

## Marathi VAMP Institute

A three –day VAMP Institute was conducted in Marathi for sex workers from East Maharashtra. The Marathi Institute was held in Aurangabad with 27 sex workers from sex worker collectives including Aadhar Bahudeshiya Sanstha Amalner, Mahila JagrutiSevabhavi Sanstha Parbhani, Godavari Foundation Jalgaon, PrernaSamajik Sanstha Vaijapur and Marathwada Gramin Vikas Sanstha Vaijapur and the NGO Indian Red Cross Society Nagpur. The Institute will enable collectives to identify and strengthen the second line leadership of sex workers to come forward and advocate for their rights.

A vibrant discussion ensued during the sessions. Young sex workers expressed a need for dignity of their work and freedom from violence and stigma. There were discussions on whether sex work was exploitation or whether it could be considered work.

Several mediums were used in this workshop, it was primarily discussion and activity based. Sangram's graphic book called Maya's story was used to begin some honest conversations on what we understand as 'honour', and that led to sharing of our opinions and stigmas around sex work, on its own. On the second day,community empowerment was discussed in detail and the ways in which our learning can be taken back to the larger community was addressed. The documentary 'ZindaLaash' was screened to address the stereotypes about sex workers which are propagated through Bollywood movies.

In the coming months, follow up training workshops will be held with the young leadership to strengthen their understanding on human rights, sex worker rights movement globally and in South Asia. Exchange visits will also be held to expose them to the collectivization process.

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