

## STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT OF SINGAPORE PROGRAMME REPORT

### Key achievements in 2013:

2013 proved to be a very eventful year. We were joined by a new part-time staff, Sonia, who is a trans sex worker. She organized events, attended capacity-building workshops, and initiated a client survey. She left us after 9 months to pursue her diploma in make-up artistry which was sponsored by Project X.

In April 2013, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Health Promotion Board (HPB). We were funded for our outreach activities and also to develop informational pamphlets for sex workers.

Here is a list of the highlights from 2013:

#### **Community Development**

- *2 March:* Together with Sonia and in collaboration with the Free Community Church of Singapore, we organized a pageant and buffet lunch to commemorate the International Sex Workers' Rights Day. Project X gave a presentation on human rights, and Action for AIDS gave a presentation on their services.



*TOP from left to right:* Rev Yap from the Free Community Church giving a sermon about sex workers and the bible; Vanessa Ho from Project X talking about "Your Rights and Responsibilities"; Terry Lim from Action for AIDS talking about safer sex practices.

*BOTTOM from left to right:* Plus Point, a dance group started by a former sex worker; pageant contestants; local drag queen performance troupe.



- *8 to 12 December:* We hosted Lily and Nong from Empower Foundation Thailand to understand the issues in Singapore and also to allow for a deeper exchange between the two countries. Lily and Nong ended their study trip by cooking a feast of Thai food for local sex workers.

## Capacity-building

- *29 March to 4 April:* Vanessa and Sonia went to a Sex Workers of ASEAN (SWASEAN) training session with Empower Foundation in Thailand. Together with sex workers from the 10 countries of ASEAN (excluding Brunei but including Timor Leste), we were trained in the structure of ASEAN and how sex workers are often left out in ASEAN policies. We presented Dhivithra's—a trans sex worker from Singapore—artwork at the collective exhibition at Bangkok Cultural Centre.



*From left to right:* UNDP opening the sex worker art exhibition at the Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre; Training session by UN agencies on best practices of HIV prevention; Sonia receiving a certificate of participation from Empower Foundation.

- *17 to 22 November:* [Brought Dhivithra and Priyanka to the International Congress on AIDS Asia Pacific \(ICAAP11\)](#) to expose them to the regional environment and to learn more about the movement to end HIV and AIDS.

## Human Rights Education and Documentation

- September: Engaged with NUS Pro Bono law society to develop a pamphlet on your rights and responsibilities.
- December: Compiled human rights report for 2013 with help from our volunteer Faith.
- Successfully referred 2 sex workers to the law society pro bono services and had their penalties reduced significantly.
- Submitted 3 letters of allegation to Special Rapporteur (a United Nations mechanism to promote and protect human rights). We submitted two in August regarding the discrimination against trans women committed by Clarke Quay management, and one in October regarding the HIV travel ban.

## Public Education and Advocacy

- 24<sup>th</sup> April: Met with US Embassy lunch to raise awareness about the issues.
- 29<sup>th</sup> June: Pink Dot; collaborated with acclaimed Malaysian transgender artist, Shieko Reto to develop a flyer on how to be supportive towards transgender people.
- Was featured in Sayoni's Come Out Come Home campaign
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013: Was part of the [We Can! Arts Festival](#) organized by AWARE to share stories of sex workers. The story of Mel—a former Singaporean sex worker—was then picked up by the People of Singapore and was eventually featured in the [Straits Times](#) and [The New Paper](#).
- 4<sup>th</sup> January 2014: We were featured at the Freedom Film Festival as “Organization to Watch”, and we also gave a presentation on the issues faced by trans sex workers in Singapore.