

# SEYCHELLES NATIONAL ADVOCACY PLAN 2018-2019:

Towards reducing Stigma, Discrimination and Violence  
against key populations in Seychelles

November 2017

TRANSFORMING  
**LAWS,**  
TRANSFORMING HIV **END**  
**STOP THE STIGMA**  
**DISCRIMINATION**  
**HUMAN**  
**RIGHTS**  
**FOR ALL**  
**STOP THE**  
**VIOLENCE** **HEALTH**  
**FOR**  
**ALL**  
**REMOVE**  
**LEGAL**  
**BARRIERS**

**ARASA**  
AIDS  Rights  
**Alliance**  
for Southern Africa



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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARASA	AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DURNS	Drug Use Response Network Seychelles
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
HAPTF	HIV and AIDS Prevention Task Force
HASO	HIV and AIDS Support Organisation
IBBS	Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance Studies
LGBTI-Sey	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex - Seychelles
MNA	Member of the National Assembly (parliamentarian)
NAC	National AIDS Council
TWG	Technical Working Group

## Introduction

1. There is clear evidence from anecdotal reports from key populations and from the Integrated Biological and Behavioural Surveillance Studies (IBBS) conducted with these populations in 2011 and 2015, that key populations experience stigma, discrimination and violence. These attitudes and actions come a variety of persons in their lives, including from service providers. For example, in 2011 in the IBBS conducted with men who have sex with men and people who inject drugs, 68% of people who inject drugs reported being refused a service in the past 12 months because of their injecting drug use, and just over 50% of them had been arrested in the past twelve months.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, most people who inject drugs themselves (83%) would want the HIV status of a family member to remain secret if one of the family members became ill with HIV.<sup>2</sup>
2. Gay men and men who have sex with men also report stigma and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> “Forty- one percent of men who have sex with men reported that they had received verbal insults and 3.8% reported being hit, kicked or beaten in the past 12 months because someone believed respondent has sex with other men.”<sup>4</sup> Moreover, 21% of men who have sex with men also reported being forced to have sex when they did not want to at some point in their lives. Among those, 50.3% then reported having been forced to have sexual intercourse in the past year. In interactions with the police, 44% of gay men and men who have sex with men reported being arrested in the past year.
3. The IBBS done with female sex workers in 2015 revealed that 37.2% of sex workers had experienced violence in the past year, with 20.5% reporting being forced to have sex against their will and 50.6% reporting arrests. Female sex workers experienced more physical violence at the hands of a steady boyfriend or a husband, at 34.5%, than from clients (15.5%) than the police (13.8%.) Sex workers were also just as likely to be assaulted by unknown persons as they were by the police.<sup>5</sup>
4. Of those sex workers who had been forced to have sex against their will, the most common perpetrators were their one-time clients at 28.1%, unknown persons at 15.6% and their steady partner or husband at 12.5%. Other people included friends, casual sex partners and their children’s father.<sup>6</sup> Relationships with the police tended to be poor. In terms of arrests, sex workers were arrested mainly for loitering (16.0%), drug use (11.5%) and selling sex (7.1%).

## Aims and Objectives of the Advocacy Plan

The main goals of the **Seychelles National Advocacy Plan 2018-2019** are two-fold:

1. To reduce stigma, discrimination and violence against key populations in service provision and delivery, and
2. To increase key populations’ access to health, educational and psychosocial services.

The specific objectives of the Plan are to:

- a. Raise awareness amongst key service providers, such as the police, the health professionals and paraprofessionals, social services and civil society organisations working with key populations, about the national situation regarding key populations such as sex workers, gay men and men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, prison inmates and migrant workers;
- b. Reduce the incidence of self-stigmatisation amongst key populations through boosting their self confidence and self-esteem;
- c. Assist national efforts in amending legislation such as the relevant sections of the Penal Code and other laws to create a conducive environment for service delivery to key populations.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health (2011) Injection Drug Use in the Seychelles, 2011: Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey - Round I

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 59

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health (2011) Men Who have Sex with Men in The Seychelles 2011: Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance Survey - Round I

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.59

<sup>5</sup> National AIDS Council (2016) HIV Biological And Behavioral Surveillance Survey Among Female Sex Workers 2015: Final Report

<sup>6</sup> National AIDS Council (2016) HIV Biological And Behavioral Surveillance Survey Among Female Sex Workers 2015: Final Report p.56

## Proposed Actions in 2017

The National Advocacy Convening on Reducing Stigma, Discrimination and Violence against Key Populations held on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th October 2017 at the Savoy Resort and Spa, in Beau Vallon, Mahé, Seychelles, which brought together key populations and service providers, highlighted the most urgent actions that need to be taken, and the service providers to be targeted. The two-day meeting funded by the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) gave a series of actions which are presented in terms of priority for the next two years. Some of the actions have been proposed for the rest of 2017.

Objectives	Actions	Target Group	Responsibility	Deadline
Coordinate national actions on HIV & the National Advocacy Plan	Create a Technical Working Group (TWG)	MoH, NAC CSO working with KPs	NAC	December 2017
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Educational sessions Media programmes	Public	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	December 2017
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Educational sessions	Police	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	December 2017

## Proposed Actions in 2018

It is imperative that the TWG is created to coordinate the implementation of the Advocacy Plan under the guidance of the Steering Committee at NAC. Once this is done, through the merging of the present TWG created to oversee the implementation of the Operational Plan for Female Sex Workers, funded by the World Health Organisation (WHO), it will be easier to organise the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Advocacy Plan 2018-2019. This will ensure that coordinating mechanisms are in place.

Objectives	Actions	Target Group	Responsibility	Deadline
Monitor stigma, discrimination & violence in service delivery	Create a KP Watchdog Group, with existing KP NGOs and CBOs	Service providers	KP Watchdog Group TWG NAC	March 2018
	Publish periodic reports on service delivery	Service providers	KP Watchdog Group TWG	June 2018
		Public KPs	NAC	September 2018 December 2018
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Educational sessions Media programmes	Service providers	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF, NAC	December 2018
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Human Rights March	Public	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	April 2018
Support national actions to amend relevant laws	Gain membership of groups / committees working on changes in policies & laws	MNAs	TWG DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	June 2018
	Lobby Members of the National Assembly (MNAs)			
Empower KPs/ reduce self-stigmatisation	Training sessions for KPs	KPs	NAC MoH TWG	May 2018 August 2018 November 2018
Improve advocacy programmes being conducted	Survey on advocacy programmes undertaken in 2018	NAC / MoH Steering Committee TWG, Service providers, KPs, MNAs	NAC MoH TWG	October 2018

It is expected that these actions in 2018 will pave the way for greater engagement of key populations in other advocacy programmes, and that there will be reductions in the number of reported cases of stigma, discrimination and violence against key populations. Furthermore, it is also expected that the monitoring and evaluation conducted by the Key Populations Watchdog Group will indicate that there has been a reduction in discriminatory and violent behaviours.

## Proposed Actions in 2019

Objectives	Actions	Target Group	Responsibility	Deadline
Monitor stigma, discrimination & violence in service delivery	Publish periodic reports on service delivery	Service providers Public KPs	KP Watchdog Group TWG NAC	June 2019 September 2019 December 2019
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Educational sessions Media programmes Adverts on bus stops, buses, billboards Operate a stall in Regatta, Festival Kreol	Public	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF NAC	On-going, throughout 2019
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Human Rights March	Public	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	April 2019
Raise awareness about the national situation of KPs	Educational sessions	Service providers	DURNS LGBTI-Sey HAPTF	April June, August October December
Empower KPs/ reduce self-stigmatisation	Training sessions for KPs International exchanges, work attachments & conferences	KPs	NAC MoH TWG	Ongoing, as needed and available during the year

The advocacy actions aim to consolidate the gains from activities in 2017 and 2018. The last year of the implementation of the National Advocacy Plan is also an opportunity to take stock and to prepare for the coming years, seeking to improve actions and to find corrective measures for identified weaknesses. It will be up to the TWG to ensure that key populations are engaged at all levels of conception, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes