



Implemented by Oxfam Novib and Hivos, Voice is an innovative grant facility that supports rightsholders and groups facing marginalisation and discrimination in their efforts to exert influence in accessing productive and social services and political participation. Led by the mantra *Nothing about us Without Us* or *NOW-US!*, Voice stand for an inclusive world where empowered rightsholders are able to express their views and demand their rights for responsive and inclusive societies. These rightsholders include people with disabilities, women at risk, indigenous people and ethnic minorities, vulnerable elderly and youth and LGBTI people. Voice works to accelerate achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 10, which envisions “social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status”. It also works to address SDG 3,4,5 and 8.

Gender
equality
& women's
rights

Trans-
parency &
account-
ability

Inclusive
and sus-
tainable
economy

Nothing about us without us

Since 2017 to date, Voice has supported a total of 400 grantee projects in ten countries in West and East Africa and Southeast Asia. This includes Influencing grants to foster policy and/or practical changes at community, local, national and regional level as well as small so-called Empowerment grants to bolster the voices of emerging groups, which have just started working together. To reinforce their grant-making Voice also has a Linking and Learning component which is on its way to become heir unique legacy.

West and East Africa and Southeast Asia

According to [Civicus](#) obstructed and repressed and closed (Laos).

Two voices within Voice

Two voices. Two very different organisations. Both Voice partners. One a regional network in Asia, the other a small association in Indonesia. Both showing the power of *NOthing about us Without Us (NOW-US!)* in practice. The first group is the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers – APNSW, a multi-country Influencing grantee based in Thailand, and Yayasan Annisa Swasti (YASANTI), a small Empowerment grantee based in Indonesia.





Raising awareness on discrimination

APNSW was established as a sex-worker led platform to mobilise and unite. Over the years, APNSW has reached out to sex workers in over 22 countries in Asia promoting the health and human rights of sex workers in Asia and the Pacific. With a Voice Influencing grant APNSW has been able to strengthen its programme to raise awareness on how to strategically use the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) at national level, which includes research, documentation, advocacy and diffusion.

Empowering women workers

YASANTI on the other hand is the first women-led NGO in Indonesia to empower women workers to stand up for their rights through formal and cultural ways. YASANTI has been engaged with Indonesian women and workers movements who have been struggling under various political conditions creating

different challenges and opportunities. A Voice Empowerment grant helped mobilise women porters at local markets to negotiate better working conditions, successfully.

Linking and Learning

“The effects of the Linking and Learning Programme are good for us. Through joining the Linking and Learning Camp in Bali we learned how to organise a Photo Exhibition for YASANTI's anniversary. In Bali, we received valuable inputs from the participants and the facilitator. Moreover, we enjoyed the video and photo editing workshop. It was great and helped us to improve the quality of the documentation of Yasanti's activities.”

Lesson learnt

- YASANTI's influencing was so successful in supporting the empowerment of the women porters that they started asking what's next once their project ends. It created a desire and hunger among the women porters to do more of their own organising and influencing. Voice has responded by introducing a new (sub-) grant type called an Empowerment Accelerator or Graduation grants, open only to previous successful Empowerment grantees, to further support successful projects in deepening or broadening empowerment processes.
- What the APNSW project shows is the need to foster dialogue and dissent not just between civil society, governments and private sector but also within civil society itself. Many civil society organisations - including women's rights organisations- still do not accept sex worker rights as legitimate or a feminist issue. It is however precisely the voices of

Hearing from the rightsholders directly....

Four professional sex-work activists explore the use of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in their work. [Read the stories of Sherry, Selvi, Simran and Kusum.](#)

groups such as sex workers who bring much needed nuanced solutions to social problems in order to truly leave no one behind. In response, Voice has sought to further “unpeel” the many intersectional layers within the five rightsholder groups and encourage more dialogue and amplification through specific Calls for Proposals and Linking and Learning activities. ●

Learn more:



[CEDAW for advocacy](#)
[Only rights can stop the wrongs](#)
[The voices of sex workers also count!](#)
[More stories from Voice](#)



Video: [Meet the women porters in Indonesia](#)
Video: [YASANTI shares stories at the Global Voice Inclusion Innovation Indaba, Voice's annual learning event](#)

