

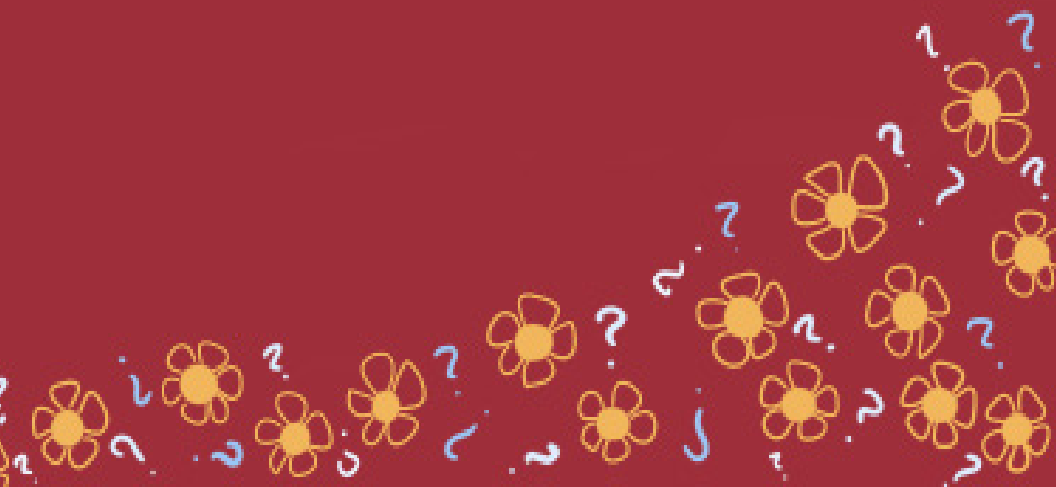


Massage Parlor Outreach Project

Community

FAQS

May 2021



[1]

Who are we?

我们是谁？

我们是按摩工人互助小组。我们是一个志愿者团体。我们中的大多数人是第一/第二代中国移民。我们中的一些人也来自越南、南韩和其他国家。

We're a group of volunteers. Most of us are first/second generation Chinese immigrants. Some of us also come from Vietnam, South Korea, and other countries.

作为社区成员，我们希望与工人建立联系，并将人们与同一行业的其他人联系起来，以便工人能够参与进一个互相支持的网络。在外联期间，我们可能会询问工人可能正在寻找的任何需求或资源。在过去，我们帮助和支持工人进行疫苗预约和医生看诊的预约，特别是用英语浏览医疗系统。我们还帮助支持工人获得失业资源、政府服务、移民和劳工权利信息。

As community members, we hope to build relationship with workers and connect folks to others in the same profession, so that workers can be plugged into a support network. During outreach, we might inquire about any needs or resources that workers may be looking for. In the past, we've supported workers in making vaccine appointments and doctors' appointments, especially with navigating the medical system in English. We've also supported workers in accessing unemployment resources, governmental services, immigration and labor rights information.



[2]

How did MPOP begin?

MPOP is formed by a group of community members whose interests center Asian migration and diasporic experiences, as well as labor and immigration rights. MPOP believes the value that sex work is work, and hope that establishing MPOP will spread these ideas to more communities and more people. We also hope to support more Asian immigrants to understand their worker rights and legal rights. In particular, the volunteers' concern for the sex workers in Seattle's International District and their desire to help sex workers have led them to establish MPOP.

MPOP is an organization that brings together like-minded people to pool their efforts and resources, and to organize and find more volunteers to help more Asian immigrants fight for their legal rights and the right to work. It is also possible to reach out to more people in need as an organization, rather than as individuals, and let them know where they can get help. The growing hatred against Asians has also made volunteers more aware of the importance of being organized to support people and to let their voices be heard.

[3]

What are our values?
What is our mission?

MPOP seeks to center and uplift the voices of massage parlor workers, especially where they are ignored, dismissed, or misrepresented. We believe in their stories and support their self-determination. We honor the work they do at the intersection of care services and sex services. At MPOP, we believe that sex work is work. Not all massage parlor workers engage in sex work, but as we stand in solidarity with all massage parlor workers, we seek to decriminalize sex work and reject “savior mentality.”

i *What is savior mentality?*

Savior mentality is the belief that taking women out of sex work is rescuing them. In the context of massage parlor work, this often goes along with pushing many false narratives that workers are either victims of human trafficking or being forced to participate in some way, when that is not the case.

Some of our other goals are to facilitate cultural connections, build a safety network in the community, and support healthy working environments. We strive to uplift the voices of workers and address language barriers and make sure accessibility needs are met. While doing our work, we make great efforts to hold ourselves accountable to what we are speaking about. We recognize that each worker has a different story and that there are many different migration journeys and narratives. Each worker has their own unique identity and background and we want to respect that. While we have our political and social beliefs as an organization, we understand and expect that not all workers will share our beliefs.

[4]

What identities/intersections do workers hold?

A common and harmful stereotype is that Asian massage workers are victims of sex or labor trafficking and that police officers act as saviors to rescue workers. Workers talk about choosing this line of work to have better control over their earnings/schedules, or to see themselves as helping professionals, or because they are trying to escape exploitative working conditions in China or Domestic violence (DV) in relationships at home.

When the Seattle police “rescued” the workers, the reason they gave was “sex trafficking operations,” which is clearly directed at the workers’ work, not human trafficking. This is the reason. Please put yourself in their shoes, abandon the victim/savior mindset and consider whether the workers were really saved? Or even if their lives are really better after being saved? Please stop reading now and think about this question. The so-called “saved” workers have lost their homes, their livelihoods, and their jobs and incomes. The so-called saviors also push workers into a more dangerous situation where their safety,

income, housing, etc. are exploited and not guaranteed, ultimately making them more vulnerable to outrageous exploitation and sexual violence. They are workers, and sex work is work. Sex workers should not fall victim to the “public safety” discourse shaped by politics and those in power.

“The Real Lives of America’s Chinese Masseuses,” written by MPOP core organizer Shuxuan Zhou and published on the Sixth Tone website, tells the story of two massage parlor workers. Their identities, their experiences, why they chose to come to America, why they finally chose this job, and the injustices and treatment they encountered in the workplace.

The workers can have all kinds of jobs. They can also be daughters, mothers, partners, and so on. They can hold any identities, but they should not be and are not victims, nor do they need a “savior” to define their work and lives. Their stories and voices should be more widely known.

[5]

What impacts does the model minority myth have?

What is the model minority myth?

The model minority myth is the idea that Asian Americans are uniformly successful. It involves a large degree of stereotyping Asian Americans as studious, smart and hard working, and although these may sound positive, it can have many negative harmful impacts on ALL minority groups. Additionally, it completely ignores oppressive immigration processes and draws unreasonable and flawed comparisons between Asian Americans and Black Americans by making it seem like 'anti black racism is Black people's responsibility to "just work harder."' Thus it creates a conflict between different minority groups and perpetuates anti-blackness and classism both in

the United States and globally.

More about the harms and impacts of the model minority myth...

This myth harms Asian Americans because it makes it seem like they are not affected by systemic racism, or that they have completely overcome discrimination, when, in reality, they have not. It stereotypes and generalizes an entire group of people and ignores their diversity. By clumping all Asian Americans together, the model minority myth ignores the differences in both the cultural and economic circumstances of different Asian groups when in reality there exists much variation in culture, lifestyle and economic compensation amongst different Asian American groups.

[6]

What are the definitions
of sex work and sex
trafficking?

Sex work is...

Any type of labor where the explicit goal is to produce a sexual or erotic response in the client.

Sex work includes prostitution, and it also includes other things like erotic dancing, pro-dom/pro-sub work, webcam work, sensual massage, adult film, phone sex, being a sugar baby, etc.

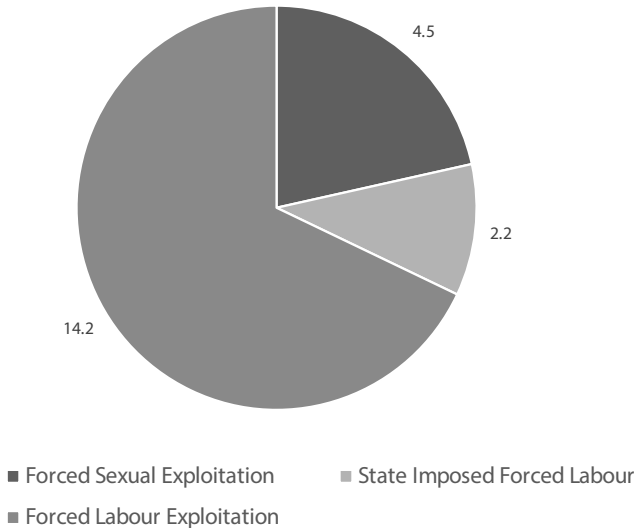
What is forced labor or
trafficking?

The use of force, fraud or coercion to compel a person into any form of work against their will.

Sex trafficking is...

The use of force, fraud or coercion to compel a person into any sex work against their will. It also can involve the illegal transportation of people from one country or area to another for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is a very prominent form of forced labor.

Types of Forced Labour (in Millions of People)



“21 million people are now victims of forced labour, ILO says”. International Labour Organization. June 2012. http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_181961/lang--en/index.htm

[7]

Why are police raids harmful?

What are police raids and their outcomes?

Police raids at massage parlors are often sting operations where the police go undercover or use the element of surprise to document and arrest sex workers. Items and possessions may go missing and cannot be accounted for. During 2019, in King County alone, 22 massage parlors were raided. As a result of these raids, many people (parlor owners and workers) were arrested and charged with soliciting prostitution and even more displaced.

Why are they ineffective?

Even if police raids were meant “to help people who have been trafficked into sex work,” they are not an effective way to do this at all. When raids occur at massage parlors or

brothels, they lead to arrests, detention, incarceration and even the deportation of those caught. Many times the raids occur under the false premise that massage parlor workers have been trafficked into this work, because the police have a misconception that sex work is not genuine work and they don't allow Asian women to have self-autonomy. The police ignore their voice when they say they are willingly partaking in their line of work.

Why are they harmful?

Raids are harmful because they displace people and charge them with crimes for doing work like anyone else. Sex work is work and people shouldn't be penalized for working. Raids can also lead to deportation and those who remain after the raids lose their source of income and their livelihood.

[8]

How are the politics
of MPOP and workers
distinguished?

What do we stand for?

While we have our political and social beliefs as an organization, we understand and expect that not all workers will share our beliefs.

We stand in solidarity with all low-wage immigrant workers. We stand in solidarity with our Black, Latinx, or Indigenous siblings who are impacted by police brutality, and who live in and adjacent to the Chinatown-International District (CID). We stand with our immigrant siblings who are detained and deported by police, the FBI, and ICE. We stand with our houseless siblings who shelter in the CID together for collective safety and community. And we stand with massage parlor workers who have been systematically arrested and

harassed by police. We refuse to allow yet another instance of wanton white supremacist violence to justify the increase and expansion of law enforcement into our neighborhood.

We encourage policies that advocate for and alongside what massage parlor workers want and need to be empowered and safe from harm. We demand the decriminalization of sex work, and recognition of sex workers and immigrants in massage parlors as legitimate essential workers providing an in-demand service. And we demand the defunding of the Seattle Police Department and the reallocation of monies to housing and social services in the CID. Let's respect massage parlor workers and fight the harm, not our own people.

As people in community with each other, we strive to respect and understand each others' beliefs while continuing to educate and advocate to address systemic oppressions.

[9]

What Projects Do We Have? What Do We Do During Outreach?

Since 2018, MPOP's outreach efforts has led to ongoing communication with a number of massage parlor workers. As our network grows, we are also conducting outreach to other areas in the region by presenting zines with local resources and explainers around local events, as well as questionnaires to help open conversation about the workers' needs. We then follow up to try to meet those needs by connecting them to resources and services, assisting with translations and other support, and planning educational and social events.



We also strive to uplift Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women's businesses or organizations established to provide a particular service. We also want to find ways to address AAPI women's social and economic struggles as well.

[10]

How Can You Volunteer or Support Us?

You can reach MPOP by our social media accounts.

Facebook – Massage Parlor Outreach
Project 女工互助小组



Always Google us! Works better
than links!



Instagram – Massage Parlor
Outreach Project

Donations

Donations are accepted & preferred on CashApp (due to transaction limits on Venmo).

通过CashApp接受捐款，CashApp是首选，因为Venmo有交易限制。

please notate donations as “MPOP”
on our cashapp

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MPOP Seattle

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