



African
Sex
Workers
Alliance



Personal stories of sex workers in Liberia affected by the U.S. foreign aid freeze



Liberia



1 Introduction

Here are five personal stories of sex workers in Liberia affected by the U.S. foreign aid freeze and the challenges they face:

1.1 Blessing, 29 – Struggling to Access HIV Treatment

Blessing has been a sex worker in Monrovia for nearly a decade. She was diagnosed with HIV two years ago and relied on a U.S.-funded clinic for her antiretroviral (ARV) medication. Since the aid freeze, the clinic has shut down, and she now has to travel long distances to find medication. With the rising cost of transportation and stigma at other health centers, she sometimes misses her doses, putting her health at risk.

“Before, I could just walk to the clinic and get my medicine. Now, I have to choose between paying for transport or eating. This is life and death for me.”

1.2 Ama, 34 – Rising Violence and No Protection

Ama has been working in Buchanan for several years. She used to depend on a U.S.-funded program that provided legal aid and self-defense training for sex workers. Since the funding freeze, reports of police harassment and client violence have increased. Recently, a client refused to pay and physically assaulted her, but with no legal support available, she had to remain silent.

“When we had funding, we knew we had people fighting for us. Now, when something happens, we just have to endure it because no one cares anymore.”

1.3 Fatu, 23 – No Access to Contraceptives or STI Testing

Fatu, a young sex worker, used to receive free condoms and regular STI testing from a community outreach program. Now, with supplies running low and no free testing available, she and many others are forced to take risks. She recently contracted an STI, but without affordable treatment, she continues to work, fearing further health complications.

“I want to protect myself, but how can I if condoms and medicine are too expensive? I feel like we have been abandoned.”

1.4 Josephine, 40 – Rising Poverty and Homelessness

Josephine used to work in a small brothel where sex workers were trained in financial literacy and alternative income skills. The program was U.S.-funded, and after the freeze, it shut down. She lost her place to stay and is now homeless, working on the streets without protection. With fewer clients and higher risks, she barely earns enough to survive.

“We were learning how to start small businesses so that we didn't have to depend only on sex work. Now, all that is gone, and I'm back to square one, but worse.”

1.5 Patience, 27 – Fear of Being Arrested

Patience was part of an empowerment group supported by U.S. aid that worked to reduce police violence against sex workers. Since the funding was cut, crackdowns on sex workers have intensified. She was recently arrested during a raid, and with no legal aid available, she spent three nights in jail, where she was physically abused.

“Before, we had an organization that would come to get us out of jail and fight for our rights. Now, the police do whatever they want because they know no one will stop them.”

2 Conclusion

The U.S. foreign aid freeze has deeply affected sex workers in Liberia, leaving them vulnerable to violence, health crises, and extreme poverty. Without access to essential services, many are forced to take greater risks to survive. Urgent action is needed to restore funding and provide support to these marginalized communities.