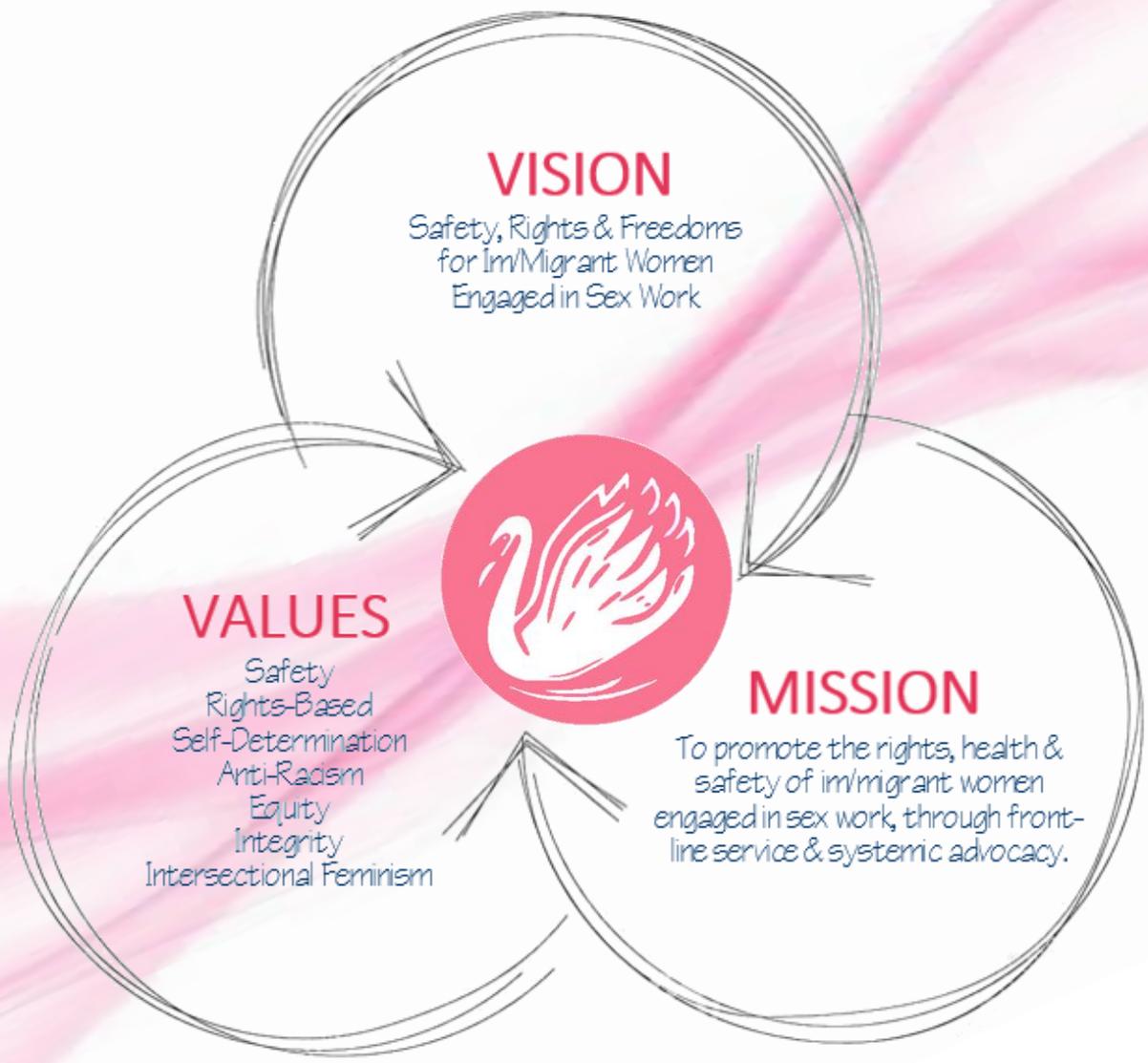




SWAN Vancouver
2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT



SWAN Vancouver is one of only two organizations in Canada providing culturally-specialized supports and advocacy to im/migrant women engaged in indoor sex work.



The voices, diversity and resilience of these women fuel SWAN’s mission to change the many pervasive cultural, social, political and one-dimensional narratives that racialize and misrepresent them; and which dominate the public discourse that leads to laws that harm them.

note from the **PRESIDENT**



Dr. Julie Ham

At SWAN, we have always recognized the invaluable contributions of our staff, volunteers and Collective members. We have often prided ourselves on accomplishing the work of a much larger organization but over the past year, we have also sought to reflect critically on what SWAN needs in order to nurture and prepare our staff, volunteers and Collective for the tasks ahead. With the help of an organizational capacity building grant from the Department of Women and Gender Equality (formerly Status of Women Canada), we began the important work of recognizing how much SWAN has accomplished and what SWAN now needs in order to achieve our aspirations for the communities that we work with.

In this annual report, you will see the necessary balance that SWAN achieves between handling the day-to-day concerns that women in the sex industry have about their safety, rights and access to justice – demanding, sensitive work that provides the foundation for SWAN’s more visible projects and initiatives. Over the past year, these included an extremely successful photovoice exhibition - Chocolate or Chicken Bones - that reached policymakers, students and the general public; a book launch of Red Light Labour featuring a chapter written by SWAN’s Executive Director, Alison Clancey and SWAN Collective Member, Kimberly Mackenzie; and our December 17 Operation Reverse Spotlight campaign, which was a satirical response to Operation Northern Spotlight (Canada’s national anti-trafficking, “rescue by enforcement” raids that target sex workers).

In the year ahead, we look forward to strengthening our infrastructure and organizational foundations, increasing our service scope to maximize the effective supports we can provide to the women we serve, increasing peer involvement in our work and governance, and reinforcing SWAN’s position to shift the narrative around anti-trafficking and im/migrant and newcomer women working in the sex industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Ham".

note from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Alison Clancey

I am pleased to present this, SWAN's 11th Annual Report. We are excited to present a new format this year, which we believe is a better representation of our organization's unique vision and work.

2018 has been a year of exciting learning and growth at SWAN. One of the year's major highlights was the launch of SWAN's Photovoice art exhibition, 'Chocolate or Chicken Bones.' Through this project, we realized the powerful inroads art carries in effectively addressing sex work stigma while amplifying the marginalized voices of im/migrant women engaged in sex work, and we envision more activism projects in the coming years.

This year we were also thrilled to secure a Social Innovation grant from the City of Vancouver. With a goal of expanding and strengthening our organizational and operational capacity, our Social Innovation project aims to increase peer involvement and leadership in SWAN's operations and governance through a two-year restructuring and engagement process. We remain grateful for the City's ongoing support of our vision, work and evolution.

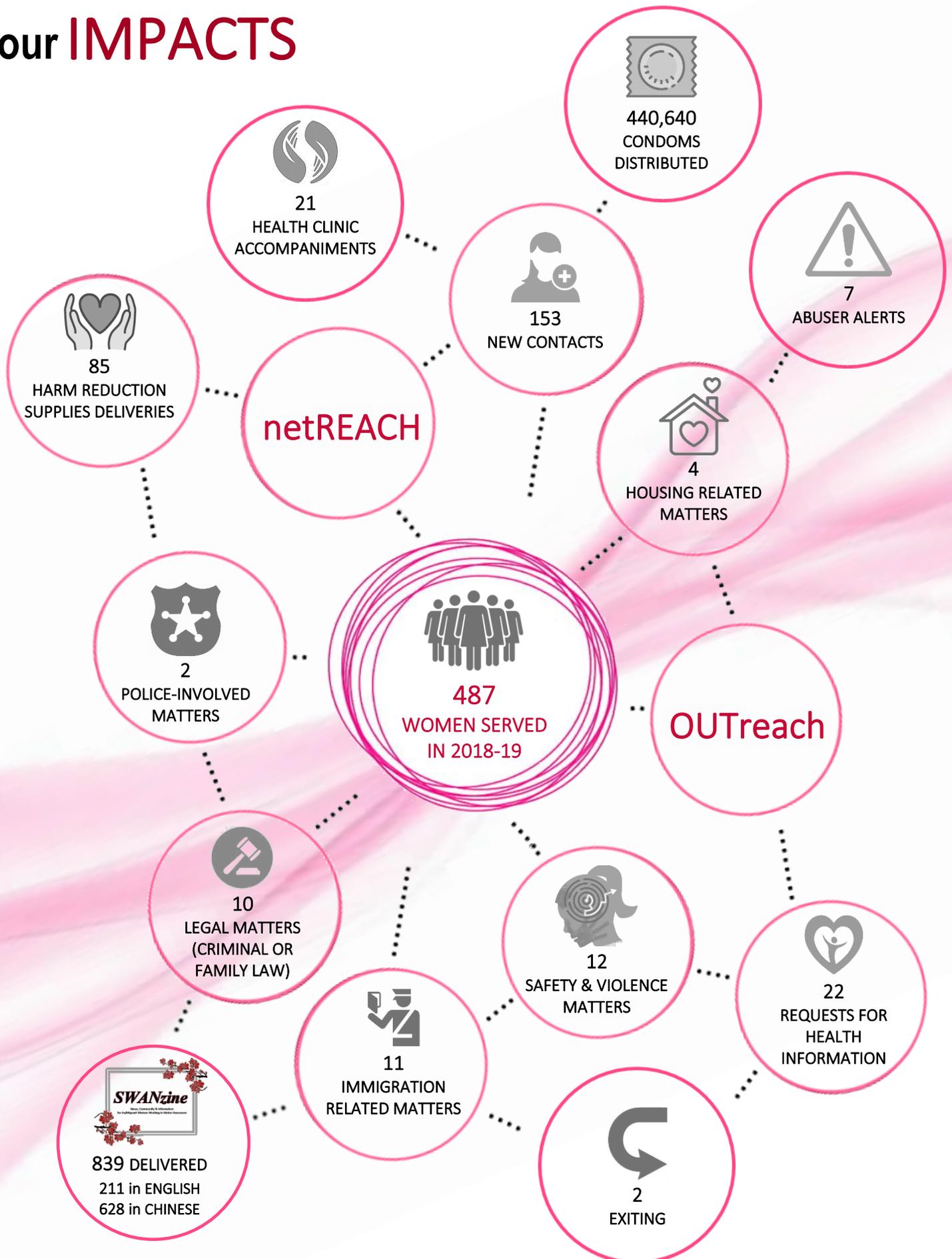
Since its inception, SWAN has borne ongoing witness to the harmful convergence and enforcement of criminal law and immigration law (also known as "cimmigration"). Providing supports to im/migrant women who are arbitrarily criminalized because of their engagement in sex work, our organization has also been directly impacted by crimmigration. Accessing legal guidance and advice has become increasingly necessary in our day-to-day work. In 2018 we secured formal legal supervision for SWAN, and this has been an invaluable addition to our operational structure. Ready access to legal advice ensures that we can move forward with supporting the women we serve, and continue advocating for their human and legal rights, with confidence.

Looking ahead, we are excited at the changes we anticipate for the 2019-20 year, which include further growth and evolution for our organization. We look to innovate our infrastructure, expand our capacity, and strengthen our foundations; and one of our first steps to reaching our next goals and dreams for SWAN is a new website, which is in development and will showcase our vision and work in a brand new way. We look forward to connecting with a broader audience and new communities of allies who share in our work and our values: human rights, intersectional feminism, safety, self-determination, anti-racism, equity and integrity.

I extend my deep respect and thanks to everyone who shares SWAN's vision and supports our efforts, including all our staff, volunteers and board who are so deeply committed to advancing im/migrant sex workers' rights. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the women we serve - thank you for your ongoing trust and belief in SWAN, and in us.

Alancey

our IMPACTS



impacts IN CONTEXT

“There was a spike in anti-trafficking raids, and our phones went silent for a year. No one wanted to report anything to the police, or even to us.”

~ SWAN’s Executive Director

By 2018-19, the number of migrant sex workers subject to interrogation, arrest and deportation as a result of interactions with police – including cases where women were victims of crime – were at an all-time high.

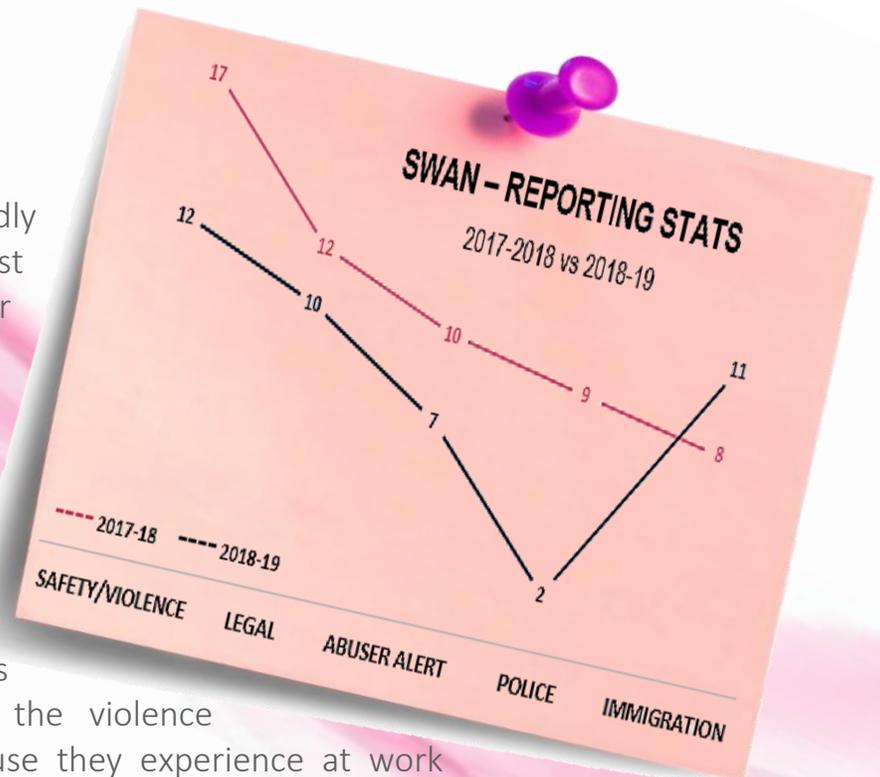
Migrant sex workers repeatedly expressed that they cannot request or expect any assistance or protections from police or the criminal justice system.

Having internalized the harmful impacts of sex work prohibition, crimmigration policies and enforcement, women’s reports

regarding the violence and abuse they experience at work have declined considerably – even to SWAN – as this year’s Outreach and Netreach statistics indicate.

Regrettably, the low numbers in our statistics do not reflect the reality that police raids, immigration enforcement, and violence towards im/migrant women working in the indoor sex industry continue unabated.

SWAN has long identified and criticized these often egregious systemic failures; more focused advocacy and campaigning will be prioritized in the coming year.



“I know there’s nothing you or anyone can do.”

~ SWAN client

“I understand you’re doing everything you can, but SWAN is a non-profit and doesn’t have enough power.”

~ SWAN client

highlights FROM THE YEAR

CHOCOLATE OR CHICKEN BONES? PHOTOVOICE EXHIBIT



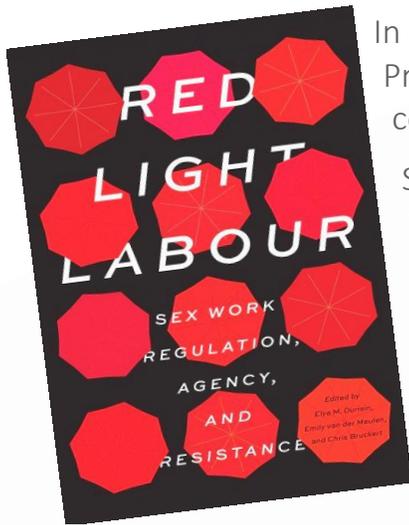
This exhibit focuses not on sex work, but on other primary aspects of im/migrant workers' lives, including their families, homes, hobbies, hopes, struggles, dreams and travels.

The photographers are five women who have accessed SWAN's services, and their photographs present them as thoughtful, complex, active and three-dimensional human beings – in stark contrast with the one-dimensional stereotypes of im/migrant sex workers that dominate and form the basis for virtually all public discourse around sex work, Asian sex workers, exploitation and trafficking.

The exhibit was first shown publicly in Chinatown's Sum Gallery in January 2019 and continues to be available to view at select community events. Curators and organizers interested to include this exhibit in a showing can contact SWAN directly to inquire. SWAN is grateful to LUSH for generously funding this project.



more HIGHLIGHTS



In November 2018, following the release of Red Light Labour (UBC Press), SWAN held a book launch event to celebrate with fellow contributors, allies, stakeholders and our community.

SWAN's staff co-authored Chapter 8: "Misrepresentations, Inadequate Evidence and Impediments to Justice: Human Rights Impacts of Canada's Anti-Trafficking Efforts."



SWAN had another busy year of community education and public presentations:

- * Presentation: Sex Workers – Race, Gender, Class & Sexual Difference Identity Constructs (UBC)
- * Presentation: Canada's Benevolent Paternalism – Preventing Migrant Sex Workers from Exercising Rights & Agency (UBC)
- * Presentation: Supporting the Anti-Trafficked (SFU)
- * Panel Presentation: Doing the Work – How to Be a Better Ally to Sex Workers in Vancouver (SFU)
- * Presentation: Building Partnerships to Support the Health & Safety of People in the Sex Industry (Peers Victoria)



in the MEDIA

In January 2019, SWAN's Executive Director and Jessi Taylor (SWAN's Research Manager) were interviewed by Talking Radical's Scott Neigh in a segment called "[Support and Advocacy with Migrant and Immigrant Sex Workers.](#)"

Discussions included SWAN's mission and work; the specialized advocacy we provide; 'crimmigration' and the increasing precarities that result for the women SWAN serves; the harmful, racializing narratives that dominate human trafficking discourse; and the backstory and methodology behind SWAN's Photovoice exhibit.



our PROGRAMS



SWAN delivers harm reduction supplies and provides direct outreach service and advocacy to workers in Vancouver and several other municipalities within the Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley and Tri-City areas, including Abbotsford, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Delta, Langley, Maple Ridge, New Westminister, North Vancouver, Richmond, and Surrey.



Our Outreach program is the catalyst through which SWAN continues to build and sustain on-the-ground relationships with the women we serve while pioneering effective service and advocacy to meet their needs.



Netreach is simply online outreach: using internet platforms and e-communication technology to meet the needs of the ever-changing indoor sex work sector. The internet is a primary system in all non-street-based sex work – recognizing workers’ access, use and participation in online spaces, including profiles, chat rooms and other social media platforms. This program effectively increases SWAN’s direct connection and availability to the women we serve, and the indoor sex work industry as a whole – locally and worldwide.

more RESOURCES



Our quarterly newsletter is produced for im/migrant women working in the sex industry. It is invaluable in our ability to remain responsive to the ever-changing landscape of indoor sex work, and the self-identified needs of im/migrant women working in massage parlours and other indoor spaces.

Topics cover updates and news related to SWAN, as well as health, social, legal, employment, tenancy, immigration, rights, community updates and other information that is meaningful to the women SWAN serves.

Electronic versions of SWANzine are made available and distributed to the women we serve through our social media platforms. Hardcopies are included with outreach deliveries; this year we delivered 839 copies to women throughout the Lower Mainland: 211 English copies, and 628 Chinese.

Criminalization of the sex industry breeds climates that are ripe for crime and violence against sex workers, and bad date reporting is a regrettable staple for rights-based sex work organizations.

Crimmigration policies leave im/migrant women vulnerable not only to robbery and violence, but any interaction with law enforcement risks arrest, detention and deportation. As a result, the women SWAN serves do *not* turn to police to report crimes or seek protections from the criminal justice system.

SWAN's Abuser Alert system empowers women to disclose their experiences of violence or injustice with a goal of increasing safety for others. They are able to access meaningful supports without placing themselves at risk of detention or deportation.

Reports are entered into an SMS messaging system that affords instant distribution to a wide audience of subscribers. Women report violent/abusive clients, non-payments, robberies, police raids, employment/management issues, and problematic intersections with by-law officers.

This year SWAN issued seven alerts to 22 SMS subscribers: 3 assaults (1 sexual assault, 2 physical assaults), 1 incident involving verbal threats/abuse, 2 non-payments, and 1 by-law officer abusing their authority. In the coming year, SWAN hopes to be able to share these reports within a Provincial Bad Date Reporting System and has joined with other sex worker organizations to collaboratively advocate and secure government funding for one.



our PROJECTS

Project funding provides ongoing opportunities for SWAN to spearhead innovative campaigns that educate, raise awareness, and/or connect sex worker rights activists and allies in political solidarity. It also allows us to continue developing and distributing resources for the women we serve, and for the communities of stakeholders and service-providers intersecting with im/migrant women engaged in sex work.

OPERATION REVERSE SPOTLIGHT

- * a "This Year's Most Wanted" list, highlighting agencies & authorities who enacted & enabled notable violence against im/migrant sex workers
- * launched: 17 Dec 2018 (International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers)
- * 2019's Spotlights coming soon – stay tuned!

BEYOND PEER SUPPORT: PEER INCLUSION PROJECT

- * goal: increase peer involvement & leadership in SWAN's operations & governance
- * 2-years of funding for restructuring & peer engagement
- * launched: 1 Jan 2019
- * funding: Social Innovation Grant, City of Vancouver

SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

- * goal: reduce HIV/HCV/STI-related burdens/risks for sex workers
- * SWAN attended an Anti-Stigma Workshop in Ottawa in the Spring of 2019 as part of the project; new resources continue to be developed
- * launched: 2017 (5 yr-project)
- * funding: Public Health Canada

RESPECT CAMPAIGN

- * goal: define & advocate for "respect" in the context of police interactions with sex workers; create an info-graphic to educate; create a toolkit to prompt dialogue
- * objective: increase sex workers' access to justice
- * launched: 1 June 2018
- * funding: Dept. of Justice

our **ADVOCACY**

Beyond the individual advocacy we provide to women who contact us for assistance with specific situational or systemic needs, SWAN also engages in policy work to drive systems change.



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS - ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- * the Committee held hearings in Ottawa & across Canada between Feb & May 2018 to hear evidence from a wide variety of stakeholders regarding human trafficking
- * SWAN submitted a written submission & presented to the Committee in Vancouver on 9 March:

- * advocating for increased justice for im/migrant sex workers
- * criticizing Operation Northern Spotlight
- * providing a scathing response to Evaluation of Canada's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking
- * calling for the repeal of the immigration prohibition on sex work

* the Committee's report was released in Dec 2018 & failed sex workers by continuing the harmful conflation of sex work with trafficking and exploitation. As a member of the Canadian Alliance of Sex Work Law Reform, SWAN helped draft the critical analysis and response that formally called out the report's failings

Immigration Refugees & Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) ROUNDTABLE re: OPEN WORK PERMIT FOR VULNERABLE WORKERS

- * stakeholder consultations were held in Jan/Feb 2019 to discuss proposed amendments to foreign work permits

- * SWAN highlighted how the specific prohibition on sex work in Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations increases im/migrant workers' vulnerabilities to exploitation & violence:

- * predators & criminals threaten to call the police & CBSA about im/migrant sex workers – they know the women fear arrest & deportation & they know the women will not report crime or violence
- * this ongoing threat enables predators & criminals to act with impunity

Public Safety Canada's CONSULTATION re: NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- * Public Safety Canada (PSC) excluded sex workers from a Summit held in Toronto in Sept 2018 to create a new national strategy to combat human trafficking
- * SWAN & other sex work organizations across Canada advocated for their inclusion in PSC's consultation process
- * SWAN met with PSC in Ottawa in Oct 2018 to provide input to PSC's report
- * in the final report PSC produced, sex work perspectives were not included in any meaningful way

Working with other rights-based sex worker and migrant organizations locally and around the world, we promote and advocate for evidence-based laws that endow equal safety, protections and rights for the women we serve, and all adult individuals who engage in any form of sex work.

our PEOPLE

Julie Ham - *PRESIDENT*

Noushin Khushrushahi - *SECRETARY*

Vanessa Sabitova - *TREASURER*

Kimberly Mackenzie - *DIRECTOR*



In the late 90's, a small group of dedicated volunteers who were involved in a pilot health project formed SWAN to ensure outreach health services provided to sex workers in massage parlours could continue after the project ended. SWAN has since evolved into Western Canada's only provider of culturally-appropriate care and service for im/migrant women engaged in indoor sex work.

Volunteers and Outreach are the backbone of SWAN's history. Our Board of Directors and our Outreach Volunteers remain as foundational to SWAN today as they did when our organization was formed.

Our Executive Director and Staff handle all the day-to-day operations while cultivating and sustaining the relationships that are foundational to SWAN's work,

connecting with the women we serve, and strengthening collaborations and community with our funders, allies, stakeholders and the public.

With a vast array of knowledge, skilled innovation, compassion and dedication, the people that make up our Board, Volunteers and Staff collectively anchor and drive our mission and vision to action.

Megan Coady

Ly Nguyen

Jane Shi

Stephanie Vu

Leila Wong

Alice Xiao



Alison Clancey
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kelly Go
OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Jessi Taylor
*RESEARCH
& PROGRAMS MANAGER*

It is only because of their enduring energy and commitment that SWAN continues to pioneer service, education, research, advocacy and systems-change to support agency, rights and social justice for im/migrant sex workers.

SWAN's ongoing success and evolution would be impossible without all the people who continue to bring our vision and mission to life – our heartfelt thanks to you all!

the YEAR AHEAD

SWAN has lots of exciting work underway and we're looking forward to forging new paths, connections and growth in the 2019-2020 year!

PHOTOVOICE II

SWAN's successful "Chocolate or Chicken Bones" exhibit is due to be shown at SFU in October 2019

STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Increasing collaborative partnerships with broader community groups, migrant rights groups & other stakeholders

LUSH PROJECT LAUNCH

"Harming While Trying to Help" – through a video, guidebook & interactive website, this project will raise awareness and provide much-needed critique about the anti-trafficking rescue industry. Due to be released in the Spring of 2020.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Innovating new approaches to law reform & systems change to increase safety, health & inclusion for im/migrant women engaged in sex work

PEER ENGAGEMENT

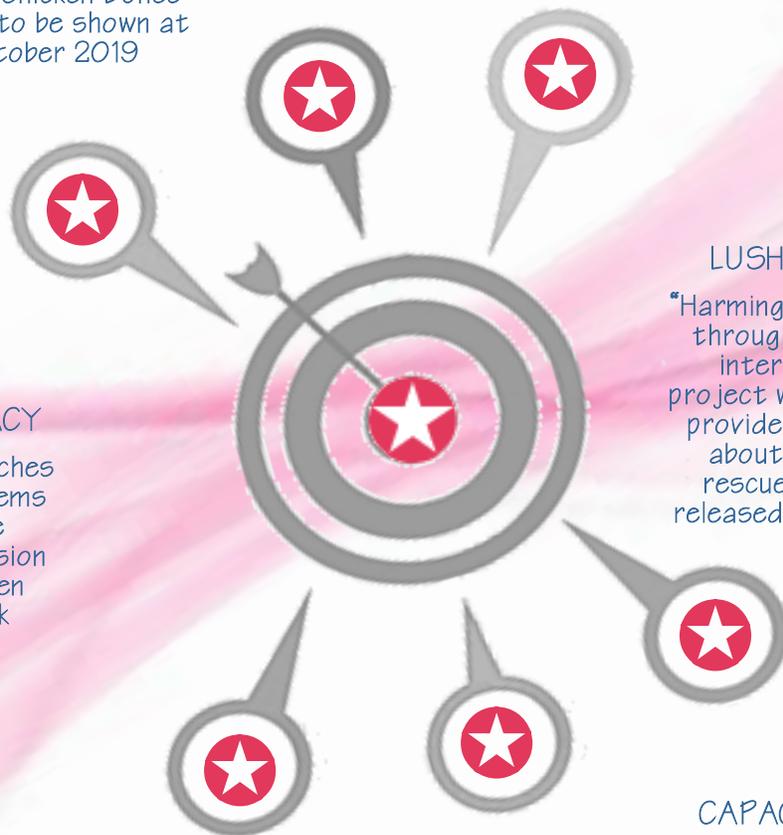
Ongoing initiatives to increase peer involvement in SWAN's operations & governance

PROVINCIAL BAD DATE REPORTING SYSTEM

In partnership with four other sex-work organizations in BC, SWAN is seeking funding for a provincial system for sex workers to collect & share information regarding violent/abusive clients.

CAPACITY EXPANSION

Strategic planning, strengthening infrastructure, rebranding & a new website



our FUNDERS

We remain grateful for our funders – our work would not be possible without their ongoing support.



our FINANCIALS

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVES NETWORK (SWAN VAN) SOCIETY

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Year Ended March 31, 2019

	2019	2018
RECEIPTS		
City of Vancouver	\$ 76,040	\$ 24,800
Department of Justice Canada	62,462	53,037
Other revenue	618	6,101
Public Health Agency of Canada	55,375	41,500
Donations	1,505	1,867
Macaids	-	20,000
Lush	-	13,000
	196,000	160,305
EXPENSES		
Accounting fees	2,116	1,968
Employee benefits	3,934	3,912
Insurance	1,741	1,749
Interest and bank charges	201	174
Office	949	1,915
Program expenditures	4,096	13,443
Rental	5,176	4,774
Salaries and wages	124,579	110,371
Telephone	1,471	1,325
Outreach Travel	2,291	2,516
Utilities	1,929	2,245
	148,483	144,392
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	\$ 47,517	\$ 15,913

ways to **SUPPORT OUR WORK**

SWAN is a non-profit and registered charitable organization (CR# 853176295RR0001). There are always opportunities to get involved – publicly or anonymously – to support our work and advocacy for the communities of im/migrant women we serve.

Volunteer Inquiries: 778-865-6343 / netreach@swanvancouver.ca

Donate via [CanadaHelps](#) or by mail; cheques can be made payable to “SWAN Vancouver Society” and tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.

ways to **CONNECT**



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[WeChat](#)



[Instagram](#)



SWAN’s new website is on its way and will be launched by January 2020 – stay tuned!



SWAN Vancouver

Culturally-Specialized Supports & Advocacy
for Im/Migrant Women Engaged in Indoor Sex Work

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Vancouver, BC V6B 0R1

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