

# ANNUAL REPORT

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2017-2018



SWAN Vancouver Society

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## Note from the President



The 2017-2018 year at SWAN was shaped by a sobering reminder of the consequences of crimmigration or the increasing fusion between immigration and law enforcement, and the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA). At a time when the women we work with most needed access to justice and a commitment to workers' safety from law enforcement, we were reminded about the risks women take in reaching out to law enforcement when they experience violence or exploitation. We were continually reminded this year that, under PCEPA, justice will continue to be inaccessible for immigrant, migrant and racialized women in the sex industry.

SWAN's advocacy efforts this year reflected this new focus. Challenging crimmigration in 2017-2018 including challenging the 'raid and rescue' measures exercised by Operation Northern Spotlight, advocating for the development of Access Without Fear policies that prioritize migrants' concerns over loopholes for law enforcement, and presenting our concerns about punitive anti-trafficking measures to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

We operate in a sobering new context but we also celebrate the courage, compassion and creativity of SWAN staff, volunteers and Collective members. SWAN's small but tenacious crew continues to produce results that would suggest a much larger organization. The work of SWAN staff and volunteers drives our core outreach and netreach programs as well as developing exciting new initiatives, such as a Photovoice project to showcase workers' creativity. We also continue to strengthen our links with the communities we work with, whether it's a LUSH Beauty Night, a documentary screening of "Anti-Trafficking Philanthropy: A Cautionary Tale" or organizing a forum for immigrant-serving organizations.

Over this past year, we have seen what is possible when sex workers are given the respect they deserve and the dire consequences that result when workers are not assured basic respect in routine interactions with law enforcement. A few of these stories were captured in our campaign "Building a Culture of Respect: Police and Sex Workers" to illustrate what respect is and is not. The strength we witness in our work is astounding but we are aware that sex workers and their allies will only be permitted a constrained resilience as long as PCEPA continues to criminalize efforts that keep sex workers safe.

Dr. Julie Ham  
President

## Note from the Executive Director



2017 was an exceptionally busy year at SWAN. The complexity of SWAN's mandate continues to grow. As such, we are always learning new ways to connect and best support the women we serve.

One of the highlights this year was the Photovoice project. Year after year our work identifies stigma as the one of the main barriers to accessing justice and community services. Led by an amazing group of experiential women, SWAN collaborated on a Photovoice project as a means to address stigma and educate the general public. We are looking forward to the public art exhibition to showcase the work our Photovoice participants.

Despite successes, 2017 also highlighted how much systemic advocacy needs to be done. Addressing the impacts of

crimmigration – the convergence of criminal and immigration law- became more and more of SWAN's work. Anti-trafficking, immigration and prostitution laws that are purported to protect the women we serve continue to create more vulnerability to violence, exploitation and human trafficking. Informing decision-makers of the failure and unintended consequences of these laws is arduous work given SWAN's marginal voice. Nevertheless, we persevere. In 2018-2019, we will continue to seek allies with mutual advocacy interests who can support our rights-based work.

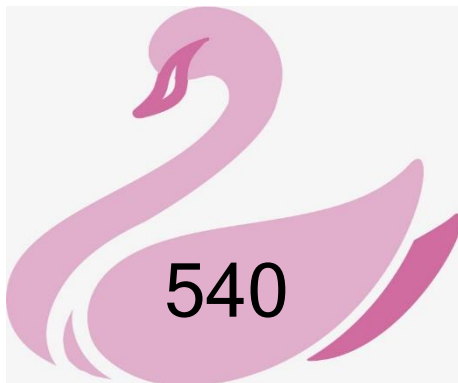
On an administrative note in 2017, SWAN complied with the new B.C. Societies Act and all our Society's records are now stored in an easy-access government portal. We also moved into our new office space in Downtown Vancouver which has provided greater accessibility for the women we serve and a pleasant work environment for our staff.

I would like to warmly thank all those who contributed to make 2017 a good year for SWAN. Without the tireless efforts of all our dedicated volunteers, staff and Board, the organization could not continue to operate and grow. Thank you!

Alison Clancey  
Executive Director

## SWAN by the Numbers

Women served

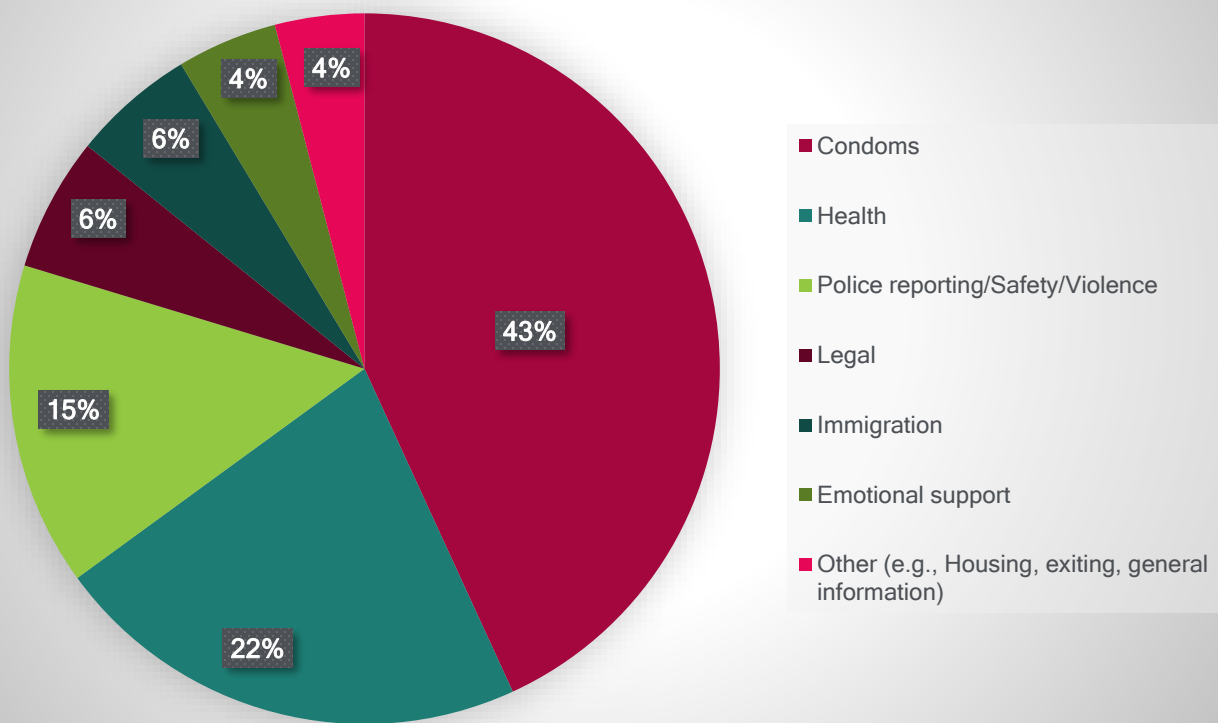


Condoms distributed



\*An increase from 95 300 condoms in 2016-2017

### Requests for Service 2017-2018



\*Requests for human trafficking support = 1 request



# Programs

## Outreach



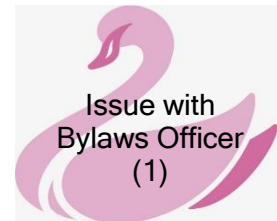
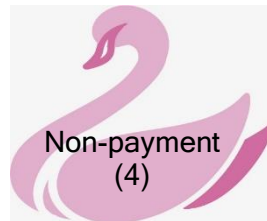
Each month, SWAN staff and volunteers do outreach to massage shops throughout the Lower Mainland. The map above shows the municipalities we visited in 2017. In total, SWAN staff and volunteers visited massage shops **62** times, **43** massage shops in total. Outreach visits provide an opportunity to distribute harm reduction supplies, build relationships, share information about problematic clients, and answer women's questions in-person on topics ranging from differing municipalities' approaches to bylaws enforcement and licensing; police enforcement and access to health care.

### Netreach (Online Outreach)

With more and more sex work moving indoors and online, Netreach has become one of our core programs. Implemented in 2014, SWAN is one of the first sex work organizations in Canada to use virtual outreach as one of the primary means to connect with and provide services to sex workers. Using the same Internet and Communication Technologies (ICTs) im/migrant sex workers use, SWAN forwards a bilingual message that briefly describes who we are and our services. Increasingly however, more and more of our referrals to the Netreach program come from women who have availed of the service themselves. Peer referrals and the overwhelming growth of the program can be attributed to the trust and relationships staff have cultivated since the origins of the program. By 2017, we have reached out a total of **1868** times to women using various ICTs.

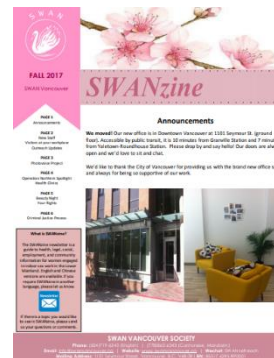
## Abuser Alert

As a result of alarming levels of crimmigration, im/migrant sex workers do not turn to authorities to report crimes or seek protection from the criminal justice system. Consequently, im/migrant sex workers share information to keep themselves safe. To complement existing information sharing networks, SWAN created a SMS information sharing system. Bilingual notifications are sent out via SMS. The SMS messaging system means alerts can be distributed to a wide audience instantly. In 2017, SWAN sent out 14 Abuser Alerts to 20 SMS subscribers, massage shops and via informal verbal distribution.



## SWANzine

SWANzine, our quarterly bilingual Chinese/English newsletter, is an important tool to communicate community supports and services, work-related legal updates, and rights and health information. In addition to posting the SWANzine's electronic version on our website and social media, SWAN distributed **1029** hard copies to inform im/migrant sex workers' decision-making in areas such as immigration, tenancy, criminal justice, health, safety and employment.



# Projects

## Photovoice

In this project, SWAN used photovoice methodology to address misinformation and stigma about im/migrant women who work in massage shops and apartments. Photovoice is a qualitative method used for community-based participatory projects to document and reflect reality. This project provided im/migrant sex workers an opportunity to self-represent their lived experiences and bring forth a dimension, reality, and perspective which policy makers and law enforcement have neglected and dismissed.

Women who are perceived to be “trafficked” are often not thought to have community, mobility or hobbies, let alone their own opinions about the violent and coercive policing that shapes their lives. The goal of this project is to resist simplified narratives and coercive policies that rely in part on ignorance and highly racialized assumptions of the lives of im/migrant sex workers.

This project gave our participants a space and safe platform to demonstrate how they engage with the community and the city around them. We hope this project will start conversations that shift public understanding and perceptions about the lives of migrant sex workers.

The project was conducted over four workshops, where participant photographers designed the foci and themes of the project. Participants received photography training, with a special webinar designed by photographer Minshu Mo. Participants have commented that they are now more likely to take photos and utilise the techniques they have learned. After collecting the photos, participants were responsible for sorting, organizing, culling, and selecting photos for the final series.



The final piece contains six main sets compiled by themes and containing photos from five different photographers. The entire project is bilingual (Chinese/English).

We are very excited to exhibit the project in the coming months.

A very special thank you to our participant photographers for and sharing so much of themselves and making this project a reality. SWAN also thanks LUSH Cosmetics who funded the project through a generous grant from the Charity Pot Program.



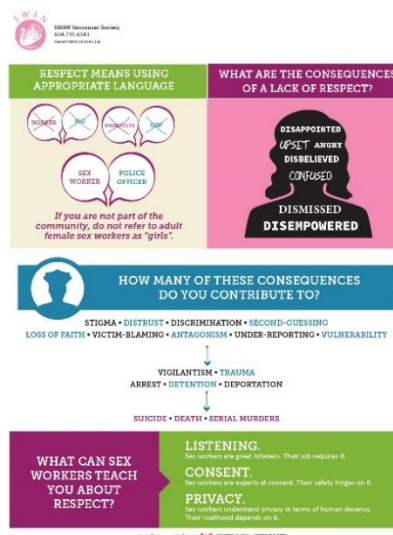
## Sex Workers Rights are Human Rights: Community-Based HIV & Hep C Interventions for Prevention, Increased Care Access and Stigma Reduction

In 2017, The Public Health Agency of Canada under the HIV and Hep C Community Action Fund funded SWAN for a five-year project to promote health. SWAN is participating in this project with three other organizations: Sex Workers United Against Violence (SWUAV), Centre for Gender and Sexual Health Equity (CGSHE), and Health Initiative for Men (HIM).

The goals of the project are to reduce the burden of HIV/HCV/STBBIs among sex workers by: 1) increasing knowledge and awareness among sex workers of HIV, Hepatitis C and other STBBIs relating to their prevention, testing opportunities, and available treatment and care; 2) reducing stigma and discrimination relating to sex work, particularly among health and social service providers; and 3) increasing awareness among policy/decision-makers of how policies and on-going criminalization impact sex workers at a structural level and result in increased stigma, and reduced access to health and reduced access health/social services. SWAN looks forward to working with its community partners on this project through to 2022.

### Building a Culture of Respect: Police and Sex Workers Campaign

Sex workers have historically had limited access to justice. With this project, we aimed to foster dialogue and a better understanding of what constitutes genuinely respectful language, attitudes and course of action between police and sex workers. The heart of this campaign consisted of two questions: are sex workers deserving of respectful criminal justice supports and if so, what does that look like?

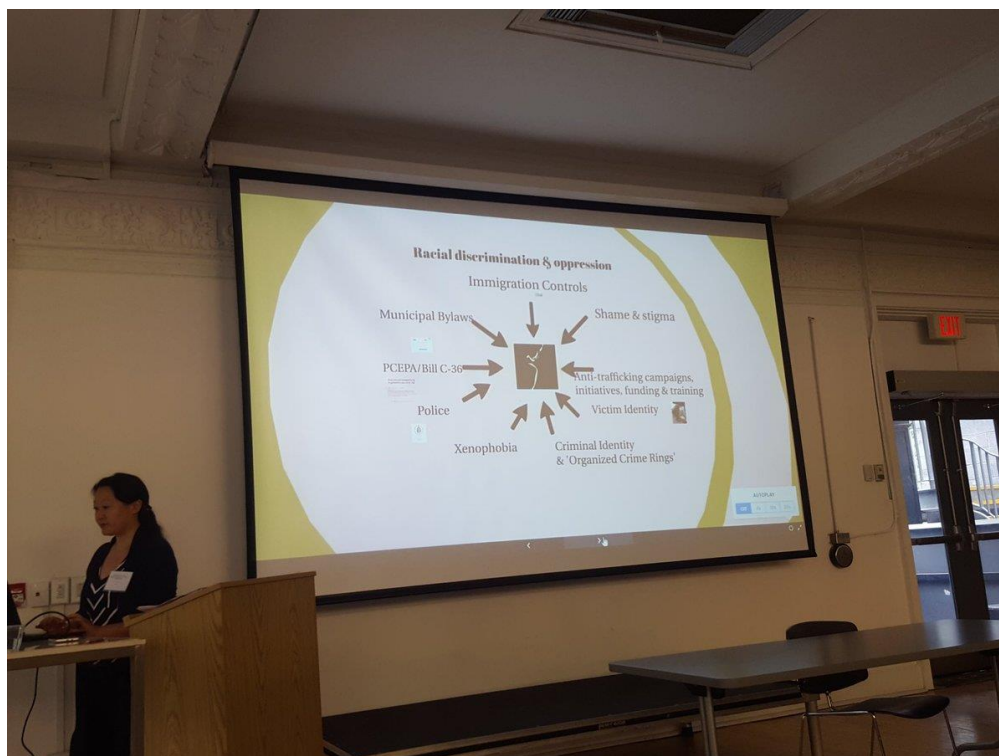


The campaign was embedded in an online video\* to provide context of the origin and goals of the project. The infographic was distributed both online and in-person to key stakeholders and sex work organizations to use in their interactions with police. Currently, the infographic is available on our website to download and distribute.

\*Available online at [http://prezi.com/djic5exsooxl/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy&rc=ex0share](http://prezi.com/djic5exsooxl/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share)

## SWAN at the 2018 Law and Society Association Conference, “Law at the Crossroads”

The Collaborative Research Network (CRN) #6, “Sex, Work, Law and Society”, in the Law and Society Association (LSA), is quickly emerging as a dynamic hub for sex work researchers. In June, SWAN President Dr. Julie Ham joined the CRN in Toronto to share her research and catch up with local, national and international allies. Executive Director Alison Clancey played a key role in organizing the pre-conference forum, “IM/Migrant Sex Work: Exploring Experience, Policy & Partnership”, which brought together academics and activists working on sex work. As part of the pre-conference, Dr. Ham discussed SWAN’s emerging direction in crimmigration and the increasing challenges that migrant sex workers face when reporting violence and abuse. During the LSA conference, Dr. Ham presented “Barriers to justice for migrant and immigrant sex workers: A community-led research project”, a project led by Board Member Kimberly Mackenzie, on the panel “Sex workers’ access to justice”. Hayli Millar (University of the Fraser Valley) summarized a book chapter co-authored by herself, Tamara O’Doherty, Alison Clancey and Kimberly Mackenzie, titled “Misrepresentations, inadequate evidence and impediments to justice: Human rights impacts of Canada’s anti-trafficking efforts” as part of the panel “In the shadow of Bedford: A roundtable on research and advocacy in post-PCEPA Canada”. The book chapter is part of *Red Light Labour: Sex Work Regulation, Agency, and Resistance*, edited by Elya M. Durisin, Emily van der Meulen and Chris Bruckert (UBC Press). Finally, Dr. Ham discussed her book *Sex Work, Immigration and Social Difference*, an analysis of im/migrant and racialized women’s experiences in sex work, as part of the panel “Sex work at the crossroads: New books in the field”. All in all, the CRN #6 organizers at that the LSA created a thoughtful, challenging space for sex workers, researchers, and allies to bridge academia, policy and activism. We look forward to more opportunities to work with CRN #6 in the future!

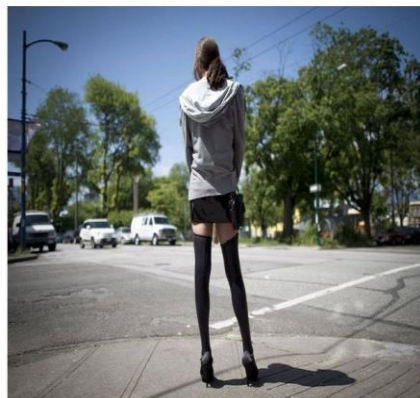


## Communications

SWAN had several pieces of media coverage related to our ongoing campaign against Operation Northern Spotlight. Working collaboratively with Pivot Legal Society, SWAN did interviews with the Globe and Mail, CBC Vancouver Early Edition, and CFX Radio among others. SWAN is very pleased to report that its campaign against Operation Northern Spotlight started in 2016 has picked up momentum and has become a national campaign with sex workers and allies from other provinces, particularly Ontario and Newfoundland, supporting the call to end this harmful police enforcement practice.



### Sex-worker advocates call for end to B.C. police sting operations



A sex-trade worker is pictured in downtown Vancouver on June 3, 2014.

#### TRENDING

- 1 The story behind 3 epic Nicolas Cage f masterpiece
- 2 Uber to invest mor in Toronto engine car centre
- 3 25 years after Oslo, achieving Israeli-P
- 4 Multiculturalism d encourages belong
- 5 The close: TSX dip stocks weigh

# Community Events & Presentations

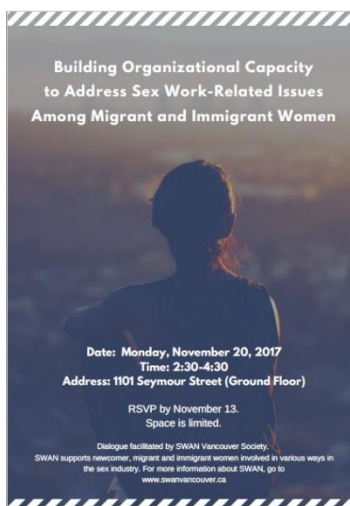
## The Wrong Light & Anti-Trafficking Philanthropy: A Cautionary Tale

In November, SWAN hosted the documentary film, 'The Wrong Light'. As part of our ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the harmful impacts of some anti-trafficking initiatives, the film was followed by a community dialogue, 'Anti-Trafficking Philanthropy: A Cautionary Tale.'



## Building Organizational Capacity to Address Sex Work-Related Issues Among Migrant and Immigrant Women

Also in November, SWAN hosted a training session for immigrant-serving organizations to build their capacity to address sex work-related issues and complexities among their service-users. Staff from organizations such as SUCCESS, Immigrant Services Society of BC and Open Door Group among others attended the training session and provided positive feedback.





## LUSH Beauty Night



In February, LUSH Cosmetics came to SWAN for Beauty Night. LUSH provided skin care consultations, massage and product demonstrations including bath bombs, bubble bars, lotion, and massage bars. Everyone had a relaxing night of pampering and trying out new products. Women enjoyed soothing arm massages and refreshing facials.



Thank you LUSH for coming and sharing your products with us!



## Board, Staff and Volunteers

### Board

Julie Ham - President  
 Noushin Khushrushahi - Secretary  
 Vanessa Sabitova - Treasurer  
 Kimberley Mackenzie - Member-at-large

### Staff

Alison Clancey- Executive Director  
 Kelly Go - Outreach  
 Hayley Leung - Outreach  
 Jessi Taylor - Photovoice Co-ordinator

### Volunteers

Ashley Appleton  
 Alice Xiao  
 Megan Coady  
 Leala Wong

## 2017-2018 Funders



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada



## 2018-2019: The Year Ahead

SWAN is very excited about the year ahead. Our 'tiny but mighty' organization continues to exceed all expectations of such a small, underfunded agency. In 2018-2019, we will:

- Hold the Photovoice public exhibition
- Increase systemic advocacy to address crimmigration
- Continue advocacy and education initiatives on critical anti-trafficking discourse

# Financial Statement

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVES NETWORK (SWAN VAN) SOCIETY

### Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31, 2018

(Unaudited)

	2018	2017
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Province of BC	\$ -	\$ 25,000
City of Vancouver	24,800	24,800
Department of Justice Canada	53,037	38,638
Other revenue	6,101	170
Public Health Agency of Canada	41,500	19,770
Donations	1,867	2,313
Macaids	20,000	-
Lush	13,000	-
	<b>160,305</b>	<b>110,691</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Accounting fees	1,968	1,239
Business taxes, licenses and memberships	-	60
Employee benefits	3,912	-
Insurance	1,749	2,353
Interest and bank charges	175	127
Office	2,987	719
Translation fees	-	802
Program expenditures	13,443	6,668
Rental	4,774	8,412
Salaries and wages	110,371	87,606
Telephone	252	625
Travel	2,516	2,009
Utilities	2,245	-
	<b>144,392</b>	<b>110,620</b>
<b>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 15,913</b>	<b>\$ 71</b>



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**Mission** Provide culturally appropriate and language-specific support, education, research, advocacy and outreach for newcomer, migrant and immigrant women engaged in indoor sex work.

**Vision** A society in which sex work stigma, discrimination and inequities are eliminated and non-judgmental community acceptance, supports and resources exist for women who engage in sex work.

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## Support our work

SWAN is a charity and registered nonprofit society. If you would like to make a donation to help support SWAN's programs, community initiatives and advocacy work, please make a cheque payable to 'SWAN Vancouver Society' or donate online at CanadaHelps.

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