



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland

## **Resolution on Sex Work (RES002)**

TENI supports the human rights of all sex workers and acknowledges that trans sex workers are valued members of the trans community. Trans sex workers have played a key role in the struggle for LGBT equality, including active participation and leadership in the Stonewall Rebellion in New York in 1969 which spearheaded the LGBT rights movement.

Trans people enter the sex industry for a variety of reasons, most commonly because they live in a transphobic social climate and face structural barriers to access education and employment, thus they have limited economic opportunities.<sup>1</sup> TENI supports trans people within the sex industry and will promote the self-determination of trans people to make decisions about their bodies and work in a free, safe and consensual environment. TENI will work with current and former sex workers without judgement.

### **Violence Against Trans Sex Workers**

TGEU's Trans Murder Monitoring Project documented 1,731 reported killings of gender-variant and trans people in 62 countries between 2008-2014. **Of those whose profession was known, 65% were sex workers.**<sup>2</sup> This suggests that trans sex workers are particularly targeted for violence. In Ireland, trans sex workers are a marginalised and invisible population. Despite the dearth of research, anecdotal evidence suggests that trans sex workers face high levels of violence, discrimination and stigma as a result of their gender identity, gender expression as well as their involvement in the sex industry. This may be further compounded by race, ethnic status, nationality and class.

### **Human Rights of Sex Workers**

Various international organisations such as UNAIDS, WHO and Amnesty International have highlighted that laws that prohibit consenting adults to buy or sell sex negatively impact trans sex workers' wellbeing and access to health and social services. In contrast, the decriminalisation of sex work promotes health and human rights for sex workers by reducing police violence and abuse, increasing access to police protection and justice, safe working conditions and health services.

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<sup>1</sup> NSWP Briefing Paper: The Needs and Rights of Trans Sex Workers. Available at: <http://www.nswp.org/resource/briefing-paper-the-needs-and-rights-trans-sex-workers>

<sup>2</sup> Trans Murder Monitoring Project: [http://www.transrespect-transphobia.org/en\\_US/tvt-project/tmm-results/idahot-2015.htm](http://www.transrespect-transphobia.org/en_US/tvt-project/tmm-results/idahot-2015.htm)

## **Position of TENI**

TENI takes the position that as an organisation we will:

- Promote the health, safety and human rights of trans sex workers and work to end the violence and human rights violations experienced by this segment of our community.
- Consult with trans sex workers on their needs and experiences and work to promote these voices in relevant activities, research, policy and legislation.
- Support the self-determination, physical autonomy and bodily integrity of trans sex workers.
- Empower trans sex workers to be more visible within the trans community and raise awareness within the trans community on the human rights issues that trans sex workers face.
- Work towards countering stigma and discrimination against sex workers.
- Support and promote the recognition of sex work as a legitimate form of work.
- Acknowledge that trans sex workers may experience multiple forms of oppression not limited to transphobia, transmisogyny, homophobia, whorephobia, sexism, xenophobia, racism and classism.
- Support a human rights and harm reduction approach to policy and laws regarding sex work, including support for the decriminalisation of sex work.
- Work in solidarity with sex workers rights' organisations and human rights organisations working to promote sex workers' rights.

## **Resolution passed by TENI Board**

**05/02/2016**