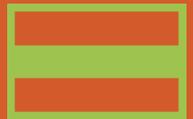


An Evaluation of Games for Advocacy

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED IN
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA





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Open Society Foundations (OSF)' Sexual Health and Rights Program (SHARP) commissioned *Cops and Rubbers* as an advocacy game to accompany their 2012 report *Criminalizing Condoms*. This report, also funded by OSF and written in 2016, is the first international evaluation of *Cops and Rubbers* game as a creative tool for advocacy in public health and human rights.

To learn more, please visit:

- <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/public-health-program>
- <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/criminalizing-condoms>
- <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/cops-rubbers>
- <http://copsandrubbers.com>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Serious games have significant potential to impact health beliefs and attitudes, because players can test out new ideologies within a game, without the high risk associated with doing so in a real-world scenario. As a result of a dearth in evidence that addresses the potential of games for advocacy in health and human rights, humanitarian organizations may be hesitant to use and promote games as advocacy tools. This study aims to contribute qualitative evidence of games as a viable communication platform for advocacy in health and human rights. To do this, the research team used *one game* (*Cops and Rubbers*) about *one human rights and health issue* (the condoms as evidence practice) and *one target audience* (human rights advocates in Cape Town, South Africa) to illustrate the potential of games in this sphere.

In countries around the world – including South Africa – police carry out legal and illegal searches of sex workers and confiscate or destroy condoms found in their possession. *Cops and Rubbers* is both a game and an interactive demonstration of this international policing practice. 56 human rights advocates in South Africa participated in the focus groups, which were designed utilizing control and treatment groups. The control groups received Open Society Foundations (OSF)'s *Criminalizing Condoms* report, which represents a standard method of advocacy, while the treatment group received the *Cops and Rubbers* game, which was meant to represent a creative, non-traditional tool of advocacy. Researchers used a constant comparison analytical method to develop emergent themes from the transcribed audio recording of each focus group.

In assessing perception of games as creative tools for advocacy, participants shared their thoughts on standard methods of advocacy for their given context. These included: community-based outreach (workshops, spaces and clubs), public demonstrations and protests, media, collaboration and referencing, helplines, theater, and games. In evaluating *Cops and Rubbers* as a creative advocacy tool, the game emerged as particularly useful in breaking barriers related to stigma and discrimination. Multiple participants in the focus groups felt that the game would be most beneficial in impacting those



Cops and Rubbers game displaying a police consequence card accompanied with a real-world statistic (left) and *Criminalizing Condoms* report cover (right)

who have little to no experience or no understanding of the challenges of sex workers. Although quantitative findings between the report and the game groups comparing game versus report experience were largely ambiguous, participants were generally more expressive in describing emotions elicited by the game. They expressed a range of emotions after playing, including: sympathy, empathy, awkwardness, hope, sadness, disappointment, and frustration.

General recommendations moving forward include tailoring the game (translation to different languages) and using the game to complement other standard advocacy methods. In addition, an important next step would be to further test the game directly with those it is designed to reach: policy makers.

Although standard advocacy tools remain useful for their potential benefits, this evaluation pointed to games as having more potential in changing perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of persons who were not previously familiar with the topic being advocated.

INTRODUCTION

Clark Abt (1970, p. 9), being one of the first to define the term, proposed that serious games “have an explicit and carefully thought-out educational purpose and are not intended to be played primarily for amusement.” Later, others extended this definition to include “a process initiated in a serious context or controlled environment, which serves a serious purpose and which is mainly supported by the use of games” (Le Compte, Watson & Elizondo, 2014). Such games are often employed to expose people to different worldviews and new contexts that would be beyond their reach in their daily lives (Corti, 2006). Built into the experience are rules of success and failure, mimicking, to a large degree, the challenges of the real world. However, players can test out new ideologies within a game without the high risk associated with doing so in a real-world scenario (Stokes, Seggerman, & Rejeski, 2006). This is the potency and potential of serious games.

By extension, serious games for health, also referred to as health games (Emmerich, Masuch & Schmidt, 2014), can be utilized to promote disease prevention strategies, increase knowledge and awareness, and change attitudes and behavior (Connolly, Boyle, MacArthur, Hainey & Boyle, 2012) by targeting health care providers and specific populations (Luz et al., 2014). They are considered useful in impacting health outcomes of specific populations and are therefore employed as a tool to increase access to health information (Carcioppolo, Wendorf, & Tran, 2015).

Most traditional health interventions simply do not offer the distinctive features and techniques that are naturally embedded within games, such as interactivity, hands-on learning, and role-playing to solve problems (Boyle, Connolly, & Hainey, 2011; Peng, 2009). When role-playing, people must – in essence – become a character, and by doing so, they begin to understand and identify with that character on a personal level (Peng, 2009). As such, players have been impacted by games most commonly in terms of their feelings and attitudes, awareness and knowledge, mental, physiological and behavioral changes, and social skills (Connolly et al., 2012). In addition, in health topics such as sexual and reproductive health, role-playing in games provides the added element of confidentiality (to reduce risk of stigma) and the capacity to tailor interventions to different audiences with different needs based on their background, including their gender, age, sexual orientation, and race (Desmet, Shegog, Van Ryckeghem, Crombez, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2015).

However, there is still not enough evidence of how components of the game may affect participants mentally (thoughts), emotionally (attitudes), and impact behavior change (Emmerich, 2014). In addition, evidence is needed to improve the user experience of the game, which includes understanding characteristics of players and their motivations to play (Ivory, 2013). To make these determinations, evaluation – by way of conducting user tests and experiments – is critical but not yet prioritized (Emmerich, 2014).

One meta-analysis on the effects of seven games for health attempted to measure both the behavior change caused by the health games as well as the game characteristics included in the games. Results for behavior change were significant and positive but small for knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavioral intentions knowledge (Desmet, Shegog, Van Ryckeghem, Crombez, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2015). No significant effect was found for attitude. In terms of game characteristics, the study suggested that more health games could benefit from individual tailoring over group targeting along with adaptability of challenges based on the participant’s ability to learn, as opposed to one ultimate challenge. Furthermore, role-playing and the use of narratives demonstrated higher impact on people’s awareness, capacity building, intentions, and attitudes than quizzes, which are a standard method of increasing knowledge (Desmet, Shegog, Van Ryckeghem, Crombez, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2015).

Beyond games for health and health promotion, there is even less formal research that addresses the potential of games for advocacy in health and human rights. How do games impact people’s perceptions of pro-social behavior toward real-world issues, and how do advocates and activists view the use of games for advocacy and activism? As a result of this dearth in evidence and experience, humanitarian organizations and their partners may be hesitant to use and promote games as advocacy tools. This study aims to contribute qualitative evidence of games as a viable communication platform for advocacy in health and human rights using *Cops and Rubbers*, a game and interactive demonstration of the international policing practice of using condoms as evidence of prostitution.

BACKGROUND

STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of this study was to evaluate games as an advocacy tool in health and human rights. To do this, the research team used one game, one human rights and health issue, and one target audience to illustrate the potential of games in this sphere. The study used *Cops and Rubbers*, a game about the condoms as evidence practice, and evaluated it with human rights advocates in Cape Town, South Africa.

More specifically, we aimed to:

1. Assess the potential impact of *Cops and Rubbers* or features of the game (game experience) on individuals' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes relating to the condoms as evidence policy
2. Understand the benefits of *Cops and Rubbers* for advocacy
3. Understand the barriers of *Cops and Rubbers* for advocacy
4. Understand the potential of *Cops and Rubbers* as a creative tool for advocacy as compared with standard advocacy tools and methods

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

In countries around the world – including South Africa – police carry out legal and illegal searches of sex workers and confiscate or destroy condoms found in their possession. In many cases, possession of condoms has been used by prosecutors as evidence of prostitution. Treating condoms as contraband forces sex workers to choose between safeguarding their health and avoiding police harassment or arrest. Sex workers often have to make a difficult choice between protecting their health and avoiding confrontation and harassment from the police (Shields, 2012). Despite awareness of condoms' high effectiveness in preventing transmission of HIV and STDs, law enforcement in countries like South Africa routinely arrest individuals possessing condoms under suspicion of prostitution, thus forcing sex workers to make the difficult choice as to whether or not to carry condoms. Furthermore, social stigma associated with sex work means that sex workers often must keep their occupation a secret and thus limiting their access to a support system, both informally and formally in the form of health services (Fick, 2005).



GAME OVERVIEW

Cops and Rubbers is a game that highlights the negative consequences of the international policing practice of using condoms as evidence of prostitution has on sex workers, including increased vulnerability to HIV infection. *Cops and Rubbers* was created in 2012 for the Open Society Public Health Program as part of its Sexual Health and Rights Project (SHARP). This game is based on the Open Society Foundations' 2012 report *Criminalizing Condoms: How Policing Practices Put Sex Workers and HIV Services at Risk*, which draws from research conducted in the following six countries: Kenya, Namibia, Russia, South Africa, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

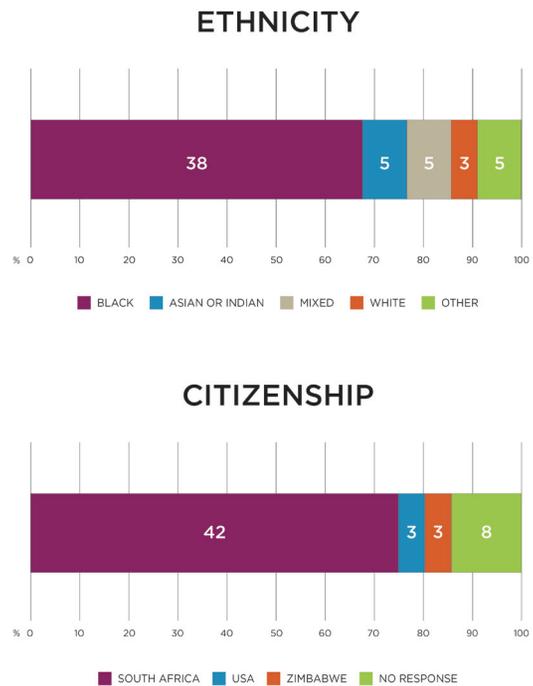
The objectives of the game are:

- To educate people and give them a more holistic understanding of sex work, including the economic reasons people engage in sex work and recognizing it as a job and source of income
- To raise awareness and to sensitize people to the practice of criminalizing condoms
- To allow people to experience common situations that sex workers face due to criminalization of condoms
- To inform and educate young people, citizens, and people with the power to make decisions as well as to affect change, like law enforcement and policy makers

METHODOLOGY

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Researchers recruited study participants who identified as human rights advocates in South Africa and invited them to participate in the focus groups. Participants were given a post-discussion questionnaire in which they responded to brief demographic and background questions. There were 56 participants in the research project with individuals self-identifying in total as 21 males and 26 females plus 9 participants who did not respond. The ages ranged from 18-59 (average=35). The majority were citizens of South Africa (N=42) with other participants from the United States (N=3) and Zimbabwe (N=3). The majority also self-identified as Black (N=38), Asian or Indian (N=5), Mixed (N=5), White (N=3), and Other (N=5).



Figures 1 and 2: Participant ethnicity and citizenship breakdown.

Note that the x-axis is marking percentage while the number inside the bar is the total number of participants.

It is important to note that in terms of gender and race some participants had difficulty identifying with the items provided in the questionnaire. Some participants who identify as transgender may have selected their gender at birth, their new gender, or opted not to answer. In terms of race, in South Africa typically only 3 races are recognized: White, Black, and Coloured. Therefore, some participants identified as Other, writing in 'coloured' in the space for explanation.

Participants were also asked some general background questions. Roughly half the participants thought that religion was either very (30.4%) or somewhat important (8.9%), a bit less than half thought religion was extremely (23.2%) or somewhat unimportant (12.5%), while 7% were neutral on the topic. Additionally, an important question in relation to the purpose of the research was to ascertain participants' prior awareness of the condoms as evidence policy. When asked if they had heard of the policy before participating in the study, most participants agreed (33.9% strongly agree, 5.4% somewhat agree, 5.4% agree), while about a third did not agree (25% strongly disagree; 7.1% disagree) and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

HAD HEARD OF THE ISSUE BEFORE PARTICIPATION

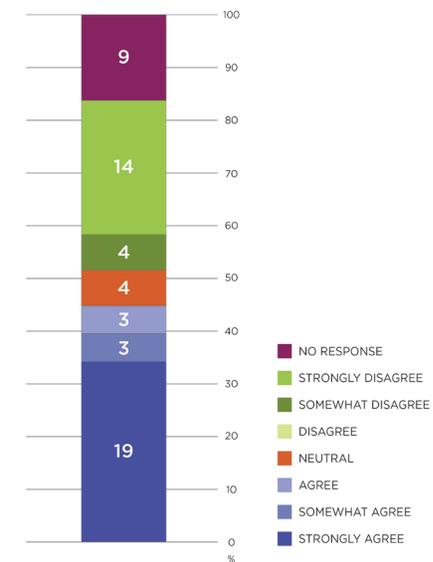


Figure 3: Participants breakdown regarding prior knowledge of condoms as evidence issue.

Note that the y-axis is marking percentage while the number inside the bar is the total number of participants.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The research was designed utilizing control and treatment groups. The control groups received the *Criminalizing Condoms* report, which represented a standard method of advocacy, while the treatment group received the *Cops and Rubbers* game, which represented a creative, non-traditional tool of advocacy. As discussed before, both the report and the game speak to the adverse effect the practice of using condoms as evidence of prostitution has on sex workers' health and human rights.

After participating in the assigned intervention (reading the report in the case of the 3 control groups or playing the game for the 6 treatment groups), participants completed the post-discussion survey to ascertain basic demographic and background information, as well as some questions about their intervention experience. In addition, some participants from the control group returned to play the game and to provide feedback comparing the two options (a special tenth focus group).

DATA ANALYSIS

Researchers used a constant comparison analytical method to develop emergent themes from the transcribed audio recording of each focus group. This method requires the research team to identify key words within the transcripts, which are later aggregated into categories and then grouped into overarching themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Researchers assessed the recurrence of these themes, which were continuously validated and improved until no new themes were found. To facilitate data coding and analysis, files were analyzed using Nvivo 11 qualitative software.



RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Note: All quotes listed in this section were provided by a South African advocacy leader who participated in the study.

DEFINITIONS OF ADVOCACY

The following is a summary of the definitions of advocacy that emerged from the focus group discussions with the control (report) group:

- Advocacy is the use of various strategies such as media engagement to push a certain agenda by targeting power structures, including decision-makers or policymakers.
- Advocates “speak for the people because there’s some people who can’t speak for themselves.”
- Advocacy is about shaping the minds of people, attempting to change mindsets and behavior, not only among politicians but also in communities.
- According to one participant “advocacy is the work of defending the community in different ways to uplift this notion of social justice.”

STANDARD METHODS OF ADVOCACY

Both control (report) and treatment (game) groups discussed methods of advocacy employed in their current work. This information was important to capture in order to assess current advocacy leaders' perceptions of the report as a resource or of the game as a creative tool for advocacy. The following eight methods or tools were discussed.

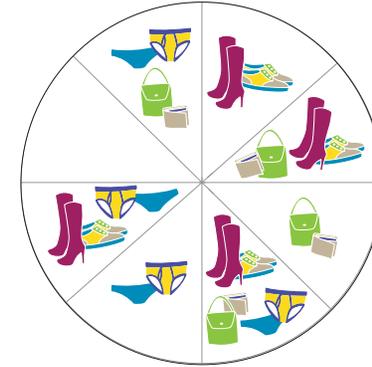
COMMUNITY-BASED OUTREACH (WORKSHOPS, SPACES AND CLUBS)

Participants mentioned workshops as one of the most common tools for advocacy. These workshops take many forms from formal training, including personal development skills training, to 'creative spaces' where persons could share real stories or testimonies with others, to support groups and clubs. In this context, the workshops targeted community members and mainly related to promoting sex worker rights and HIV treatment adherence. The workshops or spaces also trained community members in skills such as advocacy and campaign planning or provided soft skills such as anger management. Within the workshops category, participants also highlighted specific creative activities for advocacy, which included role-playing and DVD/movie screenings related to the particular issue on the table.

While some community-based outreach required members to visit the organization's office or designated location, other outreach took place in the communities.

"I was lucky enough to be here last week during International Sex Worker Rights Day, and we went out with the outreach team and some members of advocacy to set up an "Ask a Sex Worker" booth, in [location removed]... which was a very very busy area and we had flyers on sex worker myths, we had signs that people held and we took photos, and we had prepped goodie bags – of condoms and I forget what else... pamphlets, condoms, we had like sunglasses so there were incentive for people to stop by... but the point is it engaged them, so that's an example to me of a creative way of engaging the public in a way that I think was successful, in a lot of different ways and so it's making me think in parallel with the game, the game was also very engaging, ways to engage people so that they stay in it as opposed to doing a PowerPoint presentation: everybody's going to fall asleep to that."

"[We] set up an "Ask a Sex Worker" booth ... we had flyers on sex worker myths, we had signs that people held and we took photos, and we had prepped goodie bags – of ... pamphlets, condoms, we had like sunglasses so there were incentive for people to stop by..."



Game spinner to determine where the police search for condoms.

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROTESTS

Another popular form of advocacy in South Africa is the public demonstration. Participants spoke about the importance of being visible to policymakers by mobilizing groups of people, including sex workers, and wearing particular colors in certain spaces such as in court or at parliament. Some individuals participate on committees and parliamentary monitoring groups. Signage is used outside these events to disseminate messages to the community and government about the issues being faced. In some cases, a march is also included in the agenda.

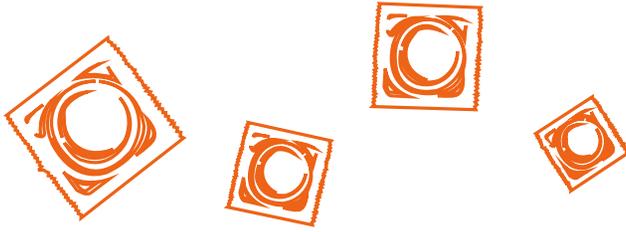
"So when we have time and when there's something important, we go and have a quiet presence in the back in our orange t-shirts, so that they see us: we're visible, then we don't have to make a noise."

We're visible, then we don't have to make a noise."

MEDIA

Participants spoke about using traditional media: "*We take every interview.*" However, more emphasis was placed on social media:

"So whatever's happening in [location removed] we taking pictures and then posing questions on Facebook and Twitter and that's how we are getting people to like our Facebook page and tell our friends about it and people to share."



COLLABORATION AND REFERENCING

As representatives of their human rights related institutions, participants spoke about solidarity among the institutions, with a consensus that working together would be most beneficial despite having different areas of focus, for example, youth or gender. Some have formed coalitions comprising multiple organizations, with a commitment to support each other, particularly in areas where there may be technical or financial gaps. They also refer clients to partner organizations that have the resources to deal with particular issues:

“We need to speak with one voice, because sex workers are not only sex workers they are mothers, they are living in our community, they are also voters. So we are part of a larger community than ourselves.”

PRINT MATERIAL

Print material is regularly used to support the aforementioned events and activities. These include fact sheets and brochures. One participant shared the importance of adapting the material for the target groups:

“We are making fact sheets, but our fact sheets are very academic ones and we had to make a simple edit and make them simple language and sometimes a booklet like this [*Criminalizing Condoms* report] is ... good for research but for an average person who is not a researcher ... we usually use our brochures which are just a few back-to-back snap-snap-snap quick to the point, someone looks. Ah! I can read this ... as a tool it's very important.”

THEATER

Some participants shared nontraditional and creative forms of advocacy utilized by their organizations, such as theater and other dramatic shows and performances, including hip-hop and poetry. An important element of these expressions is interaction with the audience on the specific issue being addressed. Theater is used as an important advocacy tool in confronting stigma and discrimination in marginalized communities.

“So the theater engages the audience. The audience is the group that we are trying to engage on a specific issue... The game also speaks to very diverse very different ways we can think of advocacy and social engagement. There is no one way of doing it so it speaks to the fact that as human rights defenders we also need to think creatively about ways in which to engage creatively with communities.”

“As human rights defenders we also need to think creatively about ways in which to engage creatively with communities.”

HELPLINE

In one organization, a helpline is used not only to assist individuals in need but also to educate the general public about sex worker rights and to answer general questions.

OTHER GAMES

Participants mentioned another simulation game that was being used in South Africa called *In Her Heels* to advocate for sex worker rights:

“We make the police officer wear heels and feel the pain sex workers are feeling, but you find out most of the police officers are not even finishing all the cards because of the pain sex workers are feeling on a daily basis. So if you take someone like a police officer or policymaker who is seated in the round table and give them these scenarios and in the end you can ask them, and they can feel this is how sex workers feel and this is the abuse that sex workers are facing on a daily basis. So it's a good game for me to use as an advocacy tool.”

GAMES AS ADVOCACY TOOLS

Participants generally agreed that games were very useful as advocacy tools because of the use of role-playing and the development of characters that represent real people, which aids in the understanding of the real issues faced by sex workers. As one participant stated, “[Cops and Rubbers] actually brings in the person into the advocacy itself because once you actually start playing the game you start advocating for sex workers in a way because you start making choices that a person in the sex work industry would make.”

“Once you actually start playing the game you start advocating for sex workers in a way because you start making choices that a person in the sex work industry would make.”

The *Cops and Rubbers* game emerged as particularly useful in breaking barriers related to stigma and discrimination. Participants felt that the game exposed people to the real and limited choices for sex workers, both with dignity and within a non-judgmental space. In addition, the game was seen as an active tool to sensitize health care workers and police through the sharing of actual stories by sex workers and by allowing their voices to be heard.

“[Cops and Rubbers] will help the health issues, it will break the discrimination and the stigma when it comes... because even if you go to the clinic in the [colloquial word for informal settlement], especially if you are transgender or you are a gay person, they will ask you ‘how you can sleep with another man?’ and all those things. They will discriminate against you, even if you have an STI and ask you to come with your boyfriend. How are you going to get client to come, you don’t have a boyfriend, how you are you going to get boyfriend to come?”

KNOWLEDGE, BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Multiple participants in the focus groups felt that *Cops and Rubbers* would be most beneficial in impacting those who have little to no experience or understanding of the challenges of sex workers. In addition, even though the participants were human rights advocates, many admitted that they were not aware about the challenges of sex workers in general, or the practice of using condoms as evidence of prostitution specifically, before reading the booklet or playing the game. As one participant put it:

“If you have no idea what sex work is about – what sex workers experience – this forces you to be in a position ... even if you are like the most non-empathetic person ever, it forces you into a position where you have to be slightly empathetic if you are going to play this game. And there are parallels to some extent that I think that anyone can relate to in terms of hustling, in terms of making money in terms of accountability and survival, hopefully.”

“Even if you are like the most non-empathetic person ever, it forces you into a position where you have to be slightly empathetic if you are going to play this game.”

One participant expressed some reluctance in the ethics of the game, as potentially watering down the real experiences of sex workers:

“I’m always a little bit weary of things that... take real experiences and make them kind of wearable for people – if that makes sense – the fact that it is a game ... the ethics of that, I’m still kind of working through.”





GAME VS. REPORT EXPERIENCE

The research team assessed the *Cops and Rubbers* game experience using responses from the focus groups and similar questions asked in the post-discussion survey. Overall, participants were approving in their evaluation of both the game and the report experiences (i.e. they evaluated the two experiences similarly). Without the ability to directly compare the two advocacy methods for each participant, the overall findings were largely ambiguous, particularly for the survey results. Focus group results from the game elicited more emotions from the participants as well as more in-depth sharing of experiences, an indication that the focus group was a better measure of the overall experience than the survey.

Most participants expressed that they enjoyed the game experience and expressed a range of emotions after playing the game including: sympathy, empathy, awkwardness, hope, sadness, disappointment, and frustration. One game participant shared the following:

"[*Cops and Rubbers*] also resembles a lot to our own life, for example not reaching your financial goal. It resembles all of us... At the moment that's also something important to me so... you feel the disappointment here.... It's not just... it's a game... you also feel 'I didn't do it again!'"

"[*Cops and Rubbers*] also resembles a lot to our own life."

One participant stated that the game was "close to my heart - actually my soul" and decided to share why:

"I am not just an ex-sex worker, I'm still a sex worker. OK. Which basically means this. I am a 30-year-old HIV positive woman, with a 10-year-old [HIV] negative son. I am a human rights and lobbying officer which is senior management in the advocacy team. I am a sex worker at night. I am a law student. I am a girlfriend to somebody. So basically, I fill out all those caps without any disability, so I do not see anything wrong with sex work. But even now with the capacity I have in advocating for sex worker rights, I still sometimes face those kinds of violations on the street. And no matter the fact that I actually can navigate myself around law, it's still hard for me to actually go to the police station sometimes because the stigmatization and discrimination itself is a burden. So, playing the game for me was emotional, but I wouldn't say it was aggravating at any point, it just brought back more of the memories and some of the lived experience that I've actually had. Obviously, I've had to make the choices that I made in the game at some point in my life. So, it wasn't the first time that I had encountered those kind of choices, which actually made it easier. So maybe if you had asked me those questions in 2008, if I would rather have sex without a condom rather than not having sex for the money, I would rather have probably chosen the without, but I also understand the impact of sex without a condom hence my choices have changed now. So, I've grown as a sex worker, I've grown as a worker [period]... yeah but the choices, I know the choices very well."

"So, playing the game for me was emotional, but I wouldn't say it was aggravating at any point, it just brought back more of the memories and some of the lived experience that I've actually had."

By contrast although participants appeared to appreciate the facts provided in the report format, it did not give rise to similar emotions and feelings. Most participants, in discussing the booklet, referred to page numbers and facts provided. A few expressed being surprised by the issues discussed:

“It’s quite... I don’t want to say impressive in a good way... but like, [the report] really struck you how deep the problem goes. I really like, at the end of the brochure on page 29 onwards, ...the recommendations. The recommendations both to local government as well as for other health workers and researchers.”

Survey results were not as conclusive when comparing the game with the report experience. The first question compared for each experience was: “I was mentally involved in the [game or report] while [playing or reading] it.” Differences between those who agreed or disagreed did not appear significant (Figure 4).

“[The report] really struck you how deep the problem goes.”

MENTAL INVOLVEMENT

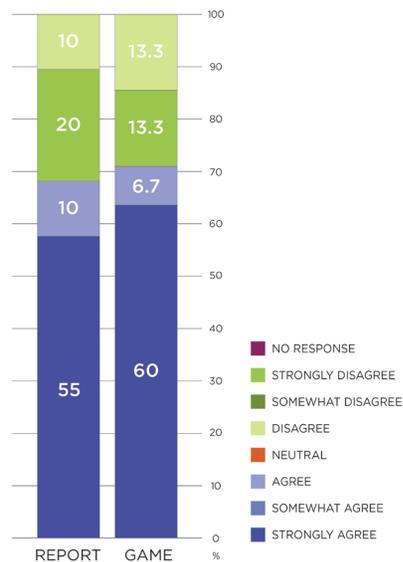
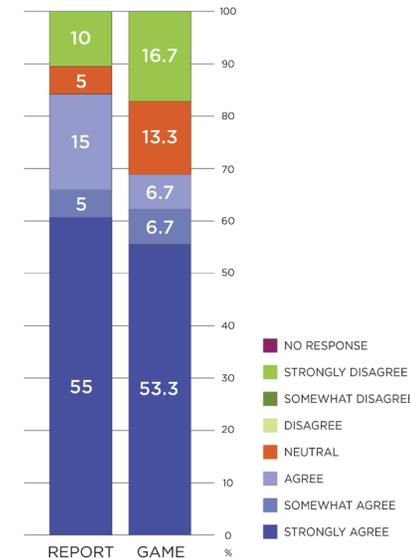


Figure 4: Comparison of results for mental involvement in Report vs. Game

Note that the y-axis is marking percentage while the number inside the bar is the total number of participants.

For the second question, 66.7% of participants agreed that the game affected them emotionally compared to 75% for the report (based on total responses selected for strongly agree, agree somewhat, and agree). In addition, slightly more participants strongly disagreed that the game affected them emotionally than those who disagreed for the report.

AFFECTS EMOTIONS



ENJOYED EXPERIENCE

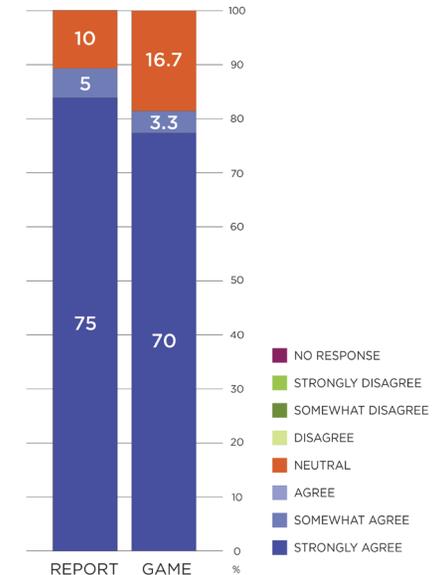


Figure 5 and 6: Comparison of results for emotional impact of Report vs. Game and comparison of results for enjoyment of Report vs. Game

Note that the y-axis is marking percentage while the number inside the bar is the total number of participants.

When asked about if they enjoyed reading the report or playing the game, participants appeared to enjoy reading the report more. The focus group data provided some explanation for the potentially surprising, lower emotional impact of the game by some participants. One participant explained:

“I think it’s trying to do two things at once, playing and engaging an exciting game, versus living yourself into people’s realities. And for me, you know, it struggles with/to do both, you can’t really do both at the same time.



“I think it’s trying to do two things at once, playing and engaging an exciting game, versus living yourself into people’s realities.”

I think it is educational in a sense for people who have never engaged with the issues but really, living yourself, yea, I think you compromise between wanting to actually get information and teach, while also wanting to have a nice, you know, game experience.”

More predictably, comparing whether participants found their minds wandering while reading the report or playing the game, more participants strongly disagreed with regards to the game than the report (20% for the game and 10% for the report). One the other hand, more participants strongly agreed that their minds wandered in the report (55%) than in the game (43.3%), indicating a slightly better engagement of the participants using the latter method.

MIND WANDERED

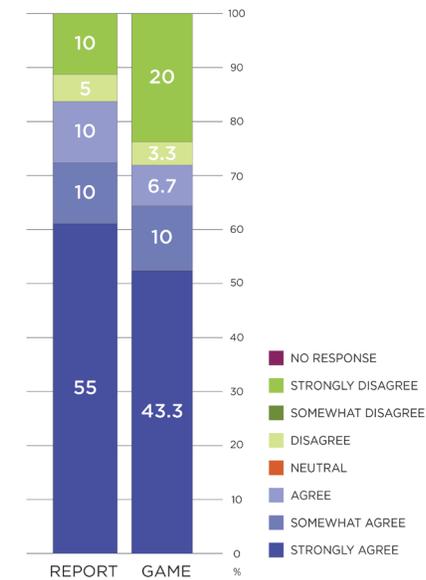


Figure 7: Comparison of results for ‘Mind Wandered’ during Report vs. Game

Note that the y-axis is marking percentage while the number inside the bar is the total number of participants.

PERCEIVED BENEFITS

Overall, both the report and the game were perceived as useful tools of advocacy, particularly in helping to highlight the challenges faced by sex workers. According to participants in the comparison focus group (those who first read the report and then played the game at least 1 day later), the report explains the condoms as evidence policy and the challenges of sex workers compared to the game, which gives an in-depth understanding of how sex work becomes a choice.

The game and the report both include real voices of sex workers (in the form of direct quotes), which is effective in convincing policymakers and members of the community on the authenticity of the situation and the claims made. The accuracy of the situations and the parallels to the real world were an added benefit of the game, especially in tackling stigma and discrimination.

As one participant stated:

“Anyone can relate to... in terms of hustling, in terms of making money, in terms of accountability and survival, hopefully. So I think it's incredibly humanizing. It's humanizing sex workers in a number of different ways and I'm saying that in response to the huge stigma and bias that sex workers have just in general across societies.”

“It's humanizing sex workers in a number of different ways and I'm saying that in response to the huge stigma and bias that sex workers have just in general across societies.”

Participants mentioned that the *Cops and Rubbers* game manages to create understanding and stimulates debate in a short amount of time, despite the complexity of the issue being addressed. Therefore, this makes the game ideal for people with limited time, for example police and ward councilors. The nature of the game was also mentioned as a more non-confrontational approach to persuading policy and decision makers. One advocacy leader stated:

“We also use confrontational methods. Boom boom boom boom boom... if you don't listen to us boom boom boom boom... but [the game] is non-confrontational. It's another way of looking at it. Seeing decision makers not as enemies on the other side. [But] as people who potentially we can identify and sympathize with us. Empathize.”



Sample character cards

PERCEIVED BARRIERS

Participants suggested several barriers to using the game as well as the report. Literacy and time were seen as issues that could prevent people from having an interest in the report.

For the game, the element of competition included in the game was sometimes seen as distracting from really empathizing with the challenges of sex workers:

“I think there was a point where I was really really really like missing the point. It was more about making the money and avoiding [infection] ... where the reality of it is that as much as I need to make money I also have a goal of, you know, to not get STIs.... Right? So I think you know that... one can get really into that competitive mode and I had to at some point say ‘calm down,’ ‘cuz remember there is the risk of HIV.”

A few participants who shared that they were already aware of the challenges faced by sex workers expressed difficulty empathizing with their characters. They suggested that it would be just as or maybe more effective to simply hear from a sex worker directly as an advocacy method. In this case, they expressed feelings that it was just a game, and therefore they were disconnected to the reality of the issues.

In terms of the report, while participants appreciated the evidence provided and the perspectives from multiple countries, they felt it could be redesigned to be more attractive, as well as with improved functionality. They felt that graphically the report should be improved in order to compete with all the other designs and messages with which people will come in contact. They also wanted more information focused on their specific country:

“Then you design the brochure so that there's pull out brochures, this is the South African one – you see what I'm saying? Then you can go deeper into each one of those countries because I think there's value in both, there's value in seeing the global picture especially at policymaker level or research level.”

Some participants felt that the game was not realistic as they felt they had little choice in what happened to them. When players were ‘losing’ they felt hopeless or that the game was unfair. They felt more flexibility should be built into the game, for example, to be able to negotiate outcomes.

“The game for me was straightforward... you either go to jail or pay the money and then there was no point where you can say maybe ... I was hoping that I had a card that really represented my life as a sex worker. When is my turn, where is my right? You know, I’ve left hopeless. I also miss my hope, you know?”

“I was hoping that I had a card that really represented my life as a sex worker.”

While each player is confronted with at least two sex worker empowerment event during the game, this quote speaks both to the limitations imposed by the practice of criminalizing condoms and to how some participants felt frustrated not being able to defend their rights more often or earlier in the game. In addition, a few participants wanted more character variation or more background information on characters. They felt that the game did not adequately reflect the intersectionality of people’s lives. For example, one participant previously mentioned in this report was a sex worker, law student, mother, and girlfriend as well as HIV positive and an advocate. Participants wanted to see more dimension reflected in the characters.

Based on focus group responses by participants, the following charts list potential benefits and barriers to using the game versus the report.

	GAME	REPORT
BENEFITS	Good for persons unfamiliar with advocacy topic	Reaffirms [what may have been learned in the game] and grounds it in research; provides more knowledge and information
	Engaging	Individuals do not have to commit a certain amount of time; can review at their own pace and leisure
	Experiential learning	Provides a generic idea of what is going on in the field internationally
	Makes you step into the shoes of the affected population (e.g. sex worker) even if you do not really have an understanding of the broader context of the issue	Very evidence based
	Gives the broader context beyond one specific country	Gives the broader context beyond one specific country

Table 1: Perceived Benefits of the Game vs. Report

BARRIERS	Persons already very familiar with the advocacy topic may not be as engaged	Makes sense to those that have been introduced or exposed to topic or who knows the reasons behind it
	Time required to play (a group of 6 players requires about an hour)	Text heavy
	Too general, should focus on specific country and language(s) e.g. South Africa	Too general, should focus on specific country and language(s) e.g. South Africa
	Not easily adaptable for mobile situations e.g. playing on buses	Not visual enough; graphic design should be improved
	Limited choices provided	Too long, some populations will have difficulty with literacy and time to read
	Not enough characters and background information on characters	No interaction or engagement
	Does not adequately reflect complexity of life, intersectionality	

Table 2: Perceived Barriers of the Game vs. Report

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommendations generated by the study participants with regards to the game and the report.

1. Both advocacy tools would appeal to a broader audience if translated into different languages. South Africa, for example, has approximately 13 official languages.
2. Both the game and the report are useful in different and complementary ways. The report is a useful tool for activities such as a workshop or a public event: not only to distribute but also to help inform the planning of the advocacy activity. The game can help to change stereotypes and reduce stigma and discrimination through role-playing.
3. The report and the game can be used together, starting with the game in order to shed light on why sex work becomes a choice for some people. Afterwards, inviting players to read the booklet, which explains the condoms as evidence policy internationally, would be most useful.
4. The report could be revised to include pull-out sections, each focused on a particular country or region. These could include country-specific advocacy materials such as posters, stickers, logo designs, etc. In addition, the survey of sex workers should be updated to reflect their current situation as well as country-specific nuances. For example, many participants stated that 'condoms as evidence' was not a policy in South Africa but rather a practice.

Participants also made the following suggestion for using the game to address the condoms as evidence policy/practice: to engage a mixed group of health workers and police personnel to play together. This may create the much needed dialogue between these professionals. Furthermore, the researchers leading this activity believe that the game must be tested in this context (i.e. with those who the game is targeted to reach).

The aim of this research project was to compare a standard advocacy method, such as a written report, to a creative and interactive one, such as the *Cops and Rubbers* game. Ultimately, both the game and the report created an atmosphere for discussion about the issues the advocacy leader participants cared about, such as the practice of using condoms as evidence of contraband. Essentially, both tools were appreciated for their potential benefits. However, the data points to the game as having more potential in actually changing perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of persons who were not previously familiar with the topic being advocated.



Outreach worker, police consequence, money, and hiding location cards

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APPENDIX

A. IRB Approval

This study (IRB ID#20150940) was approved by the University of Miami's Human Subject Research Office on February 16, 2016.

B. Focus Group Guide

REPORT (CONTROL) GROUP QUESTIONS

- What are your typical activities for advocacy?
- Please give your initial reactions to reading the report. How do you compare the report to your typical advocacy activities? How do you feel about the report and its usability among your clients/stakeholders?
- To what extent could you identify with the stories shared in the quotations? How relevant is the subject matter presented in the report to your personal or professional experiences?
- What are some benefits to using the report as an advocacy tool?
- What are some barriers to using the report as an advocacy tool?

GAME (TREATMENT) GROUP QUESTIONS

Game debrief questions

- What character did you play?
- How much money did you earn?
- Did you reach your financial goal of earning at least \$25 in the game?
- Did you reach your health goal during the game?
- Would any of you like to briefly share your experience playing the game?
- How did you feel about the game and the playing experience?
- What tough decisions, if any, did you have to make in the game?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

For both control and treatment groups

- How accurate and relevant is the subject matter and the game's content to your personal knowledge and/or experiences?
- Do you recognize the game characters (sex workers) as reflections of people you've met in your day-to-day life?
- What are some benefits to using the game as an advocacy tool?
- What are some barriers to using the game as an advocacy tool?
- What limitations do you see to using the game as an advocacy tool?
- What are your typical activities for advocacy?
- How does the game compare to these activities?
- How would you suggest the game be adapted for your cultural context?

