



## AESHA Outreach Updates

### AESHA Operation Updates

The AESHA team has been working to ensure the safety of our participants, staff, and communities during COVID-19. We are excited to be back and able to conduct interviews, clinical testing, and support participants via outreach under careful safety protocols!

- During COVID-19, we have been prioritizing interviews by phone as much as possible. For anyone who is unable/not comfortable participating by phone, we are now able to book in-person appointments at our office Mondays-Wednesdays!

- We have resumed clinical visits with our nursing team, and are available by appointment only. Our outreach team is continuing to assist in booking appointments.

- Regular outreach has resumed! Our outreach team has been connecting with participants, following COVID-19 protocol, and are offering weekly support, referrals, and drop-offs of supplies (e.g., condoms, harm reduction supplies, masks).

### AESHA Outreach Updates

- AESHA Outreach has continued to liaise with community partners and outreach services. We have been working closely with the MAP Van to share information, collaborate on outreach, address safety concerns, and access harm reduction supplies. The MAP Van has recently increased its services to include daytime outreach and regular evening outreach. The MAP Van has been on the ground up to 18 hours a day to reach more workers.

- The outdoor outreach team has recently connected with the newly formed Kingsway Community Station, a drop-in space for workers behind the Church of Nazarene at Kingsway and Windsor. The Kingsway Community Station is currently seeking donations of red dresses and other clothing. Those with donations can contact our outreach team at 778-891-6252.

- Multilingual outreach staff continue to support managed indoor spaces by phone and through drop-offs of supplies. We have been excited to learn about re-opening stages of massage parlours and are happy to continue supporting multilingual participants by phone or at our research office.

## Staff Highlights



Kate Lumsdon (she/they) has joined the AESHA team as project coordinator. Kate has been working in harm reduction and women's health for the past 12 years, including with Raincity as manager of the Budzy program. Kate is especially interested in ways we can shape policy and practice on the ground and is excited about the focus of AESHA on supporting safer working conditions, human rights, and decriminalization efforts for sex workers.



Jennie Pearson (she/her) has joined the AESHA team as a Research Assistant and Community Engagement Associate. She will be collaborating with both the qualitative and quantitative research team on knowledge translation and sharing, creative storytelling projects, and broader community engagement initiatives. Jennie's past work experience ranges from storytelling and journalism to gender equity campaign work and resource development for frontline sex-work organizations such as PACE society.



We are super excited that Alka Murphy (she/her) has taken on the role of AESHA Project Coordinator for the Qualitative arm. Alka will be coordinating all AESHA qualitative and arts-based research activities. Alka's interviewing and qualitative research skills, years of experience working with AESHA and two decades of experience in providing and coordinating experiential, harm reduction and asset-based frontline support services for sex workers are a huge asset to the AESHA Qualitative Team. Alka will also continue to work as part of the AESHA outreach team.

### Thank you to Sarah, Minshu, and Sherry!

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of Sarah Moreheart, long-time AESHA/SHAWNA Research Coordinator, as well as Minshu Mo and Sherry Wu from our multilingual outreach team, as they transition to new opportunities. Sarah will be transitioning to a role with AESHA as a PhD student. Both Minshu and Sherry will be moving on to new social work opportunities, and will be staying on with AESHA as casual staff. Sarah, Minshu and Sherry have been critical team members with AESHA over the years, and will be greatly missed on the frontlines! Thank you so much for all your contributions!

## Research Highlights

- To better understand the impacts of COVID-19 for sex workers, we have implemented a new COVID-19 interview supplement in AESHA. Almost 100 participants have already been interviewed about their experiences with COVID-19 and its impacts on access to resources and work safety. We look forward to sharing initial findings with our participants, community partners, and policymakers soon!
- The qualitative team is launching a new research project in collaboration with the Corner and HIM/HUSTLE exploring occupational health and safety of Men Sex Workers in Metro Vancouver. We have worked closely with community partners to develop the first stages of this project and are getting ready to conduct interviews in later August. We look forward to sharing results in the coming year.



• In December 2019, we launched the report “Harms of End-Demand Criminalization: Impact of Canada’s PCEPA Laws on Sex Workers’ Safety, Health & Human Rights.” The report is based on 9 years of AESHA community-based research, and aims to address how Canada’s new law, PCEPA, impacts the working conditions of sex workers. The report found:

- No improvement in rates of reporting violence
- No improvement in access to health services
- 21% reduction in access to community-led support services
- 26% reporting negative changes in working conditions following the new law
- Enhanced inequities for racialized migrant sex workers
- Third party criminalization undermines sex workers safety and rights.

[Click here to read the full report](http://www.cgshe.ca/policy/policy-reports-open-letters/), or visit <http://www.cgshe.ca/policy/policy-reports-open-letters/>

We shared this report with the federal Department of Justice, the Prime Minister’s office and all MPs and Senators. The AESHA outreach team will continue to distribute and discuss the report with participants and other stakeholders. For access to printed copies, please email [jennie.pearson@cgshe.ubc.ca](mailto:jennie.pearson@cgshe.ubc.ca)



• This past May, we submitted to the General Recommendation on Trafficking of Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration (TWGCGM). Our submission, sent to The United Nations Human Rights Watch Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), draws on community based-research from AESHA’s cohort participants. Our report requests that new UN recommendations:

- Do not conflate trafficking in persons with sex work;
- Do not conflate migrant sex work with trafficking; and
- Acknowledge the harms of end-demand approaches; and
- Support the full decriminalization of all aspects of the sex industry

To read the full CEDAW submission, [click here](http://www.cgshe.ca/policy/policy-reports-open-letters/), or visit <http://www.cgshe.ca/policy/policy-reports-open-letters/>

References:

- 1 Goldenberg SM, Liyanage R, Braschel M. (2020). Structural barriers to condom access in a community-based cohort of sex workers in Vancouver, Canada: influence of policing, violence and end-demand criminalisation. *BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health*.
- 2 Goldenberg SM, Amram O, Braschel M, Moreheart S, Shannon K (2020). Urban gentrification and declining access to HIV/STI, sexual health, and outreach services amongst women sex workers between 2010-2014: Results of a community-based longitudinal cohort. *Health & Place*
- 3 Goldenberg SM, Watt S, Braschel M, Hayashi K, Moreheart S, Shannon K. (2020). Police-related barriers to harm reduction linked to non-fatal overdose amongst sex workers who use drugs: Results of a community-based cohort in Metro Vancouver, Canada. *International Journal of Drug Policy*
- 4 McBride, B, Shannon, K, Murphy, A, Wu, S, Erickson M, Goldenberg SM & Krüsi, A (2020). Harms of third party criminalisation under end-demand legislation: undermining sex workers’ safety and rights, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*

## Research Highlights- Recently Published Papers

Our team has recently published a number of additional new research articles showing that:

- 20 percent of AESHA participants face challenges accessing condoms. This disproportionately impacts sexual and gender minorities and those facing workplace violence or harassment, and those who work in outdoor locations<sup>1</sup>. These findings demonstrate the need to increase access to sex work-tailored HIV/STI prevention.
- Using geographic mapping and questionnaire data, we found that increasing gentrification of Vancouver neighbourhoods was linked to reductions in HIV/STI testing, sexual health, and support services for sex workers. This was despite overall increases in HIV services during the same period<sup>2</sup>. These findings suggest an urgent need to increase access to safe, affordable housing as well as outreach supports to increase access to health and safety services where sex workers live and work.
- Among participants who use drugs, 1 in 3 report having experienced an overdose. Police-related barriers to harm reduction were strongly linked to high rates of overdose. The most commonly reported barriers included difficulty accessing drugs, rushed smoke or injection, or police confiscation of harm reduction equipment<sup>3</sup>. Rather than policing those who use drugs, there is a need for increased harm reduction services that are gender-sensitive, trauma-informed, and led by and designed for sex workers.
- Our recent qualitative work found that most third parties who were interviewed as part of our PCEPA evaluation were current or former sex workers<sup>4</sup>. Our findings showed that third parties provided client screening, security and sexual health resources for sex workers, yet end-demand laws restricted condom availability and access to protections in case of violence. This undermines sex workers' safety and rights.

## Career Opportunities: Join Our Team!

We are currently seeking 1-2 new multilingual (Mandarin/Cantonese) staff members to join our outreach team supporting in-call sex workers. We are seeking passionate, community orientated individuals with basic sexual health knowledge/experience and experience with marginalized communities. If you have this experience and are interested in this exciting opportunity with us, we would love to hear from you!

To see the full job posting and details on how to apply, visit <http://www.cgshe.ca/about-us/career-opportunities/>

If you're interested in participating in the AESHA project or would like more information, please contact us:

778-891-6252  
aesha@cgshe.ubc.ca  
www.cgshe.ca