

SAVE biennial report 2020 / 2021

SAVE and SAVE-members in action for the sex work community



Origin of SAVE

SAVE started in November 2019 out of dissatisfaction because we noticed that most sex workers were not aware of the upcoming WRS bill, the Sex Workers Registration Act, a law that criminalizes sex work and drives sex workers, their clients and third parties into illegality, with the associated risks of violence. SekswerkExpertise made flyers with information about the WRS in many different languages and SAVE participated in distributing this among sex workers in general and among window workers in Amsterdam in particular.

Structure of SAVE

SAVE is a group of activists (current and former) sex workers and one ally. It is an informal group with no short-term ambition to become a foundation (stichting in Dutch) or an association (vereniging in Dutch). The wish of SAVE members is to keep working in a horizontal structure and therefore fear becoming a more formalized group with legal responsibilities that would give implicit or explicit power to some of its members.

SAVE is volunteer-run and no one is paid for their work. Volunteer sometimes receive a financial voluntary fee compensation on basis run projects.

Corona pandemic

In March 2020, the Corona pandemic broke out. Sex work was banned, and sex workers were the only tax-paying profession, outside the financial corona emergency support. This is due to the complicated tax systems and municipal licensing rules, which only apply to sex workers. For some sex workers behind the windows, who managed to be eligible for emergency support, the support was often insufficient. Once known as sex workers, window workers are often confronted to abusive landlords who charge three times a market rent. Another barrier to governmental financial support faced by migrant sex workers, who, like other working migrants, need to show proof that they stayed in the Netherlands for at least 2 years to be entitled to corona emergency support. Some sex workers were struggling to buy food for them and their families and were confronted with the difficult decision of keeping working despite the ban while municipalities and police controls on sex work were increasing. Sex workers were given fines, rental and purchase contracts were dissolved and some migrant sex workers were even deported from the Netherlands. Criminals unfortunately knew the struggles of sex workers all too well. In a short time, violence from fake clients making appointments with sex workers and stealing their money increased to an extreme level. We have seen in the Netherlands what happens when sex work is made illegal in a country...

Flyers

At the very start of the lockdown SAVE members worked alongside SekswerkExpertise members to disseminate information on how to get financial support in many different languages.

Fundraising DEF

SAVE worked alongside The Dutch Emergency Fund (DEF) to disseminate information about this fund that raised and distributed money for sex workers in immediate financial need. SAVE donated a total of 2500 euros to sex workers during the pandemic directly or through DEF.



SAVE #WRS_nee @SAVE_SW · 22 mei 2020

Great news! We will be doubling any donations that are made to Trans United Europe through the **Dutch Emergency Fund** up to €1,000 until the end of this month! More details here: dutchemergencyfund.nl/articles/save

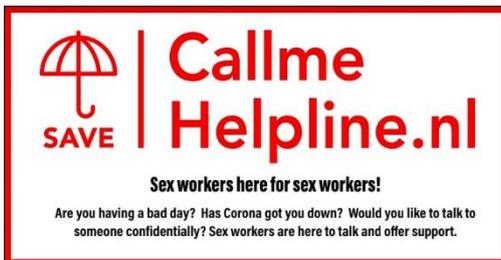
Let's do this! ❤️



dutchemergencyfund.nl

Dubbele donaties dankzij SAVE!

Update: Heel erg bedankt, donateurs! We hoopten 1000 euro op te halen in 9 dagen....



Helpline

In April 2020, members of SAVE started a Helpline, thanks to a small budget from the Global Resilience Fund. Members took turn to answer calls. The helpline was barely used and was closed down after seven months.

Urgent letters

In May 2020, and in the following months SAVE together with SekswerkExpertise, PIC, Soa Aids Nederland wrote several urgent letters to different ministers and to the minister-president. The objective of those letters was to draw attention to the problematic tax law system called "Opting-in" which is a mix between employee and independent worker status. Many sex workers who paid taxes under this Opting-in system were not entitled to any financial support like the TOZO only available to independent entrepreneurs (zpp'ers in Dutch). Unfortunately, this issue has not been resolved during the pandemic, despite an online meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment Wouter Koolmees in July 2021.

Thanks to some hard-working local council members a non-TOZO scheme was created in collaboration with some of SAVE members in June 2020. SAVE disseminated information about this scheme. Unfortunately, not many other cities were willing to take over the scheme.

Peepshow

In November 2020, SAVE members build their own mobile workspace, a corona-proof peepshow on wheels, to protest all closings, draw attention to the struggles of sex workers and at the same time give sex workers a chance to work in a corona-safe way and earn money.

SAVE brought their peepshow through closed sex work areas in Arnhem, Nijmegen, Eindhoven, Breda, Utrecht, and Den Haag.



June 2021, SAVE was with the peepshow in Tilburg, together with organisation Seksworks, to protest closing workspaces and its dramatic consequences of pushing sex workers into illegality. Wanna read more? <https://wildthing.amsterdam/blog/>

Fundraising bingo's

From November 2020 until December 2021 SAVE organised six online-bingo's during the lockdowns and raised more than €10.000,- for sex workers in need. SAVE got many presents from allies to give away as prizes and would give a special thanks to: PIC, SWAD, VSB-fonds, Candy Shop, Condomerie, Peep Show Hoes, Spot 46, Sex Power, Special Dates, Reimagining Sex Work, Striptopia, Studio Skye, Taart By Nical, Peggy Jane Delilah, Soraya Energy, Anitta Calcutta, Wild Thing, Jorma Bos, Denise Rosenboom, Lisa Jansen and Sabine Joosten.



Demo's

In March 2021, SAVE organised a big peepshow protest demo in The Hague. A specially formed Whatsapp group united many more sex workers to work closely together. Sex workers from all over the country came to the demonstration and it drew quite a lot of media attention.



On May 1st 2021 a member organised a Labour Day demo and another member gave a strong speech on this demo.

OnlyFans

In August 2021, suddenly the platform OnlyFans was about to shut down for sex workers. In fact, it was about banning sexually explicit content. Sex work was not mentioned, but it was obvious this would hurt sex workers. During the Corona pandemic, a lot of sex workers were working online, and this seemed like another disaster. SAVE quickly compiled harm reduction tips together with an experienced webcam sex worker. Luckily, OnlyFans decided not to ban explicit content, but the harm reduction tips remain useful for sex workers.

OnlyFans – harm reduction tips



Swally Award

In March 2022, just before city council elections, SAVE together with SekswerkExpertise and the PIC introduced the Swally Award. The award rewards local politicians who are good sex workers allies and is a positive way to encourage politicians to pay attention to sex workers' rights.



Street workers

December 2021, SAVE spoke out for street workers in Arnhem at the city council.

Speaking out to city councils showed results in April 2022 when eleven new streetworkers got a licence to work in the street zone of Nijmegen. SAVE and a couple of devoted local council members achieved this.

Erotic Center

SAVE members, especially those who are window workers in Amsterdam, speak out on several occasions against the closing of windows and the proposed Erotic Center, alongside with RedLightUnited and PIC, plus the unexpected yet wonderful ally FailedArchitecture.

We call on you to not collaborate in the construction of the erotic center, as it will directly undermine sex workers' rights and livelihoods (while not solving anything in the Wallen). By participating in its construction, you are directly responsible for the negative impact on the position of sex workers currently active on the Wallen.

130 sex workers active on the Wallen
Prostituut Informatie Centrum
Red Light United
SAVE
Trans United
BIZ Burgwallen
Failed Architecture



Participation

SAVE is a member of ESWA (the European Sex Workers Rights' Alliance).

SAVE is a member of de SWAD (Sekswerk Alliantie Destigmatisering).

SAVE together with Trans United Europe, a trans BIPOC sex worker led organisation that works closely with migrants, developed a report on ["The situation of migrant sex workers in Europe"](#) (November 2020). SAVE and TUE conducted community research covering those different topics: health, housing, workplace and work safety, trafficking, stigma, and police. The report highlights the discrepancies in the Dutch system around sex work that pushes migrant sex workers away to the margins and force them to work underground.

Budget and funding

SAVE currently has a total budget of €4000. Right from the start SAVE organised fundraising events in order to support its activities. Raised funds were first used to bring awareness about the WRS and its consequences to the sex worker community and allies. During the pandemic several fundraising events were organised to give back to the sex workers in need.

In 2020 SAVE received a \$5000 grant from the Global Resilience Fund. This core funding is mainly used in supporting members in their activities (reimbursement of traveling costs, maintenance of the helpline during the lockdown).

Specific funding from the Mama Cash fund SPARK (€1500) and funding received through SWAD, the Sex Worker Alliance for Destigmatization (€3500), goes to the Peepshow project for its construction, maintenance, parking, traveling and for volunteers.

Ongoing activities

Despite a very limited budget:

- SAVE is active on social media (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) and shares news articles as well as relevant articles about sex work.
- SAVE created a website and keeps it up to date.
- SAVE is easily to reach by email and answers emails.
- SAVE has an active app group where members can ask for help, share resources and knowledge, and support each other.
- SAVE is regularly in the news, newspaper articles about demonstrations or interviews with individual members with the aim of destigmatizing sex work and drawing attention to the dangers of the WRS.
- SAVE supports sex workers in many ways: financially, by referring to doctors who treat undocumented sex workers, and to lawyers, by finding housing for sex workers who have become homeless, or by offering support to victims of human trafficking, and by simply being a listening ear for those who need it.

Contact info

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