



African
Sex
Workers
Alliance



**REPORT ON THE STUDY ON TRENDS & PRIORITIES IN SEX
WORKERS MOVEMENT FUNDING IN AFRICA, 2020-2022**

CASE STUDY OF THE AFRICAN SEX WORKERS ALLIANCE (ASWA)

What the study is about

The African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA), with support of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), commissioned this study to better understand how the sex worker movement in Africa has experienced the funding landscape in recent years. The study was purposively focussed on the 37 countries in Africa where ASWA has members. Responses were received from 72 out of the 102 sampled organizations spread across twenty-one countries. The twenty-one countries are Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The highest number of organizations who responded came from Kenya (22.22%) followed by Nigeria (16.67%), Tanzania (13.89%), Uganda (11.11%) and Burundi (5.5%).

The objectives of the study were:

- To study and document the positive and negative shifts in funding for the sex workers movement in Africa.
- To study and document the effects of declining and shifting funding on the sex workers movement in Africa.
- To make recommendations on how the sex workers movement in Africa, and funders, should respond to the shift and decline in funding.
- To provide an evidence base for advocacy on funding to the sex workers' movement in Africa.

The study targeted sex workers organizations who are members of ASWA. The study does not therefore capture the experiences of sex workers organizations in countries where ASWA does not have members. Moreover, in those countries where ASWA has members, the study did not target sex workers organizations who are not its members.

Context of sex work in Africa

Sex workers organizing takes place in a context in which African societies promote the stigmatization of sex workers by often casting them as vectors of disease at odds with the sexual mores of conservative societies. Stigma against sex workers also exists in African hospitals and health centres. Sex workers themselves often internalize this deep societal stigma, which can lead to a grinding sense of hopelessness. African sex workers are the victims of physical and sexual abuse and rarely receive protection from the state as victims of gender-based violence. There is a general perception that gender-based violence is part and parcel of sex work and not a crime from which they should be protected. Far from protecting sex workers from abuse, African States are often complicit in the abuse of sex workers through tolerance of routine police abuse and harassment of sex workers. Police often demand exorbitant bribes from sex workers, detain them through arbitrary arrests, and subject sex workers to sexual abuse. African sex workers also experience sexual and physical abuse from clients.

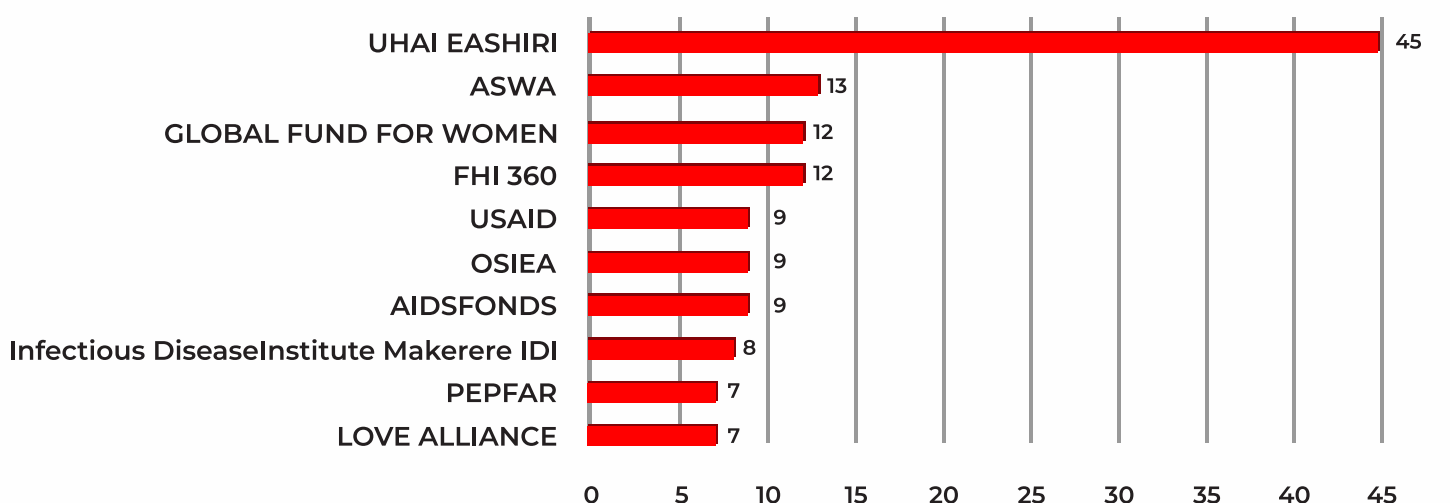
The criminalization of sex work throughout Africa heightens African sex workers' vulnerability.

HIGHLIGHT OF FINDINGS

Funders for sex work

Respondents were asked to 'list all your donors for the years 2020, 2021, and 2022'. Many different entities, one hundred and thirteen, were mentioned with the footprint for most of them being low as indicated by the number of mentions.

Top 10 Funders, 2020 - 2022



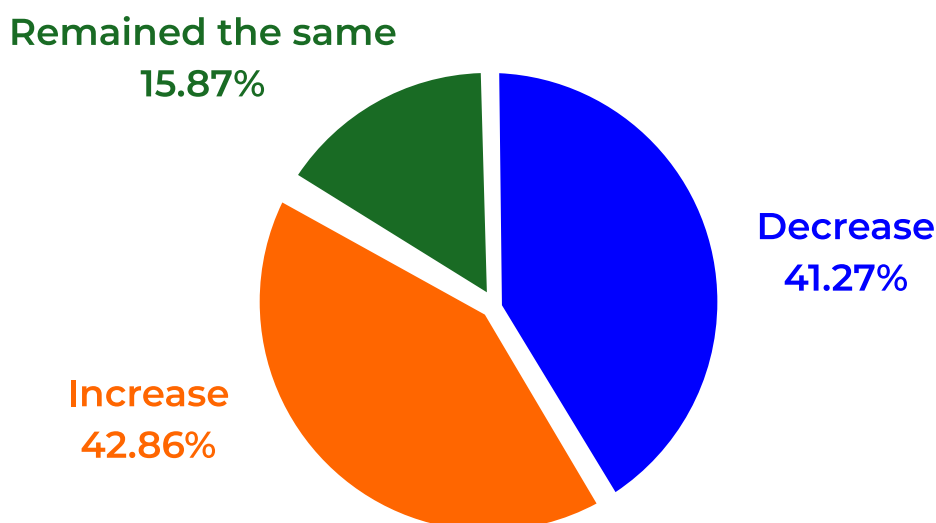
Sources of funding

'In 2020, 2021, and 2021 which of the following sources did you receive funding from? According to the responses, 19 percent of the funding came from private organizations and foreign governments, 17.8 percent of the funds was from members' contribution, and 15.8 percent came from civil societies. The least source of funds for sex worker organizations were the national and local governments (9.9 percent and 5.9 percent respectively). Funding from local/state and national governments continues to be low.

Reduction in funding

'We asked respondents 'between 2020 and 2022, did your organization's total funding increase, decrease, or remain the same'. Four in ten respondents stated it had increased, a similar number reported it had decreased, and less than 2 in 10 reported there had been no change. With funding decreasing or remaining the same for more than half of the respondents, the result could be inability to sustain their levels of engagement and even worse, likely shrinkages. Most respondents stated that reducing staff would be the main thing to do in the face of significantly reducing financing.

Twenty eight out of the seventy-two respondents did not have any donors for part or the whole of the study period.



Funding deficits

Nearly 1 in 2 respondents in the study have operated with a funding deficit between 2020 and 2022. A significant number of respondents had a funding deficit of more than 50 percent against their annual budgets, and that figure has increased during the study period reaching nearly 4 out of every 10 organizations in 2022. Such levels of funding deficits are likely to impact mission accomplishment and threaten the viability of the affected sex workers organizations.

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Percentage of respondents with more than 50 percent funding deficits

Year	Percentage of funding deficits
2020:	24 Percent
2021:	26 Percent
2022:	35 Percent

Inadequate Funding

Nearly 9 out of 10 respondents have none or have minimal funding for peer support, service delivery, capacity strengthening, advocacy and policy initiatives, staff salaries and wellbeing, and core costs. For example:

Salaries and wellbeing: Nearly 6 out of 10 respondents have no money for salaries and 4 and out of 6 have only minimal funding. Salaries and wellbeing are an unfunded or underfunded area for 10 out of 10 respondents.

Core costs: Nearly 4 out of 10 respondents have no funding for core costs and just over 5 out of 10 respondents have only minimal funding. Core costs is an unfunded or underfunded area for nearly 9 out of 10 respondents.

Restricted Grants

Nearly 6 out of 10 respondents had received grants that were restricted. Despite overwhelming evidence that unrestricted grants are better for organizational performance and resilience, far too many grants are still restricted.

Duration of Grants

Nearly 3 out of every 10 grants were for less than one year and nearly 7 out of every 10 grants were for less than two years. Short duration grants present challenges for programmatic and financial sustainability of sex workers organizations.

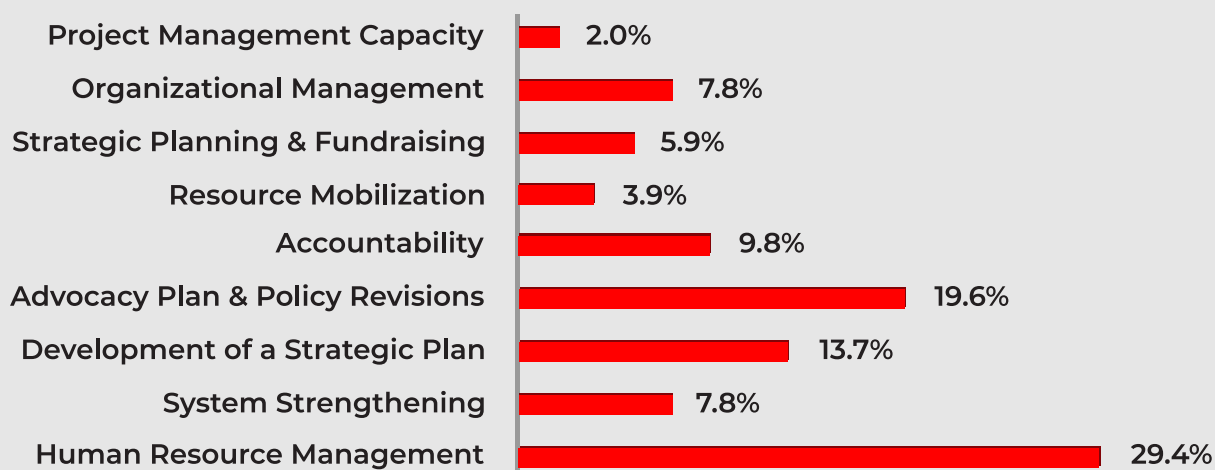
Reserves

The respondents were asked 'does the organization have any reserves/savings for a rainy day?'. Seven out of ten stated they do not have reserves, while three out of ten stated they have reserves/savings for rainy days (typically less than USD 2,000).

Capacity strengthening needs

We asked respondents 'what are the 5 main capacity strengthening needs of your organization?' Respondents said that human resource management is one of the main capacity-strengthening need for their organization (29.4%), followed by advocacy planning and policy revisions (19.6%), and development of a strategic plan (13.7%). On the other hand, only 2% of the respondents stated project management as a capacity strengthening need.

Capacity strengthening needs



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for grant makers

- Increase the amount of funding to sex workers organizations.
- Improve the quality of funding to sex workers organizations by providing funding that is long term, unrestricted, and that supports the mission of sex workers organizations.
- Current donors to the sex workers movement should see it as their urgent role to advocate to new donors to come on board.

Recommendations to ASWA and sex workers organizations

- Encourage models of shared services, for example on communication, social media maintenance, monitoring and evaluation, accounting, IT support, resources mobilization, among others, by sex workers organisations to reduce operating costs.
- Strengthen the capacity of sex workers organizations on their prioritized needs, including human resources management, advocacy, and strategic planning.
- Encourage and support sex worker organizations to form mission-based consortia and fundraise through such consortia.
- Advocate with grant makers on increased funding to sex workers organizations.
- Advocate with grant makers for increased quality funding to sex workers organizations, that is funding that is unrestricted, covers core costs, long term, and supports the mission of sex workers organisations.
- Advocate with national and regional governments to recognize the critical work of sex workers organizations and to fund them.

*For additional information or questions on this study, please contact:
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