



April 2020
67th Issue

Message from the Editor :

Last year, we have been hearing sex workers saying they did not have good business. Customers did not visit them as often as before for different reasons, say, the economy was affected by the Trade War and they had to think more deeply before they spend, some of them were afraid that the public transportation would suddenly suspend and they failed to go home for unexpected clashes between police and protesters resulted from anti-extradition law movement. When 2020 just began, there was even the outbreak of coronavirus. Coronavirus further scared customers from visiting sex workers. Some sex workers also worried that the customers might infect them. On one hand, they were afraid that the income would decrease sharply, on the other hand, they concerned the risk at work. Those who had children also had to spend much efforts to find masks for their child, or to keep their flats clean as children needed not to go to school.

Under the above, we can imagine the pressure on sex workers. Unfortunately, there are still unscrupulous people who try to take advantage of sex workers. Police also seem to resume their 'usual' work, including undercover operation against sex workers, after spending much effort to cope with the anti-extradition law protests last year.

Below are the cases how sex workers are exposed to different violence in the past 4 months. We not only see violence from customers, we also see police officer receiving free massage and sex service, which 'vanished' for some time. As long as the police refuse to review the undercover operation

guideline, and the police management turns a blind eye to those who infringe the operation guideline, sex workers can never protect their rights.

As no one can tell when the coronavirus pandemic ends, and police abuse shows no sign to stop, sex workers will probably have a hard time in 2020.

Below is the number of complaints about violence from sex workers in the past 4 months.

<u>Police violence/abuse</u>		<u>Client/criminal violence</u>	
Free massage service before arrested	2 casasa	Denial of payment	2 cases
Verbal threat and insult	1 case	Candid camera	14 cases
Neglect of duty	2 casasa	Theft	2 cases
Arbitrary arrest	120 casasa	Robbery	2 cases
		Triad threats and harassment	1 case
		Counterfeit Note	2 cases
		Intimidation	6 cases
		Cyber violence	1 case
		Privacy violation	1 case
		Condom removed	2 cases
		Rape	1 case
		Telephone harassment	1 case
		Physical assault	1 case

Our work and movement:

Hong Kong

Influence of Coronavirus pandemic

Due to the close proximity to Mainland China, and the frequent flow between Hong Kong and Mainland China, when infectious disease spreads within China, Hong Kong will easily be affected. Since January, Hong Kong has been under the influence of coronavirus. As pointed by the Department of Health and other specialists, that coronavirus is mainly spread through droplets, they urge the citizens to reduce social activities and maintain social distance with other people. Sex workers are therefore seriously affected by the disease, same as other service sectors. In the first place, not only customers are afraid to go to sex workers' place, many sex workers are also hesitant to go to work. They worry that their customers may come from the most affected areas. The outbreak does not end afterwards. As many sex workers are breadwinner, they can only choose to go back to work. There are not many customers. Those who have regular customers will call these customers, but those having few regular customers or mainly new customers will earn less income.

When customers visit sex workers' place, to reduce transmission risk, sex workers will often ask the customers to wear mask. Some of them will provide cleaning and disinfection supplies for customers. Sex workers will not remove the mask even they have sex with the customers. Yet, it is not easy to find supplies like masks and sanitizers in the drug store. Even though there is stock, they are marked at a much higher price than before. While some sex workers pay much for the masks, some will just work several days a week, so as to reduce the working cost and save using masks at work. Nevertheless, we do know some who refuse to wear masks. They are afraid that the customers will not feel happy about the mask. Customers may also fail to identify who they are. Hence they choose to take the risk and show their face.

During this period, most people on streets wear masks. It is not easy to see who the people are. It therefore gives a good chance to villains to take advantage of sex workers. As they are wearing masks at the time when they arrive sex workers' place, even they steal sex workers' money or leave without paying the service charge, sex workers can hardly remember how they look, let alone providing such information for police. Under the influence of coronavirus, sex workers are not likely to execute their rights to protect their own interests, they are only more vulnerable to violence and crime.

Many sex workers have children. Since the government announces suspension of all schools, sex workers' children stay home. In order to take care of the children, some sex workers not only stop

going to work, they also have to go everywhere to buy sanitizing supplies for their children. Those who go to work also worry a lot about the health conditions of their children. They have much psychological burden. Some sex workers will just work 2-3 hours each day, so as to go home quickly to look after their child. They do not even have time to think about the issue of high working cost and reduced income.

Our work is also affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The first goes to the outreach work. Since it is not easy to buy masks, we do not go outreach every day. Free medical support and training classes are also suspended. When we know that the sexual health clinic run by the government is closed for coronavirus, we realize that coronavirus will have greater hit on sex workers than SARS in 2003.



During this period, we also receive the donation of supplies from groups and individuals. For example, we receive masks from Médecins sans frontières, and we can distribute free masks to sex workers. We also receive prevention supplies from condom companies, which enable us to maintain our work in a limited way. As long as the whole community is deeply affected by the disease, we further understand that it is important to help each other. Mutual support can help overcoming problems.

We are grateful to all the groups, companies and individuals who donate supplies to us. We sincerely hope that the epidemic will end soon, and people all over the world can go back to normal life.

Stories/experiences of Migrant Chinese sex workers

Shenzhen

A Simple Wish

People often criticize that sex workers are materialistic, who want to earn the most money with the least effort. In fact, many sex workers only have very simply wishes.

“When I was 8 or 9-month old, I was brought to Xinjiang by my parents. They worked at a coal mine. My father hurt his eyes afterwards. He could not work in the mine so he started to graze sheep and cattle. I was able to help him at that time. My younger sister was also born there.

When we grew up, my father thought that it would be too far away from our hometown if we got married in Xinjiang, so we moved back to our hometown. My younger sister went back first. I did not work but stayed at home for a short while, then my parents made me work in Guangdong. It was a job introduced by my uncle. My first job was a toy doll factory. My first income was RMB150. I still remember I was very happy, though it was not a large amount. I did not buy anything either. I gave it all to my mother.

Later I went to Shenzhen with my younger sister. It took me more than 20 hours to travel between Guangdong and Shenzhen. I had my first love in Guangdong. I spent my youth there as well. I am still with my first lover. I also have relatives in Guangdong. A few years ago I moved to Shenzhen and start my new life here.

I have been working here since I moved to Shenzhen. Other ‘sisters’ also work here stably. We know each other well. If there is any problem with the smartphone, they will ask me for help. I will always help them.

I like handicraft and making stuff. Last year my younger sister gave me something that needs assembling as a birthday present. I like it very much.

I have been working in this industry for 6-7 years. I do not really like it. I continue just because of my family. Recently we built a house in my hometown. I live and shop here. Life is not bad in Shenzhen. It is strange. Since the year before last year, I have had a life-threatening disease every

year, and I had to stop working for several months. I had the idea to stop working a few years ago. As my daughter is no longer a kid. She knows more about this world. I do not want to have bad influence on my daughter.

I think my future life will be the same as now, but I want my daughter to lead a better life, receive more education , get a good job , live comfortably and happily. I think all mothers share the same wish.



(image: <https://wonderopolis.org/>)



Linking with the world

Canada

New linkage

We recently met with the member of Coalition Against Trans Antagonism from Vancouver. Coalition Against Trans Antagonism focuses the most on advocacy. Their members are volunteers, who want to raise increase public understanding in social inequalities in the society. Coalition Against Trans Antagonism not only concerns transgendered women, they also want to reduce the discrimination against woman sex workers and transgendered sex workers. Besides, Coalition Against Trans Antagonism works on the rights and experience of indigenous people.

In this trip to Hong Kong, member of Coalition Against Trans Antagonism mainly aims at networking with overseas groups concerning social injustice, particularly groups concerning sex workers, as they understand that overseas support is necessary for their work. We are definitely willing to meet with the member. We also look forward to more information exchange and cooperation with the group in future.

What is happening in sex workers community?

Central and South America

Migrant Women Against Violence in the World of Work



¡Menuda manera de ganarnos la vida!
MIGRANTES MUNDIALES CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA Y EL ACOSO
EN EL MUNDO DEL TRABAJO EN ARGENTINA, BRASIL,
PERÚ, COLOMBIA, GUATEMALA Y MÉXICO



(image: <https://gaatw.org/>)

GAATW conducted a research project titled ‘Migrant Women Against Violence in the World of Work’ in 2019. In this research, 172 migrant women working in 6 countries including Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Columbia, Mexico and Guatemala were interviewed. They were asked about the violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination they experienced at work. Most of them worked in cleaning and domestic work, textile, sex work, street vending and service sector.

Not surprisingly, women who work in the sex industry experience the most violence among the interviewees.

According to the research, sex workers not only face violence from employers and clients, they also experience violence from the government officials. Sex workers are also the only group of interviewees who face violence from neighbors, church members and journalists.

Through this research, you will not only understand more about the bad experiences of different working women in Central and South American countries, you will also see how gender differences are used to justified the inequality between men and women. As stated in the executive summary, ‘Gender-based violence is not an isolated phenomenon, but is part of a patriarchal structure based on unequal power relations that assign different roles, attributes and spaces for women and men, justify the subordination of women and position men in a situation of privilege.’

If you are interested in this research, you can find its executive summary here:

https://gaatw.org/publications/MWagainstViolence/What_a_way_to_make_a_living.pdf



List of Donors (January/2020– April/2020)

January	Anonimities	4,900		February	Anonimities	1,000
					譚若梅	1,000
March	Anonimities	12,500		April	Anonimities	3,500

We apologize for any omissions!!

Application for Membership

Name: _____ Age: _____

Occupation: _____ Gender: _____

Telephone: (H) _____ (O): _____

e-mail: _____

Address: _____

I am willing to join the following activities:

Publication Data Collection Research Others

I would like to donate monthly:

\$100 \$200 \$300 \$500
\$1,000 or once

My donation is paid by:

Cheque: (cheque number) _____

Cash deposited into: Hang Seng Bank A/C 232-8-085580 (Account Name: Zi Teng)

Mail: Hong Kong Post Office Headquarters P.O. Box 7450

Fax: 852 - 2390 4628 Tel: 852 - 2332 7182

Zi Teng

Hong Kong Post Office Headquarters P.O. Box 7450

Tel : 852 - 2332 7182

E-mail : ziteng@hkstar.com

Website : <http://www.ziteng.org.hk>

Blog : <http://blog.ziteng.org.hk>

Twitter : https://twitter.com/Zi_Teng_hk

Air Mail

Printed Matter