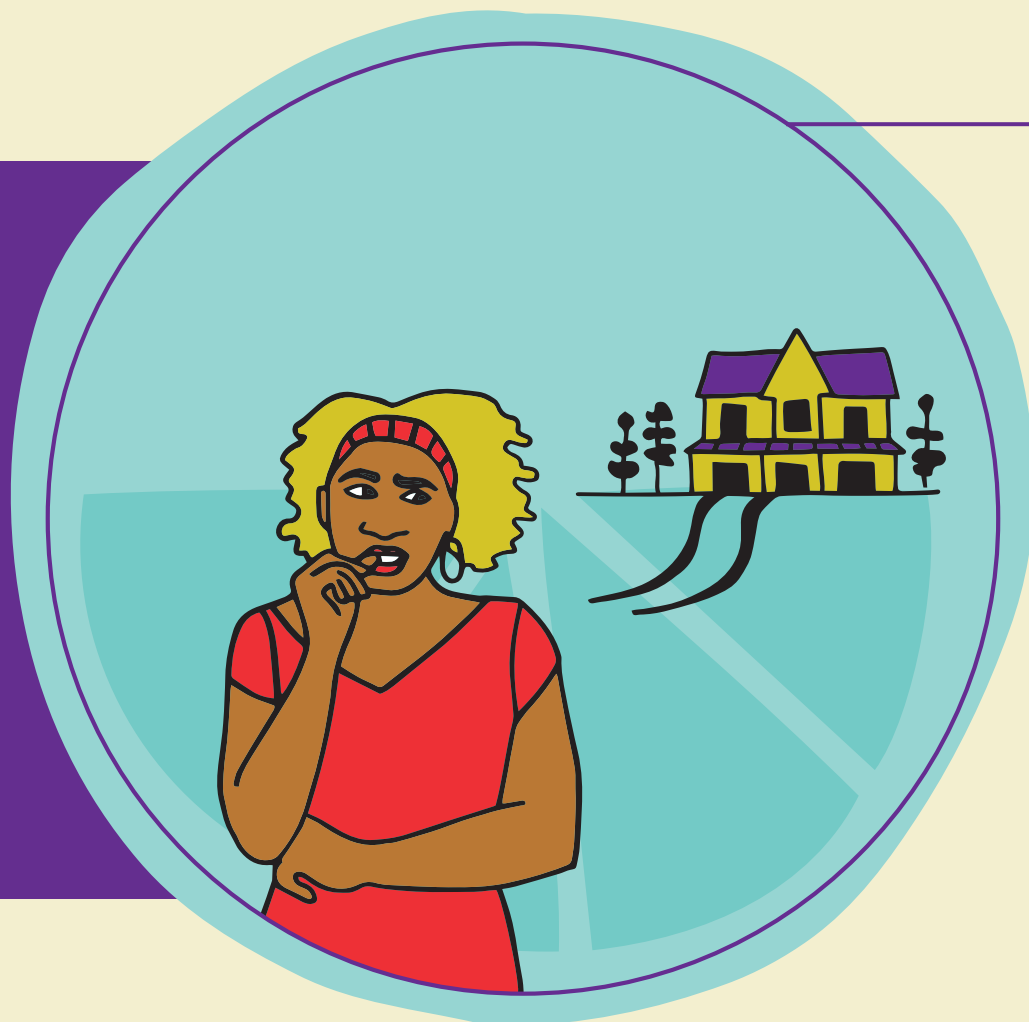
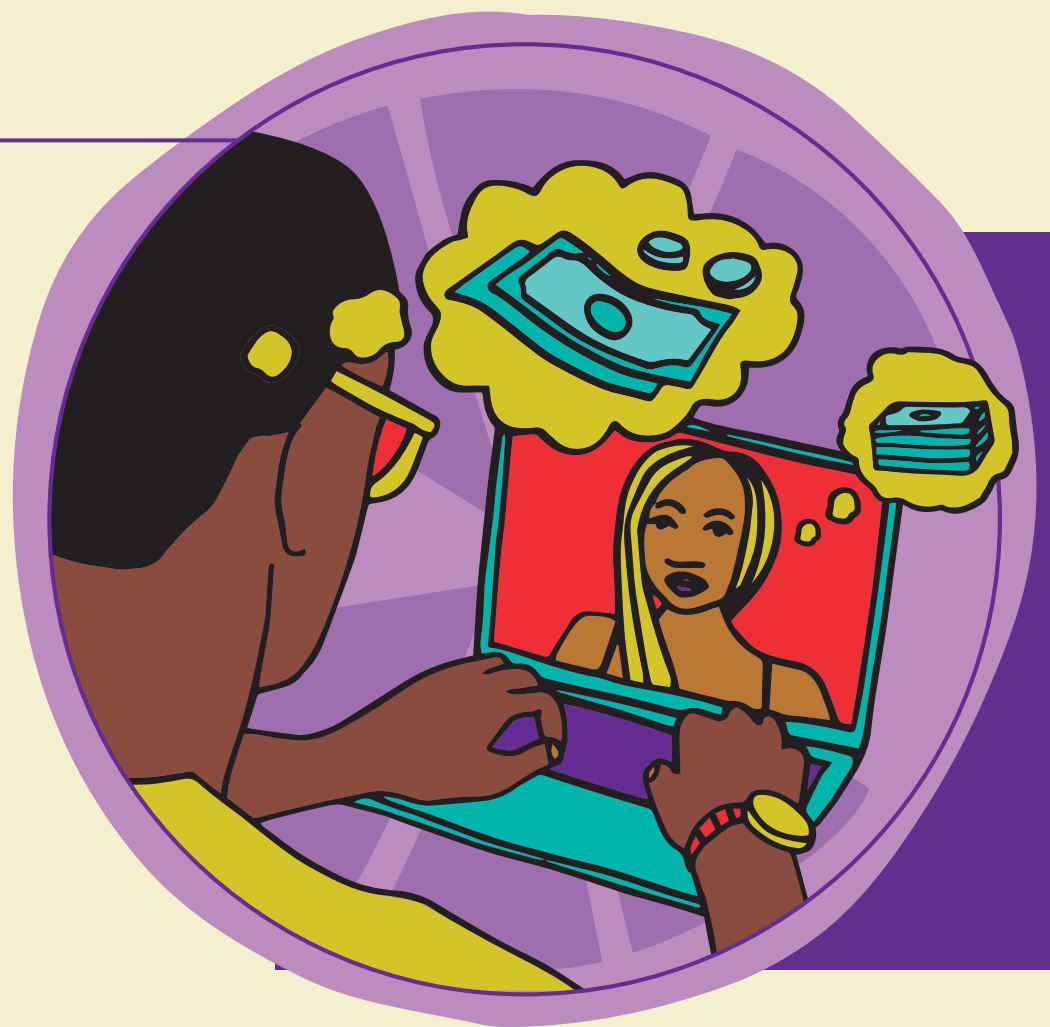


Limited control over working conditions and environment

Fear of arrest makes clients reluctant to visit indoor establishments or meet at hotels. As a result, more sex workers travel to clients’ homes which limits their control over their working conditions and environment.

Reduced bargaining power

‘End Demand’ approaches increase clients’ power over sex workers and limit sex workers’ opportunities to negotiate the services they provide and to protect themselves. Sex workers report feeling increasingly unable to refuse clients’ demands for unprotected sex and accepting clients they previously would have refused.

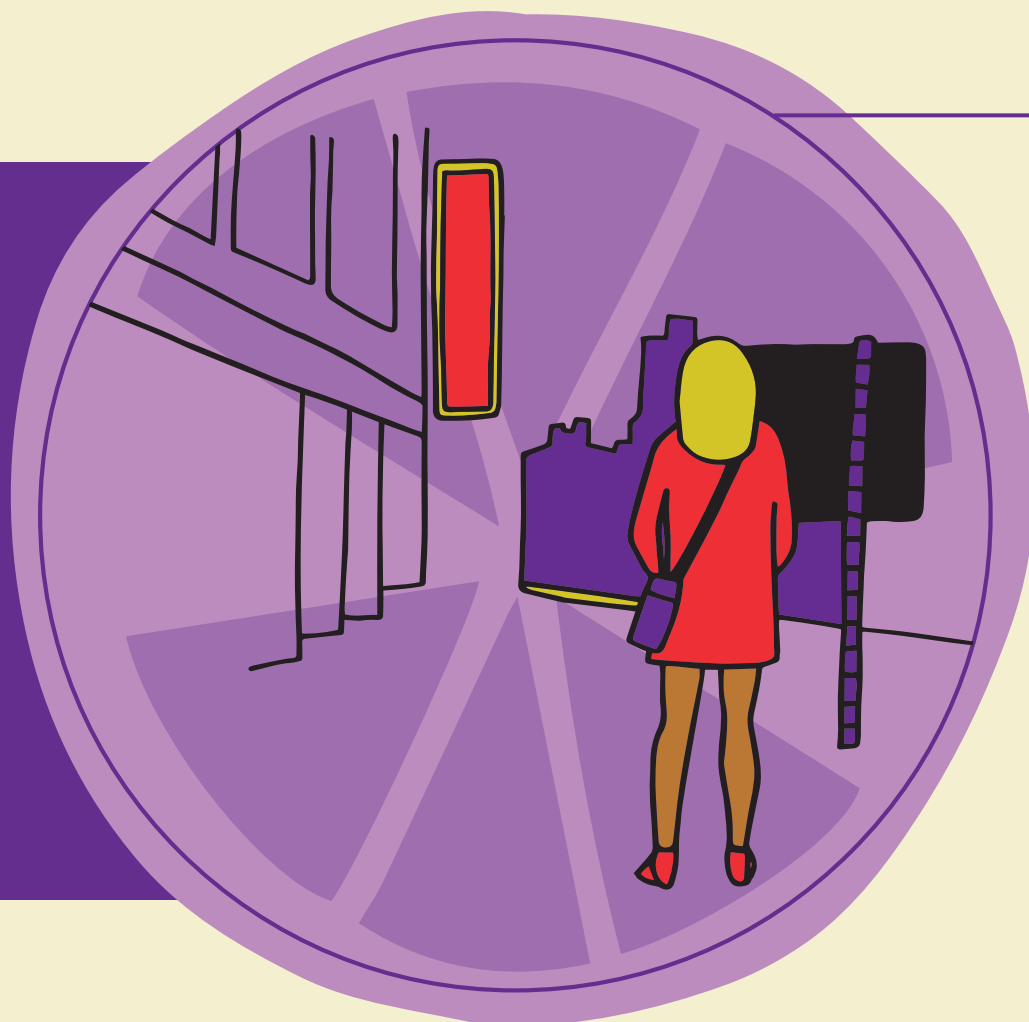


More outcalls to clients’ homes

Enforcement of stay-away orders for soliciting in a public place gives the clients of street-based sex workers an excuse to avoid coming to public spaces, demanding that sex workers come to their homes instead.

Increased reliance on third parties

Unethical and unscrupulous people become involved in the sex industry, using the covert nature of the sex industry to abuse and exploit women sex workers. While ‘End Demand’ legislation is often promoted as a measure to reduce exploitation in sex work, in practice, it has systematically increased sex workers’ reliance on third parties, creating a context rife for labour exploitation.



Increased working hours

Sex workers often have to stay on the streets, in riskier locations, for longer hours, to maintain the same level of income and meet their basic financial needs.

Migration

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Legitimising discrimination against migrant women

‘End Demand’ legislation disproportionately affects migrant women sex workers, and also exacerbates and legitimises discrimination against migrant women who are not sex workers.

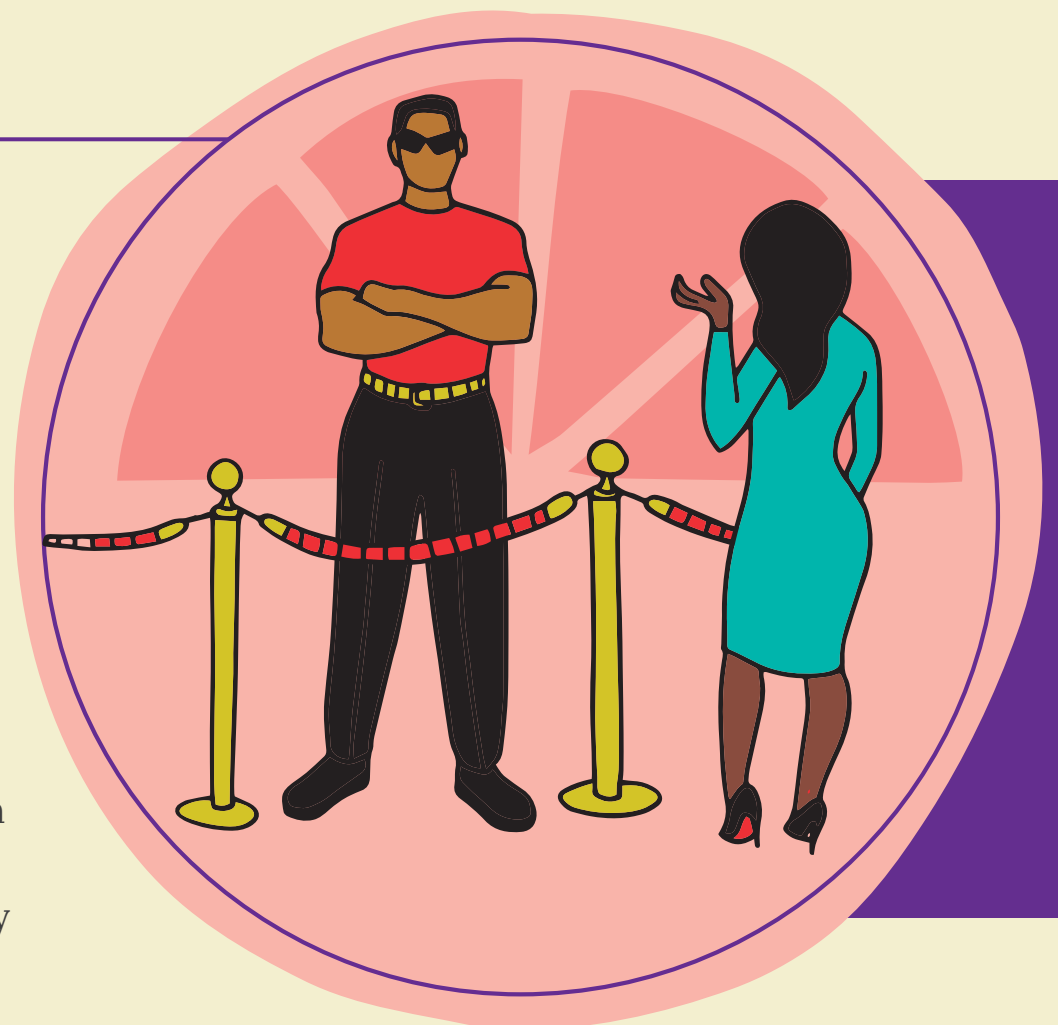
Landlords do not want to rent apartments or facilities to people – predominantly women – from nationality groups associated with sex work.

Racial profiling in social settings

Norwegian hotels profile and deny entry to women of racial, ethnic or nationality groups stereotyped as sex workers.

In Iceland, a Nigerian woman who was profiled as a sex worker was denied entry into a nightclub.

In Sweden, a bar had a policy of refusing entry to ‘Asian-looking women’ on the grounds that they could be sex workers. A lawsuit brought by a group of migrant Asian women was dismissed, first by the district court and then by the court of appeal, upholding the ‘legitimacy’ of racially profiling all Asian women as sex workers.



Reduced autonomy

Unable to easily rent workplaces, hotels or apartments, migrant sex workers face increased reliance on third parties who serve as intermediaries between them and their clients.

Risk of deportation

Migrant sex workers, who are often targeted in the policing of ‘End Demand’ legislation, also face deportation.



Trafficking

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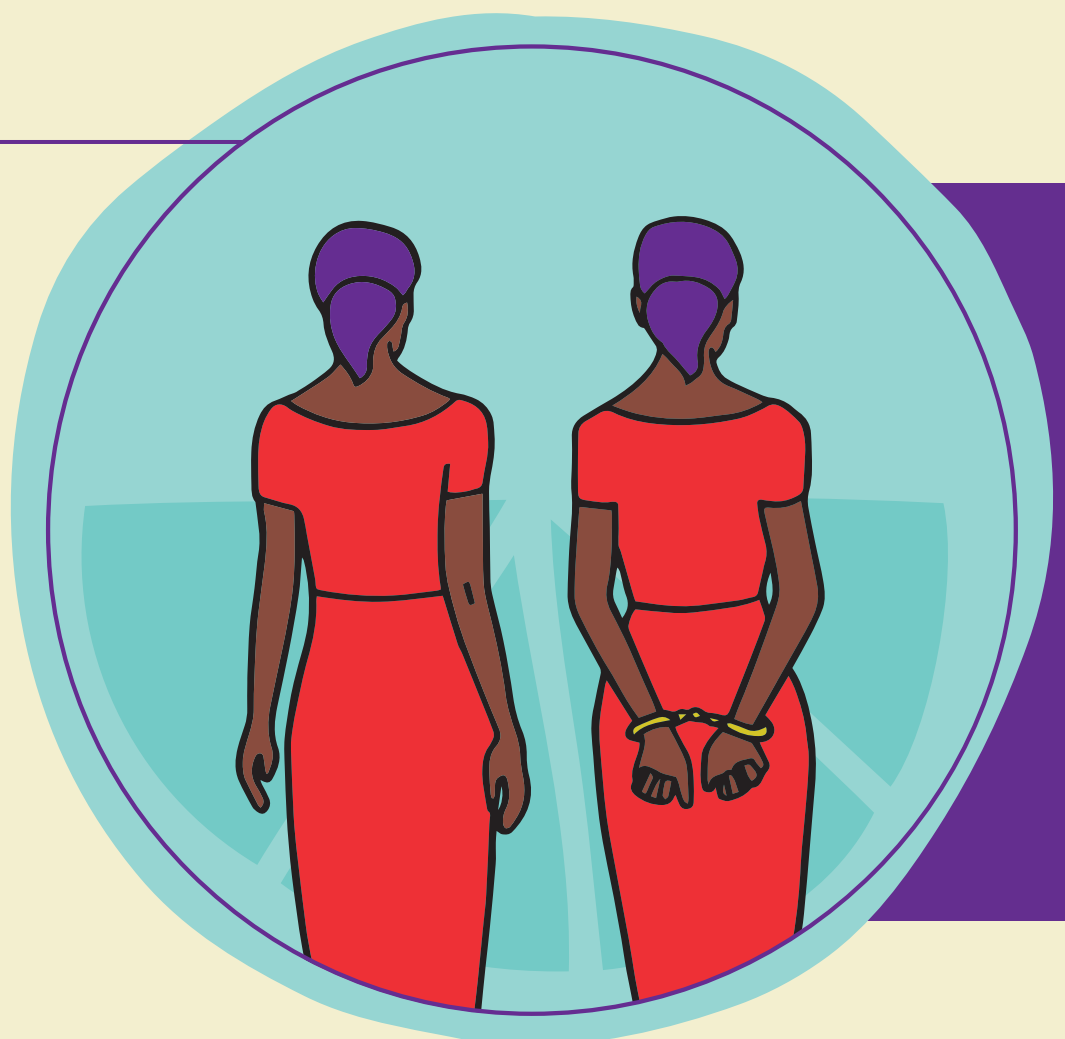
No substantive evidence of reducing trafficking

There is no substantive evidence to support the claim that ‘End Demand’ approaches actually reduce trafficking. Such an approach also ignores trafficking in other labour sectors.

Conflation of sex work and trafficking

‘End Demand’ approaches conflate consensual sex work with trafficking.

This confuses the issue and diverts resources and assistance from trafficking victims, as well as harming consensual sex workers.



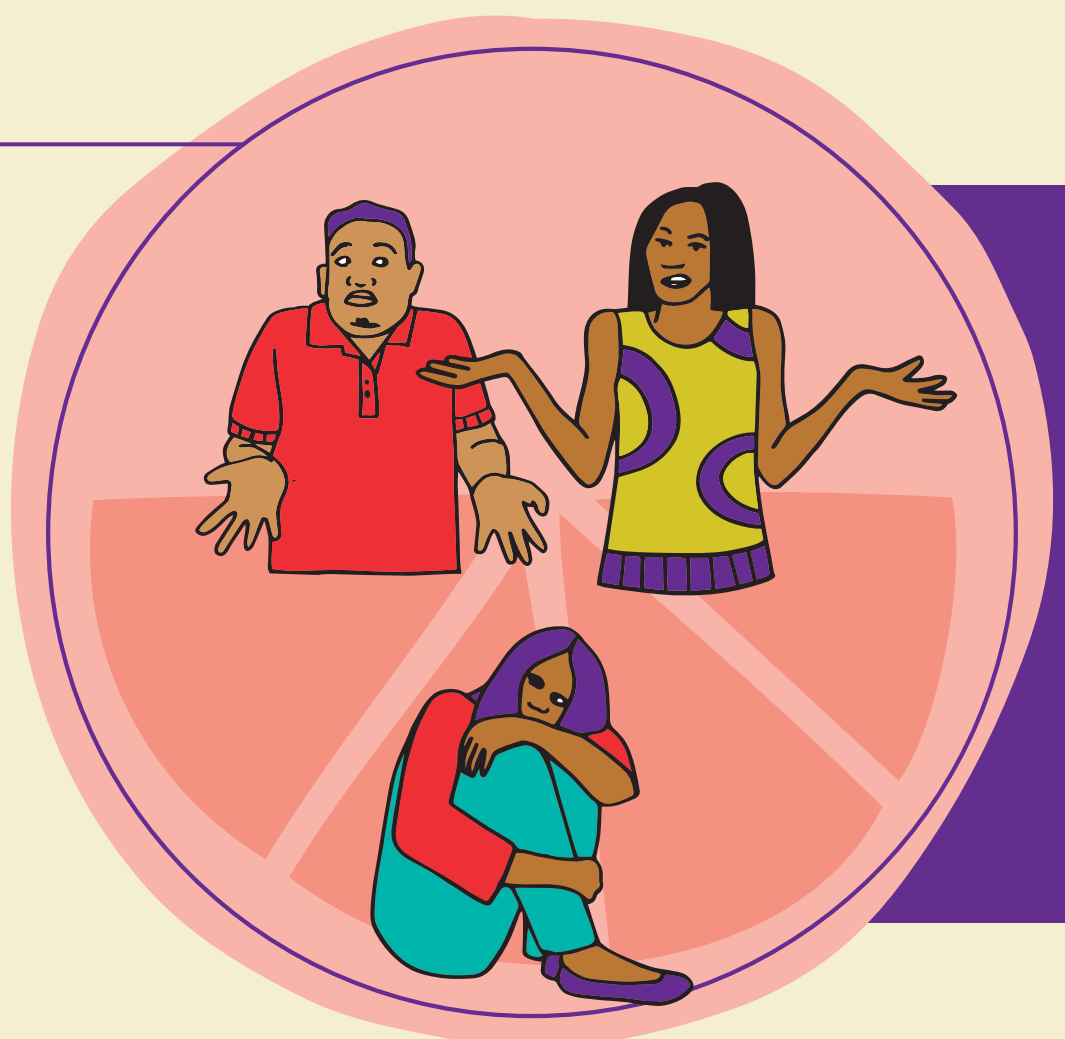
Punishment rather than protection

‘End Demand’ approaches are more focused on punishing men who pay for sexual services than on protecting women.



Deterring witnesses from making reports

‘End Demand’ approaches deter both clients and sex workers, who are well positioned to identify exploitation and trafficking, from reporting such instances.



Reinforcing the victim/abuser binary

In ‘End Demand’ models, sex workers continue to be identified as ‘pimps’ or ‘traffickers’, or charged as ‘accomplices’ – especially if they refuse to identify as victims.



Stigma

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Increasing stigma against all parties

It has been asserted that the ‘End Demand’ approach focuses only on increasing the stigma against individuals who purchase sexual services. However, as reported by sex workers, it is impossible to do this without also increasing stigma against those who sell them.

Sex workers pushed out of cities

The criminalisation of clients is often a police tool to push sex workers out of city centres. Many local residents complain about ‘prostitution’ because they have bought properties and believe that sex workers’ presence in a neighbourhood may damage property values. It is not about ‘protecting women’ as stated.



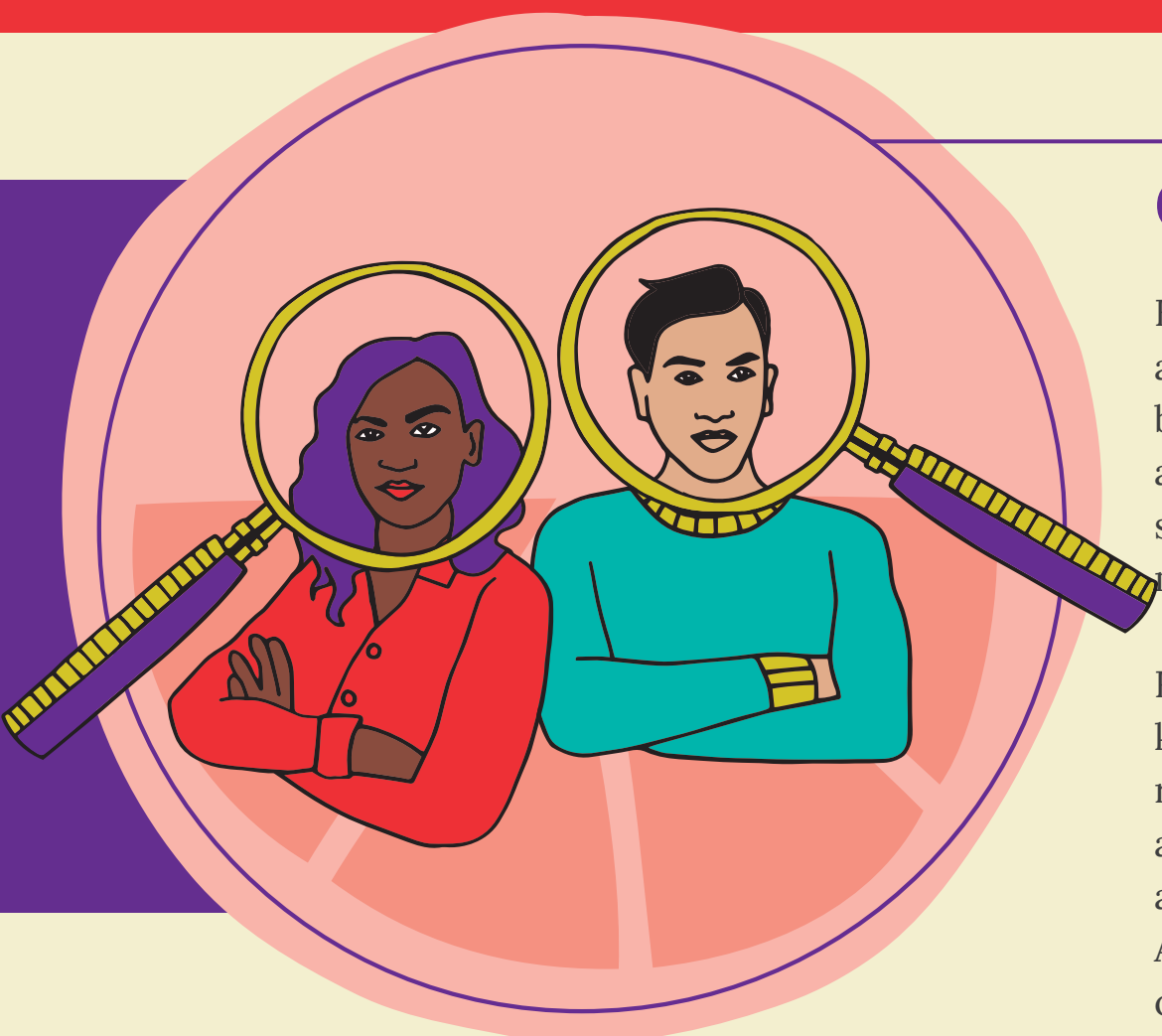
Problems accessing HIV testing

Among a sample of sex workers in Sweden, home of the ‘End Demand’ model, 25% reported experiencing problems in accessing HIV testing, including being interrogated on why they wanted an HIV test or having to insist they had a right to receive an HIV test. 26 of the 28 respondents reporting problems were women. (Rose Alliance/HIV-Sverige 2014 Survey)



Mobilising

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Community research

By ensuring research is conducted in ethical and accountable ways, sex-worker-led organisations have been able to strengthen their ability to represent and advocate on policy issues on a range of topics, including stigma and discrimination, and trafficking and migration policy.

Rose Alliance’s community research, the largest of its kind on sex work and health in Sweden, initially received little attention, but after a year it was cited by a well-respected academic who gave the methodology and content of the report their seal of approval. Rose Alliance commented: “We were still not welcomed with open arms, but we were taken seriously in a completely different way. The survey’s result is still often ignored, but they can’t ignore Rose Alliance anymore as they realised they might need our help in the future.”

Global advocacy

NSWP and its allies have held meetings with the UN CEDAW Committee and other UN agencies, and made written submissions and public statements to urge against the proliferation of ‘End Demand’ laws and approaches in international law and policy standards.

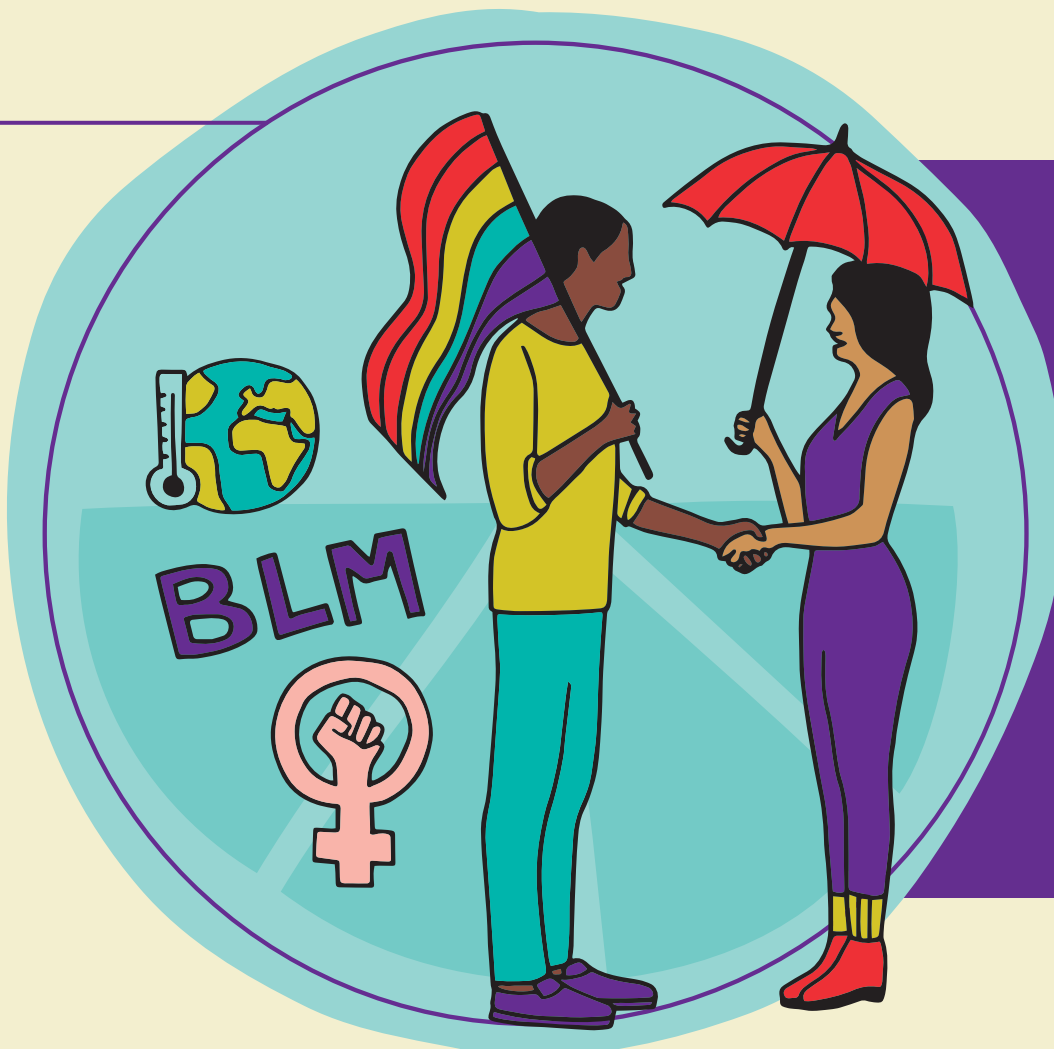


Lobbying and advocacy by sex workers

Lobbying and advocacy by sex-worker-led organisations ensures sex workers’ voices are heard in discussions about law reform.

Cross-movement solidarity

Finding common ground and shared principles with other social justice movements and other criminalised/marginalised groups has allowed sex workers to build strong alliances and increase their political exposure.



Demanding a voice

In an environment where sex workers are seen as unqualified to consent to paid sex, it is not just individual sex workers but also sex-worker-led organisations who are labelled ‘unrepresentative’ if they fail to comply with the ideological understandings of the Nordic Model. This leads to exclusion from debates and planning discussions on services, law reform and other issues which have a direct impact on their lives.