

African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA)



African
Sex
Workers
Alliance

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2021 - 2024

2021 2022 2023 2024

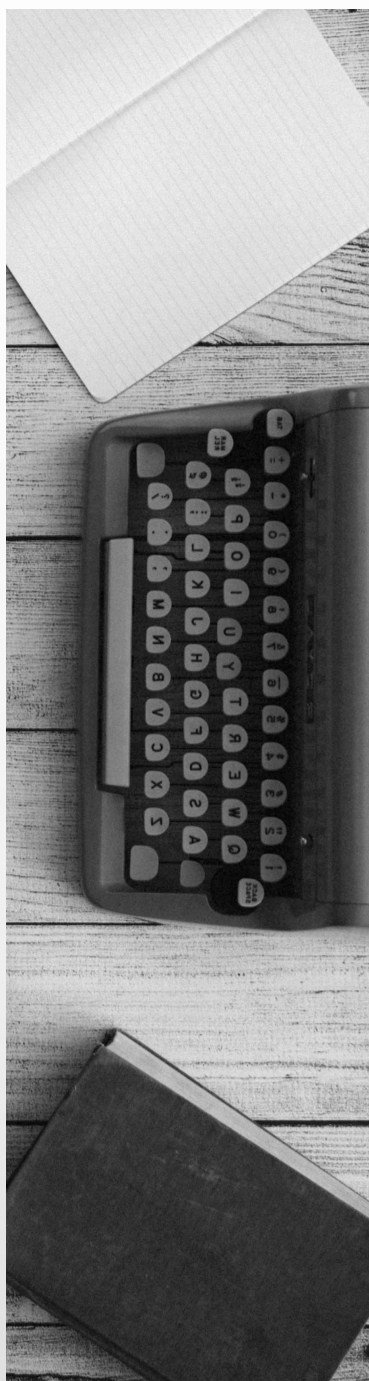
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TABLE OF CONTENT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM REGIONAL COORDINATOR	3
BACKGROUND AND OPERATIONAL CONTEXT	5
DEVELOPING THIS STRATEGIC PLAN.	6
WHAT ARE WE BUILDING ON?	6
THEORY OF CHANGE	10
OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES	12
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	13
STRATEGIC GOAL	13
Strategic Objective 1	13
Strategic Objective 2	13
Strategic Objective 3	13
Strategic Objective 4	14
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING	18
MEL MECHANISMS	18
RESOURCING THE STRATEGY:14	19
RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS STRATEGY	20
COORDINATING MECHANISM (SECRETARIAT) STRUCTURE	21



Executive Summary from the REGIONAL COORDINATOR



Message from the **Regional Coordinator**

It is with great honour and pleasure to present the African Sex Workers Alliance (ASWA) third and the most ambitious to date Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024. This is truly a milestone moment for ASWA as we celebrate over 10 years of activism, movement building and creating voice for sex workers across Africa. The 10 years have seen a nascent sex worker movement grow in leaps and bounds with new sex worker organising in even the most difficult places on the continent.

As a Pan African sex worker alliance, ASWA has made great milestones worth celebrating during this journey. ASWA's flagship program, the Sex Worker Academy Africa (SWAA), a capacity building initiative has trained over 500 sex workers from 33 African countries, ensuring that sex worker activists are equipped to challenge the endemic stigma, discrimination and societal exclusion experienced across the continent. The Academy has enabled the formation and strengthening of national alliances and networks. It has greatly contributed to the growth and development of the sex worker movement across Africa including the formation of national movements by SWAA alumni across Africa in countries for example Tanzania, Nigeria, Malawi, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Guinea, The Gambia, Eswatini and many others.

COVID-19 has changed pushed and tested the resilience of individual sex workers and organisations. The pandemics' impact on sex workers has been devastating on the social and economic lived realities of sex workers across the continent. As a response to this unprecedented moment, ASWA conducted a survey to assess the impact of COVID -19's among sex workers on the continent. From the report ASWA was able to re-program its work and sub-grant support to national networks in 24 countries to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on sex workers. Together with critical partners including UNAIDS, ASWA continues to strategize effective responses and to mitigate the effects of COVID 19 among sex workers across Africa. ASWA continues to ensure that the resilience of sex workers from across the continent is assured and supported.

ASWA continued to advocate for the decriminalisation of sex workers and sex work. ASWA continues to critique the trafficking narrative that conflates representations of sex work, migration and mobility. Due to the continued high levels of stigma and discrimination, ASWA advocates for universal access to health services, including primary health care, HIV care and treatment and other sexual health reproductive services.

ASWA is grateful for the continued support and guidance of the sex worker-led organisations and networks from across the continent. The ASWA board that provides strategic guidance to the organisation and the formidable staff, volunteers, and regional coordinators who are the engine that keeps the institution running.

As I mark my third year as the Regional Coordinator of ASWA, I look back at how far as an organisation and movement we have come from in the fight for recognition of sex work as work. I am constantly humbled by the support I have received, the strides we have made in regional and global advocacy. Together we shall soldier on.

Grace Kamau

ASWA - Regional Coordinator



Background and Operational Context

The *African Sex Worker Alliance (ASWA)* is a Pan African Alliance of sex worker led groups that exist to strengthen their voices, to empower and to advocate for and advance the health and human rights of female, male and transgender sex workers including those living with HIV and using drugs through networking, movement building and development of partnerships. ASWA was formed in 2009 with an initial membership drawn from 10 African countries. ASWA is a growing alliance of sex workers and sex worker partners seeking to contribute to social and economic justice for sex workers in Africa. Our vision is an empowered sex work industry where sex workers have equal access to human rights, social justice and health care in a dignified manner. Through this organising ASWA presently has members from 35 African countries.

ASWA's membership includes sex worker-led organisations and networks from across the African continent. ASWA works through regional structures that allows it to reach to sex worker organising in Francophone and Lusophone regions of the African continent. ASWA has a governing body comprising of sex worker leaders from across the continent. ASWA is a sex worker-led organisation with six of the seven board members being women representing four regions of the African continent. Additionally, ASWA has a Secretariat located in Nairobi, Kenya comprising of a management team focusing on finance, policy, communication and is also a sex worker led.

The criminalisation of sex work throughout Africa heightens African sex workers' vulnerability. To this end ASWA:

1

Opposes the criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work, and support its recognition as work

2

Critiques the trafficking paradigm that conflates representations of sex work, migration, and mobility

3

Advocates for universal access to health services, including primary health care, HIV care and treatment and other sexual reproductive health services

4

Speaks out about violence against sex workers, including violence from police, institutions, clients, and intimate partners, while challenging the stereotype that sex work is inherently gender-based violence

5

Opposes human rights abuses, including coercive programming, mandatory testing or registration, raids and forced rehabilitation

6

Challenges stigma, and discrimination against sex workers, their families, and partners, and others involved in sex work

7

Advocates for the economic empowerment, and social inclusion and social protection of sex workers in all spheres of life.

Developing this Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan 2021- 2024 is the result of extensive consultation among ASWA members, as well as other stakeholders. This included ASWA founding members, former and present board members, former and present staff, and regional coordinators. The process also included extensive engagement with the regional sex worker groups in Central, East, West and Southern Africa including separate engagements with Francophone and Lusophone ASWA members. ASWA partners and donors also participated with this process. The consultation was led by an independent consultant. As part of this process, an extensive review and evaluation of the ASWA previous plan 2017 - 2020 was conducted.

What are we building on?

ASWA has been implementing the 2017- 2020 strategic plan. The strategic plan employed 4 strategic pillars

- i) Red Umbrella,
- ii) Spear and Shield,
- iii) Balancing the Scales &
- iv) Look and Learn.

Overall, there has been tremendous growth of ASWA from a nascent movement to one that boasts representations, brand visibility and high-level advocacy.

A reflection of the 2017 - 2020 implementation period reveal some notable changes which include:

- 1 Successful transition within the board and Secretariat.
- 2 Realignment of roles at the Secretariat and staff (sub-regional) working remotely in various countries.
- 3 Increased regional membership and strategic actors.
- 4 Legal landscape in the continent pressurized to accommodate more calls for decriminalisation.
- 5 Ability to navigate and support activities within the context of dwindling donor funds for the sector and changing priorities.
- 6 Impact of COVID19 on organizing and on sex work as work - ability to mobilize rapid response funds for member organisations

There were also clear achievements of work conducted during the 2017 - 2020 period. The table below provides some of the key achievements and inroads ASWA has made in the previous strategic period and which this 2021 - 2024 strategy is building on:

STRATEGIC PILLAR	ACHIEVEMENT
<p style="text-align: center;">Red Umbrella</p> <p>"to advocate and ensure the voices of African sex workers are heard and considered in African spaces that create laws and policies"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth in membership: 14 New entrants in Francophone West Africa and 2 Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region- Egypt Morocco 2. Advocacy for decriminalisation of sex work including declassifying of sex work from petty offences statutes (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Malawi) 3. High level advocacy and representation of sex workers issues at various policy spaces including the UN, UNFPA, ICASA, African Union, Global Fund etc.
<p style="text-align: center;">Spear and Shield</p> <p>"to strengthen the skills and knowledge of the African sex workers movement"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducted SWAA (Sex Workers Academy for Africa) since 2014 reaching over 429 sex workers from over 33 African countries (120 since 2017). 2. The formation of 54 sex worker led organisations by SWAA Alumni trained between 2017-2020 3. Capacity building to National Networks (South Sudan, Tanzania among others) 4. Sex workers influencing spaces such as their in-country Coordinating Mechanism (CCMs) for the Global Fund
<p style="text-align: center;">Balancing and scales</p> <p>"to strengthen our organisational and operations structures to ensure that ASWA is able to deliver on its ambitious strategic plan"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of membership to include MENA and increased membership from French West Africa region. 2. Since 2018 the Secretariat has been staffed and operational 3. Mechanism for member involvement include communication through database listserv, awarding of approval certification as members of ASWA, annual review of membership status, regular member reports, the ASWA secretariat sends out a membership newsletter quarterly.
<p style="text-align: center;">Look and Learn</p> <p>"to strengthen a culture and structure of a continuous learning within ASWA"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ASWA staff were involved in the development of annual workplans and budget in 2017, 2018 and 2019 which was approved by the interim board. 2. ASWA brought the different regional groups together via online calls during the COVID 19 pandemic and conferencing with translators in place - Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone – with one voice to see how best to respond to the crisis and build capacity of sex workers to respond. In the end ASWA was able to sub grant 24 countries and recommend sex worker organisations for donor funding. 3. A Monitoring and Evaluation strategy was developed to support the implementation of the 2017-2020 strategy. 4. Staff cohesion through team building exercise and regular staff meetings. 5. Adoption of various technologies to ease communication and to publicize its work.

The evaluation of the 2017- 2020 revealed some key tensions that have emerged as part of the growth of the movement across the continent and emergent strains as part of organisational growth and development. Those under consideration and which influence the philosophy for the 2021 – 2024 strategic plan include:

1

Organising as a Pan African membership organisation and emergence of national and regional membership platforms – re-evaluate the ASWA role/relevance

2

Growth, diversification and expansion of ASWA network in the face of national and regional networks growth

3

ASWA organisational growth versus revenue/resource needs:

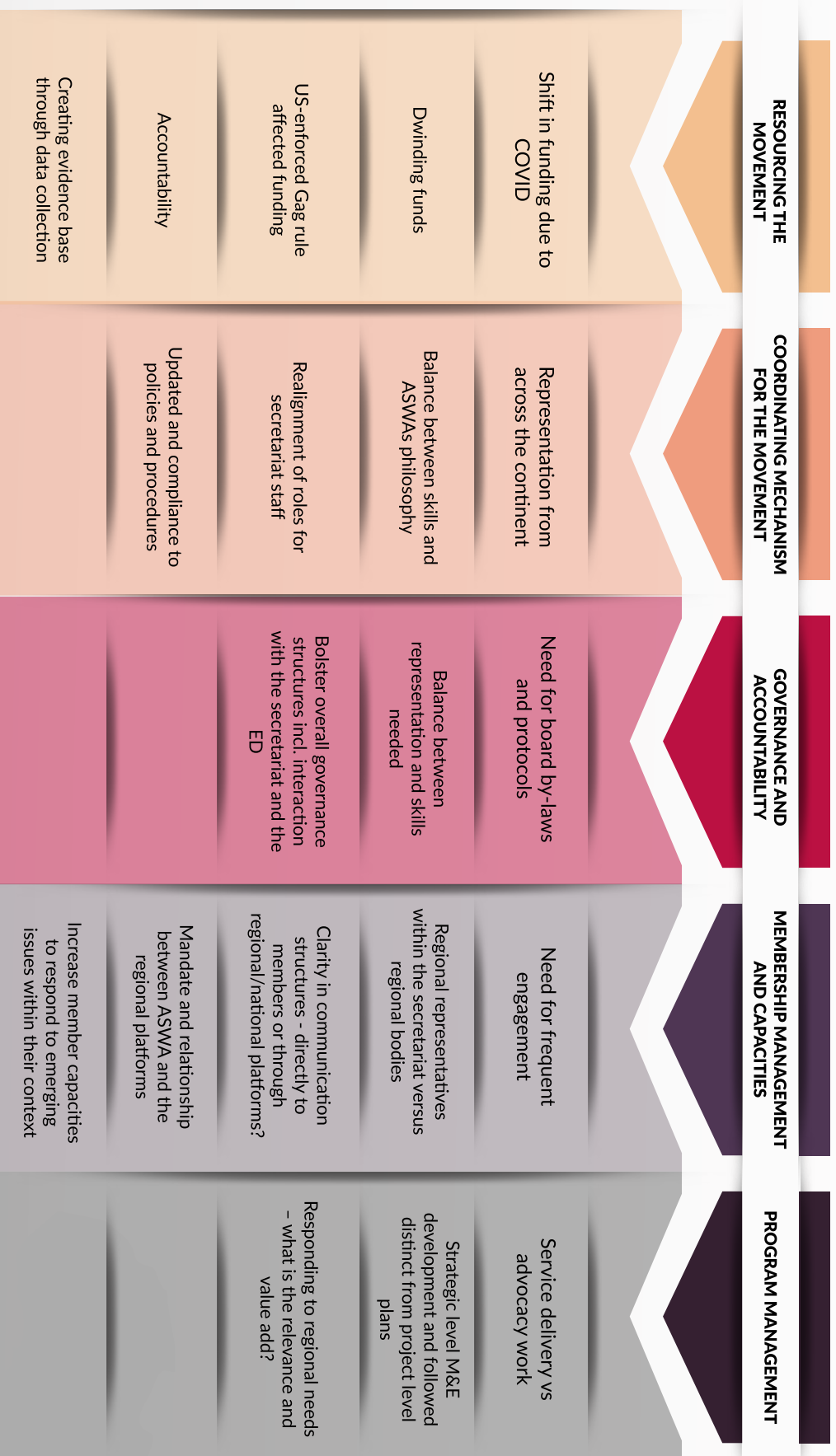
- a. Building technical skills and capacity needed and maintaining SW-led identity
- b. Ability to develop context specific approaches, tools and tactics versus regional needs e.g. West Africa anti prostitution laws or MENA regional barriers

4

Program sustainability:

- a. Project based and donor dependent
- b. Direct program delivery or high level advocacy work?
- c. The political agenda – evolution of purpose & relevance against regional platforms

Key Considerations in the development of this strategic plan are:



The development of the 2021 - 2024 Strategic Plan paid attention to the tensions and recommendations made in the evaluation report and combined these with feedback received from the membership. Moving forward ASWA has a vast range of membership, a growing alumnus of its flagship project the Sex Worker Academy Africa (SWAA), emerging context specific challenges, obstacles and barriers and thus, there will be need to focus on movement building, abilities for self-representation, agitation and agency and strengthening the coordinating and accountability mechanisms. These considerations are reflective of ASWA's progress along an institutional development continuum as is the nature of movement building.

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change works towards our vision of a world free of stigma and discrimination where sex work is recognised and protected. Impacts outlined in the process are preconditions that need to be achieved to allow for change that leads into our vision of transformation.

The main actors In ASWAs ToC are:

- i Individual sex workers
- ii Sex worker groups/community organisations
- iii Sex worker networks
- iv Allied civil society groups &
- v The ASWA Secretariat.

PROBLEMS

Criminalisation and its Impact | Police brutality and social violence | Stigma and discrimination | Poor funding opportunities | Systemic exclusion of grassroots and emerging sex worker leaders | Punitive laws and policies | COVID-19 pandemic | Sexual violence including GBV | Limited sex work programming & sustainability | Inadequate social planning/protection mechanisms | Limited to no legal service provision | Weak support systems | Low capacity of national networks

INPUTS

Training, mentorship, coaching, learning platforms | Peer education | Mapping/tracing of young SW activists | Bringing livelihood skills to scale | Security and safety training | Link to service delivery points | Mental well-being & Psychosocial support | Group level training organisational/leadership training | Learning & exchange visits | Sub-granting | Foster partnerships& allyship with groups with same interest | Offer and link sex workers with training and learning opportunities | Monitor emerging and prevailing discourse and narratives on matters that affect sex workers | Establish and strengthen systems, mechanisms and structures for sex workers to participate in the movement decision making processes

STRATEGY 1

enhance the skills, abilities, and knowledge of individual sex workers to allow them to be change agents at local, regional, and continental level

STRATEGY 2

enhance the effectiveness of sex worker groups/organizing structures and institutions that are responsive to the lived realities of sex workers

STRATEGY 3

foster and nurture linkages between regional sex worker networks to proactively advocate for and promote the dignity and rights of sex workers in Africa and globally.

STRATEGY 4

to strengthen the capacity for an adaptive and responsive coordinating mechanism for the realization of sex worker rights in Africa

OUTPUT 1

Outcome 1.1: a diverse pool of strong/resilient sex worker activists built

OUTPUT 2

Outcome 2.1: robust and resourced network of sex worker-led organizing structures/organisations
Outcome 2.2: context specific policy and program changes realized by sex workers: sex-worker led platforms

OUTPUT 3

Outcome 3.1: engagement and support mechanisms with regional SW organisations established
Outcome 3.2: collaboration, solidarity building with other movements
Outcome 3.3: Increased visibility of sex workers issues in Africa

OUTPUT 4

Outcome 4.1: consolidated, strengthened, and effective accountability, oversight, and governance movement structures in place
Outcome 4.2: strengthened and expanded coordinating mechanism (the Secretariats) capacities for effective and efficient movement management
Outcome 4.3: Evidence based documentation and research within a robust knowledge production system in place
Outcome 4.4: sustainable resource generation and mobilisation streams established

IMPACT

- Critical mass of sex workers taking action to improve the lives of sex workers
- A sex worker led movement with a shared agenda & understanding of the situation of SW
- A Pan African movement of sex workers influencing stakeholders, allies and decision makers to enact change in support of sex workers
- A strong, resilient sex-worker led continental movement that is transformative and responsive to the lived realities of all sex workers in Africa

Our Vision

A world free of stigma and discrimination where sex work is recognised and protected as work

Our Mission

ASWA is a Pan- African network of sex worker-led groups that amplifies the voices of sex workers, raises visibility and advocates for the human dignity of diverse community of sex workers working and living in Africa.

Our Principles & Values

ASWA's work is guided by these six core values:

1

Accountability and Transparency: We are accountable to our members and to our partners, and are always professional, committed and transparent in our work

2

Equality and Justice: We treat all our members equally and ensure that all our members are treated fairly and justly.

3

Voice and Agency: We ensure that our members have voice and agency, and they all are able to inform and guide ASWA's activities.

4

Respect: We respect all sex workers and understand respect as critical in building a strong and diverse community of African sex workers.

5

Diversity and Inclusion: Working alongside other movements that agitate/aim to disrupt oppression

6

Solidarity: We are a united community of diverse sex workers living and working in Africa.



Strategic Framework

STRATEGIC GOAL:

"A strong, resilient and visible sex-worker led continental movement that is transformative and responsive to the lived realities of All Sex Workers In Africa"

Strategic Objective 1:

To enhance the skills, abilities, and knowledge of individual sex workers to allow them to be change agents at local, regional, and continental level.

Outcome 1.1:

A diverse pool of 'strong/resilient' sex worker activists built

Strategic Objective 2:

To enhance the effectiveness of sex worker groups/organizing structures and institutions that are responsive to the lived realities of sex workers.

Outcome 2.1 :

Robust and resourced network of sex worker- led organizing structures/organisations

Outcome 2.2 :

Context specific policy and program changes realized by sex workers; sex-worker led platforms

Strategic Objective 3:

To foster and nurture linkages between regional sex worker networks to proactively advocate for and promote the dignity and rights of sex workers in Africa and globally.

Outcome 3.1 :

Engagement and support mechanisms with regional SW organisations established

Outcome 3.2 :

Collaboration, solidarity building with other movements

Outcome 3.2 :

Increased visibility of sex workers issues in Africa

²Female, male, trans and gender non-conforming sex workers across the African continent; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and queer sex workers, sex workers who use drugs, sex workers living with HIV, rural and urban sex workers, migrants and displaced people.

Strategic Objective 4:

To strengthen the capacity for an adaptive and responsive coordinating mechanism for the realisation of sex worker rights in Africa

Outcome 4.1 :	<i>Consolidated, strengthened, and effective accountability, oversight, and governance movement structures in place</i>
Outcome 4.2 :	<i>Strengthened and expanded coordinating mechanism (the Secretariats) capacities for effective and efficient movement management</i>
Outcome 4.3 :	<i>Evidence based documentation and research within a robust knowledge production system in place</i>
Outcome 4.4 :	<i>Sustainable resource generation and mobilisation streams established</i>

Key Priority Interventions

GOAL:

"A strong, resilient and visible sex-worker led continental movement that is transformative and responsive to the lived realities of All Sex Workers In Africa"

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes	Interventions/Activities
<p>Strategic Objective I:</p> <p>To enhance the skills, abilities, and knowledge of individual sex workers to allow them to be change agents at local, regional, and continental level.</p>	<p>Outcome 1.1</p> <p>A pool of strong/resilient sex worker diverse leaders that is able to articulate the needs of African sex workers in all their diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer based mentorship and individual coaching of emerging activists Conduct SWAA at continental and regional levels Leadership development and support for young/upcoming activists Establish and support structures/mechanisms for psychosocial support and mental health for members Digital literacy among members through training and direct support Establish a robust SWAA Alumni to support with mentorship and coaching
<p>Strategic Objective II:</p> <p>Strategic Objective II: To enhance the capacity and effectiveness of sex worker informal and formal groups, organisations and networks that are accountable and responsive to the lived realities of sex workers in Africa.</p>	<p>Outcome 2.1</p> <p>Robust and resourced network of sex worker- led organisations and networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an annual sex workers conference/symposium Learning networking and exchange visits among SW-led organisations Sub-granting to SW - led organisations and members Continued education and skills transfer among members of sex worker organisations and groups Technical support for member organisations across the organisation development spectrum
	<p>Outcome 2.2</p> <p>Rights-affirming policy and program changes realised by sex worker-led groups, organisations and networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on issues affecting sex workers that is context specific Agitate for presence on decision making tables at country and regional levels Influence decisions especially on access and service delivery for sex workers Development of an advocacy strategy to challenge the legal policies around sex workers Agitation for representation and action at national and regional sector-specific programs/policies Participation in region specific and content specific interest/working groups Initiatives aimed at tackling stigma, discrimination affecting sex workers

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes	Interventions/Activities
<p>Strategic Objective III:</p> <p>To foster and nurture learning and linkages between sex worker-led organisations and networks across Africa to proactively advocate at national, regional and global level for the dignity and human rights of sex workers in Africa</p>	<p>Outcome 3.1</p> <p>Strong sub-regional sex worker-led networks are engaged with and supported by ASWA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust building and regular consultation • Adaptive capacities for joint advocacy and fundraising • Support establishment of regional platforms/hubs where none exist
	<p>Outcome 3.2</p> <p>Other social justice movements collaborate and stand in solidarity with the sex worker rights movement in Africa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an advocacy strategy to challenge the legal policies around sex workers • Agitation for representation and action at national and regional sector-specific programs/policies • Participation in region specific and content specific interest/working groups • Initiatives aimed at tackling stigma, discrimination affecting sex workers
	<p>Outcome 3.3</p> <p>Increased visibility and support for sex workers rights in Africa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge strategic partnerships with other movements (labour rights, human rights, UHC movements, SDG task forces) • Education and awareness raising to strategic allies and partners • Collaboration with media on issues affecting Sws • Use of social media to amplify voices, experiences and lived realities of Sws • Dissemination and distribution of context and sector specific analysis and information

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes	Interventions/Activities
<p>Strategic Objective IV:</p> <p>To foster and nurture learning and linkages between sex worker-led organisations and networks across Africa to proactively advocate at national, regional and global level for the dignity and human rights of sex workers in Africa</p>	<p>Outcome 4.1</p> <p>Consolidated, effective and transparent accountability, oversight, and governance policies, procedures and structures are in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update representation protocols within the board (election processes, membership policies) • Establish/revise board management and engagement manuals and by laws • Review induction and orientation systems for board members
	<p>Outcome 4.2</p> <p>Strengthened and expanded communication and coordinating mechanisms between national members, sub-regional platforms and ASWA Secretariat support effective and sustainable movement building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and adaption of technology to ease management processes • Review and updating of management manuals • Development and deployment of a professional improvement program for human resources • Regular skills - audit and implementation of recommendations to ensure sufficient human resources • Deploy structures to ensure efficient management of the movement
	<p>Outcome 4.3</p> <p>Sex worker-led monitoring and research provide evidence-based documentation of the lived realities of sex workers in Africa within a robust knowledge production and management system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and strengthen community and evidence-based research • Strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities • Participatory development of vibrant monitoring, evaluation and learning framework and system • Regular updating and training on the frameworks and tools • Production of concise studies, analysis and reports
	<p>Outcome 4.4</p> <p>Sustainable resource generation and mobilisation streams established</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish systems for fundraising through a fundraising strategy • Co-create with members, national and regional platforms innovative revenue generation streams • Strengthen capacity of coordinating mechanism to provide sub-grants • Establishment 'sex-workers bank' /savings society



Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

ASWA will develop a comprehensive, Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning Framework to support quality, timely, and accurate implementation progress reports. The framework will guide collection, analysis, use, and dissemination of information and informed decision-making.

Implementing the M&E Framework will result in the following:

- i Increased capacity and accountability
- ii Timely collection, management, and analysis of quality implementation data
- iii Sound decision-making and program improvement, annual work planning.
- iv Evidence-driven advocacy at national, regional, continental and global levels.
- v Effective, systematic and strategic use of the gathered knowledge and expertise to inform movement building

MEL Mechanisms

The ASWA Monitoring, Evaluations and Learning framework outlines a number of mechanisms through which progress in this Strategic Plan's implementation will be measured, and these include:

- a Semi-Annual Review: This will provide a summary of ASWA's work and partnerships semi-annual progress and financial reports and remedial action to ensure achievement of yearly targets set out in the annual plan.
- b Annual Program Planning and Reviews: Each implementation year, during the annual sex workers conference, a participatory decentralized / country and regional level reviews will be held. The review will assess progress against the strategic plan results framework, revisit the operational plan and address implementation challenges and identify priorities for the coming year.
- c Mid-term Strategy Review: ASWA will schedule a mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan to examine accomplishments over the first two years. It will facilitate a review of the strategies and indicators and make evidence-based adjustments to the plan, where applicable.
- d End-term Strategy Review: A comprehensive evaluation will be conducted at the end of the life of this Strategic Plan to determine the overall impacts and outcomes against set goals and results. This evaluation will inform priorities and content of the next strategic plan.
- e Project Specific Reporting, Review Meetings: In addition to the reviews, ASWA will conduct project specific evaluations, quarterly reporting and review meetings. To the extent possible ASWA will ensure harmony between its M&E framework and other tools especially donor specific tools.

Resourcing the Strategy

Successful implementation of this Strategic Plan requires sufficient financial resources. ASWA has over time relied on donor funding. For ASWA to realise the objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan, and with learning wrought by COVID 19, there will be need to improve on resource mobilisation at all levels.

A resource mobilisation and revenue generation plan shall be developed that will further interrogate key areas including:

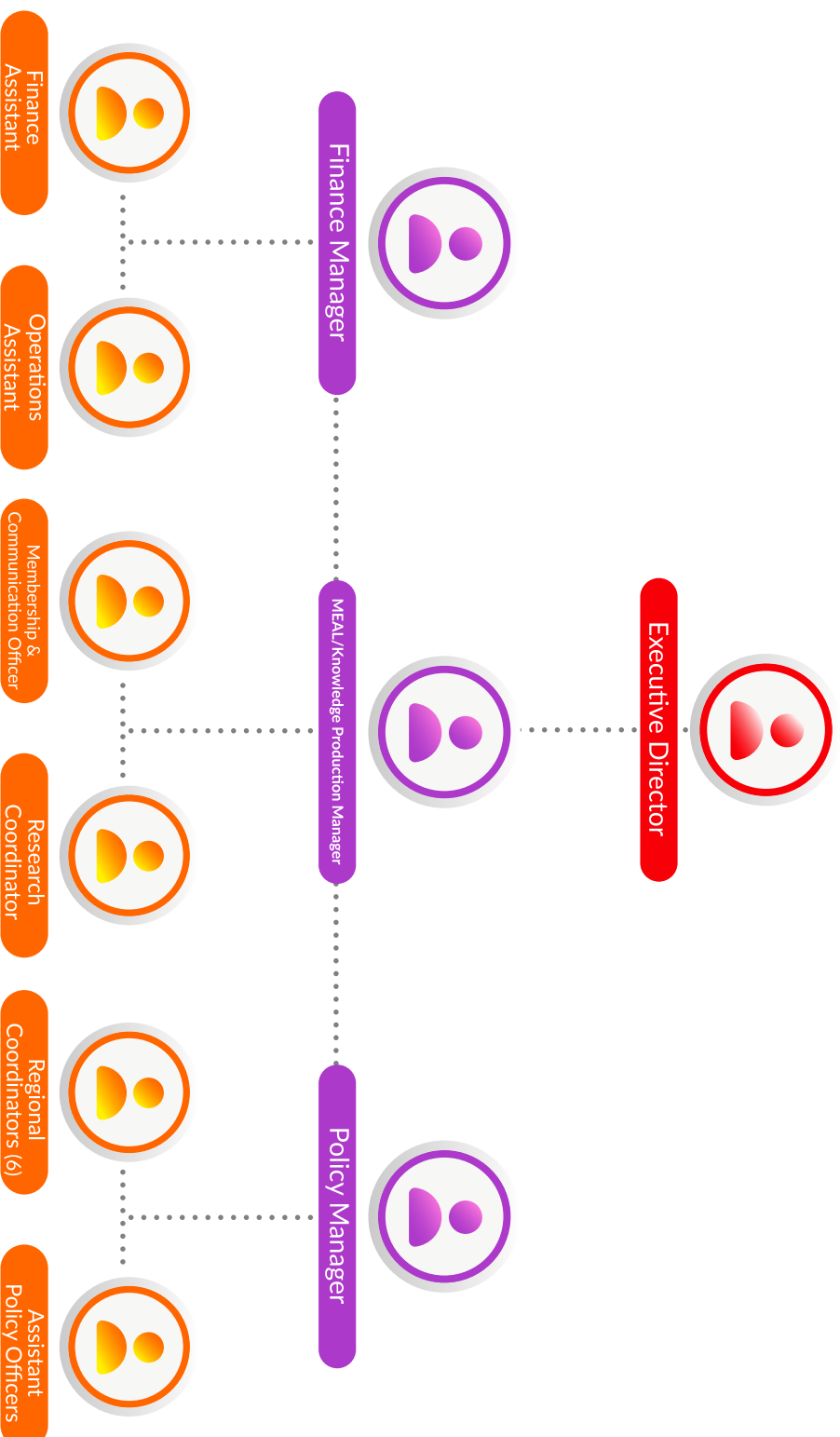
- 1 The need to include non-monetary resourcing especially on areas of movement building, mentorship and coaching.
- 2 Exploring SWAA alumni support for joint fundraising efforts that features livelihoods improvements at grass roots level.
- 3 Revenue generation through livelihoods improvement ventures, collective savings of members.
- 4 Institutional fundraising efforts that seeks endowment funding and investment for the sustainability of the movement and its constituent initiatives



Risks and Assumptions of this Strategy

Risk and Assumptions	Mitigation Mechanisms
Hostile and unwelcoming environment for sex workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link with local and International human rights organisations to continuously advance human rights. • Develop a comprehensive safety and security policy and plan for staff, members and human rights defenders (partners), including exercising caution in its outreach.
Increasingly regressive social and religious views on sex worker issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely work with allies and empower them to be advocates for change
Constricting legal frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for repeal of discriminatory laws and policies • Carry out an in-depth human rights audit of laws and policies for reform. • Join and actively participate in campaigns or coalitions against repressive and draconian laws
Institutional safety, security and protection as well as individual safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with security and develop a comprehensive safety and security policy and plan for staff, members and human rights defenders and partners

Coordinating Mechanism (Secretariat) Structure







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