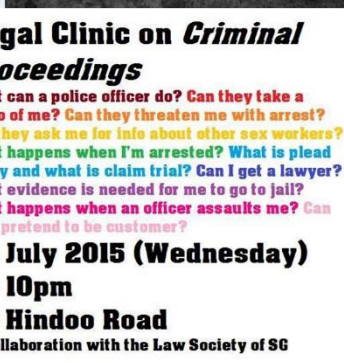
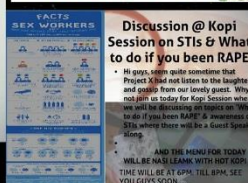
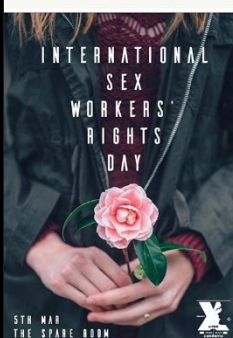
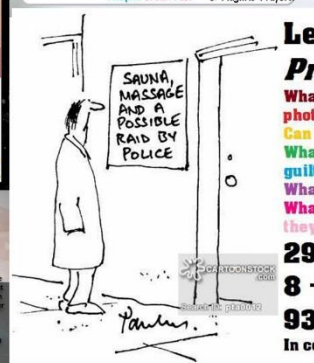
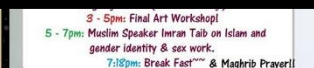
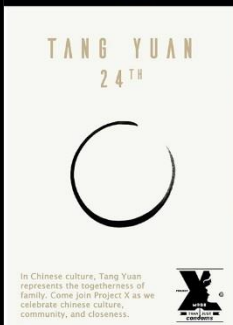
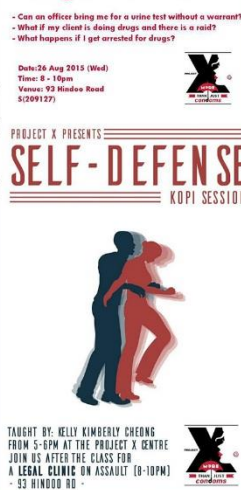
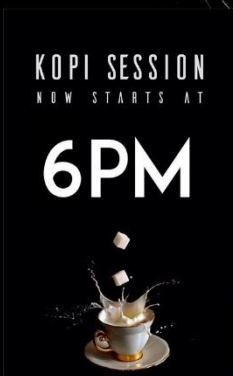


# Project X

(a program by  
Sunshine Initiative  
Singapore)

# Annual Report 2015



## Contents

<b>Summary: A Quick Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Programme Report .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Direct Services .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Public Education .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Advocacy .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Moving Forward .....</b>	<b>9</b>

*Project X is governed by the Sunshine Initiative (Singapore) which is a registered society in Singapore. Our Unique Entity Number (UEN) is T14SS0189D. Project X was established in 2008 and our vision is a fair and safe sex industry for everyone involved and a society that respects sex workers, their clients, partners, and families.*



# Sunshine Initiative (Singapore)

## Summary: A Quick Overview

- **31,708** condoms distributed in over **100** outreach sessions
- **161** participated in **36** Kopi Sessions
- **110** participated in **12** Legal Workshops
- **49** participated in art workshops
- **72** Abuser Alert reports filed
- **237** hours of staff training



- Published a report with the Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic on **abuses against Transgender Sex Workers**
- Began a research project on **gender recognition laws** in Singapore
- Participated in the **UPR** with other civil society groups.

- **934** people reached over **35** talks and events
- **21,241** sessions on our website
- **10,100** views on our Ah Boys to Bullies Campaign
- **20,250** views on our Champions of the Year Campaign



## Programme Report

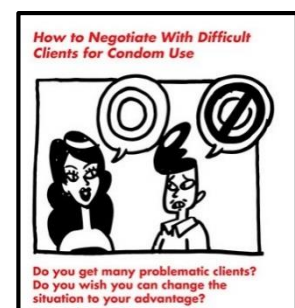
There are three main areas to our work—the provision of direct services to fulfil the immediate needs of sex workers, public education to change society's hearts and minds, and advocacy for long term policy and legislative changes. These three areas are interconnected and mutually reinforcing: without direct services, the community's immediate needs and challenges would not be addressed. In turn, without advocacy, we will not be able to permanently address the needs of sex workers. Public education similarly helps to expand society's mind-sets, reducing stigma and discrimination and contributing towards lasting change.

### Direct Services



*Clockwise from top left: Iftar Kopi Session; Art Workshop; Financial Literacy Training; Yoga.*

The key aspect of our work is outreach to the community in order to conduct our safer sex programmes. This involves the distribution of condoms, lubricants and wet tissues but also brochures on sexually transmitted infections (STI) and how to negotiate condoms with clients. However, through our experience, many sex workers remain vulnerable to STI as well as various forms of abuse. As such, we spearheaded our Kopi Session, Healing with Yoga, and Legal Workshop programmes in 2015 with the blessing of new funding.



In 2015, we finally have a centre and an office that we could use to conduct community events. Every Wednesday, our centre is open from 5 – 11pm for *kopi sessions*, which are informal gatherings where community members bond over food. Sex workers can come by to get their condoms or to

talk to any of our team members if they need someone to talk about their issues which may or may not be about sex work. We also organize regular talks and workshops during these sessions in order to educate and empower the sex workers. This is where sex workers can call a safe place to come and share their knowledge and experiences or to seek help.

*April:*

- **Financial Literacy** talk titled “Save with a Strategy”. The talk covered effective saving strategies, CPF, as well as investment.
- Induction and introductions for lawyers involved in **Project Street Smart** – a project spearheaded by Law Society’s Pro Bono Services Office (PBSO) to educate sex workers about their rights and responsibilities.

*May:*

- Legal workshop on **harassment and rape** conducted by PBSO.

*June:*

- Pastor Miak from the Free Community Church gave a talk on “**Sex work and the Bible**” for sex workers who have difficulty reconciling their faith and their work.
- A series of **art workshops** were conducted by social work students for the sex workers.
- Legal workshop on **housing and contracts** conducted by PBSO.

*July:*

- Mr Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib was invited to answer questions from the Muslim sex worker community.
- A series of **Iftar kopi sessions** were organized for Muslim sex workers who have no one to break fast with.
- Ms Laura Freedman was invited to give a talk about **career goals** for transgender sex workers. Ms Freedman is a transgender woman who is a certified career coach. She touched upon interview skills, tips on writing a resume, and the importance of self-confidence.
- Legal workshop on **criminal proceedings** conducted by PBSO.

*August:*

- Legal workshop on “**rights of an arrested person**” conducted by PBSO.

*September:*

- We organized a field trip to an **election rally** in order to get the community involved in the country’s political processes.
- Legal workshop on the laws on **drugs** conducted by PBSO.

*October:*

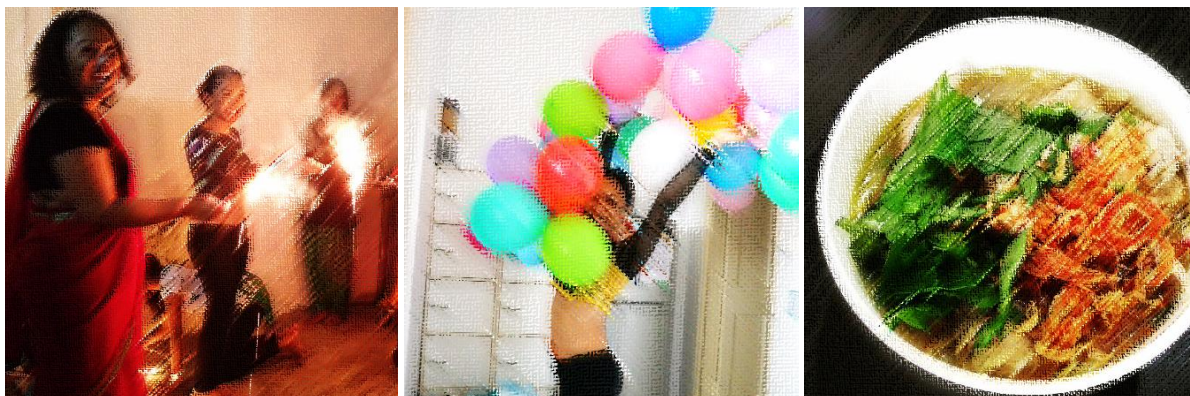
- A mini **photo project** was organized to respond to the media’s negative and inaccurate portrayals of Singaporean transgender sex workers.
- Legal workshop on **physical assault and self-defence** conducted by PBSO.

*November:*

- Doctors from Dr Tan and Partners came to give a talk on general **health** issues as well as **hormone therapy** for transgender people.
- **Deepavali** celebrations were held at our centre.

*December:*

- **Art workshops** conducted by local artist Kari.
- Two **legal workshops** by NUS Pro Bono Group were conducted.



*From left to right: Deepavali celebration; Open House; Home-cooked Mee Soto*

Another significant part of our work is **capacity building** for staff. Project X hires community leaders to be part of the organization. This is important as we believe that without the leadership and participation of sex workers, our work will be ineffective. Furthermore, this empowers the community leaders to take charge of their communities and their own lives. As such, regular trainings are scheduled for staff members to be better equipped to work with the community. Our trainings were completed at spaces like the Social Service Institute (SSI), the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE), and Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), and covered topics such as Counselling Skills, Microsoft Word, Survey Research and Quantitative Analysis, Health Insurance Schemes, Human Rights and so on. We also made use of online courses.



Staff members are also encouraged to seize various opportunities to travel to **regional and international conferences** in order to gain exposure to international standards and to learn from more established organizations. In 2015, various members of the team took part in three different



conferences: the fourth Sex Workers of ASEAN (SWASEAN) Summit in Chiang Mai, the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/ APF) in Kuala Lumpur, and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Conference in Taipei. Furthermore, one of our team members Maya Riz was also accepted to the Youth Voices Count mentorship programme that is organized by APCOM – a regional organization that works to highlight and prioritize HIV issues.



*Clockwise from top left: ACSC/ APF in Kuala Lumpur; ILGA Conference in Taipei; SWASEAN Summit in Chiang Mai.*

### **Abuser Alert**

Abuser Alert is our programme to empower sex workers to speak up about the violence and discrimination against them. Often times, sex workers fear going to the police to report crimes against them and thus suffer in silence. As such, we decided to provide a platform in which sex workers can voice out, warn each other about abusive clients, and potentially have their cases brought to justice. The programme had a strong foot in 2015 with a total of 72 reports made to us, up from a total of 40 cases in 2014, and ten cases in 2013.

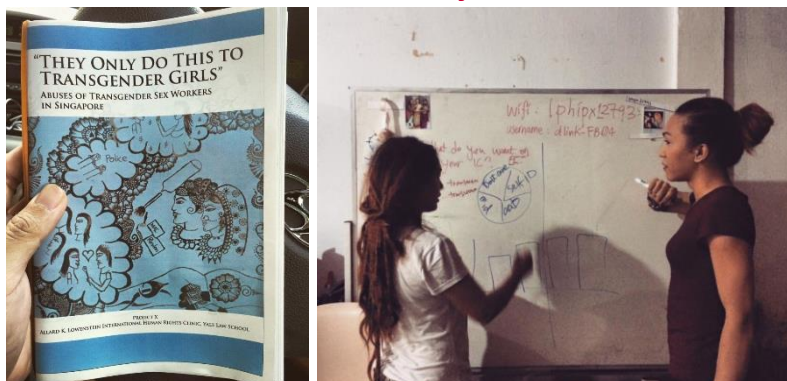
## Public Education



*Clockwise from top left: International Women's Day Sherry's Speech; International Women's Day booth; Presentation at Transgender Day of Awareness; Pink Dot Booth.*

Public education is our opportunity to raise awareness about the realities of sex workers, thereby complicating the stereotypical and stigmatizing representation of them in the media. We believe that stereotypes reduces a person to a one-dimensional caricature and thus creating misconceptions. Such misconceptions can lead to discrimination and violence as people learn to despise and ostracize sex workers. Public education is where we encourage people to unlearn unhealthy and untrue assumptions we may have about sex workers, their clients, partners, and families.

## Advocacy







*Clockwise from top left: Report on abuses of transgender sex workers in Singapore; late night discussion on how to process survey results; civil society group meeting.*

Advocacy is where we conduct rigorous research in order to produce evidence needed that will motivate our programs and services. In 2015, we concluded a study conducted in collaboration with the **Allard K Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic**. The focus was on the violence and abuses that Singaporean transgender sex workers face. We then began a study on the **gender recognition laws** and its impact on the transgender community in Singapore. The paper is scheduled to be published in the **LGBTQ Policy Journal at the Harvard Kennedy School** in May 2016. The end goal of research is to find out the root causes of the various issues faced by sex workers, and to find best practices to address those issues.

Finally, we use our findings to advocate for long lasting change through recommending policy changes. One platform that arose in 2015 for us to do so was the Universal Periodic Review, which is a United Nations mechanism that enables civil society to dialogue with the government on key human rights issues that we as a nation face. The Universal Periodic Review has given rise to two opportunities for **closed-door dialogue sessions** with various government agencies.

## Moving Forward

Moving forward, we have four big plans for 2016-2017. Firstly, with the increasing and intensifying policing of undocumented street-based sex workers, and the resulting exodus of sex workers to online platforms, we will be committing more resources to conducting **online outreach**. Online outreach is where we search for workers who advertise online and reach out to them. Secondly, we will be expanding our outreach to **entertainment workers** or **sex workers** who work in karaoke bars. Thirdly, we plan to concretize a **volunteer involvement program** in order to enable greater interactions and understanding between sex worker and non-sex worker communities. Finally, we will be dedicating resources to create and **formalize an exit plan for workers** who wish to leave the sex industry. This entails working with various stakeholders to ensure a holistic approach to exiting as well as research on best practices from other countries.

These three initiatives will complement our current services for sex workers, and thus work towards our vision of a more compassionate and inclusive society where sex workers, their clients, partners, and families are treated as equal human beings.

---