Best Practices in Recruiting Sex Workers
(Kenya Experience)

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Agenda

• Background information on sex work in Kenya
• Community engagement team
• Factors to consider when reaching out to Sex workers
• Recruitment strategies
Background

• Sex work is one of the oldest profession
• Some sex workers get involved to meet their basic needs in many developing countries
• Widely practiced in Kenya
  – Female sex work
  – Male sex work
  – Special categories
• Contribute to the greater HIV burden in Kenya
• Illegal in Kenya
Background: Kenyan Penal Code

- The Kenyan Penal Code does not criminalize sex work
- Defines two types of offences with respect to sex work, namely “living on the earnings of prostitution” and “soliciting or importuning for immoral purposes.”
  - Detention of females for immoral purposes (section 151)
  - Male person living on the earnings of prostitution or soliciting (section 153)
  - Woman living on earnings of prostitution or aiding, abetting or compelling an individual to engage in sex work (section 154)
  - Premises used for prostitution or residing in or frequenting or living in a house wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution (section 155)
  - Running a brothel (section 156)
Community Engagement team

• Have diverse experience in recruiting different categories of participants
• Self motivated and special interest in the different categories of target population
• Include CAB members
• Include members from the community who fall within the target population
Factors to consider when recruiting sex workers

- Sex worker category
- Membership/affiliation to associations and organization
- Age and length of experience in sex work
- Locality and ‘control’ of hot spots
- Type of clientele
- Ability to freely participate in research study
- Legal and social and logistical recruitment barriers
- Available local intervention programs that target sex workers
Community entry process

- Involvement of CAB (have a representative)
- Sensitization and involvement of the key partners/gatekeepers (MOH, Social Services, NGOs, National government)
- Sensitization of key female sex worker affiliated stakeholders
- Identification of peer/community recruiters
- Referral and scheduling of participants
- Real-time response to feedback
Best Practices

• Involve the CAB in all decision making process
• Involve the members of sex work in every process. Let them own the process
• Respect the profession and always identify with them
• Be patient with the demands even if they sound unrealistic
Best Practices cont.

• Share correct information don’t raise high expectations
• Recognize the role they play in the study and where possible reward achievements
• Peer recruiters contribute significantly to getting sex workers from their networks
• Ensure you secure support form legal and law enforcement organizations where sex work is illegal
Summary

- Participation of sex workers in research will depend on their involvement in the process, respect for their profession and safeguarding their rights as individuals.
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