



Sharing Life Stories and SWAA Academy Experiences

Namibia



1 Introduction

1.1 Rusten

When I first arrived In Kenya, Nairobi, I was overwhelmed by the Welcome i got. It feels like living away from home. I was responsible for managing my own time, budget, and workload. It can take a while to get used to, but it became incredibly empowering for me. I have learned how to juggle all my responsibilities and still make time for the things I enjoy.

Having to do everything for myself helped me to grow into a more confident person. I have learned to trust my own judgement and to stand up for myself when necessary. I also choose things that take me out of my comfort zone, both in my Sex work and personal life.

From ASWA Academy the lessons learned were enhancing the capacity building enhancing the most profound aspect in my Namibian society, after coming back from Nairobi,I have drastically enhancing with the other Sex workers lead organisation into stratal sing on the agenda , with the information gained i have managed to sensitized Pastors, Uniformed (Police) and the community at large that Sex work is just an Normal day to day work as others.

The take home what the academy did in my personal life is that - I can communicate profoundly with the Key population into accessing 'SRHR services' without any prejustice .There is less stigma towards me within the community. Activism has strengthen which as make me a strong activism .The work still continues!!!!

1.2 Ziggy

My post ASWA academy journey has been a rollercoaster but also has it's fruits as far as sex work advocacy is concerned.

I am now a founder and National co-ordinator for EquiMind Namibia, a psychosocial support organization for the Queer community,sex workers and marginalized women.

However i still do my sex work advocacy in partnership with NAMSWA, but would say that due to the trends in global movements the sex work movement in country is severely underfunded hence mirrors the lack of sex work organizing and visibility on a more mainstream and advanced level.

I also currently started as a Site Co-ordinator for Windhoek for the IBBS study 3 who's demographics are made up of female sex workers, transgender women and msm's.

I forever remain indebted towards the Academy for it's amazing and magnificent contribution towards advancing my graasroot work but also that of my leadership capabilities within the sex work movement.

Thankyou once more



1.3 Memoriah

1. Journey During the Academy:

The experience at the academy was transformative, offering invaluable knowledge and skills that enhanced our capacity as advocates for the rights of sex workers. The learning environment fostered both personal and professional growth, empowering us to represent our communities more effectively.

2. Challenges Faced Through and After the Academy:

While the academy provided strong foundations, challenges persisted both during and after the program. These included navigating social stigma, limited resources, and resistance from policymakers and the broader community. After the academy, implementing the advocacy work we trained for was often hindered by a lack of institutional support and limited funding.

3. Impact of the Academy on Our Lives and Advocacy Work:

The academy has had a profound impact on our advocacy work, providing us with the tools and confidence to elevate the voices of sex workers. It equipped us with strategic skills to challenge discriminatory policies, engage in policy dialogue, and drive awareness on sex worker rights within our communities.

4. Successes During and After the Academy:

Notable successes include heightened visibility of sex worker issues at national forums, increased collaboration with other human rights organizations, and the successful mobilization of resources to support grassroots advocacy. The skills acquired during the academy helped us to secure meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

5. How ASWA Can Support Namibia's Sex Workers Movement:

As a movement, we would like ASWA's support in amplifying our advocacy work through resource mobilization, technical assistance, and capacity-building programs. Support for network-building and exchange programs within the region would further strengthen our efforts, enabling us to learn from other countries and apply best practices.

6. Recommendations for ASWA:

We recommend that ASWA expand its training and mentorship programs to focus on deepening community knowledge and strengthening leadership within sex worker organizations. More specific support around fundraising, legal advocacy, and media engagement would greatly enhance our capacity to effect change. Furthermore, facilitating platforms for sex worker leaders to engage directly with policymakers would be a powerful way to advance the movement.

