

Five Principles for Undertaking an Effective Legislative Campaign

A new proposed law or piece of legislation concerning the criminalisation of clients is often a complex process and it is easy to feel overwhelmed when it lands on your doorstep. Fighting against the implementation of the law and running a campaign can be a challenge, especially if time is limited. If you can't run a full advocacy campaign, there are five key principles to keep in mind.

1 Intelligence

In order to mount the best campaign opposing the new law or regulation, you need to make sure you know about the process that government or officials will be following to implement the law. Make a timeline of each stage of the process. You can find out about new laws or proposed bills by:

- Checking the council, state or national web sites where proposed laws are announced
- Talk to your local politicians or local NGO's who have experience in campaigning against legislation.

2 Making Good Relationships

It pays to be on good terms with as many local and national politicians and policy officers that you can get access to. Always try to meet government and policy officers face-to-face to make them aware of your concerns. They will also be able to explain processes, rules and policies to you. It is also worth building links with other organisations in your community who might be concerned. However, don't assume that the community will automatically support your campaign, you need to build trust and good working relationships with people before they will join you in your campaign.

3 Good Communications

Make sure you have got a clear message for the media and public about the negative impacts the new laws will have. For example, the people who are advocating for the Swedish Model say they want to end violence against women but the evidence suggests that criminalising any aspect of sex work is more likely to make sex workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

4 Get Them on Their Weakest Points

It is important to concentrate your attention and campaigning efforts in complex legislative campaigns. Rather than trying to say something about everything, you need to work out the key areas of objection and make them into killer arguments. For example, most proposed laws about criminalisation of clients will impact on the health and safety of sex workers.

5 Danger Points

Look out for your opponent's killer response. They may employ a public relations (PR) firm and will try and sell the message of how prostitution is violence against women. Prepare your counter attack, get information about the effect of the Swedish Model and make the case that attempts to rescue and help sex workers have the opposite effect and do more harm than good.

Use stunts, protest, spread awareness, use local media, generate local feeling, use power of numbers!

FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO BE HEARD!